



SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING ADOPTED MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The special 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:	None
Alternates Absent:	David Couch, Debra Garnes, Gordon Johnson, and Mike Wilson
Staff:	Colette Santsche, Executive Officer Krystle Brogna, Clerk/Analyst Ryan Plotz, Attorney

4. CLOSED SESSION

A) Adjourn to Closed Session

B) Report Out of Closed Session

The Commission entered into closed session to confer with legal counsel regarding anticipated litigation associated with the inclusion of 17 parcels owned by Humboldt Redwood Company in the Kneeland Fire Protection District Goodwill Annexation and Sphere of Influence Amendment area, approved by LAFCo on May 21, 2025 (Resolution No. 25-03). The Commission reconvened the meeting at 10:32 a.m. and there was no reportable action taken.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

A) Approval of August 20, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion Bushnell/Nicolini to approve the consent calendar. Motion passed by 6-0-1 voice vote (Commissioner Kelly abstained due to being absent at the subject meeting).

7. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

A) Reconsideration of Kneeland Fire Protection District Goodwill Annexation

The public hearing was continued and the public comment period was opened at 10:33 a.m.

Debra Lake of Fruitland Ridge Fire Protection District stated that the 1961 statute regarding State Responsibility Areas and commercial forestlands was put into place during a time when local volunteer fire companies were providing predominantly fire suppression services and there was a need to distinguish local and state responsibilities. However, local districts currently provide a lot more services. Fruitland Ridge responds to emergency medical calls for loggers, vehicle incidents, and more. Their District provides more services to the public than what CAL FIRE does. Additionally, commercial timberlands are not defined by the law. She expressed concern that Kneeland FPD is having to go through this debate and would like to see the law change. She would like to see LAFCo work with the Attorney general to better define commercial timberlands and revise the old statute.

Steve Johnson, legal counsel for Humboldt Redwood Company, noted that their position has not changed and that he was available for questions.

Commissioners held minimal discussion on the date to continue the hearing and indicated that September 17th would work well for most of the Commissioners.

Motion Nicolini/Bushnell to continue the reconsideration hearing to the next Regular Commission meeting on September 17, 2025, and directed staff to prepare conditional language for the Kneeland Fire Protection District annexation, including provisions for the exclusion of commercial forestland parcels for purposes of taxation that may remain within the annexation boundary. Motion passed by 7-0-0 voice vote.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am. The next regular meeting of the Commission will take place on September 17, 2025 at 9:00am at the City of Eureka Council Chambers located at 531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501.