



Blue Lake City Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 10th, 2026 ~ 6:30pm ~ Special Council Meeting
Skinner Store Building ~ 111 Greenwood Rd., Blue Lake ~ Behind City Hall

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

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3 **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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5 **3. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISH A QUORUM OF THE COUNCIL**

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7 **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** City Manager Short established a quorum of council
8 members: Present: Mayor John Sawatzky, Mayor Pro Tem Elise Scafani, Council
9 Member Kat Napier, Council Member Terri Bayles, Council Member Michelle Lewis-
10 Lusso

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12 **COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

13 **STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Jennie Short, Park and Recreation Director Emily
14 Wood, and Videographer Justin Goad.

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16 **4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – Motion by Council Member Napier** to modify the
17 agenda by moving agenda item 13 before agenda item 8. **Second by Mayor Pro Tem**
18 **Scafani.**

19 **Voice Vote: Motion passed unanimously**

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21 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON AGENDA ITEMS**

22 The following persons addressed Council:

- 23 • Lin Glenn: Suggested increasing recruitment efforts for commissions and
24 encouraged council liaisons to work with the commissioners
- 25 • Adelene Jones: Addressed comments made by Mayor Sawatzky during the
26 last council meeting regarding the recall
- 27 • Julie Christie: Brought up ongoing issues with audio at council meetings.
28 Would like to see Parks and Recreation Fee Schedule make its way back
29 to council

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31 **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

- 32 a. Receive Financial Quarterly Report for period of October 1st through December
33 31st 2025
- 34 b. Approve the Monthly Report on Disbursements for the period of January 1st
35 through January 31st 2026

36
37 **Public Comment on Consent Agenda: None received**

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39 **Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Scafani** to approve consent agenda. **Second by Council Member**
40 **Lewis-Lusso.**

41 **Voice Vote: Motion passed unanimously**



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PRESENTATION

7. RECEIVE PRESENTATION FROM STEPHEN KULLMANN FROM REDWOOD COAST ENERGY AUTHORITY, ON NORTHERN RURAL ENERGY NETWORK AND LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR NREN BUSINESS PLAN SUBMISSION FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Public Comment:

- Unknown Speaker: Asked about benefits to public
- Adelene Jones: Asked about income requirements
- Ken Hamik: Asked where the money comes from (local/state/federal)
- Julie Christie: Asked about the letter of support

Motion by Council Member Napier to sign the letter of support. **Second by Council Member Bayles.**

Voice Vote: Motion passed unanimously

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION OR ACTION

8. CONSIDER STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR A RECIPROCAL ACCESS EASEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY'S CORPORATION YARD (APN 025-201-019) AND THE SITE OF THE ROUSSEAU MIXED-USE PROJECT (APN 025-201-018)

Rousseau Investments LLC has submitted a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application for a mixed-use project on their property in the Powers Creek District on APN 025-201-018. The project proposes a two-story building that would consist of two 520 s.f. one-bedroom units and 3,200 s.f. of commercial space on the ground floor and two 520 s.f. one-bedroom units on the upper floor. Since the City Engineer's recommendation would result in the use of a portion of the City's corporation yard property for an expanded driveway to serve the Rousseau Mixed-Use Project, this item is being brought before the City Council for consideration before the CUP application is scheduled for a public hearing.

Public Comment:

- Julie Christie: Supports Ryan's project(s) Thinks the easement could be easily facilitated and recommended that the City keep working with the family

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Scafani to approve the possibility of the property being used as a shared easement. **Council Member Lewis-Lusso** amended the motion by adding that the understanding is to continue the process, evaluation, and assessment. **Second by Mayor Pro Tem Scafani**

Voice Vote: Motion passed unanimously



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84 **9. INTRODUCTION OF NEW FINANCE MANAGER KARIE KROEKER**

85 The City went through a robust recruitment process which resulted in numerous qualified
86 candidates and consisted of several interview and selection committees. Karie Kroeker was
87 selected as the preferred candidate and has accepted the job. Her first full day was January
88 27, 2026. Ms. Kroeker has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an
89 Accounting emphasis from what was then Humboldt State University. She worked for
90 Jackson and Eckland as a staff accountant for 19 years. She obtained her Certified Public
91 Accountant license in 2006.

92
93 **Public Comment: None received**

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95 **10. APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1252 APPOINTMENT OF SAMANTHA GREEN AS**
96 **CITY CLERK**

97 Finalist interviews for the permanent City Clerk position were conducted by Council on
98 January 20, 2026. A conditional offer of employment was made and the preferred candidate,
99 Samantha Green, has accepted the position. Background and reference checks for the
100 Council's preferred candidate have been completed. The recruitment process is now
101 complete, and the Council can now make a permanent appointment.

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103 **Public Comment: None received**

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105 **Motion by Council Member Bayles** to approve Resolution 1252 Appointment of Samantha
106 Green as City Clerk. **Second by Council Member Napier**

107 **Roll call vote:**

108 **Aye: Sawatzky, Scafani, Napier, Lewis-Lusso, Bayles**

109 **Noes: None**

110 **Motion passed unanimously**

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112 **11. OATH OF OFFICE: CITY MANAGER, CITY CLERK, AND FINANCE MANAGER**

113 Oath of office administered to City Manager, City Clerk, and Finance Manager by Mayor
114 John Sawatzky

115
116 **12. BIKE AND SKATE PARK PROJECT- DRAFT CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

117 In September 2025, Interim City Manager Jill Duffy presented several staff reports to City
118 Council and prepared a memorandum outlining her preliminary findings and recommended
119 actions related to the project. The purpose of this staff report is not intended to rehash the
120 events that led to the current status of the project, but rather to identify steps necessary to
121 move the project forward. The development of a corrective action plan will enable staff to
122 coordinate with relevant stakeholders and volunteer-based organizations that have executed
123 an MOU with the City, contributed to the project or expressed interest in this project.



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Public Comment:

- Kevin Fisher: Thanked Jennie and Council. Acknowledged there is still work to do. Supports MOU with MBTTA
- Adelene Jones: Supports Kevin Fisher and wife Ingrid, who were instrumental in starting Annie and Mary Rail Trail. Supports bike park
- Brian Corse: Asking if outstanding funds are public records. Creating community through riding bikes
- Tim Daniels: Thanked Jennie for work put into bike park. Happy to see her as city manager
- Julie Christie: Concerned with liability, engineering of bike park, and parking

Motion by Council Member Lewis-Lusso to approve Draft Correction Action Plan for the bike and skate plan. **Second by Council Member Napier.**

Voice Vote: Motion passed unanimously

13. APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1253 AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH MOUNTAIN BIKE TRIBAL TRAIL ALLIANCE

The bike park project has generated significant community enthusiasm and support with financial and volunteer work hours committed towards this endeavor over the past three years by several community members. MBTTA is a local nonprofit organization based in McKinleyville who has expressed interest in participating in these efforts to advance the project. Staff recommend formalizing the group's role through an MOU to ensure accountability, transparency and collaboration related to fundraising, project completion, long-term maintenance of the facility, insurance coverage and access to the City property for public use subject to City approval. Additionally, the agreement assists with compliance with City Resolution 1077 pertaining to donation management.

Public Comment:

- Shaun Fyfe: Founder of MBTTA, looking forward to sharing joy of riding bikes while working with individuals to ensure equitable access to biking activities.
- Julie Christie: Thanked Shaun for stepping up for community and kids

Motion by Council Member Bayles to Approve Resolution 1253 "Approving MOU with MBTTA for Development, Maintenance, and Monitoring of the Blue Lake Bike Park" and Direct the City Manager to sign the MOU. **Second by Council Member Lewis-Lusso**

Voice Vote: Motion passed unanimously

14. PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING POTENTIAL CANNIFEST SPECIAL EVENT

Humboldt Green Events LLC is the organizer for the annual Cannifest festival. On February



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164 3, 2026, the organizer began promoting on social media that they would be holding
165 Cannifest in sunny Blue Lake on September 11 – 13, 2026. No applications or
166 conversations with City staff had occurred prior to the postings. The organizer had
167 coordinated with Dell' Arte for the rental of the building and outdoor spaces on their property
168 for the event. City Manager Short reached out to Dell' Arte and we set up a meeting that
169 afternoon to discuss the various permits that would be needed and the fact that Dell' Arte
170 conducts the Mad River Festival under a very specific Conditional Use Permit. Dell' Arte
171 confirmed at the meeting that they do not intend for Cannifest to be conducted under their
172 CUP and that the event coordinator is responsible for all City permits.
173

174 **Public comment:**

175 Those in support of Cannifest being held in Blue Lake:

- 176 • Stephen Geider, Artemis Pebdani, Kash Boodjeh, Eishee, Yajaira Padilla, Guido,
177 Jesse Dodd, Adalene Jones, Rebecca Collins, Sarah Mkinney, Stephen Kullman, Eric
178 Olson, Lin Glenn, Angela Dare, Malia Matsumoto, Alan and Carlotta Clark, Noah
179 Bremer

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181 Those on edge about the event/concerned about parking, conflicting events, or safety:

- 182 • Justin Goad, Brian Corse, Julie Christie, Jean Lynch, Verda Pitts,
183

184 Those opposed to hosting Cannifest in Blue Lake:

- 185 • Lori Ponte and Teresa Sawatzky
186

187 **Point of Order by Cort Pryor** was made regarding public comment. Since council had taken
188 two additional comments once public comment was closed, Cort Pryor wanted the opportunity
189 to comment. Cort's comment was about conflict of interest and advised the council to be
190 conscientious of this when making decisions that may be within the sphere of influence.
191

192 ***NO ACTION WAS MADE: Further discussion to continue if needed***

193 **15. SUSPENSION OF HUTA**

194 Under normal circumstances, the Annual Street Report was completed by Scott Gordan, the
195 City Accountant at Jackson and Ecklund. Mr. Gordan had been out on medical leave for
196 some time and upon his return in December he intended on completing the ASR.
197 Unfortunately, before he could complete the report his doctor returned him to medical leave.
198 Jackson and Ecklund informed us last week that they would be unable to provide a
199 replacement for Mr. Gordan. Our new Finance Manager has taken on the collection of
200 necessary information and hopes to be submitting the ASR to the SCO by the end of
201 February. The suspension of funds will not affect the actual revenues received by the City,
202 just the timing for the receipt of those funds. We anticipate that the temporary suspension
203 will not result in funds being delayed into the next fiscal year.
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NO ACTION WAS MADE

16. RREDC'S RESTATED JPA

The Redwood Region Economic Development Commission's Executive Director has supplied the attached memo requesting that the City process the draft Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement. The JPA was provided to our City Attorney, Ryan Plotz, who had a conflict due to his representation of other agencies. He has forwarded the JPA to our special counsel for review. A response from special counsel is anticipated prior to the meeting but was not available as of the posting of the Council packet.

Public comment: None received

NO ACTION WAS MADE, item tabled till next council meeting

17. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE: Letter from Laura and Brian Julian

Public comment: None received

18. REPORTS OF COUNCIL AND STAFF

- c. Ad hoc Committee Reports
- d. Commission Updates
- e. City Manager Report

19. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- RREDC JPA
- City Hall closed on Fridays
- Commission conversation

Adjourn at 10:29pm

Prepared by: Samantha Green
City Clerk, City of Blue Lake