HansonBridgett



Joan L. Cassman

Partner

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Firm Leadership
Government Ethics Practice Leader

Areas of Focus

- Government
- Government Ethics
- Municipal and Public Agency
- Public Transit and Transportation

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Joan has practiced in the field of municipal law for 45 years with Hanson Bridgett. She has also served a number of cities and public agencies as special counsel. For years, she served as one of the Evaluators for the City of San Jose Elections Commission and in that role, she recommended disposition of complaints alleging ethical violations under the San Jose Municipal Code.

Joan understands the art of serving a client as general counsel and how local government agencies function. She is often called upon to provide guidance as special counsel when crises occur, such as employee embezzlements or the misconduct of public officials. Joan has experience in a wide spectrum of issues, including election law, federal funding requirements, environmental and real property matters, railroad operations, purchase of service and franchise agreements, public works projects, municipal finance, and government reorganization matters. She has represented both public and private entities in government proceedings involving all aspects of development, contracts, procurement, and bid protests.

Publications

"Governor Plans to Lift COVID-19 State of Emergency, Limiting Agencies' Ability to Meet Remotely," Government Law Alert (October 2022)

"New Brown Act Reporting Requirements," Municipal & Public Agency Law Alert (March 2014)

“Declaring a State of Emergency: What You Need to Know,” Government Law Alert (May 2011)

Presentations

“Legal Counsel’s Role in Hiring a GM,” American Public Transportation Association’s Legal Affairs Conference (February 2016)

“Local Government in a Brave New World: Law Enforcement, Code Enforcement, and Public Agency Liability,” Municipal Law Institute Symposium (February 2015)

“Brown Act Compliance – Traps for the Unwary,” Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University (October 2014)

“We Had No Idea We Were Being Ripped Off! What Every Manager Needs To Know About Internal Controls and Fraud,” Municipal Management Association of Northern California Region 1 Event (June 2014)

“A New Look at Design Immunity: Expanding Protections for Public Entities,” International Municipal Lawyers Association Conference (October 2013)

“Municipal Restructuring: Discussion & Dialogue with Key Players,” Turnaround Management Association Northern California (June 2013)

“Selecting an Operator for Caltrain: The Procurement Experience and Lessons Learned,” American Public Transportation Association’s Legal Affairs Conference (February 2012)

“Legal Authority of Cities to Outsource and Share Services,” Hanson Bridgett Municipal Law Institute (February 2012)

“Outsourcing and Shared Services,” Hanson Bridgett Public Policy Forum (January 2012)

“Navigating the Labor Laws in a Time of Scarcity: RIF, Furloughs and Other Cutbacks,” Hanson Bridgett Seminar (April 2011)

“November Ballot Propositions,” San Mateo County Council of Cities Meeting (August 2010)

“Contractual Risk Transfer” (August 2010)

“The Investigatory and Reporting Authority of Civil Grand Juries Acting in Their ‘Watch Dog’ Capacity,” (June 2010)

“Controlling Public Employment Costs in Challenging Times,” Hanson Bridgett Workshop on Public Employee Benefits (May 2010)

"Keeping it Legal: The What's, Why's and How's of a Utility Rate and Connection Fee Ordinance," Bay Area City Attorneys Association (March 2010)

"From Grease to Energy – The Legal Challenges with the Millbrae Co-Generation Facility," Bay Area City Attorneys Association (July 2008)

"The Governor's Commission and OPEB Strategies," Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Workshop (March 2008)

"Arranged Marriage: Water Supply and Land Use Planning," Contra Costa County City Attorneys Association (August 2007)

"The Creep of Casual Corruption" (March 2006)

"Joint Powers Authorities: Opportunities and Challenges," League of California Cities (September 2003)

Honors & Awards

Daily Journal, Top 25 Municipal Lawyers of California (2011)

Super Lawyers, State, Local & Municipal; Legislative & Governmental Affairs (2006-2007)

Professional Affiliations

Bar Association of San Francisco, Member

Bay Area City Attorneys Association, former President

San Mateo County Bar Association, Government and Municipal Law Section, Member

Senator Dianne Feinstein's Judicial Advisory Committee for Northern California, Member

California Women Lawyers, Member

Queen's Bench Bar Association, Member

Education

J.D., UC Law San Francisco (Formerly UC Hastings) (1977)

B.A., Williams College and Wellesley College (1974)

Admissions and Courts

California