

Minutes of October 16th 2025 LCRCO Board Meeting

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Kate Schmidt-Hopper of the LCRCO Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m., Jing Wang will take the Minutes.

Directors Present:, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Harry Lyons, Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Steve Campbell

Directors Absent: Randy Krag, Joseph Sullivan

Others Present:

In Person: Julia Sullivan (Executive Director), Jing Wang (Bookkeeper)

Virtually: Megan McCluer-Lopez (Finance Manager), John Vandervort (Conservation Program Manager)

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1. **INTRODUCTIONS** and consideration of extra items not appearing on the posted agenda.
 - The Board acknowledged the absence of President Randy Krag and Director Joe Sullivan. As all attendees were familiar with one another, no introductions were necessary.
2. **PUBLIC INPUT** - Anyone may speak for three minutes on a subject not on the agenda; no action will be taken by the Board.
 - No members of the public were present, and no public comments were offered.
3. **BOARD REVIEW AND UPDATES**

3.1 UPDATE on staff activities - Julia Sullivan, Executive Director

- Executive Director Julia Sullivan presented a comprehensive staff report. She commended the staff for maintaining steady progress on projects despite limitations arising from the ongoing federal government shutdown, which has temporarily restricted NRCS oversight and vehicle access. EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) projects are progressing despite these hurdles.
- Julia announced that the RCD had officially received the SALC Award, a competitive grant administered through the California Department of Conservation (DOC). This \$500,000 award will fund agricultural and community outreach work in partnership with the Lake County Community Development Department (CDD). LCRCO will serve as the lead implementer for the project.
- Board members stated that they are experiencing access issues due to RCD's migration to a new Google Drive, staff will follow up with the Board to resolve the issues.
- Merry Jo asked for clarification regarding survival rates in the Middletown Phase II replanting project. Julia confirmed that approximately 85% of trees survived, exceeding funder expectations.

- Merry Jo raised concern regarding communication with the Lake County Land Trust (LCLT) on the Kuhlanapo wetland mitigation project. She emphasized that RCD staff cannot propose or plan projects on land trust property without coordination. Julia apologized for miscommunication regarding RCD staff attendance and committed to attend a follow up Land Trust meeting.

3.2 ROLL CALL on ongoing projects with Board Hosts

- Randy Krag – Absent
- Harry Lyons – None
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper – None
- Shula Shoup – None
- Merry Jo Velasquez – None
- Steve Campbell – None
- Joseph Sullivan – Absent

3.3 UPDATE on NRCS activities – Erica Lundquist

- Due to the Federal Government shutdown, NRCS District Conservationist Erica Lundquist was absent, and no NRCS report was provided.

3.4 UPDATE from President and Directors

- Randy Krag - Absent
- Harry Lyons –
 - Director Harry Lyons reported that he and Greg Dills are providing information support to subcommittees of the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Scott’s Creek Planning Project, a proposed \$250,000 planning grant from the Water Board for erosion control design. He plans to attend the Technical Subcommittee meeting on October 23, while Greg will attend the Socioeconomic Subcommittee meeting on October 28.
 - Harry is working to secure for a letter of support from the CA Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). Julia also offered to submit a letter of support from the RCD.
 - A brief discussion by the Board followed regarding the status of the Scott’s Creek Water Board, which the County intends to dissolve due to long-standing inactivity.
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper - None
- Shula Shoup - None
- Merry Jo Velasquez - None
- Steve Campbell - None
- Joseph Sullivan - Absent

3.5 UPDATE from Strategic Planning Committee

- The Strategic Planning Committee will reconvene on October 29, 2025, to review preliminary findings and recommendations from Strategic Planning facilitator Amy Stork.
- Board members agreed that the Strategic Planning Retreat held earlier in the month was highly productive.

4. ACTION – Includes discussion.

4.1 VOTE on approval of September 2025 meeting minutes

Discussion: None.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Steve Campbell

Ayes: Merry Jo Velasquez, Steve Campbell, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Shula Shoup

Nays: none

Absent: Randy Krag, Joseph Sullivan

Abstained: Harry Lyons

Result: Passed

4.2 VOTE on acceptance of August financial report

Discussion:

- Megan presented the August financials and reported that no invoices or receivables were outstanding beyond 60 days. She noted significant improvement in payment timelines to contractors compared to the previous year.
- The District's general operating expenses have increased from roughly \$10,000 to \$25,000 per month, a planned and budgeted increase reflecting expanded operations.
- For this month, the profitability reports included both a (fiscal) year-to-date summary and a full historical view, enabling better overview of project trends. Board members expressed appreciation for the clarity and suggested quarterly updates or bi-annual updates.

Motion to Approve: Harry Lyons

Seconded: Merry Jo Velasquez

Ayes: Steve Campbell, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Harry Lyons, Merry Jo Velasquez

Nays: none

Absent: Randy Krag, Joseph Sullivan

Abstained: Shula Shoup

Result: Passed

4.3 VOTE on CARCD indirect resolution

Discussion:

- Julia introduced the resolution co-sponsored by multiple RCDs to be presented at the upcoming CARCD Board Meeting. The resolution urges CARCD to advocate for higher allowable indirect cost rates in RCD contracts, to more fully cover administrative overhead costs that grants typically underfund.

Motion to Approve: Harry Lyons

Seconded: Merry Jo Velasquez

Ayes: Steve Campbell, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Harry Lyons, Merry Jo Velasquez, Shula Shoup

Nays: none

Absent: Randy Krag, Joseph Sullivan

Abstained: none

Result: Passed

4.4 VOTE on LCRCDD acceptance of California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) funds for Clearlake Oaks Phase I Project

Discussion:

- Julia presented the proposal to formally accept \$2.3 million in general funds from the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) for the Clearlake Oaks Phase I Project, which was approved by the Blue Ribbon Committee.
- Julia further explained that while earlier proposals to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) for this project were not funded, the CNRA grant will support planning and 65% design for restoration and dredging work in the Clearlake Oaks Keys area. HANA Resources will serve as a key subcontractor under LCRCDD's management, and the Clearlake Oaks Property Owners Association (POA) will participate in community engagement activities.
- Megan emphasized that this is a planning only grant, and expectations must be managed accordingly.

Motion to Approve: Shula Shoup

Seconded: Merry Jo Velasquez

Ayes: Steve Campbell, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Harry Lyons, Merry Jo Velasquez, Shula Shoup

Nays: none

Absent: Randy Krag, Joseph Sullivan

Abstained: none

Result: Passed

4.5 VOTE on approval of LCRCDD submission of NACD TA application in partnership with Napa RCD

Discussion:

- Julia requested authorization to submit a National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Technical Assistance (TA) grant application in partnership with Napa RCD, continuing an established collaboration.
- This annual grant provides funding for NRCS partnership activities, covering staff time for Noah, Estefania, John, and Julia. LCRCDD will serve as the lead applicant. The total request is expected to be approximately \$500,000, with roughly \$320,000 for Lake RCD and \$180,000 for Napa RCD.

Motion to Approve: Harry Lyons

Seconded: Steve Campbell

Ayes: Steve Campbell, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Harry Lyons, Merry Jo Velasquez, Shula Shoup

Nays: none

Absent: Randy Krag, Joseph Sullivan

Abstained: none

Result: Passed

5. DISCUSSION – Does not include action.

5.1 Project presentation (APGP, OPR-Biomass) by John Vandervort

- LCRCDD Conservation Program Manager John Vandervort gave an in-depth presentation on the District's ongoing work under the Adaptation Planning Grant Program (APGP) from the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) formally known as the Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

5.2 Preliminary discussion of LCRCDD-Risk Reduction Authority (RRA) relationship moving forward

- Julia initiated discussion on the LCRCDD's partnership with the Lake County Risk Reduction Authority (RRA), inviting open dialogue about future collaboration and support levels.
- Julia emphasized that funding is the key constraint. The current support funded through the APGP grant ends at the end of 2025. Without new funding, the LCRCDD will need to decide whether to continue facilitating RRA activities.
 - The Board must determine whether to increase, maintain, or reduce support, balancing financial feasibility with strategic priorities.
- The general consensus of the LCRCDD Board is that the RRA is valuable in concept, but suffers from lack of funding and clarity. The Board also agreed that LCRCDD's role needs clearer definition to avoid mission creep.
- To follow up, Julia will share more RRA materials, and prepare 3–4 options outlining levels of future engagement and funding implications.

6. AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS

- The Board requested that a follow-up discussion on the RRA be included on the agenda for the November Board Meeting.
- The Board requested that a review of the board attendance policy be included on the agenda for the November Board Meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn : Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Steve Campbell

Ayes: Steve Campbell, Kate Schmidt-Hopper, Harry Lyons, Merry Jo Velasquez, Shula Shoup

Nays: none

Absent: Randy Krag, Joseph Sullivan

Abstained: none

Result: Meeting Adjourned at 3:45 PM.