

MINUTES
City Council Regular Meeting
November 17, 2025

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Pullen-Miles called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, 14717 Burin Avenue, Lawndale, California.

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

Other Participants: City Manager Dr. 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 Lieutenant Ricky Osburn, Finance Director Hrant Manuelian, Community Services Director Jason Minter, Public Works Director Luis (Lucho) Rodriguez, Community Development Director Peter Kann, Municipal Services Director Michael Reyes

B. CEREMONIALS (Flag Salute and Inspiration)

Councilmember Cuevas led the flag salute. Retired Pastor Dwight Dudley provided the inspiration.

C. PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

1. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Update

Lieutenant Osburn summarized the recent law enforcement activities and invited the community to attend the Angel Tree Lighting on Friday, December 5, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. at the Lawndale Civic Center.

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

Andrew Blackney, Resident, commented on the Redondo Beach Boulevard Active Transportation Corridor Project and provided a letter in support of the project.

E. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

Councilmember Talavera thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting, and thanked Resident Blackney for providing the update on the Redondo Beach Boulevard Active Transportation Corridor Project.

Councilmember Suarez thanked everyone that spoke and asked about the next steps for the Redondo Beach Boulevard Active Transportation Corridor Project.

Public Works Director Rodriguez responded that staff will contact the City of Redondo Beach for an update on the Redondo Beach Boulevard Active Transportation Corridor Project.

Mayor Pullen-Miles asked if they should wait for more information before sending a letter to the City of Redondo Beach.

Public Works Director Rodriguez responded that staff will contact the City of Redondo Beach for an update before submitting a letter.

Councilmember Cuevas thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

Mayor Pullen-Miles thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting, and thanked Resident Blackney for providing the letter regarding the Redondo Beach Boulevard Active Transportation Corridor Project.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

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.

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: Staff recommends that City Council adopts Resolution No. CC-2511-055 authorizing the payment of certain claims and demands in the amount of \$961,862.39.

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

— Recommendation: that the City Council approve the minutes.

G. ADMINISTRATION

5. Approval of Budget for Public Safety Officer Position

— Recommendation: that the City Council approve an increase in the annual budget for the creation of a Public Safety Officer position for \$101,500.

Municipal Services Director Reyes presented the staff report.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Kearney's and Mayor Pullen-Miles's questions, Municipal Services Director Reyes responded that the position would be under the supervision of the Municipal Services Department and that the position name has been changed to Public Safety Officer (PSO).

Municipal Services Director Reyes presented a video about the City of Norwalk's PSO position.

Lieutenant Osburn gave a presentation about City of Norwalk's Public Safety Model.

Discussion ensued between Councilmembers and staff about community trust, officer responsibilities, communication methods, and public outreach for the pilot PSO position.

Mayor Pullen-Miles opened public comments.

Randall Abram, Resident, commented in favor of hiring a PSO to handle routine calls to allow deputies to patrol more.

Mayor Pullen-Miles closed public comments.

In response to Councilmember Cuevas's question, Municipal Services Director Reyes stated that the PSO would be housed at the Municipal Services Department, receive a branded City vehicle, and complete incident reports.

Councilmember Cuevas asked how the PSO gains the public's trust, and if crime rates have decreased due to the staffing of a PSO.

Brian McNerney, City of Bellflower Public Safety Director, stated that the PSO builds public trust through long-term staffing and consistency, and stated that there is no clear data showing the PSO directly lowers crime rates, but the program provides benefits such as increased community engagement and reduced response times to routine calls, enabling deputies to focus on higher-priority incidents.

In response to Councilmember Cuevas's question, Municipal Services Director Reyes stated that, based on discussions with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), the planned work days for the PSO would be Monday through Friday.

In response to Councilmember Talavera's questions, Municipal Services Director Reyes stated that all calls would go through the LASD dispatcher who would assign appropriate incidents to the PSO, he commented that the PSO would complete official reports, be introduced to the community through neighborhood watch meetings, schools, events, City Council meetings, and local media, and that requiring higher education would increase costs and limit the applicant pool.

Councilmember Suarez commented that due to it being a new position, a community outreach campaign should be implemented to introduce the role and explain its responsibilities, expressed support for the agenda item and commented that, if the program proves successful, future funding could be directed toward expanding in-house PSOs instead of hiring additional security personnel.

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers regarding the amount of funding to allocate for a community outreach campaign and bringing a future agenda item forward to discuss community outreach options.

A motion was made by Councilmember Suarez and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to approve an increase in the annual budget for the creation of a Public Safety Officer position for \$101,500. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

6. Feasibility Study for the Creation of the Lawndale Police Department

— Recommendation: that the City Council provide direction to staff on whether to research the feasibility of establishing a City run Police Department and whether to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit agencies to conduct a feasibility study for

this purpose.

Municipal Services Director Reyes presented the staff report.

Mayor Pullen-Miles opened public comments.

Randall Abram, Resident, commented in opposition to the City preparing an RFP to conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a City police department and provided a handout.

Andrew Blackney, Resident, commented that the City establishing its own police department would be burdensome and suggested contracting with neighboring local police departments.

Deena Sopko, Resident, commented on the additional cost for the City to establishing its own police department and expressed support for LASD.

Mayor Pullen-Miles closed public comments.

Councilmember Kearney commented that establishing the City's own police department would be costly and complex, cited examples from other cities where consulting and staffing expenses were high. He noted additional costs for contracting specialized services such as SWAT, K9, and helicopters, and expressed concern about recruiting deputies. Councilmember Kearney suggested tabling the discussion and focusing on implementing the Public Safety Officer program.

Councilmember Cuevas commented on using the funds to hire an additional Public Safety Officer

Councilmember Suarez thanked everyone that spoke and commented in support of exploring other options such as contracting with surrounding cities.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kearney and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to direct staff to continue contracting with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The motion passed by a vote of 4-1, with Councilmember Suarez voting no.

7. Plant a Tree Memorial Program for Youth

- Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Comment on the guidelines for the Plant a Tree Memorial Program for youth; 2.) Provide direction for staff; or 3.) Approve the Plant a Tree Memorial Program for youth and the supporting guidelines.

Public Works Director Rodriguez presented the staff report.

In response to Councilmember Cuevas's question, Public Works Director Rodriguez stated that there is space for a maximum of five trees, plaques will not be installed, and guidelines will be created.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Kearney's question, Public Works Director Rodriguez responded that plants have not been discussed, and that not all parkways are large enough to accommodate memorial plants.

Councilmember Talavera asked about the average lifespan of park trees and how often replacements are needed, commented that allowing families to choose different tree types reduces the uniformity and symbolism of the memorial program, and that without plaques, the sentiment and meaning of the memorial program may be diminished.

Public Works Director Rodriguez responded that trees have a long life span compared to plants' limited life-span.

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers about buying the trees locally and using one uniform species for easy recognition, clarifying that no flowers or memorial items would be permitted, and that the \$1,000 fee covers the costs of the tree, planting, materials, and ongoing maintenance.

A motion was made by Mayor Pullen-Miles and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to approve the Plant a Tree Memorial Program for youth and bring back on the Consent Calendar with the recommended tree type and revised guidelines that do not allow flowers. The motion passed a vote of 5-0.

8. Letter of Support for the South Bay Cities Council of Governments Application to the Caltrans FY 26-27 Sustainability Planning Grant

- Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Review and consider the attached draft letter of support for the South Bay Cities Council of Governments Application to the Caltrans FY 26-27 Sustainability Planning Grant; and 2.) Approve and direct staff to finalize the letter, as prepared, with the Mayor and City Councilmembers signature lines for transmittal to the South Bay Cities Council of Governments; or, 3.) Provide further direction.

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

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers and staff regarding clarification on vehicle locations, the number of vehicles, and whether parking would be on public or private property, and that final approval for Lawndale would remain with the City.

Mayor Pullen-Miles opened public comments.

Annette Owens, Resident, commented in opposition of supporting the program due to safety matters.

Mayor Pullen-Miles closed public comments.

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers regarding approval of the letter, noting that the parking analysis would not obligate the City to implement any recommendations and that any identified locations would require future City Council approval.

A motion was made by Councilmember Suarez and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to approve and direct staff to finalize the letter of support, as provided, with the Mayor and City Councilmembers signature lines for transmittal to the South Bay Cities Council of Governments. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

9. Request for Additional Funding and Notice of Completion - City Parks Irrigation Project

— Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Authorize staff to allocate an additional budget of \$4,272.06 to cover the water cost; 2.) Accept the project completion by Mariposa Landscapes, Inc., for the City Parks Irrigation Project; 3.) Authorize staff to file the Notice of Completion with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder County Clerk's Office; and 4.) Authorize staff to release 5% retention in the amount of \$39,885.84 for the City Parks Irrigation Project.

Public Works Director Rodriguez presented the staff report.

In response to Councilmember Cuevas's questions, Finance Director Manuelian responded that sufficient American Rescue Plan Act funds remain and that funding is not an issue and Public Works Director Rodriguez stated that per the contract code for capital improvement projects, 95% of the contract amount is paid to the contractor, while 5% is retained and released after the notice of completion to ensure project obligations are met.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kearney and seconded by Councilmember Cuevas to authorize staff to allocate an additional budget of \$4,272.06 to cover the water cost, accept the project completion by Mariposa Landscapes, Inc., for the City Parks Irrigation Project, authorize staff to file the Notice of Completion with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder County Clerk's Office, and authorize staff to release 5% retention in the amount of \$39,885.84 for the City Parks Irrigation Project. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

H. CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Dr. Moore thanked the City Council and Mayor for their support on the City Hall renovation project and expressed appreciation to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for their ongoing service to the community, maintaining public safety and supporting City operations.

I. ITEMS FROM CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

10. Direction on Sign Code Update

— Recommendation: that the City Council 1.) Discuss the staff report; and 2.) Provide further direction to staff.

Community Development Director Kann presented the staff report.

Councilmember Cuevas's commented on signage rules not being enforced and that different sizes and unpermitted signs exist.

City Manager Dr. Moore stated that a sign code update was requested and the estimated cost is \$400,000, requires a consultant and an RFP, commented that the process could be extensive, costly, and potentially contentious with the business community due to legal non-conforming, unpermitted, and permitted signs.

Councilmember Suarez clarified that she requested a sign code policy review only.

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers and staff about current sign regulations, sign dimension's being requested by businesses, the samples provided in the exhibits, and bringing the item back for discussion to answer additional questions.

Councilmember Talavera requested the policy be reviewed and updated.

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers and staff about sign fees, prohibited sign types, public schools being exempt from sign codes, allowing digital signage to advertise City events, and submitting a Request for Proposals (RFP).

Discussion ensued among City Councilmembers and staff about current legal signs being grandfathered in if there is a sign code update, reviewing cost effective options, and asking the Planning Commission to review the sign code policy before issuing an RFP.

By consensus, the City Council directed staff to prepare a request for proposal, complete an analysis of the sign code policy and bring the item back at a future meeting.

11. Report of Attendance at Meetings

Councilmember Talavera attended the Neighborhood Watch meeting, Lawndale Elementary School District Board meeting, the City's 10th Annual Field of Honor event, and former City of Hawthorne Councilmember Nilo Vega Michelin's birthday celebration.

Councilmember Suarez thanked staff for organizing the City's 10th Annual Field of Honor event, requested a job performance review of the City Manager and an agenda item to discuss a Human Resources Manager position.

Councilmember Cuevas attended the Neighborhood Watch meeting, former City of Hawthorne Councilmember Nilo Vega Michelin's birthday celebration, requested an update on the Youth Development Center, the lobbyist position and thanked staff for organizing the City's 10th Annual Field of Honor event.

Mayor Pro Tem Kearney attended the Neighborhood Watch meeting, Liability Trust and Oversight Committee meeting, Los Angeles County West Vector Control District Board meeting, El Camino College State of the College event, former City of Hawthorne Councilmember Nilo Vega Michelin's birthday celebration, the City's 10th Annual Field of Honor event, and thanked the event's sponsors.

Mayor Pullen-Miles attended the Neighborhood Watch meeting, City of Hawthorne Councilmember Nilo Vega Michelin's birthday celebration, and the City's 10th Annual Field of Honor event, and thanked staff for organizing it and the sponsors for their support.

J. CLOSED SESSION

12. Conference with Legal Counsel – Potential Litigation

— The City Council will conduct a closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(e)(2), to confer with legal counsel regarding a significant exposure to litigation, the facts and circumstances of which are known to the potential plaintiff.
Number of cases: One (1).

13. Conference with Legal Counsel – Potential Litigation

— The City Council will conduct a closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(e)(1), to confer with legal counsel regarding a significant exposure to litigation, the facts and circumstances of which are not known to the potential plaintiff. Number of cases: One (1).

14. Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation

— The City Council will conduct a closed session, pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1), to discuss existing litigation: Name of Case: City of Lawndale v. LA Investment, LLC (LA Superior Court Case No. 20TRCV00065).

City Attorney Murphy read the aforementioned Closed Session matters by title only.

The City Council convened into closed session at 8:44 p.m.

The City Council reconvened from closed session at 10:41 p.m.

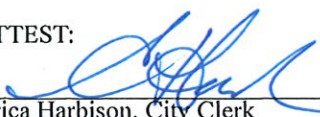
City Attorney Murphy reported that there was no reportable action for Agenda Item No. 12. Conference with Legal Counsel – Potential Litigation, Item No. 13. Conference with Legal Counsel – Potential Litigation and Item No. 14. Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation.

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, Mayor Pullen-Miles adjourned the meeting at 10:41 p.m.


Robert Pullen-Miles, Mayor

ATTEST:


Erica Harbison, City Clerk

Approved: December 1, 2025