

MINUTES



County of Inyo Board of Supervisors

May 8, 2020

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, met in special session at the hour of 11:01 a.m., on May 8, 2020, in the Board of Supervisors Room, County Administrative Center, Independence, with the following Supervisors present via videoconferencing per California Governor Executive Order N-25-20: Chairperson Matt Kingsley, presiding, Dan Tothoroh, Jeff Griffiths, Rick Pucci, and Mark Tillemans.

Pledge Chairperson Kingsley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Chairperson Kingsley asked the Assistant Clerk of the Board whether there was any public comment emailed for today's meeting for items not calendared on the agenda.

The Assistant Clerk of the Board reported that no comments were submitted in writing for any items not on today's agenda.

HHS-Public Health & Prevention – Stage 2 Attestation HHS Public Health was prepared to ask the Board to attest that Inyo County meets the State of California's readiness criteria to move through the Second Stage of Reopening at its own pace and authorize the Board Chair to sign the attestation. However, HHS Director Marilyn Mann noted that the attestation would have to wait, since the Governor on Thursday announced additional criteria for counties to meet. Mann explained that staff will be reviewing the criteria and whether the County needs to adjust anything in response, and will be strongly focused on getting the attestation submitted as soon as possible. It was noted that they expected to be ready by the meeting of the 19th, if not sooner.

Mann and Deputy HHS Director-Public Health Anna Scott presented the Board with a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Governor's re-opening Road Map, and outlining the criteria Inyo County must meet to be granted the Phase 2 waiver and exactly how the County meets the criteria to be able to move through Phase 2 at a uniquely-fitted pace. Scott also noted that because of the Governor moving California to Stage 2, businesses like book, clothes, and toy stores are authorized to do "soft openings" today with curbside service.

Extensive discussion ensued during the presentation. It was noted that Public Health Officer Dr. James Richardson would be issuing a universal masking public health order, designed to help prevent potentially contagious individuals – including visitors from outside the county – from spreading the virus, as any additional cases could jeopardize the County's ability to reopen businesses and lands for recreation. Mann also reported that Assistant County Administrator Leslie Chapman has been actively working with the business community to provide updates on the reopening and has teamed with Information Services to create a web portal on the County website specifically for businesses. It was noted that the order prohibiting short-term rentals would continue, meaning no hotels and motels would be allowed to open during Phase 2.

Public comment was submitted via email by Karen Kong and read aloud. Ms. Kong expressed concern about Inyo County's testing capacity, and whether it actually meets the criteria laid out by the Governor. Later in the meeting, Holly Acree emailed to ask at what phase youth sporting events would be allowed to resume. Scott said the County hoped to receive clarification from the State soon regarding youth sports.

Supervisor Griffiths said most people are eager for life to return to normal but there is a lot of difference in opinion on what "safe" means. He said it's disappointing the Governor moved the goal posts on Thursday but he wanted to reassure the public that the County is paying attention to the science and medical expert recommendations while looking at unique

conditions in Inyo County to determine what's best for the health of the community and economy. He noted that any reopening in Inyo County will require the public taking health orders seriously and cooperating with one another; any surge in cases will move Inyo County back to the starting line. He added that businesses taking required precautions will also help re-instill confidence in consumers, so it's in their best interest to follow regulations. Supervisor Griffiths questioned whether a good interim goal would be allowing private campgrounds to reopen, to cut down on harmful dispersed camping and help stem the tide of visitors expected to make the trip to Inyo County. Staff expressed uncertainty on the County's authority to do that, noting that Stage 2 specifically disallows the reopening of hotels and lodging facilities for recreation and leisure.

Chairperson Kingsley said while it may be tempting for residents and business owners to go "rogue," counties found to be operating outside of the health orders are experiencing significant pushback from the Governor. He encouraged HHS and everyone on the Emergency Operations Center team to work on getting the attestation ready for approval as soon as possible.

Supervisor Pucci said opening private campgrounds might be a way to phase tourism back in while being able to monitor any impacts to the local populace. He said the worst-case scenario for Inyo County is opening all at once and then having to close down again, which would be devastating for small businesses.

Supervisor Tothoroh said he hoped the County would proceed with caution as he, too, believes there would be devastating economic impacts if Inyo had to close down again because the reopening happened too quickly. He noted he does feel a lot more comfortable about moving through Phase 2 because of Dr. Richardson's mask order.

Supervisor Tillemans said the County has to be really careful about reopening because of the local demographics and noted that protecting yourself in order to protect others will be critical. He said if Inyo County wants to reopen and stay open, the number of infected individuals needs to remain low. He encouraged residents to ban together and stay strong, adding that it will not be easy and he understands the frustration.

The Board directed staff to schedule a special meeting if they completed the work on the attestation before May 19.

Adjournment

Chairperson Kingsley adjourned the meeting at 12:26 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 12, 2020 in the County Administrative Center in Independence.

Chairperson, Inyo County Board of Supervisors

*Attest: CLINT G. QUILTER
Clerk of the Board*

by: _____
Darcy Ellis, Assistant