

AGENDA ITEM 6B

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2022
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom video conference with Chair Bass presiding.

2. FLAG SALUTE

3. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Stephen Avis, Virginia Bass, Michelle Bushnell, Debra Lake, Ali Lee, and Troy Nicolini
Members Absent: Mike Losey
Alternates Present: David Couch and Gordon Johnson*
Alternates Absent: Mike Wilson
Staff: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer
Krystle Heaney, Clerk
Ryan Plotz, Attorney

* Seated as voting member

4. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

5. CEREMONIAL ITEMS

A) Certificate of Appreciation for Alan “Skip” Jorgensen

A Certificate of Appreciation was provided for former Alternate Commissioner Jorgensen for his many years of service on the Commission.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

A) AB 361 for Continued Remote Meetings

B) Approval of May 18, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

No discussion was held regarding the consent calendar.

Motion Avis/Johnson to approve the consent calendar including adoption of Resolution 22-11 for continuation of remote meetings. Motion passed by 7-0-0 roll call vote.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

A) Approval of Conducting Authority Proceedings and Request to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to Call an Election for the Formation of the Salmon Creek Fire Protection District and Special Tax Measure

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of the protest proceedings held on September 10th, 2022. There was one public member at the protest proceedings and multiple representatives from the Salmon Creek

Volunteer Fire Department with no protests received. As such, insufficient protests were received by the end of the hearing to terminate the proceedings. Draft ballot language for formation of the District and the proposed special tax was reviewed and discussed. Discussion was also held on the differences between a fire protection district and a volunteer fire company. It was explained that a district is a standalone entity that can legally levy taxes from property owners within the District while a volunteer company is often a non-profit entity that relies on donations.

Additional discussion was held on the property tax exchange agreement and the methodology for determining the \$75 per parcel per year special tax. The property tax exchange policy to support fire services was previously approved by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors and included an option for newly formed districts which allows them to collect a 3% tax allocation factor to the growth (no base) in property tax revenue. The special tax rate was determined by evaluating the proposed budget to determine what amount of funding was needed to support annual needs and build reserves. Residents in the area were also polled to see what level of tax would be supported.

Motion Nicolini/ Bushnell to adopt Resolution 22-12, confirming and ordering the formation of the Salmon Creek Fire Protection District and Special Tax subject to an election and requesting the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors call an election. Motion passed by 7-0-0 roll call vote.

B) Approval of Request to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to Call an Election for the Garberville Fire Protection District Annexation Special Tax Measure

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of the GFPD planning efforts that are taking place in the existing district and goodwill response area which includes a future fire station in the Benbow area. The draft language for the ballot was also read allow for the record. Protest proceedings were waived for this application since no objections were received by the end of the public hearing for the annexation. It was clarified that while the annexation does not require voter approval, the establishment of a special tax to support fire services does require voter approval.

The Commissioners held discussion on the ballot language. The draft language was created in coordination with the fire services planning group including Executive Officer Santsche, the Garberville FPD Chief, and the Benbow fire services planning group. There was concern that the draft language could be confusing to some voters. The Commission made suggestions to make the ballot language easier to read.

Additional discussion was held on the level of funding that was being asked for. It is substantially more than the Salmon Creek funding amount. The Garberville FPD covers a much larger response area with a higher volume of calls and will utilize paid staff in addition to volunteer staffing which increases the budget substantially. The District is also planning on building a new fire station in the Benbow area once sufficient revenue is accumulated.

Commissioner Bushnell noted that this annexation process has been going on for over a year and that a lot of effort has gone into community outreach. Property owners in the area generally support the annexation and special tax including the owner of the Benbow Inn and other large properties. It is the hope of property owners that being within the FPD will reduce insurance fees which have gone up substantially over the last few years.

Motion Bushnell/ Nicolini to adopt Resolution 22-13, waiving conducting authority proceedings, confirming and ordering the Garberville FPD annexation contingent on special tax approval, and requesting the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors call an election. Motion passed by 7-0-0 roll call vote.

8. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS - None

9. INFORMATIONAL AND CONTINUING ITEMS

A) Status of Expiring Commissioner Terms

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an overview of staff efforts to fill Commission vacancies. The City Selection Committee met on August 3, 2022, and reappointed Commissioners Avis and Johnson. The Special District election had to be extended again since a quorum of ballots was not reached during the scheduled voting period. The voting period has now been extended to October 28, 2022. Staff will continue to send out reminders and will inform commissioners of results when a quorum is reached. To date, no applications have been received for the alternate Public member seat and it is now vacant.

Commissioners discussed outreach for both the special district election and for getting the word out regarding the at-large alternate public member seat. Commissioner Lee offered to provide staff with a list of organizations that may be able to reach public candidates from different backgrounds.

B) Status of MSR Preparations

Clerk Heaney introduced the staff report and provided an update on current Municipal Service Review efforts. She provided a brief overview of each of the districts in the South County MSR and reviewed the current boundary maps of each district. Minor discussion was held on who is responsible for funding development of new water connections. Typically the property owner is responsible for paying the costs to extend water lines in more remote areas where additional service is requested.

C) Status of Current and Future Proposals

Executive Officer Santsche presented the staff report for Current and Future Proposals. This included discussion of fire agency coordination efforts, development of the 2021 annual fire report, and activation of sewer powers for Willow Creek CSD. Commissioners asked about legislative efforts to remove the exclusion language for timber production zones from fire district code. Executive Officer Santsche explained that it has been difficult to get support for the effort at the state level and that a new approach is being considered that includes asking the timber companies if they are willing to be annexed.

10. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A) CSDA Annual Legislative Tour in Humboldt County (October 4, 2022)

B) CALAFCO Quarterly (August 2022)

C) CALAFCO Daily Legislative Report (September 2022)

Executive Officer Santsche introduced the attachments included as part of the Executive Officers Report. The California Special Districts Association (CSDA) legislative tour had to be rescheduled but will be taking place soon. Commissioner Couch stated that McKinleyville CSD recently installed a new solar array that is capable of running their treatment plant and former percolation ponds are going to be rehabilitated as fish habitat.

11. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Written correspondence was received from Ed Voice regarding the Garberville Sanitary District MSR included as part of the South County MSR. This correspondence was forwarded to Commissioners prior to the meeting.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Commission will be held on Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom webinar.