

CRESTON ADVISORY BODY

Meeting Minutes #191 for Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Creston Community Center – 5110 Swayze St, Creston

Creston Advisory Body Contact – CrestonAB@gmail.com

Meetings scheduled on the 3rd Wednesday of each month except December.

Chairperson – Sheila Lyons Vice Chair – Kurt Almond Treasurer – Roy Barba Secretary/Recorder – rotating duty

1. Call to Order

At approximately 19:02, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Recorder for the Meeting

Sheila Lyons thanked those present and stated that the first agenda item was to identify the recorder for the meeting: the person who would follow up on the minutes to ensure accuracy. Sheila asked Don to take that role. Kurt agreed to review the AI-generated minutes for accuracy.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken at approximately 19:03. The following members were recorded as present: Mike Aarons, Sheila Lyons, Roy Barba, Juan Soto, Don Clark, and Kurt. Thomas was noted as absent and believed to be out of town.

3. Approval of Prior Minutes

Sheila Lyons reported that the prior meeting minutes had been circulated and reviewed by Juan Soto and Sheila Lyons. She asked whether there were any comments or corrections. Hearing none, Sheila requested a motion to approve the September minutes. Kurt moved approval, and Mike Aarons seconded. The motion passed by voice vote with ayes heard and no opposition recorded.

4. Limited Public Comment and Community Announcements

No public comment items were brought forward for distribution to the community. Sheila Lyons announced that Election Day would be November 3 and that the Creston Community Center would serve as a polling location. She also announced the Women's Club annual fundraiser, the Bloody Mary Battle, Burrito, Bovine Bingo, or "B5," scheduled for October 3 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; tickets were described as \$35 in advance or \$45 at the door.

Sheila also reported that CATCH, the umbrella organization for the community center and local organizations, planned its annual Cowboy Christmas fundraiser for Saturday, December 12. The event is intended to revive a pre-COVID tradition and may include a beef entrée and dessert auction. Sheila noted that CATCH received a \$20,000 grant from the San Luis Obispo Community Foundation over two years, but emphasized that annual facility expenses are approximately \$20,000 and that continued fundraising and organizational contributions are still needed. CAB members were asked to consider how CAB could contribute, including possible help with setup, lighting, decorating, or other support.

CRESTON ADVISORY BODY

Meeting Minutes #191 for Wednesday, September 16, 2026

5. Safety Report

No representatives from the Sheriff's Office, CHP, or Cal Fire were present. Sheila Lyons noted their absence was unusual and speculated that fire activity elsewhere may have affected attendance.

6. Fifth District Supervisor Report

Supervisor Heather Moreno was present and thanked the community for submitting letters to the Planning Commission regarding cannabis. She reported that she and Jennifer attended the Planning Commission meeting, that staff reported receiving no opposition, and that the item related to the one-mile buffer moved forward with a 4-0 vote, with one commissioner absent. She recommended that at least several CAB representatives attend the upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting when the matter is scheduled, speak in person if possible, and continue outreach by email. No exact hearing date was available; the matter was expected within the next month or two.

Supervisor Moreno also reported that the County's upcoming newsletter would focus on emergency preparedness and that the County Office of Emergency Services was working with departments, agencies, and community partners on coordinated planning. Discussion included the challenge of properties with creeks or sensitive habitat where permitting and mitigation costs can make defensible-space work more expensive. Supervisor Moreno said the County was exploring whether there might be a way to help property owners address those issues at reduced cost, but details were not yet available.

She further reported that a "ROPA 4" grant remained at the local level, with the deadline for local projects to move forward to the regional level occurring that day. She estimated that it could be at least two months before the community knows whether funding will be awarded. Dan Turner was noted as available to answer detailed grant questions.

Supervisor Moreno asked whether community office hours remained useful, observing that attendance had been low except during major issues such as the prior cannabis proposal. She described Creston as one of the most self-sufficient communities in her district and suggested that the need for office hours may depend on whether the community has active issues to raise.

Discussion then turned to parks and recreation. Sheila Lyons asked whether small funding might be available for amenities such as picnic tables in the community garden, which she described as serving as Creston's park and being used by students, workers, and residents. Supervisor Moreno said the idea could be explored, while also noting broader Parks and Recreation resource challenges. She discussed the need for stronger leadership, an upcoming search for a Parks and Recreation director, and the importance of prioritizing projects that can be maintained after grant funds are spent.

Don Clark raised related long-term planning issues around a community pool and the difficulty of obtaining grant funding without an identified park. Discussion included whether community or county ownership would affect insurance, liability, maintenance, and eligibility for funding. Sheila also described prior consideration of water features in the garden and noted that insurance costs made that infeasible.

CRESTON ADVISORY BODY

Meeting Minutes #191 for Wednesday, September 16, 2026

The group also discussed the idea of the community center serving as a resilience center during flooding, wildfire, heat, or isolation events, but Sheila reported that grant requirements such as cots and food storage were more than the community could meet.

Participants thanked Supervisor Moreno for moving the cannabis issue forward. Don Clark emphasized that social media outreach was important during the cannabis discussion because many residents were unaware of the status of prior proposals. Supervisor Moreno agreed that outreach had helped and observed that community input appeared persuasive even to commissioners who may have held different views.

7. New Business: San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council Presentation

Under new business, Sheila Lyons introduced Dan Turner and Baxter Boyington from the San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council. Dan Turner identified himself as Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council, a nonprofit 501(c)(3). He explained his history with Cal Fire and Creston, including serving as battalion chief when the current building was built and recalling the earlier volunteer fire station history. He noted that Creston remains meaningful to him because of his prior work in the area.

Dan Turner described the Fire Safe Council as a countywide organization created to bring agencies, community representatives, landowners, and stakeholders together around wildfire problems. He explained that the Council has existed since 1999, that its president has traditionally been a member of the County Board of Supervisors, and that its founding leadership included then-Supervisor Mike Ryan. He described the current council as having 33 board members representing a broad cross-section of county interests, including county supervisors, Cal Fire, Cal Poly, UC Cooperative Extension, fire prevention, resource conservation districts, cattle and farm organizations, builders, fire chiefs, insurance, environmental interests, PG&E, public works, air pollution, and cities.

Dan stated that the Council's practical goal is to identify the obstacle preventing wildfire-safety work from getting done and remove that obstacle. Examples included educating people who do not know there is a problem, helping people who know there is a problem but do not know what to do, and helping people who understand the problem but lack resources. He noted that the Council once began with very small grants and is now managing approximately \$14 million in grants countywide.

Dan discussed wildfire history and risk in San Luis Obispo County, noting that Creston lies in an area of repeated fire activity and that fire behavior changes where grass and oak woodland transition into chaparral. He emphasized that the Council evaluates not just the size of fires, but the consequences of fires based on assets at risk. A large fire in a remote area may have different consequences than a very small fire in a populated area.

He reviewed the Council's major activity areas: community planning, evacuation planning, land-use planning, resilient community design, fuel treatments, roadside and evacuation-route clearance, public

CRESTON ADVISORY BODY

Meeting Minutes #191 for Wednesday, September 16, 2026

education, agency partnerships, and chipping. He stressed that better land-use planning and fire-resistant community design are essential, especially for new development, while older communities built decades ago pose difficult retrofit challenges.

Dan described the Council's free chipping program for defensible-space work, joking that the Council dares residents to bankrupt it through chipping. The program is available in State Responsibility Areas, including the Creston area. Residents must do the cutting and place material for chipping; the Council arranges chipping and can either haul chips away or leave them if requested. A participant reported signing up through the state and not receiving service. Dan explained that residents should use the Fire Safe Council website and that the Council may schedule community chipping events or try to coordinate individual requests when crews are already in an area, while noting that one-off service is difficult because contractors must be hired.

Baxter helps coordinate Fire Wise Communities. Assess fire risks. Develop a 3 year plan to improve on defensible spaces, reduce risk. Can be up to 2500 people/properties. Create an evacuation model. An example of a defined area might be HOA boundaries. Community gets a state certification from National Fire Safety Council which can help with obtaining insurance.

8. Planning Department Update & Project Referrals – CAB Liaison Dominic Dal Porta not present

9. Unfinished Business – CAB Referrals on two projects from previous CAB meeting have not been submitted. Don and Juan will complete the Goodrow Events referral and Kurt Almond will complete the Abandy parcel certificate of compliance referral before the next CAB meeting.

10. Groundwater / Cannabis Tax Update - Murray Powell

The group also discussed cannabis taxation in other communities, noting that Grover Beach/Grover-area communities supported a cannabis tax measure tied to Proposition 64 and moved forward early with cannabis activity, while Creston was described as having different community priorities.

PRAGA submitted requests to Tax Collector/Assessor for parcels to be charged for water management over the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin. Questions were asked by the CAB members as to the legitimacy of such charges but no one had answers. Murray said no one who is going to be taxed has been showing up to the PRAGA meetings to protest. He noted one property on Riverside Rd., in Paso Robles is to be assessed \$40,000.

11. Committee Reports -

A. By-laws – Sheila had drafted a proposed change to by-laws covering CAB members covering more than one area if some area seats are vacant. Members decided no amendment to by-laws was necessary.

CRESTON ADVISORY BODY

Meeting Minutes #191 for Wednesday, September 16, 2026

CAB could continue with current process of getting volunteers from seated CAB areas to investigate and report on projects in areas without representation. This seems to have worked well to date.

B. Elections – Nothing to report.

C. Public Information – Nothing to report

12. Treasurers Report

Roy Barba reported that CAB had \$2,261.83 in the account and that, to his knowledge, all known expenses had been paid. Mike Aarons noted an additional reimbursement request for microphones in the amount of \$133.28.

13. Additional Public Comment Period - None

14. Future Meetings and Agenda Items – Next meeting October 21, 2026

15. Adjournment – 9:30 Motion made by Roy, 2nd by Juan. Unanimous vote.

Action Items and Follow-Up

- Don/Kurt to review the AI-generated minutes and verify accuracy before finalization.
- CAB members to consider how CAB can contribute to the December 12 Cowboy Christmas fundraiser, including setup, lights, decorating, or other support.
- CAB representatives to monitor the upcoming Board of Supervisors hearing date for the cannabis one-mile buffer item and plan for at least several members to attend or speak.
- Sheila Lyons/Jennifer to explore whether a comment can be submitted regarding community garden amenities such as picnic tables through the parks and recreation planning process.
- Supervisor Moreno's office to continue exploring ways to help property owners facing creek, habitat, or permitting-related barriers to defensible-space work.
- Community members interested in defensible-space chipping to use the Fire Safe Council website and coordinate possible chipping events or area scheduling

CRESTON ADVISORY BODY

Meeting Minutes #191 for Wednesday, September 16, 2026