



# Blue Lake City Council Minutes

Tuesday, August 26, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m. ~ Regular Council Meeting

Wednesday, August 27, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m. ~ Special Council Meeting

Skinner Store Building ~ 111 Greenwood Rd., Blue Lake ~ Behind City Hall

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor John Sawatzky called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**ESTABLISH A QUORUM OF THE COUNCIL:** [0:23]

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

**COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Interim City Manager Jill Duffy, City Attorney Ryan Plotz, Deputy Clerk Laura McClenagan and Videographer Justin Goad

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** [1:44]

City Attorney Ryan Plotz announced that a matter has arisen after the posting of tonight's agenda, which is, at approximately 3:45 today, August 26, 2025, the Acting City Clerk Dani Burkhart, submitted her resignation as Acting City Clerk, effective immediately. As the council knows, the city clerk serves as the city's election official. Several items on tonight's agenda relate specifically to the recall process and include directives requiring the city clerk to take certain actions. These actions are time-sensitive and governed by statutory deadlines and must be taken by the appointed city clerk.

Because the city clerk has resigned and is no longer able to carry out those duties, city council must consider immediate action to address the vacancy, including potentially designating an acting or interim city clerk to fulfill urgent legal obligations. Under Government Code section 54954.2, subdivision B, the council may take action on items not listed on the posted agenda if two conditions are met: first, a determination is made by a two-thirds vote of members present that there is a need to take immediate action, and second, that the need to take action arose after the agenda was posted.

In this case, since the resignation occurred today and the agenda was posted 72 hours prior to the start of tonight's meeting, and concerns the city's ability to comply with state election law in connection with the recall, I am recommending that the council consider a motion to add an item to the agenda for discussion and possible action regarding the resignation of the city clerk and the designation of an interim city clerk to fulfill city clerk duties. If the council makes the motion and the appropriate findings, that item will be added to the agenda and can be taken up in the normal course.



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**Public Comment Received:** Alexander Ricca, Adelene Jones

**Motion:** To add an urgent item to the agenda accepting the resignation of our acting city clerk and consider the appointment of an interim or acting city clerk, finding that there is a need to take immediate action regarding the designation of the city clerk designation or an interim city clerk as the matter involves urgent time-sensitive election duties relating to the recall process. Further that the council determine the need for this action arose after the agenda was posted and that the agenda shall be amended to add the following urgent item as an item requiring action. The item would be discussion and possible actions regarding the recognition of the city clerk and designation of an acting or interim city clerk. [7:30]

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Second by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0).

**ADJOURNMENT:** move to adjourn our meeting tonight, moving items 3 through 10 to tomorrow night's agenda (August 27, 2025) reconvening at 6:30 p.m. and continuing item 11 (Closed Session: Public Employment Evaluation) tonight. [10:30] (6:50 p.m.)

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Second by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Public Comment Received:** Alexander Ricca

**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Continuation of the August 26, 2025, Regular Meeting: Mayor John Sawatzky called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on August 27, 2025.

**ESTABLISH A QUORUM OF THE COUNCIL:** [0:35]

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

**COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Interim City Manager Jill Duffy, City Attorney Ryan Plotz, City Planner Gary Reese, Deputy Clerk Laura McClenagan and Videographer Justin Goad  
<https://www.youtube.com/@BLCNews95525>

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**



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**OLD BUSINESS:** [8/27/25 0:46 part 1] Item 11 (Closed Session: Public Employment Evaluation)  
Mayor John Sawatzky reported that council moved to adjourn the closed session at on August 26<sup>th</sup> at 8:06 p.m. The council returned to the Skinner store with a quorum to report that no reportable action was taken at 8:10 p.m.

**Public Comment Received:** Adelene Jones, Kent Sawatzky

**CONSENT AGENDA:** [8/27/25 8:34 part 1]

**Motion:** to approve items 3e-City Council Minutes for July 3, 2025, 3f-City Council Action Summary Minutes for July 22, 2025, 3g-City Council Action Summary Minutes for July 28, 2025, and 3h-Approve Monthly Report on Disbursements.

**Motion by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Second by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0)

**ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT:** [8/27/25 12:32 part 1]

**Item a. City Council Minutes for February 20, 2025:**

**Motion:** [8/27/25 15:29 part 1] to approve February 20, 2025, minutes with the following corrections:

1. Thursday, not a Tuesday. February 20th.
2. Page two, Line 35, says Mayor Pro Tem Scafani comments on the formation of the ad hoc. And I would like to add "the formation of the ad hoc outside of an open session council meeting in spite of multiple requests to agendize this since December 2024."
3. In reference to RCEA solicitation timeline, add "which was inaccurately portrayed to the council at the December 10, 2024, meeting."

**Motion by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Second by:** Council Member Terri Bayles

**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0).

**Item b. City Council Minutes for March 25, 2025:**

**Motion:** [8/27/25 17:38 part 1] to approve March 25, 2025, minutes with corrections on the adoption of February 20, 2025, minutes. Page 3: line 10, should state "withdrew the motion."

**Motion by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Second by:** Council Member Terri Bayles



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**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0).

### **Item c. City Council Minutes for April 8, 2025:**

**Motion:** [8/27/25 18:40 part 1] to continue April 8, 2025, minutes to the next meeting.

**Motion by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Second by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0).

### **Item d. City Council Minutes for April 22, 2025:**

**Motion:** [8/27/25 15:29 part 1] to continue April 22, 2025, minutes to the next meeting.

**Motion by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Second by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0).

### **HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE & NEXT STEPS:** [8/27/25 19:26 part 1]

City Planner Gary Reese presented a staff report to the council and public and answered questions. Gary anticipates the council will receive a recommendation from the planning commission in September.

**Public Comment Received:** Adelene Jones, Barbara Russell, Kent Sawatzky, Julie Christie

### **RECEIVE AND FILE CERTIFICATE OF SUFFICIENCY OF THREE RECALL PETITIONS AND SET DATE FOR SPECIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION FOR THE RECALL OF ONE COUNCIL MEMBER POSITION:**

[8/27/25 48:49 part 1] Yeah, this was the item was added as an urgency item when the council convened its regular meeting yesterday. As reported, City Clerk Dani Burkhart submitted her resignation at 3:44 PM yesterday, the day of the meeting. Due to the items on tonight's agenda requiring official election obligations, you have before you Dani Burkhart's resignation and an opportunity to appoint an acting city clerk until a more permanent appointment can be made. The city clerk is a direct appointee of the council.

**Motion:** [8/27/25 52:25 part 1] to appoint Interim City Manager Jill Duffy as the Acting City Clerk.

**Motion by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Second by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Motion Summary:** Consensus (5/0).



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**Public Comment Received:** Adelene Jones, Rebecca Collins, Julie Christi

### **RECEIVE AND FILE CERTIFICATE OF SUFFICIENCY OF THREE RECALL PETITIONS AND SET DATE FOR SPECIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION FOR THE RECALL OF ONE COUNCIL MEMBER POSITION:**

[8/27/25 56:33 Part 1]

**Motion:** [8/27/25 1:13:39 part 1] to adopt resolution 1239 to certify the sufficiency or insufficiency of recall petitions seeking removal of Council Member Kat Napier, Mayor John Sawatzky and Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani. Juan Pablo Cervantes, Humboldt County Elections Officer was available and responded to Council questions.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Second by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Aye:** Council Member Kat Napier, Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso, Mayor John Sawatzky, Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani, Council Member Terri Bayles

**Nay:**

**Motion:** [8/27/25 1:15:26 part 1] to continue Resolution 1240, selecting a date for the recall election, to a special meeting on September 9, 2025.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Second by:** Council Member Kat Napier

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Aye:** Council Member Kat Napier, Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani, Council Member Terri Bayles

**Nay:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso, Mayor John Sawatzky

**Public Comment Received:** Adelene Jones, Barbara Russell, Rebecca Collins, Lori Ponte, Angela Dare

**BREAK:** [8/27/25 1:28:08 part 1]

**EXTEND CONTINUING RESOLUTION 1237 IN LIEU OF FISCAL YEAR 2025/26 BUDGET:** [8/27/25 0:00 part 2]

**Public Comment Received:** Adelene Jones, Kent Sawatzky, Rebecca Collins, Barbara Russell



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**Motion:** [8/27/25 23:18 part 2] to approve resolution 1241 authorizing a temporary extension of appropriations for fiscal year 2526 pending the adoption of the annual budget and file the approved resolution with the Humboldt County Auditor's Office and formation of an ad hoc committee members comprised of Council Member Bayles & Napier to assist the Interim City Manager in the development and assessment of our budget.

**Motion by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Second by:** Council Member Kat Napier

**Roll Call Vote**

**Aye:** Council Member Kat Napier, Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso, Mayor John Sawatzky  
Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani, Council Member Terri Bayles

**Nay:**

**Motion carried 5/0**

**CONSIDERATION OF TRANSITION FROM VERBATIM TO ACTION-STYLE MINUTES:** [8/27/25 26:54 part 2]

**Public Comment Received:** Adelene Jones, Kent Sawatzky, Barbara Russell

**Motion:** [8/27/25 55:10 part 2] to go from verbatim minutes to action summary minutes.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Second by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Vote:**

**Aye -** Council Member Kat Napier, Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso, Mayor John Sawatzky  
Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani, Council Member Terri Bayles

**Nay -**

**Motion carried 5/0**

**RECEIVE REPORT AND SURVEY PERMISSION REQUEST FROM THE SAFETY COMMISSION:**  
[8/27/25 55:28 part 2]

**Public Comment Received:** Ted Hale, Barbara Russell, Kent Sawatzky, Julie Christie, Lori Ponte, Justin Goad

Adelene Jones announced a public safety fair will be held on Saturday, September 20th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Perigot Park. We have 14 agencies signed up, so it should be informative and fun.





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**Motion:** [8/27/25 1:24:29 part 2] to approve the disbursement of a traffic control survey for I street neighborhood and the approximate area.

**Motion by:** Council Member Kat Napier

**Second by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Vote:**

**Aye** - Council Member Kat Napier, Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso, Mayor John Sawatzky, Council Member Terri Bayles

**Nay** - Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Motion carried 4/1**

**COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:** [8/27/25 1:27:56 part 2]

A letter regarding the county's recently adopted lighting/dark-sky ordinance and a letter after the agenda was posted which you received as a handout regarding agenda item 4 Housing Element Update.

**REPORTS OF COUNCIL AND STAFF:** [8/27/25 1:28:55 part 2]

a. Ad hoc Committee Reports: [8/27/25 1:28:55 part 2]

- i. Need to place City Manager discussion on September 9, 2025, Agenda
- ii. Transparency ad hoc is working with a web designer and a new YouTube channel.
- iii. Need to place committee and ad hoc review on an agenda
- iv. City Clerk ad hoc in progress.
- v. Bike Park ad hoc in progress – gathering information.
- vi. Public Comment Received: Julie Christi

b. Commission Updates: [8/27/25 1:38:24 part 2]

- i. Mayor John Sawatzky and Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso attended the League of California City's Redwood Empire Division general membership meeting last Friday in Fortuna which relayed information regarding the wildfire impacts on insurance for homeowners and there's some recommendations that are going to be coming down for homeowners.
- ii. An Arts and Heritage meeting is coming up. Hopefully that one will happen because I think it's been four months since they've had one.
- iii. Public Comment Received: Julie Christi

c. City Manager Report: [8/27/25 1:41:27 part 2]

- i. Skunk tested positive for rabies on Greenwood
- ii. The bike park remains closed to public access until its completion.
- iii. City is now in compliance with the state controllers' office.



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iv. Public Comment Received: Julie Christi, Kent Sawatzky, Rebecca Collins

**ADJOURNMENT:** [8/27/25 1:55:49 part 2]

**Motion:** to adjourn August 26, 2025, regular meeting and August 27, 2025, special meeting at 10:02 p.m.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani

**Second by:** Council Member Michelle Lewis-Lusso

**Motion Carried 5/0**

Laura McClenagan

Deputy Clerk, City of Blue Lake