



# Blue Lake City Council Minutes

December 23, 2025~ 6:30 p.m. ~Regular Council Meeting  
Skinner Store

- 1 **1. CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Sawatzky called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- 2 **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Council, staff and public stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3 **3. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISH A QUORUM OF THE COUNCIL.** City Manager Duffy  
4 established a quorum of Council members. **Present:** Mayor Sawatzky, Councilmember Napier,  
5 Councilmember Lewis-Lusso, Councilmember Scafani and Councilmember Bayles. Staff  
6 members present included Jill Duffy, City Manager, Emily Wood, Director of Parks and  
7 Recreation, Ryan Plotz, General Counsel and Justin Goad, Videographer.
- 8 **4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA. Motion by Councilmember Scafani/Second by**  
9 **Councilmember Lewis-Lusso** to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion passed**  
10 **unanimously.**
- 11 **5. CLOSED SESSION AGENDA (1<sup>st</sup> Session 6:35 PM to 7:00 PM)**
- 12 **Public Comment on Closed Session agenda item(s)** – Julie Christie addressed  
13 Council to support the closed session and report out. City Manager Duffy directed  
14 Councilmembers to email from Kent Sawatzky.
- 15
- 16 Council convened into Closed Session at City Hall Conference Room at 6:35 pm for the  
17 purpose of **Conference With Labor Negotiators** with Agency designated  
18 representatives: Elise Scafani, Councilmember; Kat Napier, Councilmember; Ryan Plotz  
19 (Attorney for the City) to discuss the Unrepresented employee: City Manager  
20
- 21 **Report out of Closed Session** – at 7:02 pm, Council reconvened in Skinner Store  
22 where Ryan Plotz, General Counsel (via Zoom) reported out that Council considered the  
23 comprehensive proposal included in the packet (agenda item 10) and desired to move  
24 forward with agreement in Open Session without amendment. **Motion by**  
25 **Councilmember Napier/Second by Councilmember Bayles, with unanimous**  
26 **approval.**
- 27 **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 28 The following persons addressed Council:
- 29 • **Erin McClure** – alleged someone from City Hall poisoned her dogs, that the City  
30 Manager was not acting with transparency and demanded an immediate retraction of the  
31 letter issued by General Counsel with an apology by City Council.
- 32 • **Karina Green**-Thanked Councilmembers and staff for their assistance in responding to  
33 the flooding conditions on Broderick and Chartin on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. She noted



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34 that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> winter in a row with flooding, that sandbags are not enough to protect  
35 the properties and requested Council hold a meeting to prioritize plan development to  
36 address drainage issues.

- 37 • **Rebecca Collins** – expressed the need for City Council to secure a City Clerk.
- 38 • **Julie Christie** – Wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked the Council and City  
39 Manager for all their efforts.
- 40 • **Angela Dare** – Inquired about the (missing) Public Commenters in the minutes from  
41 November 25, 2025.

## 42 7. CONSENT AGENDA

43 Councilmember Lewis-Lusso requested the City Council Minutes for 7a. April 22, 2025 be  
44 pulled for discussion and correction, along with 7b. City Council Minutes for October 28, 2025,  
45 7c City Council Minutes for November 25, 2025, with a correction to 7e City Council Minutes for  
46 December 2, 2025 (stated “2026”).

47  
48 Councilmember Scafani requested item 7f. SB 707 – Brown Act Modernization Act –  
49 Informational Only be pulled for discussion.

50  
51 After discussion regarding necessary correction due, primarily, to AI transcription errors,  
52 Councilmember Lewis-Lusso motioned approval of items 7d through 7j for approval, with  
53 remaining items to returning to the Council at their January meeting/Second by Councilmember  
54 Scafani. Motion passed 4:1 vote, with Napier voting nay.

- 56 a. City Council Minutes for April 22, 2025 (*correct/return January*)
- 57 b. City Council Minutes for October 28, 2025 (*correct/return January*)
- 58 c. City Council Minutes for November 25, 2025 (*correct/return January*)
- 59 d. City Council Minutes for December 2, 2025 -correction of “2026”
- 60 e. City Council Minutes for December 6, 2026 – Special Meeting
- 61 f. SB 707 – Brown Act Modernization Act – Informational Only
- 62 g. City Council Board and Committee 2026 Assignments
- 63 h. Approve Request for Proposal for 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Planning Services and  
64 Initiate Solicitation Process
- 65 i. Receive Disbursements for period of November 1-November 30, 2025
- 66 j. Receive Financial Quarterly Report for period of July 1 through September 30, 2025
- 67



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## PUBLIC HEARING ITEM(S)

### 8. **COMFORT VARIANCE HEARING – Continuation of Application #025-067-**

**011/2025.** Variance for Jace and Lorriane Comfort to allow the construction of a new garage located within the required 15-foot side yard setback pursuant to Municipal Code Section 17.24.180(C)(4)(b). Following the staff report by Penelope Kirsch, SHN Planner, Councilmember Napier posed clarifying questions about the project. The applicant's contractor Frank Golsalves provided additional information, as did co-applicant Lorraine Comfort. The applicant's contractor and Councilmember Napier discussed items on a map, off microphone. Mayor Sawatzky called for a five minute recess at **8:00 pm**. Council reconvened at **8:05 pm**.

Mayor Sawatzky called for **Public Comment**. Frank Golsalves provided public comment responding to Council members comments and questions.

Garry Rees, SHN Planner, provided a summary of updated of information regarding 1) Building and/or Fire Code Requirements for Garage Setbacks; and 2) Building and/or Fire Code Requirements for Setbacks Between Structures and responses received from the Blue Lake Fire Department, City Public Works and City Building Official. Additionally, information was presented regarding verification of Alley Abandonment, as requested at the meeting of November 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion by Councilmember Lewis-Lusso/Second by Bayles** to approve the variance and adopt Resolution 1245, read by title only "Resolution of the City Council of the City of Blue Lake Approving the Variance Application for Jace and Lorraine Comfort to Allow the Construction of a New Garage Within the Side Year Setback". **Motion passed 4:1, with Napier dissenting.**

### 9. **CONDUCT SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 546 – An Ordinance of the City Council of Blue Lake Adopting Amendments to Title 17, Zoning Regulations of the Blue Lake Municipal Code, By Adding Section 17.20.070, Multi-Family Or MF Combining Zone, and Amending the Zoning Map to Apply The Multi-Family Combining Zone to a 1-Acre Portion of Assessor's Parcel Number 025-201-023 and Adopting a Mitigate Negative Declaration; Waive Reading of the Text and Consent to Read by Title Only.**

Councilmember Bayles asked Garry Rees for the rationale for this particular site. Garry explained that HCD asked that the City look for those city parcels 1 acre or larger, and that this lot was preferable. The Danco planned lot was not looked at because it was already being considered for development and that HCD could determine that its inclusion would be double counting.

Considerable information was presented by Councilmember Bayles regarding the Mad River



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110 levee, under co-management between the City and the County, with responses by Garry  
111 Rees. There is a need to re-establish coordination with the City and County to possible  
112 secure a grant that could assess levee condition.

113  
114 Councilmember Scafani thanked Garry Rees and stated she was comfortable moving  
115 forward.

## 116 Public Comment Received from:

117 **Debra Heberly** – Expressed appreciation for information presented by Councilmember  
118 Bayles and her position on this matter.

119 **Rebecca Collins** – Echoed both Debra’s appreciation and Councilmember Bayles work.  
120 Noted there’s some policy issues and need to coordinate work with the County (Dept.  
121 Public Works) on the levees.

122 **Julie Christie** – Expressed appreciation for the concerns Councilmember Bayles raised,  
123 and believes there are a number of missed opportunities related to Powers Creek and  
124 the City’s General Plan. She noted that the Blue Lake Rancheria also conducted some  
125 studies, and there are flooding concerns and willows.

126 **Motion by Councilmember Napier/Second by Scafani** to conduct a second reading by  
127 title and approve Ordinance 546. **Roll call vote: Ayes: Napier, Lewis-Lusso, Sawatzky**  
128 **and Scafani. No: Bayles. Motion passes 4:1, with Bayles dissenting.**

## 130 ITEMS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION OR ACTION

### 132 **10. DISCUSS AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CITY MANAGER EMPLOYMENT** 133 **AGREEMENT WITH JENNIE SHORT**

#### 135 Public Comment:

- 136 ○ **Jennie Short** addressed Council and looks forward to the opportunity to work on  
137 behalf of the City.
  - 138 ○ **Julie Christie** – expressed support for the appointment and hiring of Ms. Short,  
139 and appreciation to interim City Manager Duffy
  - 140 ○ **Karina Green** – Posed a question to Ms. Short asking whether residents will have  
141 direct access to staff.
  - 142 ○ **Rebecca Collins** -Encourages Ms. Short to secure a City Clerk
  - 143 ○ **Angela Dare** – Welcomed Ms. Short.
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147  
148 **Motion by Councilmember Scafani/Second by Councilmember Lewis-Lusso** to 1.) appoint  
149 Jennie Short as City Manager effective January 5, 2026; and 2) approve the employment  
150 contract. Voice Vote: **Ayes: Bayles, Napier, Lewis-Lusso, Sawatzky and Scafani. Noes:**  
151 **None. Motion passes unanimously 5:0**

152  
153 **11. RECEIVE AND APPROVE REVISED FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 BUDGET, APPROVE**  
154 **RESOLUTION 1248; TAKE ACTION AS APPROPRIATE**

155 Interim City Manager Duffy provided a presentation outlining a summary of the budgetary  
156 revisions and recommendations for the FY 2025-26 Budget. This included program  
157 reduction/discontinuance and operational recommendations to achieve the Council goals set  
158 forth at the November 25<sup>th</sup> council meeting that could resolve the total estimated budget deficit  
159 of over \$206,541 to being balanced. Specifically, Council requested that the General Fund  
160 (Fund 10) deficit of \$170,647 be balanced. The revised budget version presented December  
161 23<sup>rd</sup> had a preliminary surplus budget of \$2,497, pending confirmation from the City's  
162 accountant.

163  
164 Interim City Manager Duffy noted staff had continued budget revisions up to the point of  
165 agenda/staff report distribution on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> with a notation that those latest  
166 figures were submitted to the City's accountant with a request for his final review and  
167 clarification on several items listed below.

168  
169 During this review the following were noted:

- 170  
171 1. In Fund 60 and Fund 70, staff identified that the Part Time Labor Budget (GL 5002)  
172 was over-cushioned in the original July 2025 draft budget, in part because the on-call and  
173 rounds used by Full Time employees was attributed to the incorrect line item. The  
174 accountant agrees that this appears to have created a double allocation in both Fund 60  
175 and 70 with GL Line 5002 and 5014.  
176  
177 2. Town Square loan repayment was NOT included in the draft July budget, and  
178 represents an expenditure of \$11,250.  
179  
180 3. Title Correction for Fund 38 on the budgetary layout sheet – not substantive, but clean  
181 up.  
182  
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184  
185 4. A need to refine City Hall personnel staff cost estimates. The City Clerk position was  
186 included in the July draft budget, but only at a part-time rate. Council had requested a full  
187 time position.

188  
189 5. Need for clarification on CDBG programs and allocations.

190  
191 6. Accountant needs to submit appropriations transfer amounts for inclusion on the  
192 resolution approving the fiscal year budget.

193  
194 For the reasons above, Council was asked to approve Resolution 1248 to approve a 4<sup>th</sup>  
195 extension to continue the FY 24-25 budget so staff could refine the above information and  
196 complete the budget.

197  
198 Councilmember Napier reiterated that she wants to see a Special Fund established specifically  
199 for the Bike & Skate Park. Staff clarified that revenues and expenditures are tracked internally  
200 to the General Fund 10, Dept. 445, under a Project Code with the ability to produce reports  
201 detailing activities within the account. Councilmember Napier identified that the concern was  
202 related to General Funds could be moved and desired to see that revenues and expenditures  
203 be managed as a Special Fund so tracking and authorizations to transfer funds are handled in a  
204 transparent manner.

## Public Comment:

- 205  
206  
207 ○ **Debra Heberly** – Supports continuation of the greenwaste program and supports  
208 resumption of Pickleball.  
209 ○ **Karina Green** – Desires to see funding included for drainage infrastructure and upgrades.  
210 ○ **Julie Christie** – Desires Blue Lake to advocate for additional funding/representation  
211 during the County's budgetary process.

212  
213 **Motion by Councilmember Lewis-Lusso/Second by Councilmember Bayles** to adopt  
214 Resolution 1248 "Authorizing a Temporary Extension of Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024-25  
215 Pending Adoption of the Annual Budget. Voice Vote: **Ayes: Bayles, Napier, Lewis-Lusso,**  
216 **Sawatzky and Scafani. Noes: None. Motion passes unanimously 5:0**

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**12. CONDUCT SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 549**, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 13.12 Regulating Cross Connections Control

**Public Comment:** None Received.

**Motion by Councilmember Lewis-Lusso/Second by Councilmember Scafani** to adopt Ordinance 549 to Amend Chapter 13.12 Regulating Cross Connections Control by reading title. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes: Bayles, Napier, Lewis-Lusso, Sawatzky and Scafani. Noes: None. Motion passes unanimously 5:0**

**13. CONDUCT SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 545** - 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 Hazard Areas In The City Of Blue Lake

**Public Comment:** None Received.

**Motion by Councilmember Scafani/Second by Councilmember Napier** to adopt Ordinance 545 to Adopt the State of California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Designating Moderate and High Fire Hazard Areas in the City of Blue Lake. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes: Bayles, Napier, Lewis-Lusso, Sawatzky and Scafani. Noes: None. Motion passes unanimously 5:0**

**14. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE** - Written correspondence from Kent Sawatzky provided in packet and two additional emails from Mr. Sawatzky submitted prior to the meeting, and an email from Aiyana Gregori.

**15. REPORTS OF COUNCIL AND STAFF**

- a. Ad hoc Committee Reports-*continue to next meeting.*
- b. Commission Updates – *continue to next meeting.*
- c. City Manager Report – City Manager Duffy noted that over the past 3 weeks she had been preparing and submitting information for various agency audits (e.g. RRDEC, HCAOG) and State reports (e.g. SB 1, CalRecycle, and Local Streets and Road funding). Additionally submittal of application for CalRecycle’s Cities/County non-competitive grant funding and claim submittals to HCAOG for TDA, RSTP and Bike



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261 and Pedestrian fund allocations.

262  
263 **16. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS BY REQUESTED BY COUNCIL – *continue to next meeting.***

264  
265 **17. CLOSED SESSION AGENDA:**

266  
267 **a. Public Comment on Closed Session agenda item(s).** None Received

268  
269 **b. Council convened into Closed Session at City Hall Conference Room at 10:55 pm for the**  
270 **purpose of CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS**  
271 **Property: Portions of APN Nos. 312-131-037-000, 312-131-045-0003, 312-131-046-000**  
272 **and 312-190-010-000, in the unincorporated area of the County of Humboldt, State of**  
273 **California. Under negotiation: Price and terms.**

274  
275 **c. Report Out of Closed Session.** Council reconvened at 11:25 at the Skinner Store for a  
276 report out of Closed Session. No action to report out.

277  
278 **18. ADJOURN**

279  
280 *Prepared and submitted by Jill K Duffy, Acting City Clerk*

