

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK
HELD AUGUST 25, 2026

Vol. 55 Pg. 263

1. GENERAL

The City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber of the Civic Center, 6650 Beach Boulevard, Buena Park, California, Mayor Traut presiding.

1A. CALL TO ORDER

1B. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Ahn, Franco, Sonne, Traut

ABSENT: Hoque (excused)

Also present were: Aaron France, City Manager; Chris Cardinale, City Attorney; and Adria M. Vicuña, MMC, Director of Government and Community Relations/City Clerk.

1C. INVOCATION

The Invocation was led by Elder Murray and Elder Nemargut, Buena Park Area Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

1D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sage Jimenez, San Marino Elementary School.

1E. CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager France reported on the following:

- Cooling Center at Senior Center, August 23 – 28, 2026.
- Trades and Apprenticeship Resource Fair, August 29, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., at Ehlers Event Center.
- Buena Park Culture Fest, September 19, 2026, 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., at Boisseranc Park. The 2026 Culture Fest will feature a parade that will begin at 2:00 p.m. along Dale Avenue and La Palma Avenue.
- New Artist Exhibit in the Council Chamber featuring the art work of Elise Acosta.
- Office Aide/Passport Agent Ralph Kirk announced the conclusion of this year's passport walk-in which will be August 27. Starting August 31, the Passport Services Division will only be intaking applications by appointment. The public may visit the City's website to book an appointment, or contact the Passport Services Division for passport-related information.

2. PRESENTATIONS

2A. CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION TO AMY LEE FOR COMPLETION OF HER YOUTH MICROGRANT PROJECT

Mayor Traut presented a Certificate of Recognition to Amy Lee for completion of her Youth Microgrant Project – *Germ Detectives*, and a certificate on behalf of State Senator Tony Strickland.

- 2B. CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION TO THE BUENA PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL
CREATIVE CREW FOR THEIR YOUTH MICROGRANT PROJECT
Presented to Lelei Atoe, Brisalyn Atoe, Alyx Pazos, Kadence Nguyen, Emily Medellin,
and Kayla Kana Dalog

Mayor Traut presented Certificates of Recognition to Lelei Atoe, Brisalyn Atoe, Alyx Pazos, Kadence Nguyen, Emily Medellin, and Kayla Kana Dalog for completion of their Youth Microgrant Project – *Buena Park Middle School Welcome Mural*, and certificates on behalf of State Senator Tony Strickland.

- 2C. EMPLOYEE 20-YEAR SERVICE AWARD
Sarah Guerra, Administrative Assistant, City Clerk's Office

Mayor Traut presented the Employee 20-Year Service Award to Administrative Assistant Sarah Guerra, and certificates on behalf of State Senator Tony Strickland and Assembly Member Sharon Quirk-Silva.

3A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Traut announced the public may at this time address the members of the City Council on any matters within the jurisdiction of the City Council.

Assistant City Clerk Almquist acknowledged that the City received email correspondences from Buena Park residents Kirk Garrett and Angelina Zahabi. Mr. Garrett voiced his concerns about the City's use of Flock cameras and requests the City Council to take action in prohibiting its overall use in the City. Ms. Zahabi shared her and her family's recent experience on Knott's Berry Farm property.

Brandon Schooner, Buena Park resident and Climate Action Commissioner, spoke regarding his participation in the SCE Big Creek Hyrdoelectric tour and shared key takeaways from the tour.

Lyndra Luistro, Buena Park resident, commented on the need for better City-resident notices especially with regards to large-scale projects such as the former Movieland site.

There being no additional requests to speak, Mayor Traut closed oral communications.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (4A – 4F)

Mayor Traut announced that Consent Calendar Item Nos. 4A through 4F would be acted upon by one motion affirming the actions as recommended on the agenda and agenda bills submitted and inquired if anyone present desired to have any item removed for separate consideration. There being no additional requests for separate consideration, the following action was taken on Item Nos. 4A – 4F:

MOTION: Franco
SECOND: Ahn
AYES: Franco, Ahn, Sonne, Traut
NOES: None
ABSENT: Hoque

MOTION CARRIED that all actions recommended on Consent Calendar Item Nos. 4A – 4F be approved.

Minutes

- 4A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Recommended Action: Approve the Minutes of the Special and Regular City Council Meetings of August 11, 2026.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Finance 75**4B. RESOLUTIONS APPROVING CLAIMS AND DEMANDS**

Recommended Action: 1) Adopt Resolutions approving the Claims and Demands.

ADOPTED the following titled resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 15157

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, ALLOWING CERTAIN CLAIMS AND DEMANDS IN THE SUM OF \$2,202,554.83 DEMAND NOS. 437318 THROUGH 437517

RESOLUTION NO. 15158

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, ALLOWING CERTAIN CLAIMS AND DEMANDS IN THE SUM OF \$16,803.84 COVERING RETIREE PAYROLL ENDING JULY 31, 2026

RESOLUTION NO. 15159

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, ALLOWING CERTAIN CLAIMS AND DEMANDS IN THE SUM OF \$1,387,982.72 COVERING REGULAR PAYROLL ENDING JULY 31, 2026

Reports & Studies 129**4C. TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2026**

Recommended Action: Receive and file the reports

APPROVED the recommended action.

Contracts 70 C-3443**4D. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE CODE GROUP (DBA "VCA CODE") FOR CONTINUED BUILDING INSPECTION, PLANNING, AND RELATED SERVICES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026- 2027**

Recommended Action: 1) Dispense with formal bidding pursuant to Buena Park Municipal Code Section 3.28.080(H), as continuing to utilize the current service provider is in the City's best interests; 2) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with The Code Group, Inc., doing business as VCA Code, for building inspection, plan review, planning, and related professional services for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, in an amount not to exceed \$150,000; 3) Authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to make any necessary, nonmonetary changes to the agreement; and, 4) Authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute the agreement.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Reports & Studies 129 Housing 87**4E. APPROVAL OF CITY RESPONSES TO 2025-2026 ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT: "CALIFORNIA HOUSING MANDATES: THE UNINTENDED RESHAPING OF ORANGE COUNTY NEIGHBORHOODS"**

Recommended Action: 1) Approve the City's responses to the Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled, "California Housing Mandates: The Unintended Reshaping of Orange County Neighborhoods."

APPROVED the recommended action.

Reports & Studies 129 Water 153**4F. APPROVAL OF CITY RESPONSES TO 2025-2026 ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT: "PFAS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS: A CLOSER LOOK AT ORANGE COUNTY DRINKING WATER"**

Recommended Action: 1) Approve the City's responses to the Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled, "PFAS and Public Awareness: A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water."

APPROVED the recommended action.

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

5. NEW BUSINESS (5A)

Contracts 70 C-3657 Public Works Proj. 125 PW-993 Budgets 47

- 5A. FINAL PAYMENT TO HARDY AND HARPER, INC. FOR THE DALE STREET REHABILITATION PROJECT FROM CRESCENT AVENUE TO SR-91
Presented by Jaden Miller, Principal Engineer

Recommended Action: 1) Accept the project as complete and approve a final payment to Hardy and Harper, Inc. in the amount of \$1,034,916.64; 2) Direct the Public Works Department to file a Notice of Completion; and, 3) Authorize a budget transfer in the amount of \$115,000 from the Commonwealth Avenue Account (24-9806- 590190) to balance the project account.

Principal Engineer Miller reported on the Dale Street Rehabilitation Project from Crescent Avenue to SR-91 project completion. It included asphalt pavement rehabilitation, removal and replacement of damaged curb and gutter, cross gutters, sidewalks, and curb ramps that are not compliant with ADA standards; and utility adjustments. The project also comprised of the additional installation of new Class II bike lanes from La Palma Avenue to the cul-de-sac near the SR-91 freeway, new enhanced visibility crosswalks, and additional signage in accordance with the CA MUTCD. The contractor has submitted an invoice for work completed through July 23, 2026. All items, quantities, and pricing have been reviewed and verified as consistent with the contract documents. The final payment due is \$1,034,916.64. The final contract cost for this project is \$1,943,546.65, which is approximately 2.3% below the approved project construction budget. Additionally, according to the cooperative agreement, City of Anaheim will reimburse Buena Park for its proportionate share of construction costs at a not to exceed amount of \$56,000. It was recommended that the City Council accept the project as complete and approve a final payment to Hardy and Harper, Inc. in the amount of \$1,034,916.64; direct the Public Works Department to file a Notice of Completion; and authorize a budget transfer of \$115,000 from the Commonwealth Avenue Account to the Dale Street Rehabilitation Project.

The City Council discussed the savings achieved from the original project construction budget, as well as residents' appreciation for the project's completion.

MOTION: Sonne
SECOND: Traut
AYES: Sonne, Traut, Ahn, Franco
NOES: None
ABSENT: Hoque

MOTION CARRIED to approve the recommended action.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

No public hearing items.

7. COUNCIL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONFERENCE REPORTS AND CALENDAR REQUESTS

7A. REPORT

Council Member Ahn reported the following:

- August 14 Chimac K-Culture Festival
- August 19 BBQ Fundraiser for Ladies Christmas Luncheon
- August 19 Sister City Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
- August 19 Special City Council Meeting
- August 21 Farewell Ceremony for Consul General Kim Youngwan
- August 22 KASEC Art Contest Ceremony

Council Member Franco reported the following:

- Symphony On The Go
- Infinity Cycle Grand Opening
- Council Chamber Art Tour from Surrealist Artist Elise Acosta
- OCTA Roundtable: Long-Range Transportation Plan

Council Member Sonne reported the following:

- August 19 Special City Council Meeting

Council Member Sonne also indicated speaking to residents in the neighborhood that will be affected by the upcoming Buena Park Culture Fest parade and no issues were raised. It was requested that the City notify residents in advance of the event by sending mailers and posting information on the City's website. Council Member Sonne also encouraged residents to contact her for any questions or concerns regarding the event.

Mayor Traut reported the following:

- August 19 Special City Council Meeting
- August 25 Congratulatory Message to Ansan for a Holiday in their City

8. RECESS/RECONVENE

The City Council did not recess.

9. STUDY SESSION (9A – 9B)

9A. DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND BUSINESSES AT CITY SPECIAL EVENTS

Presented by Mark Saucedo, Community Services Supervisor

Community Services Supervisor Saucedo presented opportunities to increase participation by local restaurants and businesses at City-sponsored special events. The City utilizes food vendors, such as food trucks, at various special events throughout the year, and verifies they maintain a valid permit issued by the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) to participate. Many City events have utilized food trucks because they are subject to established permitting and inspection requirements administered by the OCHCA.

Expanding participation to include brick-and-mortar restaurants and other food vendors may introduce additional permitting requirements and operational considerations. Restaurants and other non-food-truck vendors that prepare or serve food at special events are generally required to obtain a Temporary Food Facility (TFF) permit from OCHCA. Based on the current OCHCA fee schedule, the annual permit fee for this category is \$640, or vendors may obtain a permit on an event-by-event basis for \$217 per event. In addition, vendors must comply with OCHCA requirements for safe food preparation and handling. Depending on the type and scope of food service, these requirements may include handwashing facilities, overhead protection, approved flooring, proper booth identification, and access to a three-compartment sink. It was noted that additional requirements present additional costs and logistical considerations for interested local restaurants and businesses that have not previously participated in City events. However, creating a process that clearly communicates applicable permitting requirements and provides local businesses with advance notice could help facilitate participation and support a smoother event planning process.

Staff sought City Council direction on whether to continue with current approach and use food trucks, businesses, and non-profit groups at designated City special events; or proceed with considering and prioritizing local restaurants and businesses when selecting food and other vendors for City-sponsored special events before seeking participation from outside vendors.

Andrew Gregson, NOCC President and CEO, spoke in support of exploring ways to give Buena Park restaurants opportunity and priority to participate in City-sponsored events.

The City Council expressed support to prioritize Buena Park businesses and non-profit groups when selecting vendors for City special events; and, requested staff to assist local businesses in the process of obtaining appropriate permit and complying with OCHCA requirements.

Following the discussion, the City Council directed staff to prioritize consideration of local restaurants and businesses before seeking participation from non-profit food trucks at City-sponsored special events.

9B. DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING AN AUTOMATED CALL-TAKING OPTIMIZATION AND RESPONSE PILOT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE BUENA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS CENTER
Presented by Nghia Nguyen, Police Captain

Police Captain Nguyen reported on a proposed automated call-taking optimization platform for non-emergency calls. The Buena Park Police Department Communications Center provides exceptional service in handling high volume of calls involving both non-emergency and emergency matters. Despite their continued dedication and professionalism, the Communications Center faces persistent challenges, including mandatory overtime, employee burnout, staff turnover, and an extensive training process that can take approximately six months to one year for a new dispatcher to become fully trained.

In an effort to identify potential solutions, the Police Department has researched several automated call-handling platforms that are specifically designed for public safety communications centers. The systems utilize artificial intelligence (AI) and real-time data to assist with answering non-emergency calls, provide automated transcription services, support language translation, and guide callers through scripted questions based on the nature of their needs or concern. Additionally, live guidance 9-1-1 call-taking provides a "copilot" to guide dispatchers during a 9-1-1 call, helping ensure that all appropriate information is received and best practices are met.

The vendors evaluated included Motorola Hyper, Axon Prepared, and Aurelian's AVA and CORA. According to the Department's review, Aurelian was identified as the preferred vendor because it was the only vendor to offer a one-year pilot program for both automated call-taking and assistive 9-1-1 at a substantial discount. A one-year agreement would allow the Department to test and evaluate the technology, gauge community and employee feedback, and evaluate Aurelian's platform and customer service. Aurelian has also extended a special introductory offer for a three-year contract: with the first year being the pilot program at a cost of \$25,000, and if the City were satisfied with the platform, it would have the option to extend the contract for two additional years at a discounted rate of \$63,000 each year. Provided the City retains the ability to terminate the contract at the end of the first year, staff believes that the three-year term is likely to offer the City greater long-term value.

With the implementation of this platform, staff anticipates improvements on service delivery to the community and dispatchers' increased focus and full attention on emergency calls. Staff sought City Council direction to proceed with the adoption of this technology for BPPD's Communications Center; and, proceed with either a one-year pilot program for approximately \$25,000 or a three-year agreement with year one costing \$25,000.00 (asset forfeiture) and \$63,000.00 (unfunded) each additional year wherein the termination costs are prorated for the duration used.

Mayor Traut spoke in support of the innovation of processes and technology in City services to better serve the community. The intended use of artificial intelligence in the Communications Center is not aimed at replacing human labor, but supporting with call-handling. Mayor Traut expressed his concerns pertaining to community safety, labor impacts, and customer service. Moreover, Mayor Traut asked about AI's handling of language barriers such as when a caller does not speak English, and hurdles in the transition for use of the new technology.

Council Member Sonne expressed concerns regarding the potential use of recorded information and inquired about the software's data-gathering capabilities, including how information is stored, used, and shared, and community members' perception of AI handling the calls instead of a live person. Council Member Sonne also asked about the AI's ability to understand and effectively respond to callers who may be distressed, rambling, or speaking in environments with significant background noise.

Council Member Ahn expressed interest for the use of technology and supportive of how it will help alleviate the workload for staff. She also spoke in favor of implementing the pilot program and appreciated the ability to terminate the program after the one-year period.

Council Member Franco asked about available assistance for calls involving individuals with heavy accents, language barriers, or hearing and speech impairments; and about the ability to transfer calls to another department when it is determined that the inquiry can be better addressed by another department. Council Member Franco also recommended the creation of a form for reports regarding illegal dumping or graffiti and make it available on City website.

Anton Benbalit, Aurelian, explained that the system will be programmed according to the City's standards and SOPs. Aurelian will determine how the system can best support the department's needs and make the necessary adjustments accordingly.

Police Captain Nguyen explained the AI process of placing callers in queue until dispatchers are able to address them. It could also be programmed in a way that if the caller requests to speak to a live dispatcher that the AI will immediately transfer the call to a dispatcher. The Executive team met with labor groups and informed them of the proposed implementation of new technology and they were all supportive. It was emphasized that the technology will help reduce the workload from dispatchers, enabling them to prioritize emergency calls while efficiently handling non-emergency calls. More importantly, it is meant to support and not replace Department personnel. As for language translation, the technology has a built-in feature capable of providing immediate translation support in more than 100 languages. Current practice involves finding a staff member capable of translating a certain language to assist the caller. A hurdle that the Department aims to overcome is the fear of the technology taking over human jobs. The technology will help reduce personnel workload while enabling emergency calls to be prioritized and handled more efficiently.

Police Captain Nguyen also assured that the program does not retain information within the system. Any data captured by the system will be used solely for the purpose of addressing and responding to the call. Additionally, the Department will have the ability to configure and program the platform in accordance with its own policies, procedures, and protocols.

Dispatch Supervisor Esquitini explained that the technology will filter non-emergency calls while dispatchers are attending to emergency, 9-1-1, more critical calls. AI has been introduced to the industry due to the ongoing limited staffing and excessive workload experienced by dispatchers. The AI system is determined to be capable of understanding and effectively responding to callers as proven during the demonstrations. It was explained that deaf, hard of hearing, speech-impaired callers use the California Relay Service to make or receive phone calls which is special service than directly calling the non-emergency line. Those who may be distressed or rambling will be automatically transferred to the emergency line. As for setbacks, Dispatch Supervisor Esquitini indicated that the City of El Cajon Dispatch employees were hesitant to the change, and that the community was not as properly informed. Whereas, the Buena Park Police Department Communications Center has met with the consultant for questions and live demonstrations of the system, and has since been supportive for its implementation.

Following the discussion, the City Council supported the one-year pilot program for automated call-taking optimization with Aurelian.

10. CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager France reported on the following:

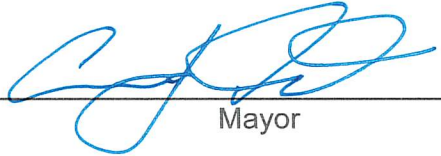
- All Employee Ice Cream Social, August 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., at the Community Center Ballroom.
- The City's Marketing team is providing information and resources to individuals affected by the GKN Aerospace incident in Garden Grove, including a website setup by GKN.
- City Manager France will be part of a commission addressing homelessness in Orange County, and thanked Chair Chaffee for visiting Buena Park and administering his oath of office.

11. COMMISSION & COMMITTEE UPDATES

Assistant City Clerk Almquist reported one vacancy in the Cultural Engagement Commission for District 1. The vacancy has been posted on the City's website. Interested residents may contact Council Member Ahn or contact the City Clerk's Office for additional information.

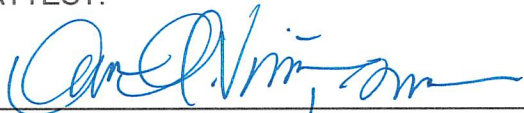
12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Traut adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk