



**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

ADOPTED MINUTES

LAFCO REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

**Wednesday, March 2, 2022
Start Time - 9:01 a.m.**

1. ROLL CALL

Chair Rachél Lather called the meeting of the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (LAFCO) to order at 9:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. She asked staff to conduct roll call.

The following Commissioners were present:

- Chair Rachél Lather
- Vice-Chair Yvette Brooks
- Commissioner Jim Anderson
- Commissioner Roger Anderson
- Commissioner Ryan Coonerty
- Commissioner Justin Cummings
- Commissioner Francisco Estrada
- Commissioner Zach Friend
- Alternate Commissioner Ed Banks
- Alternate Commissioner John Hunt

The following LAFCO staff members were present:

- Executive Officer Joe Serrano
- Legal Counsel, Joshua Nelson

2. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

2a. Virtual meeting Process

Executive Officer Joe Serrano announced that the Commission Meeting is being conducted virtually through the Zoom Webinar platform and participation by Commissioners and staff are from remote locations. Members of the public will have access to the meeting by phone or online. Mr. Serrano anticipates conducting the next

LAFCO meetings remotely in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders and the newly enacted law under Assembly Bill 361, which allows local agencies to conduct virtual meetings during a state of an emergency.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on the draft minutes. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no public comments were received. **Chair Rachél Lather** closed public comments.

Chair Rachél Lather called for the approval of the draft minutes. **Commissioner Jim Anderson** motioned for approval of the February 9th Meeting Minutes and **Commissioner Justin Cummings** seconded the motion.

Chair Rachél Lather called for a roll call vote on the approval of the draft minutes with no changes. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** conducted a roll call vote on the item.

MOTION: Jim Anderson

SECOND: Justin Cummings

FOR: Jim Anderson, Roger Anderson, Ryan Coonerty, Justin Cummings, Francisco Estrada, Zach Friend, and Rachél Lather.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on this item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was one request to address the Commission.

Becky Steinbruner, member of the public, informed the Commission about Assembly Bill 552, which authorizes the State Water Resources Control Board to order consolidations where a public water system or a state small water system is serving a disadvantaged community and would limit the authority of the state board to order consolidation or extension of service to provide that authority only with regard to a disadvantaged community. Ms. Steinbruner asked that the upcoming Countywide Water Service & Sphere Review look into this law and other consolidation efforts.

Chair Rachél Lather noted no further requests and moved on to the next agenda item.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chair Rachél Lather noted that there were no public hearing items and moved on to the next agenda item.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Rachél Lather indicated that there are three business items for Commission consideration today.

6a. Continuation of Remote Meetings

Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide a presentation on the requirements to continue remote meetings under Assembly Bill 361.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano noted that the Commission adopted a resolution in November 2021 to continue remote meetings in accordance with the guidelines under AB 361, which acts as a temporary waiver of the Brown Act's in-person attendance requirements. Mr. Serrano explained that in order to continue to qualify for AB 361's waiver of in-person meeting requirements, the Commission is required to renew the findings outlined in the resolution adopted back in November. He indicated that the state and local mask mandates have been amended and covid cases have decreased, however, California is still under a state of emergency. He noted that the Commission can continue remote meetings under AB 361 or revert back to in-person meetings.

Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on this item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was one request to address the Commission.

Becky Steinbruner, member of the public, encouraged the Commission to consider conducting hybrid meetings which would allow the public an option to attend LAFCO meetings in-person or remotely.

Chair Rachél Lather noted no further requests and closed public comments.

Chair Rachél Lather called for Commission comments on the remote meeting requirements.

Commissioner Zach Friend indicated that it would be difficult to implement a hybrid model for LAFCO meetings due to the size of the Commission, minimal LAFCO staffing, and the lack of equipment to operate a hybrid model. Mr. Friend motioned to continue remote meetings under AB 361. **Commissioner Ryan Coonerty** seconded that motion.

Chair Rachél Lather noted no further Commission discussion and called for a roll call vote on motion based on staff's recommendation: **Ratify the existing resolution (No. 2021-19) approving the continuation of remote meetings under AB 361.**

Executive Officer Joe Serrano conducted a roll call vote on the item.

MOTION: Zach Friend
SECOND: Ryan Coonerty
FOR: Jim Anderson, Roger Anderson, Ryan Coonerty, Justin Cummings, Francisco Estrada, Zach Friend, and Rachél Lather.
AGAINST: None
ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

6b. Request for Proposal – Special Fire Study

Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide a presentation on the potential distribution of a request for proposal to hire an outside consulting firm and produce a special study regarding the delivery of fire protection in Santa Cruz County.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano noted that the recently adopted Countywide Fire Protection Service & Sphere Review requested action plans by the fire districts regarding their respective sphere boundaries but also led to further discussions among the local agencies about potential reorganizations. These discussions prompted staff to produce a draft request for proposal to solicit professional services from an outside consulting firm that would help develop a feasibility study. This study would determine the financial impact of the fire agencies that are interested in annexation and the financial impact of County Service Area 48 (CSA 48) which would have to detach the annexed areas from their jurisdiction. Mr. Serrano explained that the data and findings from the special study would help create a well-coordinated plan between the County, affected fire agencies, and LAFCO to transfer fire protection responsibilities from the CSA 48 to the existing independent fire districts. He clarified that the first step would be to distribute a request for proposal in order to hire the best qualified consulting firm for this study.

Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on the update. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was one request to address the Commission.

Becky Steinbruner, member of the public, supports the hiring of an outside consultant to analyze the financial impacts towards the fire districts and CSA 48 when considering future annexations.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano indicated that there were no further requests to address the Commission. **Chair Rachél Lather** closed public comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion.

Alternate Commissioner Ed Banks noted that the contractual agreement attached to the request for proposal should increase the liability amount and identify Santa Cruz County in the firm's liability coverage.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano explained that the contractual agreement is in draft form and will be updated accordingly.

Commissioner Roger Anderson wanted clarification on the completion date of the study, how much will the study cost, and how is the hiring of an outside consultant firm different from the potential professional services agreement with the Fire Reorganization Consulting, LLC.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano noted that staff anticipates completing this study by December 2022. Mr. Serrano explained that the request for proposal includes a "not to exceed" cost limit of \$50,000. He also indicated that the professional services agreement with the Fire Reorganization Consulting, LLC is meant to help staff with fire-related projects, including but not limited to, the potential reorganization involving the Branciforte and Scotts Valley Fire Protection Districts. The hiring of an additional consulting firm will only focus on the feasibility study outlined in the request for proposal.

Chair Rachél Lather noted no further Commission discussion and called for a roll call vote on motion based on staff's recommendation: **Approve the draft request for proposal to solicit professional services for a special fire study.**

Executive Officer Joe Serrano conducted a roll call vote on the item.

MOTION: Zach Friend

SECOND: Justin Cummings

FOR: Jim Anderson, Roger Anderson, Ryan Coonerty, Justin Cummings, Francisco Estrada, Zach Friend, and Rachél Lather.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

6c. Professional Services Agreements

Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide a presentation on the potential approval of three professional services agreements to support LAFCO staff in upcoming projects and with internal operations.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano explained that Santa Cruz LAFCO operates with one full-time employee. Mr. Serrano noted that while productivity remains high with the current staffing, it may be beneficial to hire outside consultants to help with specific projects. He indicated that hiring Chase Design, Inc. would greatly improve the current LAFCO website which is in dire need of a complete overhaul and hiring Fire Reorganization Consulting, LLC would be instrumental in maintaining the momentum following the success of the Countywide Fire Protection Service & Sphere Review. He also mentioned that developing a contractual agreement with Monterey LAFCO for administrative services would ensure that the LAFCO office will be in operation with LAFCO experts even if Santa Cruz LAFCO's Executive Officer is out for an extended period of time.

Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on the update. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was one request to address the Commission.

Becky Steinbruner, member of the public, supports approving the three professional services agreements to help staff with upcoming projects and with internal operations.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano indicated that there were no further requests to address the Commission. **Chair Rachél Lather** closed public comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion.

Commissioner Roger Anderson asked why Chase Design, Inc. was selected. Executive Officer Joe Serrano noted that Chase Design, Inc. is an associate member of CALAFCO and has worked with other LAFCOs around the state to improve their logos and websites. Chase Design, Inc. knows LAFCO's role and responsibilities and understands the importance of the context within a LAFCO's website.

Chair Rachél Lather noted no further Commission discussion and called for a roll call vote on motion based on staff's recommendation: **(1) Adopt the contractual agreement with Fire Reorganization Consulting, LLC for fire consulting services, (2) Adopt the contractual agreement with Chase Design, Inc for website services, and (3) Direct staff to coordinate with Monterey LACO and develop a contractual agreement for shared administrative services on an as-needed basis.**

Executive Officer Joe Serrano conducted a roll call vote on the item.

MOTION: Justin Cummings

SECOND: Zach Friend

FOR: Jim Anderson, Roger Anderson, Ryan Coonerty, Justin Cummings, Francisco Estrada, Zach Friend, and Rachél Lather.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

7. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Rachél Lather inquired whether there was any written correspondence submitted to LAFCO. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that LAFCO received several correspondences: one from Becky Steinbruner regarding the recent healthcare district formation through special legislation and the rest were from CALAFCO. Mr. Serrano noted that CALAFCO has hired Rene LaRoche to be their new Executive Director. **Chair Rachél Lather** moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

8. PRESS ARTICLES

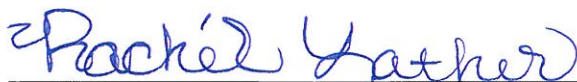
Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide a presentation on the press articles. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that this item highlights LAFCO-related articles recently circulated in local newspapers. **Chair Rachél Lather** moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

9. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

Chair Rachél Lather inquired whether any Commissioner would like to share any information. There were no comments. **Chair Rachél Lather** moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Rachél Lather adjourned the Regular Commission Meeting at 9:56 a.m. to the next regular LAFCO meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.



RACHÉL LATHER, CHAIRPERSON

Attest:


JOE A. SERRANO, EXECUTIVE OFFICER