

Siskiyou Local Agency Formation Commission
Regular Meeting
April 9, 2024

The Siskiyou Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) meeting of April 9, 2024, was called to order by Vice Chair Ogren at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 311 Fourth Street, 2nd Floor, Yreka, California.

Present: Commissioners Harkness, Mazzoni, Valenzuela and Ogren

Absent: Commissioner Baker

Also Present: Rick Dean, Director, Community Development Department; Rachel Jereb, Deputy Executive Officer; Lisa Flagg, Administrative Services Manager; Janine Rowe, Commission Clerk

Election of Officers:

Chair:

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Mazzoni, seconded by Commissioner Valenzuela, to elect Commissioner Ogren as Chair for 2024.

Vice Chair:

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Valenzuela, seconded by Commissioner Mazzoni, to elect Commissioner Harkness as Vice Chair for 2024.

Minutes: It was moved by Commissioner Valenzuela, seconded by Commissioner Ogren, to approve the Minutes from the May 9, 2023, LAFCo meeting as presented.

Voted upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present.

Unscheduled Appearances: None

Conflict of Interest Declaration: None

Changes to the Agenda: None

New Business:

**Agenda Item 1: Siskiyou County LAFCo Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025
(Potential Action)**

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 56381, Siskiyou County LAFCo will consider and adopt its final budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/2025. It is anticipated that adoption of the final budget for FY 2024/2025 will be determined to be a government fiscal activity or funding mechanism which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment and is therefore not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15378(b)(4) of the CEQA guidelines.

Staff Report:

Ms. Jereb told the Commission that staff was presenting the preliminary review of the budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025. She also told the Commission that the Municipal Services Review/Sphere of Influence (MSR/SOI) updates for the nine incorporated cities and the County was last done in 2021 so they will have to be updated soon.

Ms. Jereb also went over the bids received for past City/County MSR/SOI updates and noted that costs increased. She asked the Commission to keep that funding need in mind for future MSR/SOI updates and noted that an increase in contributions will likely need to be addressed next year.

Ms. Jereb asked Lisa Flagg, Administrative Services Manager for the Community Development Department, to provide more information. Ms. Flagg said there is a remaining balance for the RSG contract for the current fire district MSR/SOI update. She said she allocated another \$5,000 for FY 2024/2025 so there will be a cushion in case the report is not done in the next fiscal year. Ms. Flagg also said LAFCo received a credit for the cost allocation plan which covers County Counsel fees and Auditor fees. She was told by the Auditor's office that it should be a reflection of two years prior.

Commission Questions / Discussion:

A lengthy discussion was held regarding whether or not future budgets might have to be increased by increasing the amount of contributions by the nine incorporated cities and the County. Ms. Jereb said she would add a line on the Final Budget for FY 2024/2025 that costs will be increasing in the future.

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

Public Comment: None

There being no comment, the Chair closed the Public Hearing.

Motion: Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Valenzuela, seconded by Commissioner Ogren, to approve the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025 as presented.

Voted upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Harkness, Mazzoni, Valenzuela and Ogren

Noes: None

Absent: Commissioner Baker

Abstain: None

Agenda Item 2: Siskiyou County Fire Protection Districts – Budget Increase for Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update (Potential Action)

Discussion and potential action regarding the request from the Countywide Fire Municipal Service Review contractor, RSG, Inc., to increase the contract amount by \$15,000 from \$113,700 to \$128,700 to account for performance of services that extended beyond the original scope of work.

Staff Report:

Ms. Jereb told the Commission that staff and the consultants have been diligently working on this project over the past year and have made significant progress. However, it required quite a bit of extra time on the part of the consultants and Chief Vela to get the districts to respond. Once the consultants had the interviews, the fire districts were very interested in giving all the answers that they could so the interviews ended up lasting a lot longer than anticipated.

Ms. Jereb said as part of the project, staff had the consultants prepare a GIS map of the districts and the proposed boundaries—what they currently are, what they might want them to be, what the sphere of influence currently is, and what that sphere of influence might look like—and staff ended up utilizing that GIS mapping layer a lot as well as made a lot of edits. She said the map was used in the interviews, and the TAC used it quite a bit. The time they allocated in their budget for the map was less than what ended up being done, and they still needed to make some edits to finalize this project.

Ms. Jereb said because of that, the consultants are asking for an increase in their budget, and she recommends approval of this. She said she thinks it was well deserved and it's a legitimate increase.

Ms. Jereb said Chief Vela was present to provide the Commission with his input as a member of the TAC and would discuss why it took more of the contractors' time and energy and budget than anticipated.

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

Public Comment:

Jasen Vela, fire chief for Montague Fire Department and Grenada Fire Protection District, told the Commission that the GIS portion of the project was the best part and that would be the only thing that would be used. He was frustrated because the consultants did not visit the county in person to look at the facilities. He said it appeared they cut and pasted language that may not be applicable to this county. He said he was not contacted by the consultants about budgets even though he gave them three years of audits, but the information contained in the report for each individual department was incorrect. He pointed out other errors and discrepancies in the report and said the departments are not going to use it. Chief Vela said a lot of the chiefs are frustrated and wanted that relayed to the Commission.

Chief Vela said he is happy with the GIS portion and the numbers are amazing. He said they can utilize the GIS which will help the departments.

There being no further comment, the Chair closed the Public Hearing.

Ms. Jereb told the Commission that the MSR/SOI has statutory requirements for what is contained in the review which is why it looks cut and paste, but staff corrected the errors that they found.

Ms. Jereb said she wasn't aware that there was specific language the fire districts asked for, but she said the report can be edited and staff would make sure that everything is in the report before it is presented to the Commission.

Regarding accurate numbers, Ms. Jereb said she has been in contact with CAL FIRE regarding the data they have and staff will add some information that can be gleaned from their reports to get more accurate response records. Ms. Jereb said she talked to Chief Bernie Paul of the South Yreka Fire Protection District about the differences between what CAL FIRE are currently keeping for reporting

for their response records versus what they would like to see so the necessary data will be more accurate in the future.

Chief Vela told the Commission that it has always been amazing to work with Ms. Jereb and she has always been willing to listen.

Commission Questions / Discussion:

Commissioner Valenzuela pointed out that the reason the budget had to be increased for the current MSR/SOI is because there wasn't proper response by the fire districts. He also pointed out that the previous MSR recommended consolidation which has never happened. He suggested looking for ways to improve the process in the future since it is a requirement, and because costs are going up, all parties need to make an effort to participate in the process.

Discussion was held regarding the lack of participation by several fire districts in the MSR/SOI process.

Commissioner Ogren said she agreed that a lot of money is being spent on the MSR/SOI and that the consultants should physically visit the area so they can produce a better work product. Discussion was held that in the future, the Request for Proposal should include a requirement that there be at least one on site visit by the consultants so they can have direct conversations with the fire chiefs.

Discussion was held regarding the fact that the MSR/SOI process is a step toward what has to be done statutorily in order to modify district boundaries, which would in turn result in additional revenue.

Ms. Jereb told the Commission that after the RFP for the fire district MSR/SOI was circulated, a couple companies contacted her after they learned that Siskiyou County was working on it and asked to be added to the contact list for future RFPs.

Motion: Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Valenzuela, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, to approve the Budget Increase for Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update for the Siskiyou County Fire Protection Districts.

Voted upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Harkness, Mazzoni, Valenzuela and Ogren

Noes: None

Absent: Commissioner Baker

Abstain: None

Agenda Item 3: Appointment of Member-at-Large Commissioner (Potential Action)

Member-at-Large Commissioner Laurel Harkness' position on Siskiyou LAFCo expires on May 6, 2024. On March 28, 2024, staff received a Letter of Interest from Ms. Harkness indicating she wishes to continue as Member-at-Large Commissioner. At this juncture, the Commission may consider reappointing Ms. Harkness as Member-at-Large pursuant to Government Code Section 56334.

Commission Questions / Discussion: None

Motion: Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Valenzuela, seconded by Commissioner Mazzoni, to approve the Appointment of Member-at-Large Commissioner Laurel Harkness for a second term which will expire in May 2028.

Voted upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present, with Commissioner Harkness abstaining.

Items for Discussion/Direction: None

Miscellaneous:

1. **Future Meetings:** The next regular meeting of Siskiyou County LAFCo is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.
2. **Correspondence: None**
3. **Staff Comments: None**
4. **Commission Comments: None**

Adjournment: The meeting was concluded at 9:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Hailey Lang, Secretary

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