



Blue Lake City Council Minutes

Tuesday, May 27, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m. ~ Regular Council Meeting
Skinner Store Building ~ 111 Greenwood Rd., Blue Lake ~ Behind City Hall

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor John Sawatzky, Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani, Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso, Council Member Kat Napier

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Christopher G. Firor

STAFF PRESENT: Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart, City Attorney Ryan Plotz, Planner Gary Rees, Clerk Laura McClenagan, and Videographer Justin Goad

<https://www.youtube.com/@BLCNews95525>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

AGENDA APPROVAL: [0:44]

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented

Motion by: Council Member Kat Napier

Second by: Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

Public Comment:

Comment by (Adelene Jones): would like to see item 13 Blue Lake Bike Park – Discussion moved up.

Motion Summary: Consensus (4/0)

ADOPT MAY 13, 2025 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: [5:38]

Motion: To approve May 13, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes with corrections to public commenters names provided by Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani.

Motion by: Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

Second by: Council Member Kat Napier

Public Comment: None received

Motion Summary: Consensus (4/0)

REPORTS OF COUNCIL AND STAFF: [8:06]

a. Council Member Reports:

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso reported missing the Humboldt Waste Management Authority committee and thanked Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani for attending in her absence. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani reported that she attended the Humboldt Waste Management Authority committee meeting as the alternate for Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani also reported that the Public Safety Commission is working on a Safe Fireworks Campaign, performing a survey of H and I street traffic, and attempting to have the Sheriff department attend future meetings.



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b. City Manager Report:

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhardt would like to express appreciation for everyone's patience and support.

c. Financial Report:

No Financial Report given.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhardt said there will be a report available at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: [10:57]

Clerk Laura McClenagan read a public comment letter into the record. [14:06]

Comment by (Elissa Rosado): gave notice of a recall and removal of Mayor John Sawatzky, Council Member Elise Scafani, and Council Member Kat Napier according to section 11020 of the California Elections Code, asking council members to vacate their positions due to exposing the City of Blue Lake to financial, legal and operational jeopardy of potential lawsuits from contractors, fines from the state, and local control due to councils' unwillingness to vote for and adopt a housing element as required by law in the State of California and the General Plan of the City of Blue Lake and for the removal of City Manager Amanda Mager without justifiable cause during closed session, which leaves the City of Blue Lake open to dysfunction and the inability to respond to legal challenges that may arise. Elissa Rosado states that for these reasons, the citizens of Blue Lake no longer feel you have our best interests at heart and demand you vacate your positions either by resignation or recall. Elissa Rosado provided envelopes to each council member named which contained the petition along with ways to respond to the petition.

Comment by (Mardi Grainger): asks the council to re-position themselves so they can be heard better.

Comment by (Adelene Jones): said the last time she spoke to the council was at the May 13th special meeting where Major John Sawatzki stopped her to ask how was this relevant to the close session. Adelene speaks of opening the Mad River Union to read about the interim city manager Dani Burkhardt being quoted as saying "Blue Lake has been stagnant." Adelene states that in the nine plus years Mandy Mager was city manager, two bridges were completed over Powers Creek, the completion of our portion of the Annie May trail, making a safe route to school with the Greenwood Avenue project and the acquisition of the empty lot across from the post office which is now our beautiful town square, improvements to our skating rink, and hiring competent people like Tonie Quigley in, the office clerk at City Hall, and Emily Wood, Director of Parks and Recs. Adelene continues by saying unless by stagnant you mean the last five months when three of the five council persons voted not to adopt our housing element, sending our logo back to the Arts and Heritage and Economic Development Commissions who



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had already looked at it and made changes or the endless special meetings including one at 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning to discuss the budget.

Comment by (Tim Daniels): intends to install a bike rack at City Hall. Jim offers to pay for and donate the bike rack. Tim also intends to work with Glenn and Mike for placement.

Comment by (Kit Mann): speaks of the remarkable opportunity to remove the dangerous and derelict power plant and to open the land for development which can generate substantial annual revenue, contribute to grid stability, rebuild reliability and reduce greenhouse emissions in a safe and environmentally benign way. Kit Man also spoke regarding the exclusive negotiating agreement the council members signed with Power Transitions to negotiate in good faith which appears to not be in good faith as there has not been any discussion with the public, a lack transparency. Kit Man also says businesses won't wait around and asks that the Power Transition option agreement be on the next agenda for action. He also states that if we keep dithering on, we could squander this incredible opportunity.

Comment by (Terri Bayles): Terri thanked the council for taking interest in learning more about the budget. She also disagreed with the last comment about having the City Manager write a letter giving Power Transitions the ability to move forward on an accelerated timeline when that wasn't what was voted.

Comment by (?): urged caution and request people read the ERN as it wasn't in the best interest of Blue Lake as it included items that make it hard for the City of Blue Lake to have power from Power Transitions as about 14% will support AI and stored data. She also stated that she was glad the Power Transitions letter did not go out giving them site control. She believes we need to look at this better, and doesn't want it rushed through as it almost was the first time with a 312-megawatt plant.

Comment by (Beckie Thornton): agrees that it's good for the council to take their time and make sure and not rush through. Beckie further asks members of the public to let the council do their jobs.

Comment by (Dennis Whitcomb): reinforced the need to remove the dangerous power plant by having it demolished.

Comment by (Dana Silvernale): thanked the council for the opportunity for us to get fully informed on these issues and really appreciated it.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Warrants and Disbursements: [26:15] Item pulled from Consent. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani wanted to understand check number 12826 description of sales tax audit. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart confirmed that the payment was to an outside professional auditing firm to audit the cities sales tax revenue. Council Member Kat Napier mentioned check 12864 US Bank payment



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systems and asks if there is a way to itemize expenses. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart confirmed she could supply the credit card statement with receipts for purchase made with the card.

Public Comment: None received.

Employee Annual Raises: [30:28] Item pulled from Consent. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani was looking for further explanation. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart explains that the city gives an annual raise to those who have been with us for a year or more on the anniversary of their hire date. The pay increase is typically one step, accounting for a cost-of-living adjustment. Council Member Kat Napier clarified that any employee, every year, will get a one-step increase until they top out pending their performance review. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart confirmed.

Public Comment: [32:16]

Comment by (Glenn Bernald): said he has been with the city for 15 years and says the pay raise doesn't stay up with inflation at a 4% increase which is also based on the employees' performance. A poor performance may not get an increase, and an exceptional performance may give them a two-step increase. Chris Edgar, Public Works Supervising Operator, has taken many classes and has received a lot of training. He has his water certification and after a year and a half he will be able to obtain his wastewater certification and pass state testing requirements. Commenter also confirmed that the city pays for the testing and certifications.

Motion: To approve item a. Warrants and Disbursements and item b. Employee Annual Raises as presented.

Motion by: Council Member Kat Napier

Second by: Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

Motion Summary: Consensus (4/0)

WEBSITE – MEETING MINUTES AND VIDEOS: [34:54] Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani has been working with our web master for about two years and recently Access Humboldt to make improvements to the website. We've created a YouTube channel for the city so that we can upload our meeting videos directly to the channel and link them to our website.

Mayor John Sawatzky hopes to have hyperlinks within the minutes document that will take you to that section of the agenda on the video. We can then work on getting our backlog of approved minutes published on the website, which requires staff to access our computer systems to find the adopted versions.



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Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani suggested part of the discussion tonight be to perhaps authorize extra hours for Deputy Clerk Laura McClenagan to catalog and publish the past approved minutes making the information more assessable to the public.

Direction: to evaluate the project and return with a proposal which estimates the volume and number of hours needed to catalog and publish past approved minutes to the website and link to the corresponding video, including locating videos of past meetings between February and now; and adding searchable resolutions to the website similar to ordinances.

Public Comment: [41:11]

Comment by (Videographer Justin Goad): explains that videos from before he started publishing them for the city can be uploaded to the city's YouTube channel. Once uploaded, the clerk can use the transcript function to help create the minutes. This function will also advance the video to the section of the transcript the user clicks on and will be very helpful.

Comment by (Dennis Whitcomb): noticed member complaints regarding the process and how your minutes have perhaps too much detail and was hoping the city will include the links I sent to the city manager from California Cities as a reference guide on the channel.

Comment by (Beckie Thornton Raygoza): mentions a zoom participant in the meeting waiting room.

TOWN SQUARE LOAN PAYOFF: [47:13] Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart request approval to pay the daily interest on a loan for the purchase of the town square property using the generalized CBDG (Fund 38); as the amount is \$10,928, with a not to exceed \$10,980.00, councils' authorization is required.

Council Member Kat Napier asked what else the funds could be used for.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani says as it's been explained to her, these are defederalized CBDG funds paid back yearly to the city; if they are under \$35,000, those funds get defederalized and the city is able to use those funds for various qualifying projects. If those funds are above \$35,000 then it goes back into the CBDG fund that becomes part of a pool of money that can be used for other projects such as low interest loans to homeowners for needed home repairs. The city has the option to take these funds and either use them for city projects or use them for homeowner loans. In the past Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani has been in favor of using these monies to try to restart the home repair low interest loan program that helps homeowners acquire low interest loans.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani states if wanted, we could contract with the Humboldt County Planning Department to administer the program for us. They have the staff and the ability; they



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administered a similar program for the City of Rio Dell after the earthquake. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani further states her wish for the funds to be reserved for these types of programs.

Mayor John Sawatzky request clarification

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani clarifies that she is suggesting the balance not be paid off right now.

Council Member Kat Napier asks what the interest will be over a 30-day period.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart states \$1.51 per day, roughly \$45 a month, and the reason to pay it off now is to save on interest.

Mayor John Sawatzky asks for suggestions if the council decides not to pay the loan off.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise replies with loans to homeowners or other projects that have a higher priority than saving interest. Qualifying projects that are less than \$35,000 that have to meet some specific qualifications and follow a list of rules to use the defederalized monies. These monies funded the handicap accessibility improvements for the library.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart states that the city looks to reduce as many liabilities as possible from the books to post positive in the next fiscal year budget.

Public Comment: [54:15]

Comment by (Barbara Russell): expressed the need for homeowner loans to fix up our historic homes and mentions Kristin Martinque with Humboldt County who could help with getting substantially more funds than the \$10,000 that would pay off a loan. Barbara said she would hate the city to not pay off the loan.

Comment by (Darcy Lima): asked when the last time homeowner loans were offered to improve homes, how many homeowners received loans.

Comment by (Adelene Jones): said homeowner loans are low income and usually citizens in Blue Lake do not qualify. Adelene also stated she was in favor of paying off the loan.

Comment by (Brian Corse): said a roof's thirty grand for a modern home in Blue Lake and suggest paying the loose ends.

Comment by (Lori Ponte): cautions setting a precedent of spending \$10,000 to bail out projects with these funds; she says, with the projects going on, money can go pretty fast.

Comment by (David Glen): agrees with Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani and figures the funds should be saved for something more valuable and be available for other purposes like loaning monies to businesses that are coming to the business park. David further states the small amount of interest paid off is not a good enough reason to draw down the reserve. David asked if the funds could be invested.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart explained that there are restrictions on what the city is allowed to do with CDBG funds. The funds are intended for community development.

Comment by (Beckie Thornton Raygoza): agrees with Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani and thinks paying the loan off over the next year is fine and saving the funds in case something comes up.



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Mayor John Sawatzky closes public comment and brings the discussion back to the council. Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso asked from which fund and the amount of the payment. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart answers the loan amount is 1236.87 from the general fund. Council Member Kat Napier thanked Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart for her creativity and budget awareness and expressed how it is worth continuing this item until after we review the budget and gain CDBG knowledge. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani agrees a presentation would be beneficial on CDBG fund dos and don'ts and spending possibilities.

Direction: The Council directed staff to supply a presentation of CDBG rules and spending possibilities at the next regular meeting.

CALFIRE LOCAL RESPONSE AREA FIRE SEVERITY ZONE ORDINANCE SECOND READING BY TITLE ONLY AND CONSIDER ADOPTION: [1:05:54] On February 7, 2025, Governor Newsom signed an executive order regarding the state's schedule to distribute the updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps for Local Response Areas. The updated maps add 1.4 million new acres of land into the two higher tiers of fire severity, requiring jurisdictions to update building and planning requirements and regulations. Cities impacted by the update are required to adopt the maps via ordinance within 120 days of the release of the maps; the maps associated with Blue Lake were released on February 24, 2025. City staff presented the maps to the Council at the March 25, 2025 regular Council meeting and completed the posting requirements as prescribed by the State. Ordinance number 545-2025 was introduced by first reading on April 22, 2025. In order to proceed with the adoption process, City staff is bringing back Ordinance number 545-2025 for a second reading and consideration of adoption.

Motion: To adopt ordinance number 545-2025, an ordinance of the City Council of the City of Blue Lake adopting the State of California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map designating moderate and high fire severity fire hazard areas in the City of Blue Lake.

Motion by: Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

Second by: Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

Motion Summary: Consensus (4/0)

Public Comment: [1:07:51]

Comment by (Darcy Lima): asked for a brief explanation of what this adoption means. Darcy later asks if we will have a sign with a needle showing the day's hazard level.



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Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart offered that by adopting this ordinance, the city accepts the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map for this area, showing areas of moderate fire hazard and areas of high fire hazard, recommended by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

HTA CONTRACT RENEWAL: [1:08:46] The annual bus service contract renewal which provides two bus stops in the City of Blue Lake; Chartin Rd & Chartin Rd (Casino) and Blue Lake City Hall. The City of Blue Lake pays \$15,600 annually as our cost share for the service.

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso asked for confirmation of an open grant that will pay the bus service contract.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani confirmed but could not recall the exact name.

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso acknowledged Humboldt Transit Authority by saying that she was impressed with the changes they implemented, updating the service lines and making service affordable and accessible for a lot of people.

Motion: To renew the Humboldt Transit Authority contract for the year 2025/2026.

Motion by: Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

Second by: Council Member Kat Napier

Motion Summary: Consensus (4/0)

Public Comment: [1:11:24]

Comment by (Adelene Jones): mentions that a Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) representative attends the Humboldt County Association of Government (HCAOG) meetings, and believes the money, around \$34,000 comes through the HCAOG. Adelene further adds that if the city is only paying 15,000 to Humboldt Transit Authority there is money left over and wanted to bring up the idea of dial-a-ride program for seniors in the town who can't navigate the bus system.

Council Member Kat Napier adds that Humboldt Transit Authority reports to Humboldt County Association of Government.

FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET UPDATE: [1:13:20] Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart reports that Accountant Scott Gordon is not available until next week and will have more information soon.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart was able to acquire a budget template from Rio Dell, Trinidad and Fortuna and is grateful for their support. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart requests direction from the Council to establish a timeline for budget meetings and suggests sending the council members a doodle poll to determine availability. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart also reminded the Council June 24, 2025, is the last regular meeting in June to adopt the budget before the beginning of the next fiscal year.



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Council Member Kat Napier referred to Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart financial knowledge and requested a focused approach plan of action for reviewing and adopting the budget. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart responds she will be happy to suggest areas of focus.

RESPONSE TO HCD LETTER: [1:16:51] The City Planner Gary Rees gave a synopsis of the letter; As requested by the council Garry put together a draft response to California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) letter of inquiry. The draft letter contains a table which outlines the tasks that need to be completed and timeline to achieve compliance with state housing law. Planner Garry Rees also added various steps for the council to complete, and items for staff to complete. Planner Garry Rees mentions a look at the electronic sites inventory and the timeline for it being the end of June. Staff are looking for direction from the council on the target completion dates for the items listed; Adopt and submit the 6th Cycle Housing Element updates to HCD, and complete required rezoning by implementing Housing Element Program HI-14 (Rezoning and By Right Procedures). Once staff receive the council's direction, the Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart will respond to HCD listing Planner Garry Reese as the contact if additional information is needed.

Council Member Kat Napier thanked Planner Garry Rees for being present for tonight's meeting and remembers expressing concern about the Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration for CEQA and looking at it cumulatively.

Planner Garry Rees explained that there is a cumulative impact discussion in the current CEQA ISMND document, at the end under mandatory findings of significance, that has been circulated and is now ready for adoption. Planner Garry Rees also explains that the steps outlined in the response letter consider the Councils' desire to have a more robust cumulative impact discussion that may change the finding and thus create a longer timeline. Planner Garry Rees adds that the cumulative impact discussion could change the current finding, and if it does, the CEQA document will need to be recirculated for another 30-day comment period; the response letter includes that possibility.

Council Member Kat Napier added that we have a sports recreation center, an RV park, battery storage, amphitheater and bike park, and wants to look at those effects as a whole rather than segmented and saying each one is okay.

Planner Garry Rees explains that there are two types of analysis. The type Council Member Kat Napier is talking about is the type of cumulative impact analysis needed when doing a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a General Plan Update, where you are looking at all potential future development in the community that could happen under all the zoning or any proposed changes to zoning and Planner Garry Rees noted that typically that would be beyond the scope of a Housing Element Update. The second type of analysis needed when considering cumulative projects is known as reasonably foreseeable, and many of the projects Council Member



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Kat Napier mentioned, the sports recreation center and the RV park, are really concepts. In order to be considered reasonably foreseeable the projects have to move a number of steps forward. Planner Garry Rees gave an example by asking have the funds been expended for the project to happen, or does the developer have financing, have the developer applied for permits, is the zoning appropriate and if you can't say yes to most of those things then it may not be a reasonably foreseeable project that would be appropriate to consider and include in an accumulative impact analysis for a housing element update. Planner Garry Rees stated that mostly what the housing element is looking at is planning for 34 units on the vacant sites identified as site inventory, a narrow scope as opposed to future community development with a General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Planner Garry Rees said that if we change the cumulative impact analysis, we will have to go through the exercise of determining what is reasonably foreseeable and many of those projects which have been mentioned have been discussed but never moved forward in a meaningful manner and may not make the list of reasonably foreseeable projects.

Council Member Kat Napier acknowledged that the traffic study did not take into consideration a number of activities that are already present. Council Member Kat Napier explained that asking a question about a housing element or about affordable housing doesn't mean you are against it, it is simply due diligence, and adds that now is the opportunity and a necessary process for us to see how these sites are developed and where our housing goes and how it might impact our environment now and in the future. We should have more scrutiny rather than live with regret after the fact.

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso expressed appreciation and commended Garry's detailed work. Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso continued by saying that we have a request by HCD to respond with a revised timeline for achieving compliance with the state housing law and is proposing a timeline in addition to the task already identified, for the end of June for preparing and submitting an electronic sites inventory and to adopt and submit the 6th cycle housing element update a target completion date of November 30, 2025, and thirdly, to complete required rezoning by implementing Housing Element Program HI-14 (Rezoning and By Right Procedures) propose target completion date of December 31, 2025.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani suggested the end of December to adopt and submit the 6th cycle housing element update to give us a little bit of a cushion.

Council Member Kat Napier, considering the numerous holidays, and items and issues before us, suggested February to adopt and submit the 6th cycle housing element update and April or May for the HI-14 (Rezoning and By Right Procedures). Council Member Kat Napier adds that we can complete these items sooner than what we respond to the state, but not later.

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso wants to stay on task outlined by Garry and doesn't want much wiggle room.



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Council Member Kat Napier thinks the front end of the timeline, peer review requiring a bid proposal, the activity itself, going to the Planning Commission, the public comment throughout takes a lot of time, and we need to focus on passing a budget by the end of June.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart commented that while we want to be thorough and do our research, we also need to remember that we pay subject matter experts to be that and that the council do not have thousands of hours to dedicate to becoming subject matter experts in every policy that comes before you for consideration and thinks it's important that the council prioritize council and staff time in an effective and efficient manner and rely on the people we pay to be our subject matter experts for that opinion.

Planner Garry Rees asked to add a step, a joint meeting between the Council and the Planning Commission to discuss the Planning Commission's recommendation. Planner Garry Rees adds that if the timeline goes out a ways, we need to be detailed on what we expect to be done during that time. So that is why he suggests adding this new step explicitly after the first step under the adopt and submit task.

Mayor John Sawatzky directs Planner Garry Rees to add the joint meeting as a new step under the adopt task.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani states December for adoption and February for HI-14. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani confirmed with Planner Garry Rees that he estimates 6 months to process the HI-14. Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso asks Planner Garry Rees for feedback on the proposed timeline in our motion.

Planner Garry Rees responded he thought the city would get pushback for the dates chosen, but especially for the ones going into next year.

Motion: [1:48:08] We choose December 31, 2025, as the target completion date for Adopt and submit the 6th Cycle Housing Element updates and February 28, 2026, as the target completion date for implementing Housing Element Program HI-14 (Rezoning and By Right Procedures) in staffs' response to the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) letter of inquiry.

Motion by: Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

Second by: Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

Motion Summary: Consensus (4/0)

Public Comment: [1:27:58]

Comment by (Adelene Jones): expressed concern about this issue and mentions stiff fines from the State of California. Adelene Jones states that this council needs to adopt the housing element and wishes the council would have adopted it when she was Mayor. Adelene Jones reiterates that we need affordable housing in this city. Adelene explains that city staff said we have the sewer and water capacity. Adelene also mentions how the schools need children, and



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that people can't afford to live in Blue Lake; four firefighters are living in the fire station.

Adelene is for affordable housing for firefighters, teachers, staff and families.

Comment by (Linda Cooley): added that her daughter goes to Blue Lake Elementary and their budgets have been cut. There is not enough money to pay for a janitor, so the kids are cleaning. Linda is terrified to see more kids at the school on the cut budget and wants someone to work with the school to help them get more money.

Comment by (Terri Bayles): agreed with Council Member Kat Napier's comment about asking questions doesn't mean you're not for affordable housing. The commenter feels it is a social injustice to place affordable housing across the street from an industrial park or where there is a question of pollution or where they would be flanked by the creek and river, so please consider the location. The commenter also said that from what they read, a first-year teacher or firefighter wouldn't qualify for the affordable housing.

Mayor John Sawatzky reminded everyone that the current subject is the response letter to HCD.

Comment by (Lisa Hoover): Lisa recognizes the need for affordable housing. It is our accountability to meet the California Environmental Quality Act CEQA which includes analyzing environmental effects of the project including cumulative effects, which has not been well substantiated. Lisa Hoover thinks Planner Garry's response letter is perfect as it outlines the tasks to be completed. Lisa also mentions that she is unable to locate the ISMND that was for public view in 2022, where environmental effects were mentioned on page 57, and quickly adds that there are exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions which include cumulative impacts of development and potentially hazardous waste consistent with the general plan per public resources code 21159.24.

Comment by (Barbara Russell): appreciated the council taking a better look at things because you have one chance to do this right. The commenter thinks there is a lot of benefit to owner occupied units and didn't know if owner occupied housing would satisfy the element.

Comment by (Beckie Thornton Raygoza): asks the council to remember that the allocation is only thirty-four units. Beckie also said to set the dates, send the letter and get things rolling.

Beckie also agreed with Council Member Kat Napier that the council members should research and ask questions.

Comment by (Lori Ponti): understands the housing element is complicated and appreciates the council for taking their time. Lori understands if Planner Garry Rees is frustrated with all the questions but finds huge value in the questions being asked. Lori thinks that having affordable housing is necessary but thinks the location is horrible and is unsure who would qualify and asked the public if this decision would tamper the harassment of trying to fulfill the housing element, for a while.



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BLUE LAKE BIKE PARK: [1:50:28] Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart reports there has been no action since the Council last discussed this topic at the April regular meeting. Mayor John Sawatzky asked if there was a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement with Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association (RCMBA) and if grant funds have been received. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart responded that RCMBA is a volunteer fundraising partner and there is not an MOU and confirmed no grant money has been received in the last 30 days. Council Member Kat Napier confirms with Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart that there is no MOU specific to fundraising between RCMBA and the City of Blue Lake, and no written policy on the handling or accounting of the funds. Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso asked what project outline items need to be completed before the park is safe. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart responds that a number of items are needed, including signage, a fence and completion of the outer rim that makes the traffic on the pump track directional. Mayor John Sawatzky seeks confirmation that the latest estimate from RCMBA is \$300,000 to complete or for the total project and is there a time estimate for opening. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart cannot confirm the latest cost estimate nor when the park will open.

Public Comment: [1:54:01]

Comment by (Adelene Jones): highlights the letter submitted by previous council members and adds that the bike park will be a real draw for the town by explaining how well the mountain biking events held at the industrial park were quiet, clean and brought business to town. Adelene is hoping this council will continue to be supportive of the bike park by working with the dedicated group RCMBA, in their fundraising.

Comment by (Ingrid Kasic): expressed her support of the bike park. She comments on how it is not only to bring people into Blue Lake, but also for the kids and adults who live here.

Comment by (Linda Cooley): agrees the bike park is amazing but thinks there is some confusion as there doesn't seem to be any details available.

Comment by (Barbara Russell): suggested that a group or committee be formed to oversee activities like events or communicate the progress of the work.

Comment by (Brian): has put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into the mountain bike community and has the scars to prove it. Brian reported 240 adult riders registered last year, and that the youth riders will be riding in June. These events add exposure to the community.

Comment by (Videographer Justin Goad): comments that he has donated both money and a lot of time to the bike park and would love to see someone from Parks and Recreation Commission bring a member of RCMBA into a meeting to give a presentation on the status of funds required to complete, and the steps to construction completeness.



Blue Lake City Council Minutes

Tuesday, May 27, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m. ~ Regular Council Meeting
Skinner Store Building ~ 111 Greenwood Rd., Blue Lake ~ Behind City Hall

Comment by (Terri Bayles): thinks the bike park is a great idea. The commenter also expresses concern with apparent disconnect. The website posted drawing of the park does not reflect what is there. The commenter then asks how the skate park will fit in the area if the bike park has extended beyond the original map. The commenter said she was unable to locate the date of approval for the project. She mentions attending an RCMBA meeting where concern over obtaining funds was expressed, but she was unable to locate where or how to donate and expressed that clarity was needed for all to understand.

Comment by (Beckie Thornton Raygoza): confirmed the planning commission approved the bike park site plan on November 15, 2021, but was unable to locate the approval date of the bike park by Council.

Comment by (Angela Dare): is excited about the bike park and thinks it will do great things for Blue Lake but feels the public doesn't know a whole lot about it and looks forward to getting more information.

Comment by (Rebecca Collins): expressed excitement about the park but also shared two concerns; who's going to maintain it after it's built, will that be the responsibility of the city, and insurance, how do we ensure the bike park for liability and what are those costs.

Mayor John Sawatzky closes public comment and brings the discussion back to the council.

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso [2:05:26] suggests setting up an ad hoc committee to investigate some of the concerns the public has expressed and to gain accurate information.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani agrees that a committee could reach out to the different entities in a timely manner and get the information we need to put down on paper.

Council Member Kat Napier explains that this is a city government and there are certain things that bind us in what we do, how we interact, how we collect money, and how we account for money.

Council Member Kat Napier thinks an ad hoc committee would be great and would facilitate discussions, accountability throughout the process and concepts like the insurance aspect or cost recovery; are we going to charge for events, if so, how much are we going to charge for parking and adds there will be real impacts to the city when these events occur. Council Member Kat Napier expressed concern about how the funds are collected, how long they sit, who determines when they're released, who determines what gets paid for what and how things are documented and would like a MOU agreement in place with the nonprofit that does fundraising on behalf of the City of Blue Lake.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart responds that she has asked for invoices and has not received any response to date. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart adds that every dollar spent on the bike park is tracked through project code tracking and adds that's why the budget is as detailed as it is. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart then states that she cannot track for a nonprofit and the city cannot afford a forensic auditor to do so.



Blue Lake City Council Minutes

Tuesday, May 27, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m. ~ Regular Council Meeting
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Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso recommended that the council form an ad hoc committee to do some investigating and bring back for recommendations and information.

Mayor John Sawatzky asks who wants to be on the ad hoc committee and confirms that he and Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso will be on the ad hoc committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani explains the council has a lot to figure out and a lot to plan and understand and hopes the community can understand these complexities we face and afford us the time to get through them.

Council Member Kat Napier appreciates the formation of the ad hoc committee and looks forward to the reports being brought back at the next regular scheduled meeting. Council Member Kat Napier then asks if directing staff to come up with the terms of an MOU agreement on the use of the bike park is appropriate.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani agrees and states that we should get something in writing from the insurance company.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart explains that the city has a statement in writing from our insurance carrier and our CIRA risk management representative Emily has been briefed on what is expected of us.

Public Comment: [2:15:04]

Comment by (Barbara Russell): asked if the ad hoc committee accepts volunteers.

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso confirmed that the ad hoc committee wants volunteers.

Comment by (Julie Christi): supports the ad hoc committee.

Comment by (Ingrid Kasic): comments that a movie watching event happened at the bike park last weekend and that the park is still closed.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: [2:19:19]

Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso states that Eric Keller-Heckman from the Humboldt Waste Management Authority is prepared to make a 20-minute presentation on Blue Lake's waste management at the council's regular meeting in June.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani reports that she had a conversation with Regina Fuller at the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office and said we need to prioritize law enforcement contract which needs renewed by the end of June and believes the contract has been authorized pending CIRA correspondence.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart confirms communication has not been received and that she will reach out to CIRA.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani reported she received a quote and contract for animal control services at \$9,597 a year for animal control enforcement and wants to bring this to the council for



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discussion and approval at our next meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani suggested commission appointments be placed on the agenda of the next meeting as well.

Mayor John Sawatzky confirms vacancies on both the economic development commission and the arts and heritage commission.

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart reports there are some contract items coming forward, and the budget. Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart also reports communicating with power transitions and placing them on an upcoming agenda.

Council Member Kat Napier and Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani requests a hard copy of the agenda packet

Acting City Manager Dani Burkhart said that staff should be able to accommodate the request.

Public Comment: [2:26:25]

Comment by (Kit Mann): encourages the council to place the power transition project on the agenda. Kit Mann says this project is critically important for the City of Blue Lake and thinks the council should talk about it regularly and seriously.

Mayor John Sawatzky confirmed the placement of the power transition project on an upcoming agenda.

Comment by (Barbara Russell): Barbara would like to see the council get together to maintain the power plant site and suggest using volunteers to clean it up.

Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani confirms that she and Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso are on the ad hoc committee to look into the power plant site cleanup.

Comment by (Brian Corse): Brian suggests placing a break on the agenda so everyone can get up and stretch.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE: [2:30:57]

Council Member Kat Napier directs staff that it is the mayor's decision on whether the correspondence provided to the council is to be read in public or just provided in the packet as public record.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn the May 27, 2025, City Council Meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Motion by: Council Member Kat Napier

Second by: Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

Motion Summary: Consensus (4/0)

Laura McClenagan,
Deputy Clerk, City of Blue Lake