



Sonoma County Special Districts Association

DRAFT Membership Meeting Minutes **Thursday, April 25, 2024** **2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

Call to Order/Roll Call

Roll Call: Jennifer Bechtold, Jeff Veliquette, Tamara Chapman Davis, Peter Bonkrude, Sage Howell, Colleen Haley, Christine Kuehn, Reagan Ballo, Andrew Damron

I. Introduction of Guest Speaker, Senator, Bill Dodd – Jennifer Bechtold, Secretary

Logan Pitts, legislative aid from Senator Dodd’s office provided a presentation on his behalf. Senator Dodd’s jurisdiction covers six counties and has over 100 special districts, covering more than 1 million people. This is the Senator’s last year in the State legislature as he has reached his term limit.

Senator Dodd’s time in office has mainly been focused on long-term impacts and what will affect people’s lives down the road. Wildfire prevention has been a large focus since 2017 and work has been done to try and make it easier to have controlled burns. Much of the vegetation management work has been done in Sonoma Valley and has proven to be a very collaborative effort between agencies. The Senator has also authored SB 896 this year which has to do with identifying when a state agency is using AI to communicate with you and will also set forth some procedures for storage of that data. SMART is also working on a vote initiative in their special district, and this would only need a simple majority passing.

Two other issues the Senator’s office is watching are in regard to property insurance and the FAIR plan. The goal is to have insurance companies use forward-looking risk models, which would be created through simulations of what could happen in the future. More cooperation is needed from the insurance commissioner and Governor. Secondly, homelessness is a huge issue in our area and one idea that is being developed is Care Court. Essentially, if someone is unable to care for themselves, they can be involuntarily committed. This would only be the result of extreme scenarios where someone is dying on the streets. Project Homekey has also been put in place where old hotels have been converted into housing. This has been very

Guest Speaker Continued:

successful in getting folks off the street but there has been a lot of spending and little accountability.

Chief Veliquette asked about business roundtable measure and if Logan has any current information. He replied that the State, Attorney General and Governor are all fighting this measure. The feeling is the big business are using this as leverage to get something else they want. It's more of a blackmail measure, as they did something similar a couple years ago to ban taxes on soda.

Tamara asked why undergrounding fewer lines would be good. Logan replied that there are newer technologies such as turning off the power faster and sensors on power lines when something touches them. Transformers don't do well underground and are harder and more expensive to fix. The legislature does not think it is right in every scenario to underground lines and would like to create a few more hurdles before they can do so.

Peter asked for Senator Dodd's take on SB 1251 which would help Mosquito and Vector Control agencies gain access to underground utility boxes because they hold water and breed mosquitos. Logan responded that Senator Dodd voted yes on this bill and the next step is for this to go to the Senate floor.

Christine asked Logan the best way for special districts to set up meetings with Senator Dodd. Logan said in person meetings are a bit harder this time of year through June since the Senator's are in Sacramento. Fall is generally a better time. Logan offered to meet with any special districts, and this can generally be arranged within a few days.

II. Open Forum/Public Comment – Jennifer Bechtold, Secretary

There was no comment.

III. Review and Discussion on Draft Bylaws for Sonoma-Napa Bi-County Special Districts Association

Colleen mentioned we have discussed over the last several meetings how it might be advantageous for us and Napa to consolidate and create a larger Chapter together. Draft bylaws suggested a name change to Sonoma-Napa Bi-County Special Districts Association. No other changes were suggested.

With a group vote of 7 yes's and 0 no's, the bylaws and name change will move forward.

Discussion on Draft Bylaws Continued:

Colleen will work on continuing to recruit CSDA members to attend future meetings from the Napa area.

IV. Discussion and Approval of Chapter Membership for Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

There was no attendance from Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District and no documents were sent to the Executive Committee.

V. Approval of Minutes (Only Member Agencies Can Vote)

A. January 25, 2024

Motion to accept the minutes of January 25, 2024 made by Tamara and seconded by Jennifer.

VI. New Business

A. Special District Spotlight – Featuring Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

Item has been deferred to July.

B. Survey Results

Brittany was unable to attend the meeting to provide survey results.

C. Change of Executive Board Positions

At the next meeting, with hopefully a better turn out of Napa members, we will work to change the Executive Board.

VII. CSDA Update: CSDA Senior Public Affairs Field Coordinator, Colleen Haley

Colleen mentioned the following professional development opportunities. Special District Legislative days will be held May 21-22, General Managers Summit May 23-24 in Anaheim, Annual Conference in Indian Wells September 9-12, and Board Clerk Conference October 21-23 in San Diego.

Member benefits: check out Streamline for website management, California Class for investment opportunities for special districts, a new business affiliate is available to help with cybersecurity and technology and the CSDA can assist with federal grant support.

CSDA Update Continued:

Advocacy – CBRT Initiative 1935. CSDA is working with a coalition group taking a stance assuming this initiative will be on the ballot. They are working to stop this in its tracks through public education and what services will be taken away should it pass. Colleen encouraged all districts to adopt the resolution created by the CSDA opposing Initiative 1935. Additionally, the Special Districts Act would define special districts and open up more federal funding opportunities.

VIII. Adjournment

Next meeting July 25th.

The Sonoma County Special Districts meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.