

SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS
575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa 102A
Wednesday, March 5, 2025
2:00 P.M.

Commissioners	Alternate Commissioners	Staff
Jean Kapolchok, Chair	Ed Hodges	Mark Bramfitt, Executive Officer
Rich Holmer	Chris Coursey	Verne Ball, Legal Counsel
James Gore	Bill Norton	Cynthia Olson, Administrative Analyst
Mark Hemmendinger, Vice Chair	Jeff Okrepkie	Kasandra Bowen, Commission Clerk
Rebecca Hermosillo		
Sandra Lowe		
Susan Harvey		

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If the supplemental materials are made available to the members of the Commission at the meeting, a copy will be available for public review at the same address and at the Commission meeting itself.

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AGENDA

1. Call to Order by the Chair at 2:00pm with Commissioners Kapolchok, Hemmendinger, Lowe, Holmer and Harvey with Alternates Hodges, Okrepkie, Norton
 2. Public Comment: None
 3. Consent Calendar:
 - 3.1 Meeting Minutes: February 5, 2025
- Motion Harvey
Second Lowe
Ayes 4
Noes 0
Abstain 1
4. Public Hearings:
 - 4.1 Gold Ridge Fire Protection District Reorganization No. 2024-13 (Monte Rio Fire Protection District)

Environmental Review: Exempt pursuant to Sections 15320 and 15061 (b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines

Staff provided detailed information on the staff report during the meeting. The public hearing opened at 2:08 pm. A chief expressed enthusiasm for continuing ongoing work with the Monte Rio Fire Department administratively. A commissioner asked for clarification about the staffing at the Monte Rio main station, specifically regarding the presence of a 3-person paid staff, which was confirmed, along with the involvement of volunteers. Another commissioner raised concerns about the reliability of revenue, and the chief explained that there is a funding agreement with the county, adjusted annually by 4.2%, though the application used an estimated 2.4% for projections. The president of the Monte Rio Board described the consolidation with Gold Ridge as a bittersweet moment for the over 100-year-old department. The Sonoma County Fire Chief Association also expressed full support for the proposal. The public hearing closed at 2:15 pm, and a commissioner expressed satisfaction with the continued support for volunteers during these reorganizations.

Amendment to Resolution by striking line item 3 from page 3

Motion: Lowe

Second: Harvey

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

- 4.2 Gold Ridge Fire Protection District Reorganization No. 2025-02 (City of Sebastopol Fire Department)
Environmental Review: Exempt pursuant to Sections 15320 and 15061 (b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines

The public hearing opened at 2:24 pm, where a representative expressed excitement about a potential annexation, noting the long-standing discussions and challenges in running a combination fire department with both paid employees and volunteers. The importance of volunteer participation in critical situations was highlighted. A Sebastopol council member mentioned that there are currently 30 active volunteers at Sebastopol Fire, which contributed to the decision to choose Gold Ridge FPD. The Sebastopol firehouse has been transferred to Gold Ridge for improvements. The public hearing closed at 2:29 pm, and a commissioner expressed appreciation for Gold Ridge's efforts in building on these districts.

Amendment to Resolution by striking line item 3 from page 3

Motion: Harvey

Second: Lowe

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

5. Regular Calendar: None

6. Information/Report Items

6.1 Executive Officer's Report:

Update regarding status of the California Association of Local Agency Commissions
Kern has not been within CALAFCO for several years and Orange, San Diego, Riverside and Los Angeles are all pulling from CALAFCO with interest in returning under the right circumstances.

6.2 Legislative Affairs:

Proposal from the Community Water Center and Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability on legislation to expand the ability of LAFCOs to initiate reorganizations, to amplify the role of Municipal Service Reviews in communicating community needs, and to

expand the definition of special districts for LAFCO purposes to include mutual water companies.

There are over 50 mutual water companies within Sonoma County, some of which lack the funding to provide necessary services that LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) might offer.

Commissioner Holmer emphasized that most water companies are regulated and must meet state water requirements, especially rural ones, and added another layer of regulation may not solve the financial issues these companies face. Commissioner Hemmendinger asked if the companies involved had received input, and the Executive Officer confirmed they had, mentioning Riverside's strong interest. Commissioner Lowe expressed the need for some form of government guidance to help the public understand the issue, keeping an open mind on the topic.

7. General Announcements

Commissioner Kapolchok will no longer be able to serve on the Commission for LAFCO due to her recent appointment to the Planning Board. Appointment of Chair will take place in the coming Commission meeting.

8. Confirm Meetings: Meeting Confirmed
Commission Meeting: April 2, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment @ 3:04pm

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