



2.b.
9/24/2026

MINUTES
September 3, 2026

Present Yxstian Gutierrez, Chair
Commissioners: Agustin Arreola, Vice-Chair
V. Manuel Perez
Steve Sanchez
Michael M. Vargas
Bruce Underwood

Absent
Commissioners: Stephen Corona

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

1.1. CALL TO ORDER AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG.

Chair Gutierrez called the meeting to order at approximately 8:08 a.m.

1.2. ROLL CALL.

1.3. POTENTIAL REQUEST BY ONE OR MORE COMMISSIONERS TO PARTICIPATE REMOTELY.

There were no requests.

1.4. ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMISSION MEMBERS.

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

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

There were no minutes for approval.

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

There were no public comments.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (NON-HEARING ITEMS) :

There was no consent calendar.

The Commission decided to take items 6. and 7. at this time.

6. EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS.

Mr. Thompson stated that the next regular meeting would be September 24th. He stated that the CALAFCO Annual Conference would be in October and it would be his last one before retirement. He stated that staff are working on a few new projects.

Ms. Craig stated that the office move went smoothly and staff is almost unpacked.

7. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/FUTURE ITEMS.

There were no commissioner comments.

The Commission recessed at 8:14 a.m. to allow Commissioner Perez to arrive.

Commissioner Perez arrived at the meeting at 8:26 a.m.

The Commission reconvened at 8:26 a.m.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**New:**

- a. LAFCO 2026-02-4-Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Review and Potential Amendments: Pinyon Pines County Water District and a finding of exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Mr. Thompson gave a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that County Supervisor and Commissioner Perez's office requested this item as they, as well as LAFCO, were getting complaints about the district. He stated the district website has transparency issues, infrastructure and maintenance issues, and has no reserves. He stated that the Board of Directors and District Manager have been hostile and didn't want to provide the questionnaire information that was sent to them. He stated Commissioner Perez's office assisted with supplying much of the information for the reviews. Mr. Thompson stated that there have not been enough candidates for the Board therefore, for those that run unopposed the Registrar of Voters certifies them and the Board of Supervisors ratifies their appointment without an election.

Mr. Thompson stated that the last review of the district was in 2019. He reviewed the MSR and SOI Review process and determinations for each. He stated the current SOI and jurisdictional boundary overlapped with Desert Water Agency's (DWA) SOI. He presented these maps to the Commission. He discussed options to consolidate or dissolve the district. He stated that DWA may not want to take on the issues of the district. Mr. Thompson and Commissioner Perez spoke about potential grant funding with assistance from DWA, especially with a disadvantaged community designation. He stated that with funding infrastructure repairs could be made.

Commissioner Perez asked about the district's budget and how many

staff members there are and what is budgeted for payroll. Mr. Thompson stated there are three paid staff. He stated the district's budget is approximately \$37,000 and that they are in a deficit spending situation.

Commissioner Perez asked that two videos that were included as links in the MSR be played for the Commission. Both videos were clips of PPCWD board meetings.

Commissioner Sanchez asked how there was a rent expense for board meetings in the budget if the meetings were held at the District Manager's home.

Mr. Thompson stated that it was paid to the District Manager for a storage facility for the district.

Mr. Thompson stated that there is no space for public comments on the agenda and the videos reflect what happens when the public wants to speak.

Mr. Thompson reviewed observations made during the MSR process and stated his recommendation was Option 3 of the staff report.

Chair Gutierrez opened the public hearing.

Charysse Dillingham, resident of PPCWD. Ms. Dillingham stated that the PPCWD community is very small with less than 85 meters. She stated that the District Manager, Mr. Huss, is a bully but is doing his job legally. She stated that there are issues with the Board. She stated she does not want to be a part of DWA. She stated she is willing to volunteer her time and knowledge to help the district.

Jason Coate, resident of PPCWD. Mr. Coate stated the quality of the water in the district is some of the best in the state. He stated that the water pressure is great as well as the prices. He stated he is opposed to another district taking over. He stated he has tried in the past to speak at meetings but wasn't allowed to speak and has given up going. He stated that this report has shed light on the problem and that change is going to happen. He stated the community is ready to step up and asked that the Commission leave the district as is.

Jason Boice, resident of PPCWD. Mr. Boice stated he loves the PPCWD community. He stated that he has gone to his neighbors for their opinion on the issues. He stated that he feels the community is ready to make the changes needed rather than another agency taking over the district.

Chair Gutierrez closed the public hearing.

Vice-Chair Arreola asked if it is correct that in the past 16+ years no one has run for the board. Mr. Thompson stated that there haven't been enough candidates to hold an election, however, there may have been some new members on the board in the past. He stated there hasn't

been enough interest from residents to run.

Commissioner Underwood stated he has a concern if there is an issue with water quality. Mr. Thompson stated that there is no issue with quality, but an issue with infrastructure. He stated that water pressure is not good in some areas and if needed he assumes the fire department would supplement with booster pumps on their trucks.

Chair Gutierrez stated that regardless of the action taken today it does not change the Board or staff in the district.

Commissioner Sanchez stated that this is why LAFCO exists to provide oversight over districts and be sure that they can provide services. He asked if the board has adopted any procedure rules as they are in clear violation of the Brown Act. He asked why the previous MSR didn't catch the overlap of the PPCWD and the DWA. He thanked the residents that spoke today. He also stated whoever runs the PPCWD does so legally. He asked if the current revenue comes from tax assessments.

Mr. Thompson stated that the correction will have to be made regarding the overlap in SOI's between the two districts. He stated that the revenue is from direct charges not taxes.

Commissioner Vargas stated that there are many issues and he is surprised they are still running with such a small budget. He stated that he is in support of Option 3.

Commissioner Sanchez and Commissioner Vargas left the meeting at 9:38 a.m.

Commissioner Perez thanked the residents that came to the meeting and spoke. He stated that the district needs help and not have to be afraid of staff as clearly seen in the videos presented today. He stated that the best approach is to continue with conversations with DWA just to understand how the district should be run, help with writing grants, not to take over. Commissioner Perez stated he believes in local control and is willing to work with them and facilitate meetings with agencies to be sure the district can continue to run. He stated he is in support of Option 3.

Commissioner Underwood stated he liked the public participation and these discussions need to happen to move forward.

Moved (Perez) seconded (Arreola) to receive and file the Municipal Service Review for Pinyon Pines County Water District, approve Option 3 and amend the SOI Review determinations to include language defining that this is a disadvantaged community, in addition, to sit down with the State Assembly Members and the State Water Resources Control Board to help guide to redefine a disadvantaged community to include a rural area such as PPCWD.

Chair Gutierrez called for the vote.

AYES: Perez, Underwood, Arreola, and Gutierrez.

NOES: None.

ABSENT FROM VOTE: Sanchez and Vargas.

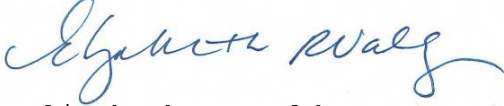
ABSTAINED: None.

Mr. Thompson thanked the residents that came today and showing their interest in being engaged moving forward.

8. ADJOURNMENT.

Chair Gutierrez adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth R. Valdez", is written over the typed name.

Elizabeth R. Valdez
Commission Clerk