

MINUTES



County of Inyo Board of Supervisors

November 9, 2021

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, met in regular session at the hour of 9:34 a.m., on November 9, 2021, in the Board of Supervisors Room, County Administrative Center, Independence, with the following Supervisors present via webinar per California Assembly Bill 361: Chairperson Jeff Griffiths, presiding, Dan Tothoroh, Rick Pucci, Jennifer Roeser, and Matt Kingsley. Also present: County Administrator Leslie Chapman, Assistant Clerk of the Board Darcy Ellis, and County Counsel John-Carl Vallejo.

Public Comment

The Chairperson asked for public comment on items not calendared on the agenda.

The Assistant Clerk of the Board had not received any written comment and nobody requested to speak to the Board via the “hand-raising” feature on Zoom.

Closed Session

Chairperson Griffiths recessed open session at 9:34 a.m. to convene in closed session with all Board members present to discuss the following item(s): No. 2 **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION** – Initiation of litigation pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Government Code § 54956.9(c). Number of potential cases: one; and No. 3 **CONFERENCE WITH COUNTY’S LABOR NEGOTIATORS – Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6** – Regarding employee organizations: Deputy Sheriff’s Association (DSA); Elected Officials Assistant Association (EOAA); Inyo County Correctional Officers Association (ICCOA); Inyo County Employees Association (ICEA); Inyo County Probation Peace Officers Association (ICPPOA); IHSS Workers; Law Enforcement Administrators’ Association (LEAA). Unrepresented employees: all. County designated representatives – County Administrator Leslie Chapman, Assistant County Administrator Sue Dishion, County Counsel John-Carl Vallejo, Health and Human Services Director Marilyn Mann, and Chief Probation Officer Jeff Thomson.

Open Session

Chairperson Griffiths recessed closed session and reconvened the meeting in open session at 10:00 a.m. with all Board members present.

Pledge of Allegiance

County Counsel Vallejo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Report on Closed Session

County Counsel Vallejo reported that pursuant to a 5-0 vote, the Board authorized the County to initiate litigation action. He said the defendants will be disclosable once that action has been initiated.

Public Comment

Chairperson Griffiths asked for public comment on items not calendared on the agenda.

Robin Flinchum of Tecopa read aloud a letter explaining that masking and getting vaccinated is something community members can do for the greater good, noting that for some, it is easier to believe the government is conspiring against the people than to accept impotence against the virus – and in the process turned on one another and turns their backs on science and compassion.

Wes French of Bishop offered a prayer.

Proclamation – Veterans Day 2021

Veterans Service Officer Gordon Greene read a proclamation recognizing Veterans Day. Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve a proclamation declaring November 11, 2021 as Veterans Day in Inyo County. Motion carried unanimously.

County Department Reports

Chief Probation Officer Jeff Thomson announced the passing of Deputy Chief Probation Officer Mark Olsen, who gave 34 years of service to the probation field. Chairperson Griffiths asked that the meeting be closed in his memory.

Sheriff Jeff Hollowell announced that after 35 years with the County, he has made the difficult decision to retire, with his last day December 15. He said he enjoyed working with the County, the citizens, and most of all his employees.

COVID-19 Staff Update

HHS Director Marilyn Mann, HHS Deputy Director-Public Health & Prevention Anna Scott, and Public Health Officer Dr. James Richardson provided the Board with an update on COVID-19, including local case numbers, vaccinations, current hospitalizations, and upcoming availability of booster shots. Ms. Scott also shared a slide show with data showing local trends, noting that Inyo County's case rate is on a slight decline but it is still the highest case rate in the state.

Public comment came from Cari Arnal, Craig Thornburg, Lynette McIntosh, Wes French, and Jason Crockett, who all spoke in opposition to mask and vaccine mandates.

County Counsel – Redistricting Hearing

Chairperson Griffiths opened and Deputy County Counsel Grace Chuchla introduced the fifth of several public hearings on the 2020 Census redistricting process in Inyo County. Ms. Chuchla and Planning Director Cathreen Richards reviewed for the Board and public the redistricting process, including deadlines, town hall meetings, and potential changes to districts. They stressed that staff encouraged feedback and ideas from the public.

The Assistant Clerk of the Board read aloud a comment letter from Paul Huette, urging the Board to consider a majority-Native district connecting the five Tribes in the county. Public comment also came from Josh Nicholson of Bishop regarding a proposed map he submitted, noting his intention was to keep the changes simple with practical communities of interest. Lynne Greer, Mike Godbe, and Mary Roper asked for clarification on the town halls, residency requirements, and technical issues.

The public hearing was closed.

Recess/Reconvene

The Chairperson recessed the meeting at 11:26 a.m. and reconvened the meeting at 11:31 a.m. with all Board members present.

Workshop – INF Wildfire Closures

The Board conducted a workshop with Inyo National Forest Supervisor Lesley Yen to address issues surrounding Forest closures due to wildfires burning throughout the State. Jane McDonald shared concerns regarding dispersed camping, and Lynne Greer said permittees would appreciate anything the Forest Service can do to help them prepare for closures, with more than 24 hours' notice.

BOS – Memorial Naming of C.O.B.

CAO Chapman introduced a request to name the Consolidated Office Building in Bishop after late County Administrator Clint Quilter. Assistant Clerk of the Board Ellis reviewed the County's policy on naming buildings and said had concluded this request meets all of the requirements. She also noted that only three letters of support for the proposal were needed and it received 13. Board members acknowledged the years of work of former CAO Carunchio on the building project, and noted that CAO Quilter deftly brought it to completion. Supervisor Kingsley said the building is a testament to his dedication to saving taxpayer dollars and his ability to get things accomplished. HHS Director Marilyn Mann said she sees the building as a symbol of what CAO Quilter did for the county and its employees. Jane McDonald, Eastern Sierra AFSCME representative, said it is unusual for a union to endorse proposals like this – but the Inyo County Employees Association found it fitting given CAO Quilter's ability to engender a feeling of mutual respect following previously fractious relationships. Carol Lenoir said she was proud of the Board for bestowing this honor and thanked the County for treating CAO Quilter so well during his time at the County. Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Totheroh to approve the request from Chairperson Griffiths, in accordance with County policy, to name the Consolidated Office Building the "Clint G. Quilter Consolidated Office Building" in honor of the late County Administrator (*4/5ths vote required*). Motion carried unanimously.

COVID-19 Staff Update (Continued)

The Assistant Clerk of the Board read aloud comment letters from Kathy Goss, expressing support for the masking mandate despite the opinions of the minority, and from Samantha Goodman, who wondered if there is any movement to bring a big box store to Bishop.

Public comment also came from “Todd,” Wayne Croasdale, and Pastor Kelly Larson, all in opposition to mask mandates, vaccines, and tyranny. Pastor Larson also called out Supervisor Totheroh for what he described as disrespectful body language and facial expressions. Supervisor Totheroh responded that he has a hard time hearing people tell him things that are blatantly untrue (e.g., that Governor Newsom is ordering children who contract COVID to be killed), and was reacting thusly with no offense intended.

Comment also came from Deena Davenport-Conway and Mary Roper, both of whom expressed support for masking mandates and enforcement thereof. Roper also encouraged the Board to remember that most residents of Inyo County are vaccinated, so the Board is hearing every week from a loud and persistent minority.

Supervisor Kingsley said he is not big on the mask mandate either, and hopefully Inyo County’s case rate will decline enough that it can be rescinded. He also pushed back at what he called conspiracy theories suggesting the World Health Organization is in cahoots with government agencies to do the people harm. He said one could also buy into the theory that people discouraging others from getting vaccinated are the ones out to do harm to the people.

Recess/Reconvene

The Chairperson recessed the meeting at 1:17 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 1:43 p.m. with all Board members present.

Personnel – Meaghan McCamman Assistant CAO Contract

Moved by Supervisor Totheroh and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve the contract between the County of Inyo and Meaghan McCamman for provision of professional services as Assistant County Administrator at a monthly salary of \$11,777, effective November 11, 2021, and authorize the County Administrator to sign. Motion carried unanimously.

County Counsel – Deputy, Assistant County Counsel Ranges

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Totheroh to:

- A) Approve the job descriptions for Chief Deputy County Counsel and Assistant County Counsel positions;
- B) Change the Authorized Strength in the County Counsel's Office by deleting one Senior Assistant County Counsel position at Range 97 (\$9,483 - \$11,529);
- C) Allow flexibility within the County Counsel Authorized Staffing by adding either one Chief Deputy County Counsel at Range 97 (\$9,483 - \$11,529), or one Assistant County Counsel at Range 160 (\$10,682 - \$12,984) or allow the hiring of one Deputy County Counsel I-IV based on qualifications;
- D) Find that, consistent with the adopted Authorized Position Review Policy:
 - 1. the availability of funding for one (1) Deputy County Counsel I through Assistant County Counsel exists in the General Fund, as certified by County Counsel and concurred with by the County Administrator and Auditor-Controller; and
 - 2. where internal candidates may meet the qualifications for the position, the vacancy could possibly be filled through an internal recruitment, but an open recruitment is more appropriate to ensure qualified applicants apply; and
- E) Approve the hiring of one position of Deputy County Counsel I through Assistant County Counsel, depending on the qualifications of applicants.

Motion carried unanimously.

Road Department – Superintendent at Step E

Moved by Supervisor Totheroh and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve the hiring of the Road Superintendent at Range 78, Step E, retroactive to the hire date of October 14, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

HHS-Social Services – SSA Agreement

Moved by Supervisor Pucci and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve the agreement between the Federal Social Security Administration (SSA) and the County of Inyo, allowing the SSA to continue to provide services in Bishop through videoconferencing equipment to be installed at the County Consolidated Office Building in Bishop, and authorize the HHS Director to sign. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Works – Access Technologies Sole-Source P.O. Moved by Supervisor Pucci and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to: A) declare Stanley Access Technologies of Walnut Creek, CA a sole-source provider; and B) authorize the issuance of a purchase order in an amount not to exceed \$15,000.00, payable to Stanley Access Technologies of Walnut Creek, CA for the purchase and installation of an electric door at the Consolidated Office Building. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Works – Electric Gate Plans and Specs Moved by Supervisor Pucci and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve the plans and specifications for the Agriculture Department Building Electric Gate Project and authorize the Public Works Director to advertise the project. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Works-Town Water Systems – Ordinance 1272 (Liens) Moved by Supervisor Totheroh and seconded by Supervisor Pucci to approve an ordinance titled, "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, Adding Section 4.12.090 to the Inyo County Code Regarding Liens for Delinquent Water Bills." Motion carried unanimously.

County Counsel – Supervisorial District Ordinance Moved by Supervisor Roeser and seconded by Supervisor Kingsley to waive further reading of the proposed ordinance titled, "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, Repealing Chapter 1.12 of the Inyo County Code Regarding Supervisorial Districts," and schedule enactment for November 16, 2021 in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, County Administrative Center, Independence. Motion carried unanimously.

BOS – Hazardous Tree Management Project Support Letter Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve and authorize the Chairperson to sign comment letter prepared by staff regarding the Forest Service Region 5 Post Disturbance Hazardous Tree Management Project, with Sens. Feinstein and Padilla and Congressman Obernolte cc'd and a paragraph added thanking the Forest Service for the opportunity for feedback. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Member and Staff Reports Supervisor Kingsley said he attended meetings of the Inyo-L.A. Standing Committee and Great Basin Air Pollution Control District Board last week, and the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District Firemen's Fling fundraiser last Saturday.

Supervisor Pucci said he attended the Inyo-L.A. Standing Committee last week and will have a consultation meeting Friday with the Bishop Tribe.

Supervisor Totheroh said he attended a meeting of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board, is holding a redistricting town hall tonight, and will have a consultation meeting Friday with the Bishop Tribe.

Supervisor Roeser said she is holding a redistricting town hall tomorrow, and attended a Great Basin Air Pollution Control District Board meeting.

CAO Chapman reported that the comment period for the Community Economic Resilience Fund ends soon, and staff is requesting permission to submit a letter addressing the proposed grouping of the "Eastern Sierra Region."

Adjournment Chairperson Griffiths adjourned the meeting at 2:27 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, November 16, 2021 in the County Administrative Center in Independence.

Chairperson, Inyo County Board of Supervisors

*Attest: LESLIE CHAPMAN
Clerk of the Board*

*by: _____
Darcy Ellis, Assistant*