



JANUARY 17, 2024
ADOPTED MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. in the City of Eureka Council Chambers and via Zoom video conference with Chair Bushnell presiding.

2. FLAG SALUTE

3. ROLL CALL

Members Present:	Michelle Bushnell, Ali Lee, Mike Losey, and Steve Madrone
Members Absent:	Steve Ladwig, Debra Lake, Troy Nicolini
Alternates Present:	Heidi Benzonelli* and Gordon Johnson
Alternates Absent:	Jack West and Mike Wilson
Staff:	Colette Santsche, Executive Officer Krystle Heaney, Clerk Ryan Plotz, Attorney

*Commissioner Benzonelli seated as voting member for duration of meeting.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A) Approval of November 11, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

B) Approval of Meeting Calendar for 2024

Commissioner Lee asked for clarification on her prior comments regarding the timing of LAFCo applications since several extension of services have taken place prior to annexation. It was also noted that Commissioner Lake's first name was misspelled.

Motion Losey/Lee to approve the consent calendar with minor corrections. Motion passed by 5-0-0 voice vote.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

A) Designation of Chair and Vice Chair for 2024

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and requested consideration of a Chair and Vice Chair for the 2024 calendar year. Minor discussion was held with recommendation to continue with Commissioner Bushnell as chair and Commissioner Madrone as vice chair.

Motion Losey/Madrone to appoint Commissioner Bushnell as Chair for the 2024 calendar year. Motion passed by 5-0-0 roll call vote.

Motion Bushnell/Lee to appoint Commissioner Madrone as Vice Chair for the 2024 calendar year. Motion passed by 5-0-0 roll call vote.

B) Mid-Year Financial Report

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report. The County Auditor-Controller's Office has collected annual contributions from the county and cities, and is in the process of collecting annual contributions from special districts. Several of the larger expenses have already been paid for this fiscal year and a substantial amount of work was completed as part of the South County MSR/SOI Update.

Minor discussion was held by the Commissioners including where GIS software for the new web-based mapping would be billed and whether or not there is a budgeted contingency. It was explained that the GIS software will be included in the next fiscal year's proposed budget which will be presented in March and that a contingency has not been included in the budget for some time since the Commission has a healthy reserve.

C) Revised Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update for Willow Creek Community Services District

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of the revisions that are proposed to the 2021 Willow Creek CSD MSR/SOI Update which include listing wastewater services as an active power. Unfortunately LAFCo did not have a complete record of the activation of wastewater powers for the District when the MSR process was completed but the General Manager was able to locate and provide LAFCo with historical documentation from 2006. Since the District is in the process of constructing wastewater facilities, has completed a Proposition 218 process, and a comprehensive environmental review process, Executive Officer Santsche felt it was appropriate to revise the prior MSR and list wastewater powers as active.

Discussion was held by Commissioners that provided support for the revisions. It was also requested that the District Board of Directors be updated and that the Tsnungwe tribe be included in the discussion under 2.5 Tribal Lands since they historically occupied areas south of Willow Creek. It was also pointed out that Hoopa is a tribe and not a rancheria.

Discussion was held by Commissioners on the sizing of the wastewater treatment system. Unfortunately, the District General Manager was unable to attend the meeting, but it is staff's understanding that the system went through a rigorous design process and was sized for the downtown commercial area and adjacent residential areas.

Additional discussion was held regarding LAFCo archives and how far back they go. LAFCo has a substantial amount of historical scanned documents and continues to work to locate records and documentation for district formations, powers activations, and other boundary changes.

Motion Madrone/Losey to adopt Resolution 24-01 approving the Revised Willow Creek Community Services District Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update, as described in the staff report with minor revisions as directed by the Commission. Motion passed by 5-0-0 roll call vote.

7. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS - None

8. INFORMATIONAL AND CONTINUING ITEMS

A) Status of Web-Based Mapping

Clerk Heaney introduced the staff report and shared the Marin LAFCo web map as an example of what staff is aiming for. Executive Officer Santsche continued the staff report by detailing the various functions of the Marin LAFCo map including layers for different services, different base maps, and potential for including tax rate areas.

Commissioner Lee expressed her desire to have a map that showed the cumulative effect of annexations overtime since a more zoomed out picture could help the Commission see impacts to the county as a whole. Executive Officer Santsche explained that this would be a difficult task since most annexations are presented as single layers so gathering and compiling all that data into one layer would be a time-consuming process.

Commissioners held additional discussion on the approach to displaying district information. Interest was expressed in making LAFCo layers compatible with other mapping programs so that a wide range of agencies could use the data and looking into options to display more specific infrastructure data. It was also suggested that LAFCo could work with Cal Poly Humboldt to engage students for capstone projects.

Final comments include questions about who would be able to access the map and download data, and what the overall timeline for this project is expected to be. Executive Officer Santsche noted that the map would be made available to the public on our website so a wide range of people could access it. Staff would also like to make the official boundary layers available for download so agencies and interested parties could use the official layer for planning purposes. Staff anticipates having an initial web map with basic layers available to the public by fall of this year.

B) Status of Expiring Commissioner Terms

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and provided a brief summary of expiring commissioner terms in 2024. Staff will begin the Special District election process this month since it takes approximately six months to complete and will be starting the Public Member selection process in spring.

Commissioner Madrone expressed his hope that Commissioner Lee would like to continue on LAFCo as she provides good input to discussions. Commissioners also asked for clarification of the public process and Executive Officer Santsche stated that the commission considers all the candidates and appoints one for the upcoming term.

C) Status of Municipal Service Review Preparations

Clerk Heaney introduced the staff report and provided an overview of current MSR preparations. Staff is working on finishing an administrative draft of the Orick CSD MSR/SOI Update and will be working with the District to get additional information on governance and financial standing. Staff is also working on gathering data on Orleans CSD and the City of Eureka.

Minor discussion was held regarding the importance of the Orick CSD MSR since they are in the process of developing a community wide wastewater system which would help reinvigorate the community.

D) Status of Current and Future Proposals

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and provided a brief summary of current applications. The Arcata Fire Protection District submitted an application for annexation of its goodwill response area for Jacoby Creek and Fickle Hill Roads. This matter will come before the Commission at the regular March meeting.

Ongoing fire services planning is taking place including technical assistance for CSA#4 in the Trinidad area. Funding has been provided for a special study that will be conducted by an outside consultant. LAFCo may act as the contractor for the study and will assist with the Request for Proposal process.

Commissioners held discussion on the timing of applications to LAFCo and Commissioner Lee asked why LAFCo proceedings occur so late in the planning process and noted the timing of the Humboldt Community Services District annexation. Executive Officer Santsche stated that LAFCo has been involved in the Humboldt CSD process since early on and has commented on the draft environmental documents. She also noted that timing of LAFCo applications is very important. Humboldt LAFCo policy states that development projects need to go through the County discretionary process prior to application with LAFCo. This helps LAFCo assess the service needs for the development and prevents agencies from being burdened with services for areas that do not get developed and subsequently do not provide any additional tax revenue or fees for services.

Chair Bushnell recommended that further discussion on the timing of LAFCo applications be agenzized for a future meeting.

9. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A) CALAFCO Daily Legislative Report (November 2023)

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and noted that the legislative season is just beginning. She is now an alternate member on the CALAFCO legislative committee and will bring forward information as it becomes available.

10. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE - None

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Commission will be held on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Eureka Council Chambers located at 531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501.