

**California Association of School Transportation Officials  
State Board Meeting**



**MINUTES  
Friday, September 10, 2021  
10:00am – 1:00pm  
Virtual Zoom Meeting**

**I. OPENING** – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Michael Sawyer, 10:01am

- A. Pledge of Allegiance** – Kerri Gardner / Michael Sawyer
- B. Moment of Silence in memory of the fallen on 9/11/2001 – 20 years ago tomorrow which “We shall never forget.”**
- C. Introductions and Welcome** -State Board, Executive Board, Audience
- D. Attendance**

1. 1, 2, 3, 4, ~~5~~, 6, 7, ~~8~~, 9, 10, ~~12~~, 13, 14, 15, 17, ~~18~~, 19, 20

*President, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, Secretary, Treasurer, Past President, Professional Associate Rep., Contractor Rep., Sustaining Member Rep., CASTOway’s Editor, GASBO Rep., CDE Rep., DMV Rep., Legislative Rep.*

2. *Verification of Eligibility* – Mike Sawyer

1, 2, 3, 4, ~~5~~, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, ~~15~~, ~~17~~, 18, 19, 20

- E. Minutes of Prior Meetings** – Adjustments or changes; acceptances of the 6/4/2021 meeting (M) Chad Barksdale (S) Tony Peregrina (C), Sam Anderson opposed, he did not receive the minutes.
- F. Correspondence** – Amanda Hightman, None at this time.
- G. Additions / Changes to the Agenda** – No Changes. (M) Tony Peregrina (S) Omar Dena (C)

**II. Reports**

- A. Treasurer** – Christina Celeste, checking \$158,466.43 savings \$5,792.44 total \$164,258.87. Christina shared the Budget vs Actuals report she has got everything to date recorded. No questions. (M) Tony Peregrina (S) Sam Anderson (C)
- B. Membership** – Mike Sawyer, Total membership is 1965. We have been receiving a lot of checks and the membership is flipping to the agency membership which is awesome.
  - Chapter 1, 159
  - Chapter 2, 282
  - Chapter 3, 182
  - Chapter 4 124
  - Chapter 5 11
  - Chapter 6 148
  - Chapter 7 88
  - Chapter 8 55
  - Chapter 9 15

Chapter 10 130  
Chapter 12 153  
Chapter 13 201  
Chapter 14 126  
Chapter 15 11  
Chapter 17 19  
Chapter 18 29  
Chapter 19 21  
Chapter 20 153

We have 158 Sustaining members.

**C. State Officers** – Executive Board

**D. Special Representatives** –

1. *California Department of Education* – Anna Borges, Hopefully, everyone has seen the FMCSA extension that was sent out by the Department of Education in regard to CDL, CLP's and you noticed there is a different date for the Medical expiration because that is a CA State requirement. CDL's and CLP's that is extended until November 30<sup>th</sup> and the Medical's for our State is September 30<sup>th</sup>, unless the Governor gives an executive order which then would be extended depending on what he does. With that the CDE/OST has extend the Hours of Services that is required to maintain your Instructor Credentials we do this to align with FMCSA and the Executive order from the State because we know if it is difficult to renew your CDL or get your Medical renewed then we know its difficult to instruct to maintain your hours. Although with the driver shortage then I'm sure none of you are short hours. Hopefully you all are putting on classes left and right to add school bus drivers to our already 55,000 certified school bus drivers. Our office is fully opened we just do not have anyone coming to our office except applicants. We are starting class this coming Sunday with graduation October 1, 2021. The next Instructor course will be January 2022. We do have an Administrators Program, Special Needs Course and the School Bus Officers Program all coming up. They do require those there to wear a mask, we do temperature checks as well as limit contact outside of the office because if one gets it then the whole thing must be shut down. Those that have attend have done a great job, they take it very seriously. They want to come and get certified just as the driver shortage there is also a shortage of certified Instructors, she is constantly getting calls throughout the State asking if there are Instructors around that can help. I also want to thank Chapter 17 and Kerri Gardner for assisting Chapter 17 to get up and running.
2. *Sustaining Member Representative* – Jason Songer, as you all have heard there is a lot of supply chain shortage all Manufactures and it is becoming a real concern in manufacturing buses, there are a lot of real cost increase that are here now and that are coming. There has been a 200% cost increase in steel alone in resent months. It's a tough situation but we along with all the Manufactures we are managing. There is a shortage of Type A cutaway chassis through Ford and GM. EV update, Great news CARB (California Air Resources Board) has allocated \$100,000,000.00 next year toward School Bus alone, which is fantastic. With all the HVIP and CARB money going into the state here is another great amount going into 2022 for EV School Buses. For those of you that are in the South Coast Management Districts, mainly the four counties, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange and Los Angeles, the board is going to announce the South Coast awards in November, and they will be giving out contracts in December. You will be able to place your orders in December and you will have your buses by Summer of 2022.
3. *Contractors Representative* – Erin Borda, we are all in the same boat throughout the State with School Bus Driver shortage it is particularly heavy here in Los Angeles and

that has made the start of the school year a big struggle. In my operation as well as other contractors here in the city that I have been in contact with its all-hands-on deck. The real focus has been on drivers and covering routes and making sure we do the best we can every day, in light of the driver shortage making sure we comply with COVID protocols. With many buses sitting for 17 months we are also facing mechanical issues. Many districts are in big need of athletic buses but because of the driver shortage our operation has suspended all athletic trips focusing on home to school routes. It's a big concern if schools don't have transportation for their athletic teams, what do they do? How do they get them to their games?

4. *CASBO Representative* –Carlos Chicas, No Report

### **III. Standing Committee Report**

1. *Legislation* – Nico Chavez, First, on the recall, it looks more and more likely Newsom will survive the recall. On the budget, if your district has over 55% unduplicated percentage, so that's Foster Youth, Disadvantage, English Learner or Homeless Students, then you district is eligible for additional funding to increase the number of Credential staff, Classified staff that provide direct services to students including Custodial staff on school campuses and the way it reads School Bus Drivers are included. Last May a bill was sent to the Governor in the latest round of what they call Budget Bill Jr so the Legislator will pass a budget in June then toward the end in session they will pass what they call August Budget Trailer Package which is additional augments to the June Budget so one of the bills in this new set of bills on Budget includes \$19.85 Million for School Bus Charging Infrastructure.
2. *Roadeo Report* – Tony Peregrina, we will talk more about have we will maneuver Roadeo in new business.
3. *Access & Mobility* – Tony Peregrina, we have plenty of books available, it's a great resource on how we transport Special Needs Students, recommendations, and best practices. Each Chapter should keep a few with you as when you do have your workshops you have them available let people know that that resource is available to all. You can order it online through the CASTOways website or through your chapter \$35.00 includes shipping.
4. *Fundraiser / BINGO* – Dano Rybar, CASTO BINGO moved to the City of Citrus Heights right before the pandemic they lease two days a week Wednesdays and Sundays. They did parking lot BINGO for 15 months through the pandemic (you were not allowed inside) to bring in revenue to pay for rent and monthly expenses. On June 2, 2021 we began to have BINGO inside the hall and hope every week we get to continue to be opened. We have about 175-200 BINGO players ever Wednesday night and Sunday Matinee, those are the two days that Anna and Dano operate BINGO for CASTO. In 2019-2020 fiscal year Dano was able to write a check to CASTO for General Fund \$12,000.00 to help the Conference right before the pandemic hit. It takes about 15-18 volunteers to operate this hall, its very large. We have one volunteer a retired instructor from the San Francisco Bay Area that is from the school bus industry the rest are parents from High School or Elementary Schools, they put in hours, then CASTO makes a donation to the school fund and it goes to help offset the cost of activities the students are involved in. Last month, Anna and Dano, took all the volunteers, 38 of them, to a Barbeque, Anna Barbequed Tri Tip with all the fixings and as a big thank you, which was more important, we gave them all Skechers shoes. It may seem like a big joke but when they worked parking lot BINGO all summer, they went through smoke from fires, we did 110-degree days, in the wintertime we did rain and wind, and they never complained all those volunteers. As a joke behind the scenes joke, but truthfully, we wanted to thank them so we wore out your shoes during parking lot BINGO we will replace your shoes. We pay out about \$19,000.00 in prizes each session, each game

pays out about \$300.00 to \$1199.00 because of the tax bracket. So, if you are ever in the Sacramento area on a Wednesday night or Sunday afternoon stop by and play BINGO with us. Anna also shared that when Dano says they did parking lot BINGO just imagine setting up a Roadeo 4-5 times a month that is what this was like everything must be set up and the taken down every time, moved out and then moved back in. Kudos to Dano for doing this for 15 months... All the Volunteer's are great and much needed but if it were not for Dano's vision for the best BINGO on planet earth we would not have anything.

#### **IV. Business and Issues**

##### **A. Old Business**

1. *Mechanic's Workshop CA Best Tech & Inspection* – Tony Lavezzo, the workshop was July 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> it was virtual on Hopin. We had 12 classes, mechanic classes and supervisor class. We had 67 attendees, with good feed back from those who attended. Looking forward to when we can meet in person again.
2. *Officer's Workshop*, July 20, 2021 (Virtual) – Mike Sawyer, it was well attended. Everybody got a new Officers Handbook was emailed to them. Mike will also put the handbook up on the website for all to reference as needed. The workshop was virtual via zoom we had 57 attendees which included the 10 executive board members. It was really nice, if any of you are interested in being on your local chapter board you are encouraged to attend this event. If you have any suggestion that you would like to be taught at this event, please let us know we are always open for suggestion. Sometimes we forget what its like to be a newbie.

##### **B. New Business**

1. *2021 – 2022 CASTO Events* – Mike Sawyer, as you all know we are in this pandemic, we have driver shortages and our next event coming up is the Managers Forum October 20, there are 26 people register. We are hear and receiving emails that their districts are not letting them travel due to the pandemic so after our lengthy discussion about what our events will look like this year because we have sign contracts in place that we have committed ourselves to and we need to get out in front of and try and gage what's going on politically what's going on with the pandemic, what you school district will allow people to attend? And with this driver shortage, we are all driving. And if you are allowed to go, the attendance will be greatly reduced. And then what if you come back with COVID, what if our event is a super spreader, now we have infected your organization? We talked about it in length, we have made the decision to cancel all CASTO events for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year. This should also include all of your local chapter events because you all ride under our insurance and if something were to happen at one of your events somebody gets sick, or God forbid passes away and their family tries to sue us it goes against our insurance. Its very sad that we are going to have a whole another year of this, will try and do as much as we can virtual and try and get you all connected as much as we can, it would be irresponsible to push forward and continue as it use to be. Nanette Rondeau commented for understanding that all events for this next year including Conference will shift to virtual or not at all, yes that is correct. Our next event scheduled is the Managers Forum, we are on the hook for some room blocks, food and costs. Let's pivot to Dano to talk about that and gives us a update on what we are on the hook for and how it will impact our budget. Dano shared contracts are usually signed three to five years out, the reason organization sign contracts in

advance is to get the best deal and when you repeat yourself at a property you get the best deal. So last year when we had to cancel our State Conference, we cancelled Managers Forum the hotels required us to extend the contract to another date. In April of 2021 the Governor of California made it quite clear that June 15, 2021 we were reopening California with no restrictions. At the time he made that comment and the time he opened California the pandemic did not look as bad as it is today so in April along with talking with Tony and the Executive board, we needed to make a decision and extend these contracts, or we would be responsible for last years expenses. So, we agreed with Delta by Marriott for a contract for October 2021 which is next month that contract replaced the conference contract March 2021 which we cancelled. They were happy to go ahead and write that contract I did change the expense and room blocks that we would have had the State Conference to match the average numbers we have at the Managers Forum. So as of today, we have a commitment with the Delta by Marriott for October of 2021. A guarantee catering and beverage bill of \$25,000.00 we are also responsible for the room blocks, 15 room block for Tuesday night, 60 room block for Wednesday and Thursday night and another 15 room block for Friday night at the Anaheim Garden Grove Delta by Marriott. The contract states that we will be responsible for all 145 room blocks in addition to the minimum of \$25,000.00 catering and beverage bill. Now, we put in the Wyndham Contract which is the Delta by Marriott in addition to the DoubleTree Hotel for the Conference of 2022, "no damage shall be due for failure performance due to the act of God, war, terrorism, government regulation, riots, disaster, strikes." Government regulations means if a Governor or the National CDC prohibits gatherings of 100 or more in a facility then the contract will be voided. If the Governor or the CDC do not come out in the next month and say that we cannot gather Delta by Marriott by contract will charge us the \$25,000.00 for food and beverage plus the 145 nights stay. We can't predict what the Governor or CDC will do next month, we do have a good relationship with the Delta. I have been directed to go directly to the Director of Catering and Beverages that person was off today so I will have to wait until next week to speak with them can they push this to 2024 so we won't have to pay this \$55,000.00. or can we lower the room rate or food bill? If they will not extend this again. This is how hotels make money and they have lost money for 16 months so we will have to wait and see what they will be willing to negotiate. In the meantime, I have spoken with Christina, the Treasurer and Mike, the acting President and fortunately CASTO BINGO has done very well so CASTO BINGO can afford up to \$24,000.00 to pay this... liquidate damage. If we have to pay a bill, if we have to pay \$55,000.00 as Christina shared with you this morning, we have \$150,000.00 plus she is going to have to refund those who have already paid its going to bring your treasury that we have work so hard since 2019 to bring back up back down to zero. The BINGO money was planned to be use for Roadeo but with Roadeos cancelled the money belongs to CASTO so it best to help our association to help pay any fees or the most we can. On a second note, we need to keep some money in the BINGO account if Sacramento County is not doing very well with the virus just like some other counties. And Sacramento County Health Department is in discussion of closing nonessential public gathering and if that happens, I will have to close BINGO. And the landlord made it clear he will not forgive our rent this time around. Our rent is \$9,000.00 a month so I can give all the money away I need to keep some to pay rent if needed. What you need to know worst case scenario, we have to pay \$55,000.00 for cancelling Managers Forum, second scenario maybe not as bad maybe not as high, the best scenario they let us push this contract to 2024 and then we would have zero dollars we would have to pay next month. Then we would have that BINGO money to have the best Roadeo when we go back.

2. *2022 State Conference* – Mike Sawyer, Dano Rybar, Conference is at the DoubleTree Hotel in Sacramento February 11-14, 2022. I think we are going to be dealing with the same thing with cancelling Conference, which is a much larger, close to a \$200,000.00 contract. I don't know how this happened, I'm glad I did not enforce it, but I never received a countersigned contract with the DoubleTree we worked on it in April and May I have everything we want all the details, they have my signature, but they never forwarded it back to me with their signature that we both agreed to the contract. Looking through all my emails during that time they lost the person I was working with and assigned it to someone else who never contacted me so I thinking I have a void contract for February we do not have a countersigned contract for February. So, they can't say we are responsible for that Hotel in February when we don't have a signed agreement for the lady you fired and the replacement did not follow through, so I think we saved our selves on that one. Christina shared when we originally bought the platform Hopin last year it was a little over 14,000.00 and we bought that to operate our State Conference last year and though out this year we have been able to do Mechanics Workshop on it and it has been useful for us. Originally when we bought it for that \$14,000.00 It came with about a 1,000 registration and between those two events, we have not used all the registrations. We still have a little over 500 registration available to us, but the contract expires at the end of January 2022. It was a full year we had that original platform so we want be able to use those registrations for the Conference in February 2022 but we are in conversations with them to see if we have to repurchase the software all over again or if it's a package of registration we can purchase. That is the information we still need to gather from Hopin, from passed conversation they made it seem like it might be registration packages to purchase with maybe a slight fee to maintain the platform services. We will continue to follow up with the conversations. Mike shared that the plan is to send out an email to members explaining the decision, directing all CASTO events on the Executive and Local Chapter level be canceled or switched to virtual in light of the pandemic. The question was asked why we could not have the local events and have the participants sign a waiver releasing liability, as an organization we believe that would be irresponsible on CASTO's behalf for many reasons, one we are all experiencing driver shortages we are all out their driving ourselves. We are all in this situation, I would not even be able to leave the office to attend an event. A lot of districts have not lifted the travel restrictions for people to go anywhere. If we attend and we are a super spreader and we are all in the transportation industry and we all get each other sick none of our operations will be able to function. So, for that reason there is no release of liability that will be issued for any one to attend an in-person event. That is why CASTO choose to cancel. Safety is our Business. Nanette asked if our contract with Hopin ends the end of January 2022 would it be possible to move conference back into January to save us a little bit of money. Mike answer that all things are possible as we continue our conversations with Hopin. So those of you that have register for the Manager Forum and have not paid just cancel it, if Christina receives a check, she will contact you to either shred the check or send it back to you. And if you have paid Christina will contact you to discuss the method of refund you would like, we plan to refund we do not plan to have credits on file. At this time, we do plan on offering a virtual Conference, we have some really great people working behind the scenes to make this happen, Dano Rybar, Stephanie Oliver, Jennifer Hanshew, Nanette Rondeau. Dano shared the next scheduled events; we are cancelled through the 2021-2022. We have a Managers forum scheduled October 19-21, 2022 at Delta Marriott Anaheim. This event if we were to cancel, we are over 360 days away it could be a possible 30% penalty and if you break it down 365 days or less it goes to 50% and then it works its way up to 70% all the way to 100% of the anticipated revenue.

State Conference is February 10-13, 2023 at Burbank Marriott and that is a signed contract, and it has the same penalties as the above.

Managers Forum October 18-20, 2023 at the DoubleTree Sacramento.

Dano has not sign anything for the years 2024 and 2025 because he needs to negotiate the contracts he is trying to cancel booked for those years.

Nanette asked the question about Roadeo next year 2022 Galt Marketplace is not available due to construction she wanted to know if we should look at 2023 for the Roadeo. Dano said that we have a \$750.00 deposit there for the Roadeo we cancelled in 2020, Galt Marketplace said they would hold for our next event there. The question was then asked if the construction would affect our ability to use the Marketplace for Roadeo once the construction is complete? Nanette will consult with the Roadeo Committee and report back at our next meeting.

3. *Poster Contest* – Amanda Hightman, National School Bus Counsel is overseeing the poster contest, their theme is “1 Bus + 1 Driver = a BIG Impact on Education” Oh My... Kids will never get this. Anna shared we have never complied with NAPT California has always done their own Safety Poster Contest because we do things so much different than any other state. A better option for us would be to do our own CASTO California base, I think we should evaluate it every year, does it fit the criteria here in California? Not saying the slogan, they came up with is bad but it’s very complicated and student are going to say, I don’t understand what that means. Mike suggested that the Executive board and committee will meet again, and we will put out an email with the official form, official rules with the theme. Let’s promise to get it out by the end of September. The deadline to get the posters back in to us will be January 3, 2022.

**V. INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

**A. Chapter News** – Chapter Presidents

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**VI. ADJOURNMENT** 11:41am (M) Sam Anderson (S) Chad Barksdale (C)