

Commissioners
Javier Moreno, Chair (City)
Maria Nava-Froelich (City)
Jesus E. Escobar, Vice-Chair (County)
Michael W. Kelley (County)
Vacant (Public)



Alternate Commissioners
Robert Amparano (City)
John Hawk (County)
Jose Landeros (Public)

SUMMARY OF THE LAFCO MEETING

Thursday, March 28, 2024
8:30 a.m.
El Centro City Council Chambers
1275 Main St., El Centro, CA 92243

VOTING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	Javier Moreno, Chair Maria Nava-Froelich Michael W. Kelley Jose Landeros John Hawk
ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	None
ABSENT:	Jesus E. Escobar, Vice-Chair
STAFF PRESENT:	Paula Graf, Executive Officer Lori Zinn, Clerk/Analyst Steve Walker, Legal Counsel

- 1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

The Commission appointed Commissioner Javier Moreno as the LAFCO Chair for 2024.

Motion by Commissioner Froelich to appoint Commissioner Moreno as Chair for 2024

AYES: FROELICH, MORENO, LANDEROS, HAWK, KELLEY
NAYS: NONE
ABSENT: ESCOBAR
ABSTAIN: NONE

- 5. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Commission appointed Jesus E. Escobar as the LAFCO Vice-Chair for 2024.

Motion by Commissioner Kelley to appoint Commissioner Escobar as Vice-Chair for 2024

AYES: FROELICH, MORENO, LANDEROS, HAWK, KELLEY
NAYS: NONE
ABSENT: ESCOBAR
ABSTAIN: NONE

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Smith with the Imperial Valley Coalition for Sustainable Healthcare Facilities was allowed to make a public comment on item 11 since he needed to leave. He read a letter dated March 28, 2024, from President Frank Brabec of the Imperial Valley Coalition for Sustainable Healthcare Facilities, asking the LAFCO Commission to continue the public hearing on the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District until at least after the November election when voters will have a say on the funding mechanism for the new Imperial Valley Healthcare District.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. December 14, 2023 meeting minutes

b. Project Status Report

The Commission approved the consent calendar.

Motion by Commissioner Froelich to approve the consent calendar

AYES: FROELICH, MORENO, LANDEROS, HAWK, KELLEY

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: ESCOBAR

ABSTAIN: NONE

8. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Froelich let everyone know that this would be her last meeting and that the City Select Committee would appoint someone to replace her as City Member to the LAFCO Commission. She also informed everyone that Mr. Eric Rubino is the interim police chief for the City of Calipatria and that the League of Cities meeting would be held tonight.

Commissioner Moreno thanked the Commission for their support in making him the Chair, he appreciates that and is looking forward to working with everyone.

9. EXECUTIVE OFFICER ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Calendar of Events for 2024

Executive Officer Paula Graf let everyone know that there were two calendars in their packet, the LAFCO meeting calendar for 2024, and the CALAFCO event calendar for 2024. She also let everyone know that the annual conference for this year would be from October 16 through October 18 in Yosemite.

10. CLOSED SESSION

Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation

(Gov. Code § 54956.9) Name of Case: City of El Centro v. Imperial LAFCO case #ECU002984

Legal Counsel Steve Walker reported one item was discussed but no action was taken.

11. PUBLIC HEARING

[9:00] A.M. Continued Public Hearing from November 16, 2023, and related action to consider the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District Proposed Expansion and: The adoption of a Negative Declaration (ND) of environmental impacts; consider and adopt a Fiscal Impact Analysis to determine a proposed county-wide tax; approve or deny the Expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District to cover the entire county of Imperial or a substantial portion thereof; to include, concurrent therewith, the Dissolution of the Heffernan Memorial Healthcare District; to include directions to the County Board of Supervisors to schedule during the next regular election, a measure to add a tax to all parcels of land within the county of Imperial that are allowed to be taxed.

Legal Counsel Steve Walker noted that the public hearing opened at 9:11 am.

General Counsel Sally Nguyen of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District made comments in support of approving the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District. She also requested to keep the application pending as a backup plan for AB 918.

Council Member Tomas Oliva of the City of El Centro made comments in opposition to approving the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District so that we can focus on the Imperial Valley Healthcare District and all the work that needs to be done.

Board President Catalina Alcantara-Santillan of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District made comments in support of approving the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District, as an expansion saves time & money versus the bill.

Board President Katherine Burnworth of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District made comments in opposition to approving the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District. She also gave an update on the Imperial Valley Healthcare District, as well as answered some questions.

CEO Tomas Virgen of the Heffernan Memorial Healthcare District made comments in opposition to approving the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District.

Board Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Nickolas Aguirre of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District made comments on this item and requested to keep the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District as a safety net and backup plan.

Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia was allowed to speak on speaker via the cell phone of District Representative Guillermo Hernandez Jr. of Senator Padilla's office. He let everyone know about some recent meetings that took place, spoke on AB 918 and the Imperial Valley Healthcare District, as well as answered some questions. He stated that the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District is not a safety net, nor plan B, but that the guaranteed approach is through the process of AB 918.

Legal Counsel Steve Walker read an email from Board of Supervisor Ryan Kelley of the County of Imperial in support of approving the expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District.

Legal Counsel Steve Walker listed letters received, noting to be part of the record of the public hearing.

1. Letter of opposition from Board President Sylvia Bernal of the Heffernan Memorial Healthcare District dated 3/21/2024.
2. Letter of a legal opinion from the Office of Legislative Counsel to Assembly Member Garcia dated 3/20/2024.
3. Letter of opposition from El Centro City Attorney Elizabeth Martyn dated 3/26/2024.
4. Letter of opposition from Legal Counsel Adriana Ochoa of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District dated 3/25/2024.
5. Letter asking for a continuance from President Frank Brabec of the Imperial Valley Coalition for Sustainable Healthcare Facilities dated 3/28/2024.

Legal Counsel Steve Walker noted that the public hearing closed at 10:10 am. He explained the options for today's vote, as well as what the staff's recommendation was.

The Commission discussed the item, and the following action was taken.

Motion by Commissioner Kelley to deny the Expansion of the Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District

AYES:	FROELICH, MORENO, LANDEROS, HAWK, KELLEY
NAYS:	NONE
ABSENT:	ESCOBAR
ABSTAIN:	NONE

12. DISCUSSION AND ACTION

a. Appointment of a Public Member to the Commission

The Commission listened to and discussed the statements made by both candidates, David Salgado, and Jose Landeros. The Commission appointed David Salgado as the Public Member of the Commission.

Motion by Commissioner Kelley to appoint David Salgado as the Public Member of the Commission

AYES: FROELICH, HAWK, KELLEY
NAYS: MORENO, LANDEROS
ABSENT: ESCOBAR
ABSTAIN: NONE

b. Imperial Valley Healthcare District

Executive Officer Paula Graf let the Commission know that she was going to ask a representative from the Imperial Valley Healthcare District to give an update on how the district has been doing, but this was done already under item 11 by President Katherine Burnworth of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District.

Legal Counsel Adriana Ochoa of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District let everyone know what items would be on the agenda for the April 11th board meeting. She also answered some questions.

Support Staff Tomas Virgen of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District told everyone to visit their website at www.iv-hd.org for updates.

No action was taken on this item.

c. Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Executive Officer Paula Graf presented the proposed Draft Budget for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025. The Commission discussed the information in the Executive Officer's Report and approved the Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Motion by Commissioner Kelley to approve the Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

AYES: FROELICH, MORENO, LANDEROS, HAWK, KELLEY
NAYS: NONE
ABSENT: ESCOBAR
ABSTAIN: NONE

13. ADJOURNMENT

Javier Moreno, Chair



Paula Graf, Executive Officer