



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

ADOPTED MINUTES

LAFCO REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Start Time - 9:00 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Vice-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 the roll call.

The following Commissioners were present:

- Commissioner Jim Anderson
- Commissioner Joe Clarke
- Commissioner Rachél Lather (Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Eduardo Montesino
- Alternate Commissioner John Hunt

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather will serve as the meeting facilitator on behalf of Chair Manu Koenig and Alternate Commissioner John Hunt will be a voting member in the absence of Commissioner Roger Anderson (Public).

The following LAFCO staff members were present:

- LAFCO Analyst, Francisco Estrada
- Legal Counsel, Joshua Nelson
- Executive Officer, Joe Serrano

2. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

2a. Virtual Meeting Process

Executive Officer Joe Serrano indicated that the meeting was being conducted through a hybrid approach with Commissioners and staff attending in-person while members of the public have the option to attend virtually or in-person.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather moved on to the next agenda item.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on the draft minutes. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no public comment on the item. Vice-Chair Lather closed public comments.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather called for a motion. **Commissioner Jim Anderson** motioned for approval of the May 7th Meeting Minutes and **Commissioner Eduardo Montesino** seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather called for a voice vote on the approval of the draft minutes.

MOTION: Jim Anderson

SECOND: Eduardo Montesino

FOR: Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, John Hunt, Rachél Lather, and Eduardo Montesino.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on any non-agenda items. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was no request to address the Commission on the item.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather closed public comments and moved on to the next agenda item.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

5a. “Comprehensive Sanitation Service & Sphere Review”

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide a presentation on the countywide report that analyzed the 10 sanitation districts in Santa Cruz County.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano explained to the Commission that due to the ongoing and robust analysis still being conducted by both LAFCO staff and the County, more time is needed to accurately complete the report and made the recommendation to defer action again until the report has been finalized by County and LAFCO staff.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather opened the floor to Commission comments or clarifying questions. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no requests from the Commission.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no request to address the Commission on the item. Vice-Chair Lather closed public comments.

Commissioner Joe Clarke asked a clarifying question about voting on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained that it was at the discretion of the commissioner to vote on any agenda item.

Commissioner Jim Anderson motioned for approval of staff recommendation and **Vice-Chair Rachél Lather** seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather called for a voice vote on staff recommendation: **Postpone action on the draft sanitation service and sphere review until the next LAFCO regular meeting to allow for adequate review and preparation.**

MOTION: Jim Anderson

SECOND: Rachél Lather

FOR: Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, John Hunt, Rachél Lather, and Eduardo Montesino.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

5b. “Service & Sphere Review for the Pajaro Valley Public Cemetery District”

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide a presentation to consider the adoption of a service and sphere review for the Pajaro Valley Public Cemetery District (PVPCD).

Executive Officer Joe Serrano explained that PVPCD was formed in 1955 and is Santa Cruz County’s only public cemetery district, although it also provides services to parts of Monterey County. Mr. Serrano’s analysis found that the district efficiently manages five cemeteries in Santa Cruz County and is considered to be financially sound. Additionally, the district lacks a long-term capital improvement plan, and its website needs an update to increase transparency. Additionally, there are discussions about annexing unserved areas of Prunedale to either the PVPCD or Castroville Cemetery District (CCD) in Monterey County to ensure all residents have access to cemetery services. Mr. Serrano recommended adopting the draft resolution approving the 2025 service and sphere review with its identified conditions, including coordinating with Monterey County LAFCO the possible annexation of unserved areas in Monterey County and consider a sphere designation in February 2026.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted a request to address the Commission on the item.

Elizabeth Lopez, PVPCD Manager, thanked the Commission for the report and indicated she was available for questions. **Commissioners Jim Anderson** asked about the agency status of the cemetery district. Ms. Lopez noted that PVPCD is an endowment cemetery district.

Commissioner John Hunt asked about the population of the unserved area in Monterey County. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained that one expected outcome from the coordination with CCD will be collecting demographic data on the unserved areas. **Vice-Chair Rachél Lather** had a follow-up question about nearby cemeteries. Mr. Serrano explained that the Prunedale area is mostly residential and added that cemeteries across the state are looking for land to expand services.

Commissioner Jim Andeson asked about residential requirements to access cemetery services. **Elizabeth Lopez**, PVPCD Manager, explained how residents and non-residents can access their services.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested a motion approving staff recommendation. **Commissioner Eduardo Montesino** motioned for approval and **Commissioner Jim Anderson** seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather called for a voice vote on staff recommendation: **Adopt the draft resolution (LAFCO No. 2025-08) approving the 2025 Service and Sphere Review for the Pajaro Valley Public Cemetery District with the following conditions: A) Amend the District's sphere of influence to include the unserved area of Prunedale located in Monterey County; B) Provide a status update to the Commission on the District's website no later than February 4, 2026; C) Coordinate with Monterey LAFCO to analyze the possible annexation of the unserved Prunedale community to either the Castroville or Pajaro Valley Public Cemetery Districts; and D) Direct the Executive Officer to distribute a copy of the adopted service and sphere review to the Pajaro Valley Public Cemetery District and any other interested or affected parties, including but not limited to Monterey LAFCO as the affected LAFCO.**

MOTION: Eduardo Montesino

SECOND: Jim Anderson

FOR: Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, John Hunt, Rachél Lather, and Eduardo Montesino.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6a. Fire-related Projects – Status Update

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide an update on the ongoing reorganization efforts involving CSA 48 and other fire agencies.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano provided the Commission with updates on the following fire-related projects: CSA 48 Reorganization, Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Reorganization, the multi-agency fire memorandum of understanding, and the Felton Fire Protection District Governance Options Report. Mr. Serrano recommended the Commission direct staff to continue working with the fire agencies, and to develop a governance options study for the Felton Fire Protection District (FFPD).

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there were three requests to address the Commission on the item.

Chief Jeff Maxwell, Zayante Fire Protection District (ZFPD), requested LAFCO to prioritize the governance options study for FFPD based on their current situation, needs, and potential impacts to the area.

Rae Spencer-Hill, Santa Cruz County Supervisorial District 5 Analyst, had a question on the upcoming schedule. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained the timeline and process to develop the governance options study, stated that the project is a priority for LAFCO, and noted that he is available for timely updates to the Commission or to partner agencies if requested.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, spoke on the CSA 48 Reorganization, the May 20th board meeting of the PVPFD, and provided updates on the status of the memorandum of understanding.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather closed public comments and opened the floor to Commission comments or clarifying questions. **Commissioner John Hunt** had a clarifying question on the CSA 48 Reorganization. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** stated that LAFCO is assessing the potential level of service as part of the proposed CSA 48 transition plan and has identified CalFIRE as the service provider. **Commissioner Jim Anderson** added that CSA 48 provides all around fire services and agrees with expediting the FFPD study.

Commissioner Joe Clarke asked about funding options for the proposed independent fire district. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** stated that as part of the reorganization process, potential long-term revenue options will be considered. Mr. Clarke also spoke on the confusion experienced by constituents who receive fire services in the unincorporated areas. Mr. Serrano noted that although fires do not recognize jurisdictional boundaries, LAFCO is working to ensure all residents get the best level of fire protection service.

Commissioner John Hunt asked about staff capacity. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** stated that staff continue to complete projects in a timely and collaborative manner.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested a motion approving staff recommendation. **Commissioner Eduardo Montesino** motioned for approval of staff recommendation with the condition that the Felton FPD governance report be completed as soon as possible and provide an update to the commission in September. **Commissioner Joe Clarke** seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather called for a voice vote on the motion: **Direct staff to continue working with the fire agencies and develop a governance options study for the Felton Fire Protection District as soon as possible and provide an update to the Commission by September 2025.**

MOTION: Eduardo Montesino

SECOND: Joe Clarke

FOR: Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, John Hunt, Rachél Lather, and Eduardo Montesino.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

6b. LAFCO Meeting Schedule – Proposed Cancellation of August Meeting

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide a presentation to consider cancelling the August 6, 2025 LAFCO Meeting due to a staffing conflict.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano informed the Commission that with the birth of his second child approaching, staff has requested to cancel the August LAFCO meeting and instead reconvene in September. Mr. Serrano added that projects will not be affected by the request and assured the Commission that objectives will continue to be met in a timely manner.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather opened the floor to Commission comments or clarifying questions and said she was open to cancelling the meeting. **Commissioner John Hunt** asked a clarifying question on providing staff direction to continue working on ongoing LAFCO-related projects. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained the process and received a consensus from the Commission to continue moving forward with ongoing projects, including prioritizing the FFPD governance options study.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested a motion approving staff recommendation. **Commissioner Eduardo Montesino** motioned for approval of staff recommendation and **Commissioner Rachél Lather** seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather called for a voice vote on the motion: **Cancel the August 6, 2025 LAFCO Meeting and reconvene at the September 3, 2025 LAFCO Meeting.**

MOTION: Eduardo Montesino

SECOND: Rachél Lather

FOR: Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, John Hunt, Rachél Lather, and Eduardo Montesino.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

6c. Educational Workshops Update

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather requested staff to provide an update on the various educational workshops being developed and/or hosted by Santa Cruz LAFCO.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano provided an update on the collaborative workshops that LAFCO staff has attended (ex. consolidation and private water systems forum), plans to attend (ex. the California Special Districts Association annual conference), or plans to host (ex. educational workshop for road-related CSAs).

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather opened the floor for Commission comments or clarifying questions. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no requests from the Commission.

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

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, spoke on the “Connecting the Drops” workshops, on the small private water consolidation workshop hosted by the county, and on the potential benefits of hosting regular road CSA meetings.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

7. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather inquired whether there was any written correspondence submitted to LAFCO. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that no written correspondence had been submitted.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

8. PRESS ARTICLES

Vice-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.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

9. COMMISSIONERS’ BUSINESS

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather inquired whether any Commissioner would like to share any information. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no request from the Commission.

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Rachél Lather adjourned the Regular Commission Meeting at 9:58 a.m. for the next regular LAFCO meeting scheduled for Wednesday, September 3, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in the Watsonville City Council Chambers.



MANU KOENIG, CHAIRPERSON

Attest:


FRANCISCO ESTRADA, LAFCO ANALYST