

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**LAWNDALE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**February 18, 2025**

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

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Mayor Pullen-Miles called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, 14717 Burin Avenue, Lawndale, California.

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Robert Pullen-Miles, Mayor Pro Tem Kearney, Councilmember Bernadette Suarez, Councilmember Francisco M. Talavera, Councilmember Sirley Cuevas

Other Participants: City Manager Sean M. Moore, City Attorney Gregory M. Murphy, City Clerk Erica Harbison, Assistant City Clerk Yvette Palomo, Deputy City Manager/Director of Human Resources Raylette Felton, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Captain Nicole Palomino, Municipal Services Director Michael Reyes, Finance Director Hrant Manuelian, Community Services Director Jason Minter, Public Works Director Lucho Rodriguez, Community Development Director Peter Kann

**B. CEREMONIALS (Flag Salute and Inspiration)**

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Mayor Pro Tem Kearney led the flag salute. Pastor Gregory Guich of Hawthorne Community Church provided the inspiration.

**C. PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT**

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**1. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Update**

Captain Palomino summarized the recent law enforcement activities.

**D. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (Public Comments)**

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Andrew Blackney, Resident, commented on pedestrian indicator traffic signals used in other cities and requested that the City consider installing these.

Deena Sopko, Resident, read a written comment submitted by Resident Randall Abram regarding the use and sale of fireworks in the City.

Rhonda Hofmann Gorman, Resident, commented that issues talked about at Neighborhood Watch meetings are being addressed, asked everyone to report suspicious activity, and announced that the next Neighborhood Watch meeting is on February 19, 2025.

Dominique Harris, Resident, submitted a written comment regarding yard fences heights and unsupervised dogs on private property.

## **E. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL**

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Councilmember Talavera thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting, commented that pedestrian indicator traffic signals are a great way to keep pedestrians safe, supports banning safe and sane fireworks if the City organizes a fireworks display, and stated that it was requested to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) that Neighborhood Watch meetings also be presented in Spanish.

Councilmember Suarez, thanked everyone that spoke at tonight's meeting, requested staff to review future projects that pedestrian indicator traffic signals can be implemented with, and requested LASD to provide an update on how they are addressing gang activity.

Councilmember Cuevas thanked everyone who spoke at tonight's meeting, invited members of the public to attend and speak at future meetings, inquired whether traffic signals are managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or the City, if permission is required to implement pedestrian indicator traffic signals, and whether it would be costly.

City Manager Moore responded that the City shares traffic signals with adjacent jurisdictions, Los Angeles County, and that the City has its own lights. Staff would work with other agencies for approval to implement pedestrian indicator traffic signals, and an item would be presented to the City Council to discuss the cost.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting, commented on witnessing residents break traffic laws, stated that all cities are challenging to ride bicycles in, and that translation services should be offered in all languages spoken by the City's population.

Mayor Pullen-Miles thanked everyone who spoke at tonight's meeting, expressed his support for pedestrian indicator traffic signals, thanked Resident Hofmann Gorman for her comments on Neighborhood Watch meetings, and encouraged residents to attend the next Neighborhood Watch meeting on February 19, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at the Harold E. Hofmann Community Center.

## **F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

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Councilmember Suarez commented that all the committee applications received were not included in the staff report for Agenda Items F.5. Beautification Committee Appointments for 2025-2027 Term, F.6. Parks, Recreation and Social Services Commission Appointments for 2025-2027 Term, F.7. Personnel Board Appointments for 2025-2027 Term, F.8. Planning Commission Appointments for 2025-2027 Term, and F.9. Senior Citizen Advisory Committee Appointments for 2025-2027 Term; therefore, she will be voting no on those items.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kearney and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to approve the consent calendar. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0 with Councilmember Suarez voting no on items F.5, F.6, F.7, F.8 and F.9.

2. Motion to read by title only and waive further reading of all ordinances listed on the Agenda  
— Recommendation: that the City Council read by title only and waive further reading of all ordinances listed on the agenda.

3. Accounts Payable Register

— Recommendation: that City Council adopts Resolution No. CC-2502-009 authorizing the payment of certain claims and demands in the amount of \$598,436.16.

4. Minutes of the Lawndale City Council Regular Meeting - February 3, 2025

— Recommendation: that the City Council approve the minutes.

5. Beautification Committee Appointments for 2025-2027 Term

— Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Approve the Mayor's appointments by directing staff to insert the appointees' names in Section 1 and 2 of Resolution No. CC-2502-011; and 2.) Adopt Resolution No. CC-2502-011 as amended.

6. Parks, Recreation and Social Services Commission Appointments for 2025-2027 Term

— Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Approve the Mayor's appointments by directing staff to insert the appointees' names in Section 1 and 2 of Resolution No. CC-2502-014; and 2.) Adopt Resolution No. CC-2502-014 as amended.

7. Personnel Board Appointments for 2025-2027 Term

— Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Approve the Mayor's appointments by directing staff to insert the appointees' names in Section 1 and 2 of Resolution No. CC-2502-013; and 2.) Adopt Resolution No. CC-2502-013 as amended.

8. Planning Commission Appointments for 2025-2027 Term

— Recommendation: that City Council 1.) Approve the Mayor's appointments by directing staff to insert the appointees' names in Section 1 and 2 of Resolution No. CC-2502-010; and 2.) Adopt Resolution No. CC-2502-010 as amended.

9. Senior Citizen Advisory Committee Appointments for 2025-2027 Term

— Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Approve the Mayor's appointments by directing staff to insert the appointees' names in Section 1 and 2 of Resolution No. CC-2502-012; and 2.) Adopt Resolution No. CC-2502-012 as amended.

## **G. ADMINISTRATION**

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### **10. Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance No. 1209-25, Amending Section 2.04.040 of Title 2 of the Lawndale Municipal Code Regarding City Clerk Compensation**

— Recommendation: that City Council: 1) Introduce for first reading by title only and waive further reading of Ordinance No. 1209-25, amending Chapter 2.16 of the Lawndale Municipal Code Regarding Compensation for Elected City Clerk to become effective 30 days after the second reading of the ordinance; and 2) authorize the Director of Finance/City Treasurer to appropriate \$2,100 from the General Fund to the Salaries – Elected Officials line item 100.130.501.200; OR 3) provide other direction to the City Manager and staff, if any.

Deputy City Manager/Human Resources Director Felton presented the staff report.

Mayor Pullen-Miles opened public comments.

Rhonda Hofmann Gorman, Resident, commented in favor of increasing the City Clerk's compensation and provided background information on past increases.

Mayor Pullen-Miles closed public comments.

Councilmember Suarez commented that she does not support increasing the City Clerk's compensation; therefore, she will be voting no.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kearney and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to introduce for first reading by title only and waive further reading of Ordinance No. 1209-25, amending Chapter 2.16 of the Lawndale Municipal Code Regarding Compensation for Elected City Clerk to become effective 30 days after the second reading of the ordinance; and authorize the Director of Finance/City Treasurer to appropriate \$2,100 from the General Fund to the Salaries – Elected Officials line item 100.130.501.200. The motion passed by a vote of 4-1 with Councilmember Suarez voting no.

### **11. Mid-Year Budget Update for Fiscal Year 2024-2025**

— Recommendation: that the City Council approve all recommended budget amendments noted in the Mid-Year Update for FY 2024-2025.

Finance Director Manuelian presented the staff report.

Councilmember Cuevas asked why the Golden State Water Company invoice amount was not questioned sooner, whether the City could audit Golden State Water Company to ensure invoice accuracy, and why the sales and use tax was low.

Finance Director Manuelian responded that the City was paying the water bill as it was received, staff is working with the Public Works Department to ensure accuracy of the invoice, sales and use tax has been decreasing state-wide, and there is a projected increase in the upcoming years.

City Manager Moore commented that the City Attorney's office is reviewing the matter and the City may not be liable for past month's invoices.

In response to Councilmember Suarez's questions, Finance Director Manuelian responded that the City has been conservative with the sales tax expectations in alignment with HDL's projections, the savings were caused by contracts of temporary staff positions ending early, vehicle maintenance fees not required due to vehicles being new, and budgets are amended as needed.

In response to Councilmember Suarez's questions, Community Services Director Minter responded that the department is actively hiring part-time staff to accommodate the community center's event space rental.

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers and Finance Director Manuelian about the Public Works Department's water costs, and the amount the City is being billed for past months.

A motion was made by Councilmember Cuevas and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kearney to approve all recommended budget amendments noted in the Mid-Year Update for FY 2024-2025. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

#### **12. 2025 Fireworks Applications Approval**

— Recommendation: that City Council approve or deny conditional permits to sell fireworks to the three applicants listed above or take other action if deemed appropriate.

Finance Director Manuelian presented the staff report.

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers and staff regarding staff reviewing applications, applications being received by the deadline, and discussing at a future meeting how many illegal fireworks citations that were given in 2024 were paid.

Mayor Pullen-Miles opened public comments.

Andrew Blackney, Resident, commented on the City's revoked license policy and the approval of a revoked organization's business application.

George Pelz, Resident, commented in favor of the sale of safe and sane fireworks, described the size and noise level of the safe and sane fireworks and how fundraising from the sale of fireworks would positively impact the local parks.

John Martinez, Resident, thanked the City Council for allowing the public to speak, thanked residents for attending the meeting to show their support, spoke in favor of selling safe and sane fireworks, and mentioned the improvements Lawndale Little League has made to the parks with the funds raised from selling fireworks.

Christina, Lawndale Little League Representative, stated that the league relies on fundraisers such as the fireworks booth to remain active, and that she would like to continue selling fireworks in the City to support league participants.

Luz, Parent of Lawndale Little League Participant, commented in favor of Lawndale Little League being approved to fundraise by selling fireworks and shared a story about how baseball positively impacted her family.

Matthew Harbison, Lawndale Wesleyan Church Pastor, commented on residents purchasing fireworks outside of the City and allowing the community organizations to sell fireworks.

Sandra Suarez, Resident, commented in favor of allowing organizations to fundraise by the sale of safe and sane fireworks.

Mayor Pullen-Miles closed public comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney stated that the South Bay 25 Club received approximately \$5,000 from fireworks sales, which was used for Santa's Sleigh and commented in favor of fireworks in the City.

Councilmember Suarez commented in favor of approving the three applications and on educating the public about handling fireworks correctly.

Councilmember Cuevas commented that because she is a part of the South Bay 25 Club she does not participate in the sales of fireworks and is in favor of approving the applications.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney commented that a fireworks display is not allowed to be hosted at the school district parks and the high school fields because they have artificial turf.

Councilmember Talavera commented in favor of waiving the permit application fee for all applicants and asked about the purpose of the fee.

City Manager Moore responded that the fee is based on the cost of administering the permits, and it is waived for Parks, Recreation, and Social Services Committee because they are a part of the City.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kearney and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to approve the conditional permits to sale fireworks to the three applicants as follows: Lawndale Parks, Recreation and Social Services Commission, Lawndale Little League and The Lawndale Wesleyan Church. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

### 13. Measure M Application

— Recommendation: that the City Council authorizes staff to submit the application requesting Measure M funding for the Local Travel Network.

Public Works Director Rodriguez presented the staff report.

Councilmember Suarez commented that part of this program is to educate the public on how to correctly use the streets and obey traffic laws.

In response to Councilmember Cuevas' questions, Public Works Director Rodriguez responded that the funds are to be used for design and construction, which is phase 1 and phase 2, and this item will be brought back to discuss further phases.

Councilmember Suarez commented that the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) is actively seeking to hire a planner.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kearney and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to authorize staff to submit the application requesting Measure M funding for the Local Travel Network. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

## **H. CITY MANAGER REPORT**

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City Manager Moore commented that he has nothing to report.

## **I. ITEMS FROM CITY COUNCILMEMBERS**

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### **14. Discussion of South Bay Cities Council of Governments Membership Dues Increase for FY 2025-26**

— Recommendation: that the City Council: 1) discuss the SBCCOG annual membership dues increase for fiscal year 2025-2026; and 2) provide direction to staff, if necessary.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney presented the staff report.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney requested that the City be reimbursed for the fees for the regional planner, and this item be brought back at the next City Council meeting with a breakdown of the dues, including the regional planner.

Councilmember Suarez commented that the SBCCOG can be invited to the next City Council meeting to answer questions, and fees are based on each city's population and their general fund reserve, and requested that all of the City's membership fees and conference fees be reviewed.

Mayor Pullen-Miles opened public comments.

Andrew Blackney, Resident, commented in favor of being a part of the SBCCOG.

Mayor Pullen-Miles closed public comments.

Councilmember Suarez commented that there was an increase in the fees due to a change on the organizational structure of the SBCCOG.

By consensus, the City Council directed staff to bring this item back to a future meeting to discuss the fees breakdown and invite SBCCOG staff.

## 15. Report of Attendance at Meetings

Councilmember Talavera attended the Senior's Valentine's lunch.

Councilmember Suarez attended a SBCCOG Steering Committee meeting and met with the Co-founder of Experimentally Structured Museum of Art (ESMoA) about the City creating an Arts Committee.

Councilmember Cuevas attended a Metro Budget Telephone Town Hall, the City's Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan (HBSP) Update Study Session, encouraged residents to attend the HBSP meetings and announced the Neighborhood Watch meeting scheduled for February 19, 2025 at the Harold E. Hofmann Community Center at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney attended the Senior's Valentine's lunch, California Joint Powers Insurance Authority Liability Trust Fund Oversight Committee meeting, and West Basin Facility Tour.

Mayor Pullen-Miles attended the Los Angeles County City Selection Committee Special meeting, the Los Angeles County City Selection Committee Western Region of the South Coast Air Quality Management District Special Meeting via Zoom and a Senior Lunch.

## J. ADJOURNMENT

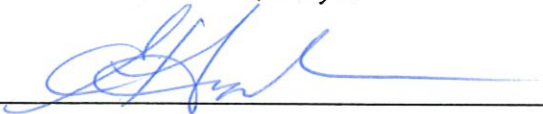
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There being no further business to conduct, Mayor Pullen-Miles adjourned the meeting at 8:07 a.m.



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Robert Pullen-Miles, Mayor



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Erica Harbison, City Clerk