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Stephen Morgan
Special District Member

James M. Underwood
Interim Executive Officer/
General Counsel

December 3, 2015

Commissioners:

Re: SHASTA LAFCO SUPPORT STAFFING & OFFICE HOURS (Item # 8c)

Background

Shasta LAFCO has used part-time staff provided through temporary staffing services to support its day-to-day office management and support functions for several years. Recently, however, with reduced agency activity, and corresponding reduced support staff hour needs, it has been difficult to attract and retain qualified part-time support staff help, excepting for the part-time Office Manager position. This has exacerbated challenges in maintaining consistent office hours for the public conduct of business. This agenda item was requested by the Commission to enable a discussion of related issues and options.

Discussion

This agency has, in recent years, obtained office management and other support staff help through temporary staffing services. That has included the services of Kathy Bull, the Shasta LAFCO Office Manager, but her availability has been limited to working in the evenings due to another full-time job commitment. Office receptionist and clerk functions have also been filled by part-time staff, but in recent months we have had difficulties in obtaining and retaining qualified support staff for the receptionist/clerk function. As a result, even the limited target Shasta LAFCO office hours of 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, have been intermittent.

Factors that have influenced our ability to obtain and retain the services of qualified support staff for receptionist/clerk functions, and to enable consistent public office hours, include:

- Limited Hours – Limited hour part-time positions are generally difficult to fill and maintain when there is a need for only 16 to 20 hours weekly, as is presently the case at Shasta LAFCO.
- Relatively Low Wages – The employee position required to keep the Shasta LAFCO office open for public access does not require a high level of skills, and is therefore paid at or below \$15.00 hourly, which means that there is usually not a significant employee “investment” in this part-time employment.
- Limited Office Manager Hours – Kathy Bull, while doing a good job on a part-time basis, has been working in the evenings on accounting and other office management functions, making supervision of and ongoing contact with part-time receptionist/clerk employees difficult.
- Absence of Shared Staffing Opportunities - There is not presently an opportunity to utilize the support staff employed directly by the contract executive officer in a way that might be cost-

effective, though this has been done on an occasional basis using Underwood & Wetzel Law Offices support staff as needed.

- Message Services - The forwarding of telephone calls and email messages to the contract executive officer or a message service can occur, but is of limited value in addressing consistent public office hour goals.

These factors have made recent efforts to employ and retain part-time employees a challenge, which has also made the maintenance of consistent Shasta LAFCO office hours for public access a challenge. However, pending the engagement of a new Executive Officer for further review of options, the following steps are recommended to ensure consistent public access to LAFCO staff representatives: (1) When there is no staff in the Shasta LAFCO office the phone will be forwarded to the Interim Executive Officer's Redding office, which will enable his staff to take messages for management as determined appropriate; (2) a proactive effort is ongoing to hire and maintain part-time receptionist/clerk support help through local temporary employment services options; and (3) The Shasta LAFCO office will have updated office hours posted, with notifications that members of the public can deliver materials to or make personal inquiries at the Interim Executive Officer's office at 1274 Court Street, in Redding.

The goal, at least pending the engagement of a new Executive Officer, is and must be to have consistent public office hours for the conduct of agency business. If Shasta LAFCO were to be located proximate to another local agency, and ideally if it shared a common reception area with another public agency, there might also be shared reception functions and associated costs that could be explored, but that is not presently an option.

Alternatives

Staff is open to whatever alternative direction the Commission may want to provide to assist in achieving the goals of consistent Shasta LAFCO office hours for public access, and improved responsiveness to public inquiries concerning agency concerns, consistent with constrained budget resources.

Conclusion & Recommendations

It is recommended that the Commission discuss and provide direction to the Interim Executive Officer concerning immediate and longer term options for achieving consistent limited Shasta LAFCO office hours for public access, and regarding improved responsiveness to the interested public more generally.

Sincerely,

Jim Underwood

James M. Underwood,
General Counsel/Interim Executive Officer