



2.a.
2/27/2025

MINUTES
January 23, 2025

Present Michael Vargas, Chair
Commissioners: Yxstian Gutierrez, Vice-Chair
 Stephen Corona
 Steve Sanchez
 V. Manuel Perez
 Stephen Tomanelli
 Bruce Underwood

Present Staff: Gary Thompson, Executive Officer
 Crystal Craig, Assistant Executive Officer
 Elizabeth Valdez, Commission Clerk
 Melissa Cushman, Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG.

Chair Vargas called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.

1.2. ROLL CALL.

1.3. POTENTIAL REQUEST BY ONE OR MORE COMMISSIONERS TO PARTICIPATE REMOTELY AND UTILIZE AB 2449'S JUST CAUSE OR EMERGENCY CIRCUMSTANCES, POTENTIAL VOTE ON LATTER.

No requests were made.

Brad Anderson. Mr. Anderson submitted written comments on Item 1.3. requesting the opportunity for the public to attend meetings remotely.

1.4. ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMISSION MEMBERS.

Counsel Cushman made a statement to the public regarding the disclosure of contributions made to Commissioners.

Commissioner Gutierrez arrived at the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

a. December 5, 2024

Commissioner Underwood requested that the City of Blythe be added to the minutes of future locations for LAFCO meetings.

Moved (Tomanelli) seconded (Corona) to approve and amend the Minutes of the December 5, 2024, meeting adding the City of Blythe as a location for future LAFCO meetings.

Chair Vargas called for the vote.

AYES: Corona, Sanchez, Gutierrez, Tomanelli, Underwood, and Vargas.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Perez.

ABSTAINED: None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ANY ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Brad Anderson. Mr. Anderson submitted written comments that the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District and Palm Springs Cemetery District have denied access to their buildings during normal business hours. He also wrote that he feels they are trying to censor public testimony during meetings.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (NON-HEARING ITEMS):

a. LAFCO Monthly Expenditure Review.

b. Consideration of First Amendment of the Agreement with Davis Farr LLP for Audit Services.

Moved (Sanchez) seconded (Tomanelli) to approve the Consent Calendar as recommended by staff.

Chair Vargas called for the vote.

AYES: Corona, Sanchez, Gutierrez, Tomanelli, Underwood, and Vargas.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Perez.

ABSTAINED: None.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Continued:

There were no continued public hearing items.

New:

a. LAFCO 2024-05-3-Reorganization to Include Concurrent Annexations to Eastern Municipal Water District (Water & Wastewater) and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (113th Fringe/Hospitality Retail Center and Self-Storage) and a finding of exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and adoption of a resolution making determinations on the proposal.

Ms. Craig presented this item. She stated that this proposal consisted

of five acres of undeveloped, uninhabited land for water and wastewater services. She stated that both districts can serve the area and there is 100% consent from all landowners.

Moved (Gutierrez) seconded (Sanchez) to approve LAFCO 2024-05-3-Reorganization to Include Concurrent Annexations to Eastern Municipal Water District (Water & Wastewater) and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (113th Fringe/Hospitality Retail Center and Self-Storage) as recommended by staff.

Chair Vargas opened the public hearing, there being no one wishing to speak he closed the public hearing.

Chair Vargas called for the vote.

AYES: Corona, Sanchez, Gutierrez, Tomanelli, Underwood, and Vargas.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Perez.

ABSTAINED: None.

b. Amendment to the LAFCO Processing Fee Schedule.

Ms. Craig presented this item. She stated that the last time the fee schedule was amended was in 2015. She stated that the revised schedule was based on the current CPI which has increased by 35.7%. She stated that staff spends multiple hours on the pre-application process and that this new line item has been added. She also recommended that the Commission consider a policy to review the fee schedule on a regular basis. Ms. Craig stated the public review and comment period needed to be extended past today. She recommended the public hearing remain open to the next meeting to allow for comments to be received.

Commissioner Sanchez stated the schedule should be reviewed and amended if needed annually to avoid large increases.

Commissioner Underwood asked if an external fee study was done by a consultant. Ms. Craig stated that she reviewed the fee schedules of multiple southern California LAFCOs. She stated that it is hard to compare other LAFCOs as each is structured differently. Mr. Thompson stated that a consultant would be too costly and that the standard is using the CPI. Mr. Thompson stated that it has just been too long since Riverside reviewed and amended the schedule.

Chair Vargas opened the public hearing. He kept the public open until the next meeting of the Commission.

Moved (Gutierrez) seconded (Sanchez) to keep the public hearing open and continue the Amendment to the Processing Fee Schedule to February 27, 2025, to allow time for public comment as recommended by staff.

Chair Vargas called for the vote.

AYES: Corona, Sanchez, Gutierrez, Tomanelli, Underwood, and Vargas.
 NOES: None.
 ABSENT: Perez.
 ABSTAINED: None.

Commissioner Perez arrived at the meeting at 9:22 a.m.

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Amendment to Policy A-1 Adopting Resolution No. 01-25.

Mr. Thompson presented this item. He stated that in January the Commission approved the increase to the stipend amount for CALAFCO related multi-day conferences. He stated that the policy and resolution have been revised to reflect that change.

Commissioner Sanchez asked if there were any other CALAFCO conferences that staff or commissioner attend.

Mr. Thompson stated that it was for CALAFCO multi-day conferences, which included the staff workshop and annual conference. He stated that any other event would have to be authorized by the Commission to attend and would be compensated.

Moved (Underwood) seconded (Sanchez) to approve Policy A-1 as amended clarifying a per day stipend would be received for all CALAFCO conferences and CALAFCO workshops.

Brad Anderson. Mr. Anderson submitted a written comment opposing the increase in any stipend received by the commission.

Chair Vargas called for the vote.

AYES: Sanchez, Perez, Gutierrez, Tomanelli, Underwood, and Vargas.
 NOES: Corona.
 ABSENT: None.
 ABSTAINED: None.

b. Selection of Commission Officers for 2025.

Mr. Thompson stated that the appointed officers would take effect at the next meeting of the Commission.

Moved (Sanchez) seconded (Tomanelli) to reappoint Commissioner Vargas as Chair and Commissioner Gutierrez as Vice-Chair.

Chair Vargas called for the vote.

AYES: Corona, Sanchez, Perez, Gutierrez, Tomanelli, Underwood, and Vargas.
 NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.
ABSTAINED: None.

c. Committee Assignments for 2025:

- i. Administrative Review Committee
- ii. Legislative Committee

Mr. Thompson stated that these committees meet as needed. He stated there was a vacancy on the Legislative Committee.

Commissioner Underwood asked why the vacancy wasn't filled. Mr. Thompson replied that as of last year there was not three members on the Committee. He stated that previous Commissioner Jeffries did not seek re-election therefore creating the vacancy.

Commissioner Perez asked what each Committees does. He asked for additional information about CALAFCO's role in legislation.

Mr. Thompson gave a brief overview of what each committee does and who the members are. He stated that each meeting he presents a report on legislation to the commission.

Commissioner Perez requested he be appointed to the Legislative Review Committee.

Moved (Sanchez) seconded (Tomanelli) to reappoint Commissioner's Vargas, Sanchez, and Tomanelli to the Administrative Review Committee and to reappoint Commissioner's Gutierrez and Sanchez and to appoint Commissioner Perez to the Legislative Review Committee.

Chair Vargas called for the vote.

AYES: Corona, Sanchez, Perez, Gutierrez, Tomanelli, Underwood, and Vargas.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAINED: None.

7. **INFORMATION ITEMS:** No action to be taken by the Commission.

a. Proposals Received and/or LAFCO Initiated (Government Code Sections 56751 and 56857):

- i. LAFCO 2024-14-3-Reorganization to Include Sphere of Influence Amendment for Eastern Municipal Water District (115th Fringe) & Concurrent Annexations to the Eastern Municipal Water District (Sewer), Rancho California Water District (Water) & Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (City of Murrieta)
- ii. LAFCO 2024-15-3-Annexation to Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District (TR 38037- KB Homes, LLC) (French Valley)

- iii. LAFCO 2024-16-4-Annexation to the City of Coachella (P-7 & Mesquite)
- iv. LAFCO 2024-17-5-Sphere of Influence Amendment for Eastern Municipal Water District (addition) (116th Fringe/Titan Contractors)
- v. LAFCO 2024-18-5-Reorganization to Include Concurrent Annexations to Eastern Municipal Water District (Water) and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (116th Fringe/Titan Contractors)
- vi. LAFCO 2025-01-2-Annexation to Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (Water & Wastewater) (Tri Pointe Homes, Canyon Hills Estates / Heights)
- vii. LAFCO 2025-02-2-Request for Extra-Territorial Service Provision - Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (Water & ~~Wastewater~~) (Tri Pointe Homes, Canyon Hills Estates/Heights)

Ms. Craig reviewed the new proposals. She stated that item 7.vii. was just for water and did not include wastewater. She stated that this item was not on the agenda today for approval since there was additional information required that was not received prior to the agenda being distributed.

Michael Tidus, Tri Pointe Homes. Mr. Tidus spoke on item 7.a.vii. He stated that they were asking to take water from Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD) into their trucks for grading purposes. He stated that Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) does not have facilities near the project site. He stated that there is an exemption that he felt qualified for this project, and this was just a policy matter and process they had to go through.

Robert Marks, Tri Pointe Homes. Mr. Marks stated he was available to answer any questions on item 7.a.vii.

Commissioner Gutierrez asked if this was just an information item only and if any action was going to be taken. He asked if they were just trying to get water from EVMWD that was 15 ft away from the project site.

Mr. Thompson stated no action was required today. He stated that the issue was that the exemption doesn't qualify under the Government Code and that this project would require commission approval. He stated that it is not a substitute service as there is no service currently being provided to the project site.

Commissioner Sanchez stated that it appears to be a technicality in the law. Mr. Thompson stated that it would be before the commission next month and that staff cannot cut corners on CEQA requirements.

Commissioner Corona stated that the applicant could request the districts enter into interagency agreements and therefore not have to bring the project to LAFCO.

Ms. Craig stated that there are no lines that are currently there to serve the area. Mr. Thompson stated that there is another exemption that could apply if there was an agreement in place.

Chair Vargas stated that WMWD does not provide water to the project area even though there is a hydrant 15 ft away and that it seems the applicant needs to have the district enter into an agreement between the two agencies that LAFCO could approve. Mr. Thompson replied that the agreement would be between WMWD and EVMWD.

Dean Wetter, District Manager, Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District. Mr. Wetter spoke on item 7.a.ii. Mr. Wetter stated he was there today with Gustavo Bermeo, Assistant District Manager, and stated his appreciation for LAFCO. He stated he was there today in support of this project. He also extended an invitation to the commission to meet with him at any time regarding what the district does in the community.

b. Report on Conducting Authority Proceedings.

Mr. Thompson gave an update on the conducting authority proceedings.

8. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND POTENTIAL POSITIONS.

Mr. Thompson stated that the legislation session just started. He stated that there was going to be a CALAFCO Legislative meeting tomorrow and there was nothing to report as of today.

There was no action taken by the Commission.

9. EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS.

Mr. Thompson stated that next the annual audit and mid-year budget update would be before the commission.

Mr. Thompson stated that the CALAFCO Executive Director has resigned, effective at end of the month.

Commissioner Underwood asked who the CALAFCO lobbyist is. Mr. Thompson replied, Jean Hurst.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/FUTURE ITEMS.

Commissioner Underwood stated that at the October meeting there was discussion regarding a list of board presidents, board members, clerks, and managers. He stated that in December staff mentioned a list was available on the County website. He stated that list did not include all the information requested.

Mr. Thompson stated it would take time for staff to create these lists, but it may not be current.

Commissioner Perez asked for clarification on what information needs to be on this list.

Ms. Valdez stated that she has a list of clerks and managers and their contact information. She stated that the presiding officers is the only list that is not kept. She stated that the lists have been provided to Commissioner Underwood many times. She stated that she would provide the lists to the full commission after the meeting. Ms. Valdez stated that presiding officers change often, and a list is hard to maintain.

Commissioner Perez stated that this information should be on the website. Ms. Valdez stated that the commission website has a list that contains a link to each district and city so that members of the public can go directly to the source for the most current information.

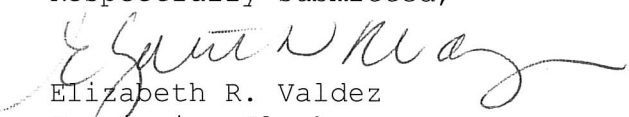
Chair Vargas and Commissioner Gutierrez both agreed that a link to the agency website is appropriate.

Commissioner Sanchez stated that this came about due to the lack of voting during the election of new Commissioners and they wanted to be able to have a source available to contact the agencies.

11. ADJOURNMENT.

The Commission adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Elizabeth R. Valdez
Commission Clerk