

Siskiyou County Local Agency Formation Commission
Regular Meeting
October 8, 2024

The Siskiyou County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) meeting of October 8, 2024, was called to order by Chair Ogren at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 311 Fourth Street, 2nd Floor, Yreka, California.

Present: Commissioners Harkness, Mazzoni, Baker, and Ogren

Absent: Commissioner Valenzuela

Also Present: Hailey Lang, Executive Officer; Rachel Jereb, Deputy Executive Officer; Janine Rowe, Commission Clerk

Minutes: It was moved by Commissioner Mazzoni, seconded by Commissioner Baker, to approve the Minutes from the September 10, 2024, 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

Presentation of Documents: None

Public Hearing Protocol: Discussion was held that the Public Hearing is still open for the Fire District Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

Changes to the Agenda: None

Old Business:

Agenda Item 1: 2022 Countywide Fire Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update (Potential Action)

Siskiyou County LAFCo will consider and adopt the Fire Protection Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update. This review encompasses cities, fire protection districts, Community Service Districts (CSD), hose companies, Zones of Increased Benefit (ZIB), and County Service Areas (CSA). The purpose of this MSR is to perform a comprehensive update and review of the current service levels provided by the fire service providers in the County.

Staff Report:

The previously circulated Staff Report was reviewed by the Commission, and a presentation of the project was provided by Deputy Executive Officer Rachel Jereb.

Ms. Jereb provided a recap of the last meeting during which the project was continued to today's meeting in order to allow additional time for public review and participation as well as time to update the resolution with the changes and corrections that were discussed during the last meeting. The revisions included updating the description of the County fire warden and correcting the map of the sphere of influence for McCloud as well as changing the resolution to keep the current sphere of influence for Gazelle. She said the Mayten sphere of influence also needed to be modified, and the

current sphere of influence for the city of Weed would not be changed.

As far as the city of Yreka is concerned, Ms. Jereb said she discussed the potential sphere of influence expansion to the north with City Manager Jason Ledbetter. Mr. Ledbetter said the city of Yreka was against expanding their sphere of influence to avoid changes before the upcoming election. He said they are agreeable to revisiting the matter in the next two to three years during the next city municipal service review.

The Chair read Public Hearing Protocol items C, D and E.

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

Public Comment:

Chief Bernie Paul, Chief of the South Yreka Fire Protection District and President of the Fire Chiefs Association, said he was completely against the term “fire only” and wanted to make sure it wasn’t included in the report. He said he wasn’t happy about the numbers because he believes they are incorrect and will affect the ability for fire districts to apply for grants.

Chair Ogren asked Ms. Jereb to address Chief Paul’s concerns. Ms. Jereb said Lake Shastina Community Services District is the only district where there will be a fire only sphere of influence. She said the consultants added a note stating: “While RSG recommends certain areas to be designated exclusively for fire protection services only, this recommendation should not be interpreted to exclude the future provision of any other municipal and emergency services in these areas and should not prevent emergency medical services from being provided to these areas under existing automatic or mutual aid agreements.”

Ms. Jereb explained that the Shastina sphere of influence currently covers all services provided by the Community Services District, but this review only focuses on what fire department services provide. It excludes water, sewer, police, roads, streets, and waste management. Therefore, the comprehensive sphere of influence can’t be expanded unless all these services are considered.

Regarding Chief Paul’s concern about inaccurate numbers, Ms. Jereb reminded the Commission that the authoritative data sources that are common across all of the areas being analyzed are required to be used for the report. In this case, she said the census was used for this report, and the county uses the census data as well.

Commissioner Mazzoni asked about funding and whether there would be more financial burden on the fire districts. Ms. Jereb reiterated that this project is only proposing to expand sphere of influence boundaries and that the boundaries reflect the areas where fire districts already respond. She said there is no financial exchange or cost, and the boundaries create the potential for expansion in the future.

Chief Paul said if they get a call to an area that isn’t in their sphere of influence, they still respond if they have the people even though there is no legal requirement to do so. Chair Ogren added that not having an area in their sphere of influence hinders their ability to get grants for that area.

Discussion was held about the importance of education regarding the impact the Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence update will have on districts, fire departments, and the public. Chair Ogren said LAFCo needs to improve its educational efforts, as this is the present Commission’s first experience with such decisions. She said it is an opportunity for everyone, including the Board of

Supervisors, to understand the intent, repercussions, and opportunities of the decision.

Discussion was held about continuing the project to the next meeting, which would not be until January 2025, to allow more time for the fire districts to review the final draft, so Ms. Jereb provided an overview of the changes that were made.

Chief Roath reiterated that fire districts go to areas that are outside of their district because the practice is to use the closest source concept in dispatching to help to people when they need it.

Janet Jones, Chief of Klamath River Fire, suggested adding a footnote clarifying that the term “fire only” means fire and emergency response.

Further discussion was held that the recommendations shouldn't be interpreted to prevent emergency services from responding, and that Lake Shastina is the only district for which the term “fire only” is being used since their other services are not included in the municipal services review. It was suggested that the language should read “...and should not prevent emergency services from being provided to these areas under existing, automatic or mutual aid agreements.”

Also discussed was the fire district sphere of influence maps where the sphere of influence was proposed to be expanded only for fire services. It was decided that the language would read, “While RSG recommends certain areas to be designated exclusively for fire protection services, this recommendation should not be interpreted...”

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

Motion: Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Mazzoni, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, to Adopt LAFCO Resolution No. 2024-02, A Resolution of the Local Agency Formation Commission of the County of Siskiyou, State of California, Determining the Project Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act and Adopting the Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update for the Siskiyou County Fire Protection Agencies and approve the changes that were discussed.

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

Ayes: Commissioners Harkness, Mazzoni, Baker, and Ogren

Noes:

Absent: Commissioner Valenzuela

Abstain:

Items for Discussion/Direction: None

Miscellaneous:

- 1. Correspondence: None**
- 2. Staff Comments:** Ms. Lang told the Commission that she would be making a presentation either at the January meeting or another upcoming meeting on tax sharing agreements, which was prompted by numerous inquiries about potential annexations and consolidations.
- 3. Future Meetings:** The next regular meeting of Siskiyou County LAFCo is scheduled for

Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

4. Commission Comments: None

Adjournment: The meeting was concluded at 9:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Hailey Lang, Secretary

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