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CITY OF BLUE LAKE

CALIFORNIA

111 Greenwood Road

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Blue Lake City Council Minutes

Tuesday, April 25th, 2023 ~ 6:30 p.m. ~ Regular Council Meeting
Skinner Store Building-111 Greenwood Road, Blue Lake-Behind City Hall

Unless Otherwise Noted, All Items on the Agenda are Subject to Action.

Meeting Called to Order at 6:30PM

1. Pledge of Allegiance and Establish a Quorum of the Council

Council Members Present:

Adelene Jones, Mayor
Elizabeth Mackay
Angela Shull, Mayor Pro-Tem
Elise Scafani

Council Members Absent:

Christopher Edgar

Staff Present:

Amanda Mager, City Manager/City Clerk
Emily Wood, Director of Parks & Recreation
Anali Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant

Public Present:

Melissa Combs
Erin McClure
Scott Frazer
Beckie Thornton
Justin Noyb
Lisa Hoover
Lin Glen
Julie Christie
Mike Wilson - County Supervisor
Angela Dare
Winona Pitts
Hailey Crews
J. Hudson

2. Approve Agenda

Motion: To Approve the Agenda as presented

Motion by: Councilmember Mackay, **Second:** Councilmember Shull

There were no comments from the Council or public.

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None

Motion Summary: Motion Passed

3. **Public Comment** – *The Public is invited to present petitions, make announcements, or provide other information to the City Council that is relevant to the scope of authority of the City of Blue Lake that is not on the Agenda. The Council may provide up to 15 minutes for this public input session. To assure that each individual presentation is heard, the Council may uniformly impose time limitations of 3 minutes to each individual presentation. The public will be given the opportunity to address items that are on the agenda at the time the Council takes up each specific agenda item.*

Julie Christie – Is the proposed housing element consistent with the General Plan; when was it put out to the public and will it be made available to the public; will the HCD letter be available for public review and who is the City’s HCD reviewer? Senior housing should be prioritized; stands by senior housing over artist housing.

Lisa Hoover – The draft housing element is on the City’s website; they want comments in seven days; given that there are significant revisions to the draft element that includes up-zoning parcels and is a significant change to what was presented in 2022, I would like to ask the Council to ask the Planning Commission to have a meeting to focus on the plan. Garry Rees did an amazing job; but I don’t understand it; it’s up-zoning of parcels in our town.

Humboldt County Supervisor Mike Wilson – Supervisor Wilson introduces himself to the Council and the audience; was contacted by Councilmember Scafani to have a meeting; would like Council and the community to know that he is in regular contact with the City Manager regarding a host of issues and would like to thank the City Manager for keeping in contact. Supervisor Wilson is easy to contact and is happy to meet and talk about issues.

Scott Frazer -Quickly reviewed the housing element; agrees with Lisa Hoover’s request for a meeting to discuss the element; requesting a 30 day extension of the public comment period.

Erin McClure -I support Lisa Hoover’s request; but I’m here to talk about the City’s water tank; the City tank is located on my family’s property; the lease is expired and the City needs to put together a lease agreement proposal.

Council Comment:

Councilmember Scafani: Can the Council discuss the housing element tonight since the public comment period is expiring?

City Manager Mager: The Council cannot discuss items that are not on the agenda, as per the Brown Act, unless specific findings can be made. This request would not meet the threshold requirements. The Housing Element update is a Planning Commission item and it is moving through a specific process as mandated by the State.

Angela Dare - States there was not enough time for the community to do anything with the information they’re given; states that seven days is not enough and she agrees with Lisa Hoover. Would like longer discussion.

Public Comment Closed.

4. City Council Meeting Video Recording Update – Discussion/Direction

Mayor Jones introduces the item; City Manager Mager presents an update, including an update from Access Humboldt regarding technology capabilities and their ability to evaluate the facility and make a recommendation to the City for implementation. City Manager Mager will continue to work with Access Humboldt and will bring back a proposal for Council consideration in the near future.

Councilmember Mackay: Is the recording process that Justin is managing working?

Justin Noyb: It's working for now, but I need to invest more money to increase the quality.

Councilmember Scafani: Thanks Justin for his volunteer work; and agrees that the quality could be improved and the City should invest in the technology.

Public Comment:

Angela Dare: Would like all of the City's meetings recorded; would like to be able to watch all of the meetings and increase participation.

Lin Glen: I'm happy to hear that staff and Council are talking about this; I agree that all meetings should be recorded.

Julie Christie: Thanks Justin for his work recording the meetings and would like all meetings to be recorded.

Councilmember Scafani: Would like to know if Justin's YouTube Channel can be posted on the City Website?

Justin Noyb: His channel is open to the public and it could be posted to the City's website.

Councilmember Mackay: Is there anything on your YouTube channel that's not City related?

Justin Noyb: States there is only one "Welcome Video" that he uploaded that is Blue Lake related and the rest of the videos are recordings.

Councilmember Scafani: I would like to link Justin's YouTube channel to the City's website.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shull: Would it be appropriate to get feedback from the City Attorney before taking action in regards to this matter?

City Manager Mager: I would caution the Council in linking this channel to the City's webpage; this channel is outside the control of the City and this presents a liability to the City in the event that content is compromised.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shull: I have concerns as well; can we direct staff to move forward if the attorney reviews the request and states that it's okay?

Councilmember Scafani: I would like this to have a timeframe of 10 days to implement.

Council Direction: Direct staff to move forward with Access Humboldt work and pending approval from the City Attorney; staff will share relevant YouTube links for City meetings to the City website.

5. Blue Lake Parks & Recreation Fee Schedule – Discussion/Action

Mayor Jones introduces the item and reads the agenda report

Mayor Jones: Do these fee increases reflect rising costs for staff wages, including the increase to the minimum wage?

City Manager Mager: Provides an overview of the City’s fees and the considerations that were made when evaluating increases; including wages, maintenance and improvements, facility impacts and public accessibility and equity in affordability.

Councilmember Mackay: The 10 punch pass option is a brilliant idea; questions the cost of table rentals.

City Manager Mager: The table rentals are an up-sell item; we are maintaining an affordable entry cost for patrons, but have to capture revenue through other rentals and purchases, including concessions, table rentals and merchandise.

Mayor Jones: States that skate night has been “wonderful” and is happy to see the rink full of people.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shull: I showed the car show fee proposal to my father; he has a car that he shows, and he stated that the fees were very reasonable.

Public Comment:

Julie Christie - Are we limiting the horse arena rental to one day per weekend? States she is concerned that non-profit organizations won’t be able to rent the arena for two days for horse shows, training clinics, etc.

City Manager Mager - Explains that this clause relates to non-equestrian related events that would be taking the arena away from its intended use. States that events that are outside of the arena’s intended use would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for appropriateness, and that equestrian events can be facilitated for multiple days.

Mayor Jones – Language should be added to the rental application stating that rentals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Motion: To approve the Fee Schedule with amended Horse Arena rental language clarifying that non-equestrian events will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis

Motion by: Councilmember Scafani, **Second:** Councilmember Mackay

There were no comments from the Council

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None

Motion Summary: Motion Passed

Lin Glenn - Supports having the Medieval Festival in Blue Lake.

6. Animal Ordinance Update - Discussion

Mayor Jones introduces the item and reads the agenda report.

City Manager Mager: Provides an update on her contact with Humboldt County Animal Control; they agreed that a tiered contact system could be easily implemented in the event that the City

Manager cannot be immediately reached. This would not require any changes to the ordinance and can be implemented immediately. The City has several communication options for after-hours emergencies and these will be made available to animal control. States that Animal Control triages calls on their end and that is out of the City's control. If there is a threat to life and/or property, animal control already has authorization to respond without the City's authorization. Humboldt County Animal Control is currently looking at possible revisions to their protocol based upon recent events in other communities; they will provide updates to the City as more information is available.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shull: Is there a timeframe for Andra to respond?

Councilmember Scafani: Is there language in the ordinance that defines the County's response? I agree that communication is good, but I want to address the community having direct access to animal control without the City's approval.

City Manager Mager: Animal Control responds to calls at their discretion; this is based upon the type of call that they receive. There is a process for determining whether a dog is declared "vicious." It's outlined in the municipal code and is very specific regarding findings and determinations. This is a law enforcement issue and the HCSO is the City's enforcement agency.

Councilmember Scafani: Would like to see the policy more clearly defined in incidences where an attack has already taken place.

Winona Pitts: States that the dog who attacked her dog has been roaming since March 26th and the City has not taken proper action to declare Otis a vicious dog; nor has Animal Control or the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. She feels terrified knowing that the dog [Otis] is roaming and found it very traumatic to find her dog mauled by Otis. Wants the City to provide her support.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shull: Does the City follow the City or County Ordinance?

City Manager Mager: The City follows the City's ordinance which mirrors the County. Because it is a law enforcement issue findings have to be made and a process followed for declaring a dog vicious.

Kahish: Is there a place to look up the City ordinances?

Lin Glen: I'm looking at the City's ordinance; I'm not sure what the staff is looking at; the Sheriff upholds the City's ordinance and the Council has the authority to update the ordinance. The Public Safety Commission could review the ordinance.

Julie Christie: Recommends installing signage on City property to decrease liability.

Jean Lynch: Suggests Council looks at the possibility of creating a leash law.

Matt Watts: Agrees with Winona in regards to the dog ordinance law and states there is a time and place for leashes.

Beckie Thorton: Agrees with leash law.

Angela Dare: Agrees with leash law. States that her dog was approached by three unleashed dogs on the levee trail.

Councilmember Scafani: Thinks there should be a "warning process" for incidences where owners of unruly dogs are warned with a written notice. States there could be an update to the Ordinance to back up the warning process.

Mayor Jones: Suggests this issue be brought to the Public Safety Commission; the commission can review the ordinance and look at options for a leash law.

City Manager Mager: States she can add it to the Public Safety Commission agenda for their meeting on Monday Night, May 1st at 7pm.

7. City of Blue Lake Website Review – Ad Hoc Committee Update - Discussion/Direction

Mayor Jones introduced the item and reads the agenda report.

Mayor Jones: The ad-hoc committee conducted two meetings; one between the committee and one with the interested community members. They discussed contracting with a Webmaster to get additional work done on the website. They discussed a City-wide event calendar, consolidation of Parks & Recreation pages, user interface and accessibility, removing redundant information, online water bill pay and service sign up, and a variety of other ideas.

Councilmember Scafani: States that the Ad-Hoc Committee would like to meet with the web designer, Andy Linde, to see what is possible for the City's website.

Winona Pitts: Enjoyed the Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

Jean Lynch: Was the cost discussed?

Councilmember Scafani: There was two different packages offered by Andy Linde that depends on the services required; he can create a custom package to fit our needs, including monthly touchups, and larger updates. States that those at the meeting agreed \$45/hour was reasonable for his services.

Beckie Thorton: Feels the meeting was productive and went well.

Lisa Hoover: Appreciated the meeting.

Mayor Jones: The Ad-Hoc Committee will meet with Andy Linde at Skinner Store to have a better look at the website.

Motion: To authorize the expenditure of \$1200.00 to update the City's website and authorize Redwood Curtain Design to complete the work.

Motion by: Councilmember Scafani , **Second:** Councilmember Shull

There were no comments from the Council

Public Comment: None

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None

Motion Summary: Motion Passed

8. Commercial Property Vacancy Tax - Discussion

Mayor Jones introduces the item and reads the agenda report. City Manager Mager provides an overview of the item; the item was requested by Councilmember Mackay to begin conversations at the Council level regarding under-utilized and/or vacant properties in the historic down town.

Councilmember Scafani: Have buildings been identified that would be subject to this vacancy tax?

Councilmember Mackay: Not necessarily; but there are several buildings, including the Emporium, Stardough's, the belting shop and Joan Schirle's building that could be considered. The vacancy tax could be used to incentivize investment into the properties.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shull: The vacancy tax would be collected and then reinvested into the property?

City Manager Mager: Explains how other communities utilize the tax as a mechanism to invest money into vacant properties.

Mayor Jones: Would these taxes be paid by the property owner?

Councilmember Scafani: This seems punitive to only a few property owners.

City Manager Mager: Cities across the nation are looking at ways to incentivize invest in downtown properties and historical districts. With the downturn in investment in large developments like shopping malls, cities are seeing renewed interest in downtowns that support small businesses and live/work environments. A vacancy tax is one way that cities are collecting revenue to reinvest in their downtowns. Vacant buildings detract from commerce and they bring down surrounding property values; in Blue Lake, the historical downtown is small and there is a large percentage of unoccupied, or vacant buildings. This makes it difficult for other small businesses to succeed and limits investment opportunities.

Councilmember Mackay: States she liked what Redding did to their indoor mall; they knocked it down and transformed it into a pedestrian friendly downtown district.

Mayor Jones: I know that this is a concern and that it impacts the City; it's a hard climate for business; I'm not sure that a tax is appropriate as it feels punitive.

Councilmember Scafani: Before punitive attacks are put in place, vacant property owners should work with City Staff to move towards common goals.

City Manager Mager: A vacancy tax may not be the best fit for Blue Lake, but a discussion has to be had to determine options for activating spaces and increasing business in the downtown.

Public Comment:

Julie Christie: I concur to stay away from a tax, but help people to find resources; continue to communicate in a positive way.

Jean Lynch: To increase a tax, there needs to be a vote.

Hailey Crews: Thinks there should be positive energy pushed towards businesses and states that Stardoughs need's help; there are structural issues and the family would consider a longer term lease if the property can be renovated. Feels a tax would severely dishearten businesses who are not open.

Matt Watts: When I saw the Emporium Building I was excited; now it looks like it needs to be condemned; it shouldn't be inhabited, but people are living there; it's not safe; it looks like it will fall down in an earthquake. I don't know how anyone could afford to fix it up.

Beckie Thorton: Doesn't feel a tax would be appropriate and feels it's hard to survive in Blue Lake without a good business plan.

J. Hudson: We opened Stardoughs because the community wanted a place to eat; it was always in the red; my dad had to work everyday at the restaurant to keep it open; the building needs a lot of maintenance and repairs.

Councilmember Scafani: States that most business owners are barely scraping by and can only afford to be open limited hours; a vibrant business community is "pie in the sky."

Mayor Jones: I feel that the overall consensus is that the tax is not supported at this time.

No action/direction taken by Council.

9. City of Blue Lake Water Deposit Policy – Update/Discussion

Mayor Jones introduced the item and reads the staff report.

City Manager Mager provides an overview of the item and the staff's recommendation. Staff is recommending that the water deposit would be refunded to the account holder if they have made their payments on time and in-full for a period of 24 months.

Councilmember Mackay: Is 24 months long enough; if there are problems, it could be brought back for reconsideration.

City Manager Mager: Addresses concern, including concerns regarding tenant turnover and the City's ability to collect when tenants move. Feels that 24 months is a manageable amount of time and if there is a problem it can be reconsidered.

Public Comment:

Scott Frazer: I asked that this item be placed on the agenda; I support this change and would like it to be brought back to Council next month for adoption.

Council directs staff to bring the item back at a future date for adoption.

10. City Council Board/Commission Primary and Alternate Designation

Mayor Jones introduces the item and reads the staff report.

Motion: To appoint Mayor Pro-Tem Shull to the primary delegate position on the Redwood Region Economic Development Corporation Board

Motion by: Councilmember Scafani , **Second:** Councilmember Mackay

There were no comments from the Council

Public Comment: None

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None

Motion Summary: Motion Passed

11. Consent Agenda:

- a. March 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- b. Warrants and Disbursements
- c. Caretaker Lease – Amendment No. 6

Mayor Jones introduces the item; Councilmember Scafani pulls item a (March 28, 2023 minutes) and item c (Caretaker Lease).

Motion: To approve Item b-Warrants and Disbursements on the Consent Agenda

Motion by: Councilmember Shull , **Second:** Councilmember Mackay

There were no comments from the Council

Public Comment: None

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None
Motion Summary: Motion Passed

March Meeting Minutes Discussion: Changes noted to correct the designation of primary and alternate.

Motion: To approve the March 28, 2023 minutes with changes made to Page 8 (change Mackay to Shull and Edgar to the alternate)

Motion by: Councilmember Shull , **Second:** Councilmember Mackay

There were no comments from the Council

Public Comment: None

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None

Motion Summary: Motion Passed

Caretaker Lease Discussion: Councilmember Scafani requests clarification on the tenancy details, including lease amount and longevity of tenancy.

Motion: To approve Item C-Caretaker Lease Amendment as presented.

Motion by: Councilmember Mackay , **Second:** Councilmember Scafani

There were no comments from the Council

Public Comment: None

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None

Motion Summary: Motion Passed

12. Reports of Council and Staff

Councilmember Scafani: Attended Parks & Recreation meeting; the commission worked on the fee schedule; RCEA meeting is coming up.

Mayor Jones: Attended HCAOG Meeting. Declared May as Bike Month. Attended League of Women Voters Luncheon

Mayor Pro-Tem Shull: Was unable to attend the Chamber of Commerce meeting; attended the RREDC Board Meeting, approved the 2024 budget; currently servicing 60 loans; an update on the Core Hub offshore wind project was provided.

Councilmember Mackay: Attended the Small Business Round Table Meeting and the Economic Development Commission Meeting. There will be a Low & Slow Fun Run on May 21st. Discussion items included ways to beautify the downtown; the Arts and Heritage Commission Meeting was cancelled.

City Manager Report: The City Manager provides an overview of current projects, including the housing element update, Parks and Recreation activities and several projects that are making their way through the review process to go before the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Scafani: Why does the City have a RFQ out for engineering and planning services?

City Manager Mager: Explains that the City is required to solicit proposals for services every 3-5 years; this ensures that the City is receiving competitive services and competitive pricing.

Councilmember Scafani: Would like to know if the meeting with City Manager Mager and County Supervisors are regularly scheduled and happen frequently.

City Manager Mager: The City regularly meets with local and regional representatives, including County officials and staff. The City collaborates on various levels with agencies, cities and others and these meetings are a function of the City Manager's job duties.

Council Correspondence: Mayor Jones and the City Manager received correspondence from FEMA.

13. Future Agenda Items:

- Public Noticing Procedures - Council Member Scafani
- McClure Water Rights Issue - Council Member Scafani
- Budget Review - Council Member Scafani - Requests more information/budget training from Accountant.

14. Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15PM

Motion: To adjourn at 9:15PM

Motion by: Councilmember Mackay , **Second:** Mayor Pro-Tem Shull

There were no comments from the Council or public.

Vote: Ayes: Jones, Mackay, Shull, Scafani **Nays:** None **Abstain:** None

Motion Summary: Motion Passed