



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting Minutes

Jefferson Community Center Auditorium
1000 B Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Tuesday, March 10 2026
6:00 PM

Mid-Klamath Watershed Council Building
38150 State Highway 96, Orleans, CA 95556

Attendance

Members Present

Norman Bell, Deborah Dukes, Colin Fiske, Benjamin Fordham, Richard Johnson, Luna Latimer (remote), Chair Ethan Lawton, Vice Chair Dennis Leonardi, Pliny McCovey.

Absences

CAC Member Kit Mann, Board Liaison Sarah Schaefer.

Board-Nominee Vacancies

Blue Lake Rancheria, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Yurok Tribe.

Staff Present

IT Technician Ken Beals, Business Planning and Finance Director Lori Biondini, Infrastructure Programs Manager Juliette Bohn, Executive Director Elizabeth Burks, Board Clerk Lori Taketa, Deputy Executive Director Eileen Verbeck.

Meeting (Call to Order)

1. Open

Chair Lawton called the hybrid in-person and teleconference meeting to order on the above date at 6 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center and the Mid-Klamath Watershed Council Building (remote, public meeting location). The meeting agenda was posted at both locations on March 6, 2026.

2. Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

There were no non-agenda item public comments received for this meeting.

3. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Burks highlighted two bills that Community Choice Aggregators are closely tracking in the California Legislature:

- AB 1761 "Improving Energy Bill Transparency" which would allow those outside of PG&E and the CPUC to understand how the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment (PCIA) charge is calculated.
- SB 1138 "Lowering the Cost of California's Resource Adequacy (RA) Program" which would allow load serving entities to avoid over procuring RA, thus avoiding unnecessary costs to ratepayers.

Executive Director Burks postponed discussion of RCEA's engagement in major local project developments while the agency's role in implementing the Regional Climate Action Plan is being discussed by the Board. There was no public comment on this item.

4. Consent Calendar

4.1. Approve January 13, 2026, CAC Meeting Minutes.

4.2. Accept Local Major Projects Staff Notification List – None as of Agenda Publication.

Neither CAC members nor members of the public requested Consent Calendar item discussion.

Motion Dukes, Second McCovey: Approve Consent Calendar items.

The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Fordham, Johnson, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, McCovey. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Mann.

6. Community Advisory Committee Chair/Vice Chair Selection

Deputy Executive Director Verbeck described the schedule and requirements for Community Advisory Committee chair and vice chair selection appointments as outlined in the CAC Charter. There were no public comments on this item

Motion Johnson, Second Bell: Reappoint Ethan Lawton and Dennis Leonardi as Community Advisory Committee chair and vice chair, respectively, for terms beginning April 1, 2026, and ending March 31, 2027.

The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Fordham, Johnson, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, McCovey. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Mann.

7. Report on E-Bike and Regional Resilience Grant Program Outcomes

Infrastructure Programs Manager Bohn reported on RCEA's e-bike voucher program, which aims to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by providing incentives for purchasing e-bikes. The popular program is in its second year and offers adjusted voucher values to accommodate all income levels. Staff processed 143 applications so far with a 45-48% redemption rate. The group discussed the possibility of conducting incentivized surveys to gather VMT reduction data and justify investments. Committee members expressed e-bike safety concerns, including the need for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to improve alternative transportation adoption and safety. Manager Bohn emphasized local bike shops' key role in RCEA's e-bike program. The shops ensure quality e-bike purchases and provide maintenance and safety training.

Manager Bohn also updated the committee on energy resilient fire services in high-threat communities. The project received a \$3 million grant to install solar and battery systems at 17 critical facilities, including 16 fire stations and one tribal emergency communications tower. Crew members from six of the remote locations deployed mobile solar + battery trailers recently. Construction begins next month on roof-mounted solar + battery systems at the remaining sites. The targeted completion date is the end of 2026 or early 2027. The grant also funded prescribed burn training. The group discussed how this project fits with County Office of Emergency Services priorities and coordinates with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). The committee asked to review RCEA's critical facilities list annually, to add low-power FM radio station power backup to that list, and to hear a report on Cal Poly Humboldt students' research project on virtual power plants. There was no public comment on this item.

8. Community Choice Energy Program Cost-of-Service Rate Study Update

Business Planning and Finance Director Biondini described legal action against a California Community Choice Aggregator prompting many CCAs to undertake cost-of-service analyses and rate design studies as a best practice to justify electricity rates. Phase one of RCEA's cost-of-service analysis showed that RCEA's electricity rates recover \$4.7 million less than actual costs, with some customer classes under-recovering and others over-recovering costs. RCEA sets its rates at 0.5% lower than PG&E's electricity rates, and PG&E's recent large rate reduction forced RCEA's rates down. PCIA charges also increased, significantly lowering RCEA's revenue. Continuing to under-recover costs and maintain a discount on PG&E's rates would result in declining reserves from 200 days cash on hand this fiscal year, to 96 days by FY 2028.

The RCEA Board agreed to maintain their current discounted rates relative to PG&E while monitoring the agency's cash reserves. Should the number of days of unrestricted cash on hand decrease to 180, the Board will consider temporary rate changes. To set long-term rates that reflect the cost of providing programs and energy portfolio goals matching the community's priorities, RCEA will engage the community in revising the agency's strategic plan. Executive Director Burks described how the committee and stakeholder focus groups would be engaged to help with the planning process, and the need to balance goals with agency viability.

The group discussed how PG&E's rate design is influenced by policy and politics and not just the cost of providing service, and the risks of raising electricity rates above PG&E's, especially for RCEA's large customers. Members raised concerns about maintaining affordability for low-income customers and straying from climate goal commitments, inquired about investing RCEA's cash reserves, and requested a meeting dedicated to the new rate strategy. There were no public comments on this agenda item.

9. Member and Board Liaison Reports

Chair Lawton recognized departing committee members Pliny McCovey and Colin Fisk for their service.

10. Close & Adjourn

Chair Lawton adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Lori Taketa, Clerk of the Board