



MAY 21, 2025
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 Madrone presiding.

2. FLAG SALUTE

3. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Heidi Benzonelli*, Michelle Bushnell, Cheryl Kelly, Steve Madrone, Meredith Matthews, Troy Nicolini, and Elaine Weinreb

Members Absent: None

Alternates Present: David Couch**

Alternates Absent: Debra Garnes, Gordon Johnson, and Mike Wilson

Staff: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer
Krystle Heaney, Clerk/Analyst
Ryan Plotz, Attorney

*Commissioner Benzonelli was present on Zoom and participated as a member of the public.

** Alternate Commissioner Couch was seated as a voting member for this meeting and participated via Zoom for 'Just Cause' under AB 2449.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A) Approval of March 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion Kelly/Bushnell to approve the consent calendar. Motion passed by 7-0-0 roll call vote.

6. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

A) Kneeland Fire Protection District Goodwill Annexation

Executive Officer (EO) Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of the proposed annexation to Kneeland FPD (FPD or District). Potentially affected landowners and registered voters were provided 21-day mailed notice of the public hearing and notices were also published in two area newspapers.

The proposed annexation area is the District's goodwill response area where they have been providing services for many years. The boundary line between Kneeland FPD and Arcata FPD was determined through discussions with both districts and estimated response times from each district. This resulted in a split of Fickle Hill Road

as noted on the included map. A minor change is proposed to the District's Sphere of Influence to make it coterminous with the District's boundary after annexation.

EO Santsche received numerous phone calls from the public about the annexation. Most questions were about whether or not a particular parcel was in the annexation area and how much the landowners' special tax obligation would be. To help provide additional public information, Kneeland FPD held a public meeting on May 14, 2025 to discuss the annexation process and conduct a Q&A.

LAFCo notified Green Diamond and Humboldt Redwood Company regarding the inclusion of commercial forest land parcels within the proposed annexation area. Efforts were made to exclude parcels zoned entirely for Timber Production Zone (TPZ) where feasible; however, some TPZ lands remained within the annexation boundary in order to preserve logical and contiguous service areas.

KFPD was able to implement a new special tax last fall that replaces previous special tax measures for the District. Kneeland FPD worked closely with landowners, especially those that own ranches and homesteads, to create a tax that would not overburden owners. This led to inclusion of a contiguous parcel exemption in the approved tax.

Prior to the meeting, two letters of opposition were received which are on file with LAFCo staff. As such, the EO will proceed with a protest hearing. Landowners and registered voters in the affected area will be provided with a 21-day notice on how to participate in the proceedings.

Chair Madron opened the Public Hearing and invited initial comments from Commissioners. Commissioners held discussion on the proposed annexation and invited comments from Chief Roe and Board Member Green who were in attendance. Clarification was provided on how the District coordinates with CAL FIRE in the event of a wildland fire. It was noted that often Kneeland FPD is the first on scene and provides initial attack and incident command until CAL FIRE arrives at which point they take over incident command. Kneeland FPD continues to work the fire under CAL FIRE direction. It was also noted that the special tax is the same for both State Responsibility Areas and Local Responsibility Areas, that the District has a good working relationship with Green Diamond, and that NOAA provides a Spot Forecast that can help fire districts prepare for potential inclement weather that may cause fires.

No public comment was received and Chair Madrone closed the public hearing.

Motion Kelly/ Nicolini to adopt Resolution No. 25-03, approving the Kneeland Fire Protection District Goodwill Response Area Annexation and directing the Executive Officer to conduct protest proceedings. Motion passed by 7-0-0 roll call vote.

B) Final Budget and Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-26

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of the budget process. The Commission reviewed the proposed budget in March and after approval it was sent out to member agencies for review and comment. EO Santsche also provided an overview of how special district contributions are calculated by the County Auditor-Controller and the planned expenses for the upcoming fiscal year including the proposed work plan with MSRs.

Chair Madrone opened the public hearing and invited initial comments from Commissioners. Commissioners held brief discussion regarding the budget and expressed appreciation for the work that staff does with a tight budget. It was also requested that the Peninsula CSD MSR/SOI Update be moved to later in the year when District staff has more time to work on it and that staff consider conducting the Manila and Peninsula CSDs MSRs at the same time.

Motion Bushnell/ Nicolini to adopt Resolution No. 25-04, approving the final budget for FY 2025-26. Motion passed by 7-0-0 roll call vote.

8. BUSINESS ITEMS

A) Garberville Sanitary District First Amendment to Updated Water Services Agreement with the Southern Humboldt Community Park

Prior to discussion, Commissioner Bushnell noted that she does not have a conflict of interest for this agenda item. EO Santsche then proceeded to introduce the staff report and provided an overview of the process to date.

In 2019, Garberville Sanitary District (GSD or District) requested approval of an Out of Agency Service Agreement to provide limited water services to Southern Humboldt Community Park. LAFCo approved the extension of services by adopting Resolution No. 19-05 which specified the areas to be served, the location of the meter, and referenced the water services agreement with the park. In 2023, the District requested that the proposed location of the water meter be moved to a easier access point. LAFCo approved the change by adopting Resolution 23-04 which noted the new location of the water meter on Sprowel Creek Road.

In April 2025, GSD sent a letter to LAFCo requesting a further update to the LAFCo approval to incorporate minor changes made to the water services agreement with the park. The term spigots was added as an approved use to the agreement. No changes to the approved service areas or the amount of water allowed under the agreement are proposed.

The Commission invited comment from GSD representative Jennie Short, County Planning Director John Ford, and SHCP representative Laura Cochrane. It was noted that all input from the District was included in their letter to LAFCo requesting the change and that this is a minor clarification to proposed uses. It was also noted that Humboldt County approved phased development of the park and went through an Environmental Impact Report process. The current request is consistent with that process.

Commissioners held brief discussion regarding the request and noted that adding this additional use helps mitigate potential health and safety concerns at the park. The area tends to get very warm in the summer and providing clean potable water to the public is important. The Commission expressed gratitude to SHCP for continuing to work with regulatory agencies, including the County, on going through the proper planning process to obtain approvals for different phases of the project.

Public comments were received from Edward Voice. He provided written comments to the Commission prior to the meeting which are on file with LAFCo staff. He also asked what the beneficial use was for the water to the proposed spigots, will SHCP keep adding uses, and at what point the park will need to ask

for more water. EO Santsche responded noting that the current request is specific to supporting community events and that it is consistent with the current phase of park development.

Motion Bushnell/ Matthews to adopt Resolution No. 25-05, amending Resolution No. 19-05 to include reference to the updated water services agreement between Garberville Sanitary District and Southern Humboldt Community Park. Motion passed by 7-0-0 roll call vote.

B) Westhaven Community Services District Correspondence Regarding Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Municipal Service Review

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of a letter that was sent to LAFCo by Westhaven Community Services District. The letter voiced concerns regarding the process for regional water services planning, the recent adoption of the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District MSR/SOI Update, and the proposed main line extension to the Trinidad Rancheria. EO Santsche provided a written response to the District noting the importance of collaboration among water agencies and ensuring that any future discussions regarding water services in the area will include a robust agency and public outreach process.

Commissioner Kelly stated that the Trinidad City Council was not consulted about the letter sent to LAFCo and that the City would appreciate an early and public process regarding water services planning in the region. Commissioner Nicolini noted that some topics, such as agricultural resources and water mainline extensions, may need additional public outreach due to heightened sensitivity.

Chair Madrone noted his appreciation for staff comments. Although the Commission approved the HBMWD MSR/SOI Update, he had hoped that additional information would have been provided by the District on the potential growth inducing impacts of a mainline extension. While the condition included as part of the approval, to conduct a project specific MSR if an application is submitted to LAFCo, is beneficial, there should be an earlier process to gather input. He requested that a report on the planning process and how the public and Commission can be included early on.

C) Redway Community Services District Correspondence Regarding Boundaries and Service Authority

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of a letter received from Redway Community Services District (RCSD or District). RCSD requested clarification on the Meadows Business Park annexation that occurred in 1993. EO Santsche provided a written response stating that no restrictions were placed on the annexation and the District is able to provide all active services to the area based on Board review and approval. Included with the letter was the prior administrative record for the 1993 annexation.

Jennie Short, representing RCSD, stated her appreciation for the comprehensive response which will help with the CEQA process for their change in place of use process.

9. INFORMATIONAL AND CONTINUING ITEMS

A) Form 700 and Ethics Training

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and requested that forms be sent to LAFCo as soon as possible. It was also noted that ethics training is required every two years. Commissioners noted that it would be beneficial to receive the link to the ethics training via email.

B) Status of Municipal Service Review Preparations

Clerk Brogna introduced the staff report and provided an overview of current MSR preparations. Staff will be working on the City of Eureka MSR/SOI Update and in the new fiscal year will begin new MSRs.

C) Status of Current and Future Proposals

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and provided a brief update on current and anticipated proposals. The Kneeland FPD is the only current application on file and staff will provide the Commission updates on the protest proceedings at the next meeting.

It was also noted that regional fire service planning efforts are ongoing, and that Humboldt CSD Board recently approved a resolution of application for annexation of the McKay Ranch subdivision. As such, it is expected that LAFCo will receive a full application from the District soon.

10. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A) CALAFCO Staff Workshop (April 30 – May 2, 2025)

EO Santsche provided a brief overview of the CALAFCO workshop and noted that staff provided presentations during the workshop. Clerk Brogna also noted that there is an open cultural assessment for CALAFCO that Commissioners are welcome to participate.

11. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE - None

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 am. The next meeting of the Commission will take place on July 16, 2025 at 9:00am at the City of Eureka Council Chambers located at 531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501.