



HOPLAND

MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Hopland Municipal Advisory Council

Minutes

Regular Meeting – Hybrid

October 15, 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: Melissa Frausto - LACO Associates

1. Call to order & roll call

The meeting was called to order at 5:31pm. All members were present and none attended virtually.

2. Public comment & announcements on non-agenda items

Vernon Budinger (*Public Comment*): Vernon asked if the HMAC meetings were recorded. Julie confirmed that they are not recorded, but the minutes are available online. Vernon then requested a formal written response to his public records requests regarding minutes and correspondence with Caltrans about the Hopland Public Utilities District (HPUD) rate increase.

A member of the public asked for a correction to the September 17, 2025, Draft Action Minutes, specifically in Item 2, paragraph two, it should state "11 percent increase" rather than "11 percent decrease".

Elisa Cox (*Public Comment*): Elisa from Mendo Local Public Media announced that they were recording audio of the meeting.

3. Consent Calendar

The following consent items are expected to be routine and non-controversial and will be acted on by the HMAC in a single action without discussion, unless a request is made by a Council Member or a member of the public for discussion or separate action.

- a. Approval of the September 17, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Dale moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on September 17, 2025, with the following revisions to Item 2, Paragraph two: "decrease" to "increase", with a second from Chelsea. All members voted in favor.

4. Discussion and possible action on community updates and issues

- a. Mendocino County Sheriff's Office: *General updates from Sheriff Kendall*
Lieutenant Clark, Commander of Central Inland Operations, provided updates from the Sheriff's Office. He reported that the Sheriff's Office received several calls from Hopland

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requesting their attention and presence. They have responded to calls related to theft, which often involves checking surveillance footage, as people generally want their property returned. The Sheriff's Office has also been actively working with Behavioral Health when responding to mental health calls. Regarding drugs, Lieutenant Clark noted that drug usage levels is high in the County as compared to the rest of the State. The primary cause of most overdoses in the County is Fentanyl, and the Sheriff's Office works to identify the suppliers. Lastly, Lieutenant Clark strongly encouraged everyone to sign up for two alert systems: Nixle, and MendoAlerts. Links to sign up for both can be found on the Sheriff's Office website or the County website.

b. Hopland Fire Protection District: *General updates from Chief Franklin*

Chief Franklin reported that the Hopland Fire Protection District (HFPD) has been busy with traffic collisions and reminded everyone that they are not out of fire season yet. He noted that while the recent rain was good, the ground is still dry, and the effects of a single day of rain do not last long. The HFPD was also involved in a search and rescue effort for a missing person, which Chief Franklin noted can take many hours. Lastly, He mentioned that the Mendocino Fire Safe Council (MCFSC) will be holding a BBQ at the Fire House on Sunday.

c. Board of Supervisors: *General updates from Supervisor Madeline Cline*

Madeline Cline provided the following updates:

- The County is currently facing difficult financial times. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) is asking all departments to plan for a six percent budget cut; however, they are allowing each department to choose how to implement the reduction.
- Madeline spent a week in Washington D.C. advocating for Mendocino County and other rural areas regarding federal funds. The focus was on securing funding through the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs, which are federal obligations intended to support local schools, roads, and public safety. These funds are currently not being fully funded, which is harmful to rural communities.
- Madeline brought up a resolution to ban the sale of nitrous oxide canisters to primarily curb illegal use targeted toward youth. The ban is already in effect in the City of Ukiah. Dale asked if people could still buy it online. Madeline confirmed that if the ordinance passes, online sellers like Amazon would not be allowed to mail it.

A member of the public asked for an update on Assembly Bill (AB) 830. Madeline stated the bill was vetoed by Governor Newsom but there was \$1.5M set-aside and that gives us hope that we might be able to garner that funding and direct it towards Caltrans to pay for some of the costs incurred during Phase 2 of moving the water and sewer laterals. The public member asked if the Hopland Public Utility District (HPUD) was aware of the funding that will be appropriated because of AB 830. Madeline responded that she is aware but is not sure how the appropriation would be communicated or how the funds will get to the HPUD. Jen Buck (*Public Comment*):



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Jen (*Caltrans, Office Chief of Project Management*) clarified that the appropriations bill is Senate Bill (SB) 105.

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

Amy Frost provided an update on Shanél Valley Academy (SVA):

- SVA is fully staffed this year. The new principal is doing well, and the school is actively working to rebuild its reputation and highlight how it differs from other schools in the County.
- The SVA preschool is open and enrolling students aged two to three. Enrollment is flexible, allowing children to sign up as soon as they turn two, even during the school year.
- The SVA currently hosts the 4H program, which is open to all community children, not just those enrolled at SVA.
- SVA received a Farm to School Grant with the goal of increasing student and family knowledge about the origin of food. They created the 'Harvest of the Month' program, which brings in local produce from local farmers and each month has a new theme. Last month's theme was apples with tasting and recipes sent home. This month's theme is squash which students are growing and tasting. Next month's theme will be acorns, where students will learn about different types and learn about harvesting methods and their social significance.
- Additionally, SVA uses a focused learning theme. This year's theme is space. The 5th and 6th graders are currently focused on a "Mission to Mars," which involves projects like making space suits and integrating the theme into their math and writing lessons.
- Lastly, an important grant is due at the end of the month. If received, it will allow SVA to purchase a bus to provide transportation for kids who may be traveling between Ukiah and the SVA.

e. *California Department of Transportation: General updates from Jen Buck*

Jen Buck (*Caltrans, Office Chief of Project Management*) stated that there is no new information for the Hopland Highway 101 ADA Project (ADA Project) but will still be coming to the HMAAC meetings to answer questions. Additionally, Caltrans will be working on making adjustments to the intersection at La Franchi Road which will be occurring in late 2026. There will also be road maintenance just north of Hopland and that is scheduled for early 2026.

Amy asked if the La Franchi Road intersection would be widened. Jen confirmed it would be widened on one side only, explaining that widening on both sides of the road was avoided to limit the impact on a nearby vineyard. The improvements also include adding a retaining wall. Jen offered to bring layouts to a future meeting to show the planned adjustments.

Vernon Budinger (*Public Comment*): Vernon asked for confirmation of the cost of the ADA Project, stating that in the September 17, 2025, Draft Action Minutes, it states that the



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cost is \$2 million. Jen confirmed that \$2 million is only an estimate. Julie reiterated that it is a ballpark estimate and asked Vernon to clarify. Vernon stated that the Hopland Public Utility District (HPUD) is trying to increase rates because of Caltrans and the ADA Project. Amy responded by clarifying that the HMAc supported bills like AB 830 so that the HPUD, and subsequently ratepayers, would not have the burden of paying for utility relocation. She noted that the issue is due to how the law is written, which is not the HMAc's responsibility, and that the HMAc has made efforts to move the project forward. Dale advised Vernon to speak directly with Caltrans and HPUD. Vernon then asked for the best way to contact Jen Buck. Jen provided two email addresses: HoplandADA@dot.ca.gov and district.1.pio@dot.ca.gov.

f. Mendocino County Fire Safe Council: *General updates from Eva King*

Eva King [Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC), Outreach Coordinator] explained that the MCFSC's mission is to help county residents thrive in fire-prone environments. Eva passed out flyers containing information on the MCFSC, including details on home hardening, magnets with important local contacts (like Nixle), and insurance information. Flyers and magnets can be provided at community events if requested. She also mentioned that the MCFSC is available to conduct presentations across the County. Eva also highlighted the work of Firewise Communities, which are groups of volunteers who work together on planning and projects to become more wildfire-prepared. This program carries a national certification overseen by MCFSC and CalFire, and one key benefit is that certification can lead to insurance discounts. She noted that Hopland has been a successful "poster child" for the program, with McNab Ranch and Felix Creek established as certified Firewise Communities. The Felix Creek and McNab Ranch Firewise community will host an informational BBQ on October 19, 2025, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Hopland Fire House. Finally, Eva announced that the MCFSC is hosting a GrizzlyCorps Fellow (an AmeriCorps program), who will work on wildfire safety for mobile homes and other condensed housing. She directed the public to the MCFSC website (<https://www.firesafemendocino.org>) for more information and offered to provide more information and help anyone interested in starting a Firewise Community.

g. Hopland Public Utility District: *General updates*

Joan Norry [Hopland Public Utility District (HPUD), President] announced that the next HPUD regular meeting is in November, and the public is welcome to share their comments and concerns. Additionally, the HPUD has approved the rate increases that were proposed for the next five years. Joan clarified that the HPUD has the authority to lower the rates but will not be able to increase the rate than what was approved over the next five years.

h. Hopland Cemetery District: *General updates*

Joan Norry [Hopland Cemetery District (District), Board member] announced that the District received a historical monument for the cemetery from the Sam Brannan Chapter of E Clampus Vitus, a historical society focused on preserving California history.



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i. Hopland Research and Extension Center: *General updates*

Eva King shared that the Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC) is hosting three GrizzlyCorps Fellows. These Fellows will live at HREC and focus on fire and forest resilience research and provide support with educational field trips.

5. Discussion and possible action on County of Mendocino 2024-25 Civil Grand Jury Report - Planning & Building Services Structural Issues: Exposing the Cracks

Madeline Cline (*Public Comment*): Madeline explained that the Grand Jury is a group of 19 people, independent of the government, who investigate issues within the County, and they recently completed a report on the Planning & Building Services (PBS) Department. She added that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has an adhoc committee working on ways to improve the PBS. Madeline Cline encouraged people to email her about any issues, emphasizing that she is interested in hearing about it. Amy asked what the HMAC's role would be for this item. Julie clarified that the goal is mainly to discuss the report so community members would know they are not alone in having problems, as the County is actively working on the issue. Amy volunteered to read the report and report back to the HMAC.

6. Discussion and possible action on Rehabilitation of the Highway 101 Northbound Hopland Sign

Chelsea spoke with "Concrete Pete" who suggested moving the sign. Chelsea does not view this as a good solution and is now revisiting other ways to fix the sign.

7. Discussion and possible action on Downtown Hopland Pedestrian Lighting

Julie opened the discussion by requesting help with the lighting project, noting that her attempt to consult the Ukiah City Manager was unsuccessful. She emphasized the need for a plan before the sidewalk construction of the ADA Project begins so that Caltrans can install the conduits beneath the new sidewalks. The community would be responsible for purchasing the light poles and developing a plan with the placement of the light poles and regulations to provide to Caltrans.

Julie specifically asked Jen Buck for resources or specifications regarding the necessary information, such as the required distance between light poles. Jen Buck (*Public Comment*): Jen stated that Howard Dashiell has sent information on approved LED lights and that she had forwarded it to Julie. For placement, Jen noted that since the lighting is decorative, the community has more input on placement as long as it does not conflict with utilities. She offered to work together with Julie on the placement of the lights, acknowledging that this is a high priority for the community. Dale added that mounting requirements should also be discussed with Caltrans. Julie stated that she will bring up mounting requirements to Caltrans. Julie stated the next step is to draw a map showing the desired light pole locations. Jen suggested they schedule a time together to work on this.

Dale asked if the County should create the plan. Julie stated that only the plan itself is needed, and Amy added that the community will pay for the lights. Julie suggested that funding for the

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lights could come from the Mendocino Community Foundation, which holds approximately \$100,000 in community-raised funds specifically designated for use in Hopland (from the St. Francis Guild). Amy suggested that to figure out the cost and number of lights needed, the group should decide on a first, second, and third choice for the light poles. She volunteered to research these options.

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

- a. HMAc Vacancies
- b. Hopland Community Liaisons Update

No update/discussion.

9. Discussion on agenda items for November 19, 2025, HMAc meeting

Madeline Cline suggested inviting Senator McGuire to discuss SB 105.

Julie suggested we can contact Assemblymember Roger's office for an update on AB 830 and AB 1045.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02pm.