

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE,
CALIFORNIA HELD MAY 14, 2024.**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vargas called the City Council meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 4455 W. 126th Street, Hawthorne, California.

INVOCATION

Hope Chapel Pastor George Magdalany gave the evening's invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Former Mayor Guy Hocker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES/PRESENTATIONS

1. Proclamation for Daniel Lucero (Army Retirement)
2. Proclamation for American Lung Association (Turquoise Week)

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Monteiro, Patterson, Reyes English, Mayor Vargas.

Absent: Councilmember Manning.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Former Mayor **Guy Hocker** spoke against becoming a Charter City and listed many former elected officials who agree with him. He noted residents voted 60% against it in 2022 and the City currently runs well. **Alicia Nguyen** of the Fair Housing Foundation spoke of her organization's services to benefit residents. **James Reddick** spoke in favor of a Charter, adding he voted against it two years ago because it came along with a Council pay raise. He stated a Charter will prevent the State from running Hawthorne. **Ryan Richard** thanked the Council for giving residents an opportunity to understand what a Charter means.

CITY CLERK'S CONSENT CALENDAR

3. Approval of waiver of full readings of resolutions and ordinances on Tuesday, May 14, 2024's agenda.
4. City Treasurer requests approval of the warrants.

Warrant Nos.: 25912-26527; 196044-196057; 485901-486135; 73112-73432; 10954-10958
196059-196072;

Warrant Totals: \$1,717,232.13 \$16,101.86 \$2,409,137.02 \$923,935.48 \$143,555.79

RESOLUTIONS

5. Resolution No. 8461 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE, CALIFORNIA, PROVIDING FOR A NEW CITY SEAL AND LOGOS.

6. Resolution No. 8462 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A LIST OF PROJECTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 FUNDED BY SB1: THE ROAD REPAIR AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2017.

Councilmember Reyes English moved, seconded by Councilmember Monteiro, to approve the City Clerk’s consent calendar.

ROLL CALL AYES: Councilmembers Monteiro, Patterson, Reyes English, Mayor Vargas.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Councilmember Manning.

At 6:33 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Manning joined the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS (FIRST READING AND ADOPTIONS)

7. Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget Workshop/Department Work plans presentation for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Director of Finance Felice Lopez presented on the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Proposed Budget with a focus on long-term fiscal stability. She noted the \$247 million budget is highlighted by a \$2.4 million surplus and a 13% increase in General Fund revenue. She provided a department-by-department breakdown.

Councilmember Manning requested the Councilmembers’ event stipend be increased to \$2,000 from the proposed \$1,000. City Attorney Robert Kim stated this request should be brought back to Council as an action item because this is a Workshop. Councilmember Manning requested a line item for the Hawthorne Library and City Attorney Kim reiterated this is a direction staff wishes to discourage at this time because it is Agendized as a Workshop.

Councilmember Patterson stated he would be open to having a Special Meeting to discuss some of these specific line items. The Council agreed specific matters like the stipend and Library can be discussed as an Agendized item at the May 28th Regular Meeting.

Councilmember Patterson requested additional information on the success of the City’s inhouse collections efforts compared to when it contracted Merchants Adjustment Service, Inc. (MAS).

In response to Councilmember Reyes English’s inquiries, Information Systems Manager Josh Armstrong confirmed his department is currently understaffed.

Councilmember Reyes Vargas requested more information on illegal dumping and encouraged improving the removal of bulky items.

ORDINANCES

8. **Ordinance No. 2252** (1st Reading) AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING SECTION 2.30.140 (SALARIES OF THE CITY CLERK AND CITY TREASURER) OF CHAPTER 2.30 (CIVIL SERVICE GENERAL PROVISIONS AND REGULATIONS) OF TITLE 2 (ADMINISTRATION, CIVIL SERVICE AND PERSONNEL) OF THE HAWTHORNE MUNICIPAL CODE AND MAKING A FINDING OF EXEMPTION IN COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

Mayor Vargas moved to introduce the Ordinance.

CITY MANAGER'S CONSENT CALENDAR

9. Progress Payment #3 in the amount of \$632,762.76 due to Sequel Contractors of Santa Fe Springs, CA for Northeast Hawthorne Mobility Improvement Project (Project # 21-05)
10. Progress Payment #6 in the amount of \$592,661.30 due to GRBCON, Inc of Baldwin Park, CA for Sewer Main and Miscellaneous Storm Drain Improvement Project 2023 (Project # 23-04).
11. Award of Contract for 120 St Improvements – Crenshaw Blvd to Felton Ave, Phase II (Project # 21-03)
12. Progress Payment #7 in the amount of \$82,222.21 due to Elecnor Belco Electric of Chino, CA for Hawthorne Blvd Mobility Improvement Project – Phase II (Project # 23-01)
13. Progress Payment #11 in the amount of \$112,916.32 due to Elecnor Belco Electric of Chino, CA for Highway Safety Improvement Project Traffic Signal Upgrade and Reconstruction 120 St Improvement Project – Prairie Ave to Felton Ave (Project # 21-06).
14. Bids to Repair Betty Ainsworth Sports Center Exterior Doors.
15. Progress Payment #1 in the amount of \$514,309.38 due to Best Contracting Services, Inc of Gardena, CA for Betty Ainsworth Gymnasium Roof Replacement (Project #23-03).
16. Progress Payment #2 in the amount of \$154,831.85 due to Best Contracting Services, Inc of Gardena, CA for Betty Ainsworth Gymnasium Roof Replacement (Project #23-03).
17. Progress Payment #3 in the amount of \$577,012.47 due to Martinez Landscape Company, Inc. of Sylmar, CA for General Maintenance (Project #22-05).
18. Progress Payment #2 in the amount of \$271,671.50 due to Martinez Landscape Inc, of Sylmar, CA for Alley Improvement Project (Project #24-06).

19. City Owned Properties Renovation Project Professional Services Agreement with Pacific Packing and Moving LLC.
20. Approval of a Change Purchase Order to J. Lee Engineering, Inc on the amount of \$200,000 for a Total Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$250,000 annually.
21. Fiscal Year 2023/24 & 2024/25 Blanket Purchase Orders for the Public Works Department
22. Agreement Between the City of Hawthorne and Riverside County Sheriff's Department to provide overtime funding for after hours or weekend investigations and or enforcement. The Hawthorne Police Department was awarded \$106,000.00, which has been adopted into next year's budget (24-25).

Councilmember Reyes English moved, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Manning, to approve the City Manager's consent calendar.

Clarification was issued regarding the discrepancy between the printed Agenda having one fewer item in the City Manager's consent calendar than what was read and is being voted upon.

ROLL CALL AYES: Councilmembers Manning, Monteiro, Patterson, Reyes English, Mayor Vargas.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

23. Further Discussion Re. Charter for November General Election

Councilmember Monteiro stated being a Charter City would be good for having authority ahead of the State in matters relating to Senate Bill 9 and S.B. 10. He noted the State has since appealed the ruling granting Charter Cities this leverage against State housing mandates. He requested postponing the ballot initiative due to the time constraints and ongoing community confusion over what comes with Charter City status.

Councilmember Patterson agreed with Councilmember Monteiro. He clarified what is being discussed now is different than what residents voted on two years ago and stated being a Charter City does not give the Council a blank check to adjust compensation. He added his vision is to explore portions of a Constitution residents could adopt to improve the City.

Consultant Andrew Jared, Senior Counsel at Colantuono, Highsmith, and Whatley, PC, agreed with Councilmember Patterson's assessment of how a Charter compares to a Constitution in establishing basic laws for a jurisdiction. He clarified what is considered a local affair compared to a State affair, adding they are often up for legal clarification. He reported the State's appeal of its recent loss over S.B. 9 and S.B. 10 enforcement could take up to two years. He added a similar legal loss by General Law cities is currently under appeal. He noted the different civic legislative processes a Charter approved by residents could permit which are forbidden in a General Law City, such as the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles having veto power.

Councilmember Reyes English echoed Councilmember Monteiro's call for postponement to allow for sufficient community outreach, adding this diligence was crucial in the cannabis initiative. She noted a delay could lead to more foreclosures and similar concerns in the interim but acknowledged a Charter needs more time to be done right for the City's collective future.

The Councilmembers confirmed there is a consensus to postpone this matter.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

City Clerk Williams-Hunter encouraged residents to register to vote either in their office or online.

Councilmember Patterson requested creating a continuing education plan for all departments either through policy or budgeting to better stay up to date on best practices for their areas. He called for additional investment in the City's prosecution department to better take an aggressive stance against petty theft. He commended the Hawthorne Police Department (HPD) for hiring its first-ever African American female officer.

Councilmember Monteiro reported on the Hawthorne President's Council Volunteer Appreciation Day, honoring 75 volunteers who selflessly help the City. He reported attending the Southern California Association of Governments' Annual Assembly. He stated the HPD's drone presentation was mind-blowing. He thanked Mayor Pro Tem Manning and Councilmember Reyes English for their Mother's Day event. He reported attending meetings of the Clean Power Alliance and the Sanitation District. He promoted an upcoming fundraising dinner to benefit the HPD's K-9 unit and the City's Juneteenth celebration. He directed City Manager Norris to work with the Planning Commission to formulate a strategy for Imperial Highway's motels to improve and generate more Transient Occupancy Tax ahead of major events coming to the area in 2026 and 2028.

Councilmember Reyes English reported Bridge of Hope Housing is about to celebrate its first anniversary. She promoted Sociedad Jose Marti's upcoming event and informed City Manager Norris she would like to contribute from her stipend. She lamented the closing of Trinity Lutheran Church's school. She promoted Connect to Your Future's spring hiring event, HPD's K-9 dinner, the Hawthorne Senior Center's Los Angeles County Fair bus trip, the Community Services Dodgers Dream Team, and the Imperial Highway Improvement Project's ribbon cutting. She thanked those who joined her in lobbying against a proposed rate hike by the California Public Utilities Commission at its recent meeting in the City of Long Beach. She thanked those who helped with her Mother's Day event. She announced the birth of her eighth grandchild.

Mayor Pro Tem Manning thanked Councilmembers Patterson and Monteiro for both their in-person and stipend fund support of the Mother's Day event. She called to increase conference attendance funding for the City Council to \$5,000 and proposed increasing the City's capital asset budget by \$1,000,000. The Councilmembers agreed.

City Attorney Kim stated this would have to be Agendized as a discussion item and cautioned there are potential legal issues.

Mayor Pro Tem Manning reported attending a kickoff event for the Pope Francis Leadership Conference in the City of Norwalk, and a Small Business Summit hosted by County Supervisor Holly Mitchell.

Councilmember Reyes English echoed Ms. Nguyen's comments about the importance of the Fair Housing Foundation's work. She added she will host an upcoming free legal clinic for residents with legal issues through Female Advocacy Mentoring Empowerment (FAME). She added there will be an upcoming Council presentation from the group which recently conducted a similar tax workshop to showcase its results.

Councilmember Monteiro requested approval of a Proclamation acknowledging Bridgestone Family Center's 15 years and one welcoming the Prime Minister of Cape Verde. The Council agreed.

Mayor Vargas promoted the upcoming Memorial Day event hosted by Hawthorne Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 275 and the American Legion.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Vargas called for oral comments on Item Nos. 24-25. No public comments were received.

Mayor Vargas recessed the Council into Closed Session at 8:50 p.m.

24. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION, SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO LITIGATION
(Pursuant to subdivision (d)(2) of Section 54956.9 of the California Government Code)

One potential case

25. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – INITIATION OF LITIGATION AGAINST A THIRD PARTY
(Pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 54956.9 (d)(4) of the California Government Code)

One potential case

Mayor Vargas called the City Council meeting back to order at 9:15 p.m. following recess. City Attorney Kim reported direction has been given on Item No. 24. He added on Item No. 25 direction has been given to initiate litigation by a unanimous vote.

Mayor Vargas called for oral comments on Item Nos. 26-27. No public comments were received.

Mayor Vargas recessed the Council into Closed Session at 9:16 p.m.

26. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS
(Subdivision (a) of Section 54957.6 of the California Government Code)

Name of Labor Negotiator(s): Vontray Norris and Erika Lampkin
Regarding: Hawthorne Municipal Employees Association (HMEA)

Mayor Vargas called the City Council meeting back to order at 9:36 p.m. following recess. City Attorney Kim reported a Memorandum of Understanding has been tentatively approved unanimously by the City Council.

Mayor Vargas called for oral comments on Item No. 27. No public comments were received.

Mayor Vargas recessed the Council into Closed Session at 9:37 p.m.

27. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS
(Subdivision (a) of Section 54957.6 of the California Government Code)

Name of Labor Negotiator(s): Gary Tomatani
Regarding: Hawthorne Executive Group (HEG)

Mayor Vargas called the City Council meeting back to order at 9:59 p.m. following recess. City Attorney Kim reported a Memorandum of Understanding has been tentatively approved unanimously by the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Vargas adjourned the Regular Meeting at 9:59 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

DAYNA WILLIAMS-HUNTER, HAWTHORNE CITY CLERK