



HOPLAND

MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Hopland Municipal Advisory Council

Minutes

Regular Meeting – Hybrid

March 19, 2025 at 5:30 pm

Hopland Fire Protection District Community Room
21 Feliz Creek Road, Hopland, California

The Hopland Municipal Advisory Council (HMAC) meetings are held in-person and virtually via Zoom Video Communications. Meeting access information is available on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members: Julie Golden, Amy Frost, Dale Andrew, Chelsea Arnold, *Vacant*

Alternate: *Vacant*

Administrative Support: Becky Clark - LACO Associates

1. Call to order & roll call

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm. All members were present. No member attended virtually.

2. Public comment & announcements on non-agenda items

No comment/ discussion

3. Consent Calendar

- a. Approval of the February 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Dale moved to approve the consent calendar with a second from Chelsea. All voted in favor.

4. Discussion and possible action on community updates and issues

- a. Mendocino County Sheriff's Office: *General updates from Sheriff Kendall*

Sheriff Kendall provided the following updates regarding the Sheriff's Office:

- i. March 19th marked the 11th anniversary of Deputy Sheriff Ricky Del Fiorentino's death in the line of duty. An annual gathering was held in Fort Bragg.
- ii. The Sheriff's Office is currently experiencing a budget deficit. Service reduction options are being explored by the Sheriff and Undersheriff, due to funds exceeding available County resources.
- iii. The new jail construction is progressing and is anticipated to open within 30 days of the planned date.
- iv. One (1) deputy is in the final stages of training, one (1) resigned during training due to excessive pressure, and seven (7) are actively in training. Current personnel includes 20 deputies, nine (9) sergeants, and the aforementioned trainees. Sheriff Kendall is aiming to have 51 deputies on staff. The Sheriff's Office reports a 30-percent staffing deficit, compared to a 18- to 20-percent deficit in the Ukiah Police Department.
- v. Julie shared that she recently attended a meeting of the Mendocino Farm Bureau about potential future annexations of land south of the City of Ukiah into the city limits and during the meeting, a question came up regarding services for newly

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annexed areas if the City Police Department is understaffed for its current service area. Sheriff Kendall stated that he has been in discussions about this and does not see the annexations occurring any time soon. Supervisor Cline shared that many actions need to happen before an annexation can occur, including approval by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) and that the annexation of lands south of the City is years in the future.

- vi. Finally, Sheriff Kendall has noticed criminal activity appears to be decreasing. He speculates that border closures and reduced drug flow are the cause.
- b. Hopland Fire Protection District: *General updates from Chief Franklin*
Firefighter Clayton shared that the Hopland Fire Protection District's (HFPD's) Fireman's BBQ is scheduled for May 3rd at 4:30 at the fire house. The event will proceed regardless of the weather. He shared that the HFPD has begun collecting items for the raffle and that the local 4H is helping with the fundraising event and may host a bake sale. Flyers for the event will be available this month. Additionally, the HFPD has successfully recruited four (4) volunteers from Hopland and one (1) from Healdsburg.
- c. Board of Supervisors: *General updates from Supervisor Madeline Cline*
District 1 Supervisor Madeline Cline shared updates from recent Board of Supervisors (BOS) meetings:
 - i. The County of Mendocino (County) is currently working on the budget for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026). Madeline noted that the County's revenues have decreased, while expenses have increased. This situation is common among many local governments. The budget deficit is largely due to declining industry and high salaries and benefits (57 percent of the General Fund, or \$95 million goes to this category). Additionally, departmental funding requests received thus far exceed the available funds by \$15 to \$20 million. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) is looking at making adjustments to expenditures while finding ways to support the local economy and community. The budget priorities of the BOS are economic development, public safety, and road maintenance (pursuant to the Twenty-Year Corrective Maintenance Plan adopted in 2019). Dale suggested that budget planning consider making the number of employees proportional to the County's population. Madeline shared that she has begun an analysis of departmental staffing levels across comparable counties to identify if the County departments are appropriately staff as compared to others.
 - ii. Amy asked if there are ways the HMAC could help communicate what to expect during the upcoming road improvement work (discussed in more detail under item 6). Madeline stated that the road improvements are scheduled to begin the first week of June. She will request more information from the County of Mendocino Department of Transportation (MDOT) on how prepare for the road improvements.
 - iii. Julie expressed concern with the recent delayed arrival of supplemental and escape tax bills from the County Tax Collector's office and the expectations for



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prompt payment when the bills themselves were sent months late. The bills have short payment timelines and it appears that penalties will be incurred if bills are not paid on time. Madeline clarified that property assessing and tax bills are not handled by the BOS but rather are the charge of other elected officials (Treasurer-Tax Collector and Assessor-Clerk-Recorder). Furthermore, penalties and payment plans, where allowed, are dictated by State code. As a member of the BOS, Madeline is able to engage in dialogue and inquire how the BOS can provide support to constituents. Julie and others shared an overall frustration with the lack of public communication about this. Madeline acknowledged the need for improved communication and suggested that the public write directly to their elected officials to express these concerns. Amy proposed developing public awareness materials. Madeline may follow up on this item at a future HMAC meeting.

d. *Shanél Valley Academy: General updates from Amy Frost*

Amy shared that the Shanél Valley Academy (SVA) is currently undergoing an audit related to expanding learning. The SVA is also preparing for a new principal as the current principal is stepping down at the end of the school year. Recruitment for the position will start later in March. Additionally, the SVA is in the process of creating a Farm Plan (Plan), which will require permits from the County. Amy intends to send the finished Plan to Supervisor Madeline Cline for feedback. Currently, Amy is seeking expert input before finishing the Plan. Julie suggested Amy connect with Kayla Delbar-Moore, the Agriculture Program Director in Potter Valley.

e. *Hopland Public Utility District: General updates*

Joan Norry [Hopland Public Utility District (HPUD) President] shared that the HPUD signed the Assembly Bill (AB) 830 letter and sent it to Assemblymember Chris Rogers (see item 5 for additional discussion on this bill). Joan believes that AB 830 would save the HPUD a lot of money in the future if approved and would like to see the bill get passed before the second phase of the Caltrans Hopland Highway 101 ADA Project starts. Additionally, she shared that the HPUD administrative services will be contracted through the City of Ukiah (City) since Willow County Water District, who currently provides administrative services, is now part of the Ukiah Valley Water Authority (UVWA) that is managed by the City. The HPUD will monitor the costs of City administrative services. Lastly, the HPUD intends to hire a contractor to conduct a rate study as the HPUD has not increased rates in years.

f. *Hopland Cemetery District: General updates*

Joan Norry [*Hopland Cemetery District (District) Board member*] reported that the District has a clean-up planned April 26th and 27th. While the cemetery is currently in good condition, general maintenance is needed. Posters and flyers will be put up in an effort to find volunteers. Amy suggested contacting the local 4H and Chelsea agreed to help connect Joan with 4H. Additionally, Joan shared that the District is collaborating with Sonoma State University on a project to update the Find-a-Grave tool on the District's



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website and Facebook page. This project is being undertaken by Sonoma State students as their final project.

- g. Hopland Research and Extension Center: *General updates*
No update/ discussion

- h. Hopland Farmers Market: *General updates*

Chelsea shared that the Hopland Farmers Market has secured its first three (3) sponsors for the 2025 season and continues to seek more. She will share another update on sponsor progress at the next HMAC meeting. The Farmers Market is scheduled to occur every Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. from June to October, in the Brutocao Cellars parking lot.

5. Discussion and possible action on California Assembly Bill (AB) 830 Letter of Support for Caltrans Funding for Infrastructure Projects

Scott Alonso (*District Director for Assemblymember Rodgers*) and Monica Barragan (*Field Officer*) were present. A representative from Senator McGuire's office was also on the call. Scott Alonso shared that Assemblymember Rodgers has introduced AB 830, which includes a mandate requiring Caltrans to fund utility line relocation within their right-of-way (ROW). The bill's progression to the Assembly Transportation Committee is anticipated in April and a decision is anticipated in late April. The bill faces challenges due to potentially large cost implications for Caltrans. Potential changes already discussed may involve narrowing the focus of the bill to specific public utility districts (PUDs) or project types, though these are not yet on the table. Hopland is the primary case study, but Caltrans has been asked to identify other PUDs that may be affected by the bill.

The HMAC reviewed the Template AB 830 Support Letter provided by Scott and discussed completing the "Enter How bill Could Impact Your Local Community" section with language from the Facts Sheets that was shared at the meeting by Scott. Dale suggested the statement say something like: "This directly impacts our community because Caltrans has a project planned within our community that cannot move forward as planned without the passage of this bill. We need this funding in order to allow this project to move forward. [The last 2 paragraph from the fact sheet]." He also suggested mentioning that Caltrans has recently separated the Caltrans Hopland Highway 101 ADA Project (project) into two (2) phases because the HPUD does not have the funding to pay for utility relocations. It would make Phase 2 of the project possible if Caltrans could pay for the utility costs. As it stands now, Phase 2 of the project can't happen without this bill.

Dale moved to approve the HMAC completing the letter with the suggested text added with a second from Amy. All members voted in favor. Julie volunteered to complete and deliver the letter.



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Scott Alonso also provided information regarding AB 1014, also proposed by Assemblymember Rogers. This bill pertains to speed limits and proposes changes to the criteria Caltrans uses for speed surveys. He offered to return in April for further discussion. Scott will send additional information to Julie for review prior to next month's meeting.

6. Discussion and possible action on County of Mendocino Department of Transportation (MDOT) 2025 Hopland Area Road Maintenance

Julie noted that the Twenty-Year Corrective Maintenance Plan (Plan), passed in 2019, is coming to fruition and shared the letter received from the MDOT on February 11, 2025 with the list of roads in the Hopland area that are planned for improvements in 2025. Supervisor Cline shared that the Plan includes assessed approximately 1,000 miles of County roads using the Pavement Condition Index (PCI). On the PCI scale, 100 generally means optimal condition and 1 means very poor condition. According to the MDOT letter, the MDOT plans to improve approximately 17.38 miles of road throughout Hopland. These roads have PCIs ranging from 50 (average) to 2 (very poor). Madeline indicated she will be present in the area during the maintenance work.

Supervisor Cline (*BOS, District 1*) reported that the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) is currently scoping the feasibility of a sales tax increase in unincorporated areas with the revenue directly allocated to road maintenance. The County's sales tax cap is approximately 10 to 10.25 percent, while Hopland's current rate is 7.89 percent. For comparison, Santa Rosa's rate is approximately 9.25 percent. Interested parties are encouraged to communicate their thoughts to MCOG directly. Amy noted that the high concentration of wineries in the Hopland area, operating under the lower sales tax rate, places a significant burden on local infrastructure without contributing proportionally to its upkeep.

7. Discussion and possible action on Caltrans Hopland Highway 101 ADA Project

Jen Buck (*Caltrans, Office Chief of Project Management*) reported that project development is approximately 95 percent complete. Upon completion of ROW acquisition and PG&E gas line relocation in June, funding will be sought from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in August. The current schedule includes putting the project out to bid in September, contract awarding in December, initial communication to the community/business owners in early spring 2026, and finally construction in late spring. In order to clarify a point of ongoing confusion, Jen shared that work related to the rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) is in conflict with AT&T, PG&E gas, and HPUD water lines, however, AT&T and PG&E lines will be relocated as part of the Phase One. As discussed RRFBs have been removed from Phase One due to conflicts with HPUD utilities. The remaining project details are unchanged. Lastly, the project website has been updated to state that project updates will be provided at HMAC meetings.

8. Discussion and possible action on Downtown Hopland Pedestrian Lighting

No update/ discussion

9. Council Members' and staff reports regarding assigned tasks, committee meetings, and other items of general interest

- a. HMAC Officers

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No update/ discussion

b. HMAC Vacancies

Julie is continuing efforts to recruit members for the HMAC and seeks to recruit someone from Russian River Estates. Madeline shared that a Redwood Valley MAC member is relocating to Hopland and may be a potential candidate.

c. AB 2449 – Remote Attendance Requirements for Council Members

The HMAC reviewed and discussed the summary of requirements for AB 2449. There were no questions.

d. Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700) Submittal Deadline

Julie reminded the group that Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700) form is due in April and offered to help those who have not completed it before.

10. Discussion on agenda items for April 16, 2025 HMAC meeting

HMAC members would like to discuss the Redwood Valley MAC letter regarding the gas station and AB 1014 at the April meeting.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:06pm.