CITY OF LOS BANOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 15, 2026

ACTION MINUTES – These minutes are prepared to depict action taken for agenda items presented to the City Council. For a detailed account of this meeting, refer to the video recording available on YouTube, which serves as a permanent record.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Amabile called the City Council Meeting to order at the hour of 6:01 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Police Chief Reyna led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL – MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL PRESENT: Council Members Mitzy Perez – District 1, Refugio LLamas – District 2, Deborah Lewis – District 4, Mayor Michael Amabile; Absent: Marcus Chavez – District 3

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: City Manager Than, City Attorney Lerner, City Clerk Mallonee, City Treasurer Lawrence, Community & Economic Development Director Souza Elms, Police Chief Reyna, Public Works Director Via, Fire Chief Tualla, Finance Director Moreno, Parks & Recreation Director Heim, Interim Human Resources Director Carlos

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Amabile made note that Council Member Chavez is not here tonight and requested that item 9B – Public Hearing – To Receive Public Comment and Consideration of Introduction and Waiver of First Reading of Ordinance Amending Sections 2-1.302 and 2-1.303 of Title 2, Chapter 1, Article 3 of the Los Banos Municipal Code to Increase Electeds' Compensation be removed from the agenda and brought back at a later date when all Council Members will be present.

Motion by Lewis, seconded by LLamas to approve the agenda as amended with the removal of item 9B – Public Hearing – To Receive Public Comment and Consideration of Introduction and Waiver of First Reading of Ordinance Amending Sections 2-1.302 and 2-1.303 of Title 2, Chapter 1, Article 3 of the Los Banos Municipal Code to Increase Electeds' Compensation. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Chavez absent.

PRESENTATIONS.

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION – EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH FOR MARCH 2026 – HALEY LEONARD, PLANNING TECHNICIAN, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT. Mayor Amabile presented the certificate to Haley Leonard who was present to accept.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING LOS BANOS POLICE EXPLORER POST #864. Mayor Amabile presented the proclamation to the members of the Los Banos Police Explorers who were present to accept.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE 57TH ANNUAL PROFESSINAL MUNICIPAL CLERKS WEEK. Mayor Amabile presented the proclamation to City Clerk Lucy Mallonee and Assistant City Clerk Vionna Lin who were present to accept.

NEW EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTIONS. City Manager Than presented the staff report, asking Public Works Director Via to come forward and introduce their new employees: Tony Vazquez, Part Time Maintenance Worker, Patrick Arambel promoted to Facilities Manager, and Jacqulyn Garcia-Wright promoted to Administrative Assistant, who were all present to be introduced. Mr. Than stated that four new Police Officers will be introduced at the next Council Meeting as they were unable to attend tonight's meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS ON ANY ITEM OF PUBLIC INTEREST THAT IS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE CITY; INCLUDES AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS. NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS. SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO A FIVE (5) MINUTE PRESENTATION. DETAILED GUIDELINES ARE POSTED ON THE COUNCIL CHAMBER INFORMATIONAL TABLE. Mayor Amabile opened the public forum. MARIAN PHILLIPS, Executive Director of the American Hero Initiative, spoke regarding disabled veterans and the challenges many face when they cannot afford critical home and auto repairs or other basic needs for their families. She explained that the organization assists disabled veterans through financial support and resource referrals. Ms. Phillips stated she was honored to share information regarding the upcoming "250th Birthday Celebration of the United States" event, scheduled for July 5th at the Ag Sports Complex. She noted the event will honor veterans, celebrate the nation's history, and raise funds to support disabled veterans in need. She described planned activities including an opening ceremony honoring veterans, live entertainment, vendors, children's activities, a "Wall of Heroes" veteran display, community resource booths, and a silent auction. Ms. Phillips requested public support and participation through sponsorships, vendor participation, donations, volunteer involvement, and attendance at the event.; BLANCHE JORGE, downtown resident, thanked the Council for its continued support of animals and noted that the current week is Animal Control Appreciation Week. She spoke regarding the important work performed by Animal Control and shelter staff and recognized Jason Martin and Mariah Estrada, Code Enforcement Officers, along with shelter attendants Suzanne Cardoso and Adrianne Jasso, for their dedication and service. Ms. Jorge also addressed the upcoming budget process and emphasized the importance of supporting the Chief and staff when requesting budget funding, noting the department has specific goals it is working to achieve.; ERASMO VIVEROS, resident of the downtown area, gave the Council kudos for the successful State of the City event and spoke about transparency and good governance. He commented on the item pulled from the agenda regarding elected officials' pay increases and stated he did not feel the second report fully addressed total council compensation and benefits. He referenced comments from former Councilmember Evan Sanders regarding benefits received by

councilmembers and comments from Deborah Lewis regarding compensation from the Air Resources Board. Mr. Viveros also questioned language in the staff report stating the Mayor would be eligible for the increase immediately rather than after the next election. He stated that, based on his own research and examples from other cities, he did not find clear support for the increase taking effect immediately and asked for clarification from staff. He stated the issue is important to the community and encouraged the Council to carefully consider public trust and transparency before moving forward. He also expressed that the Mayor should recuse himself from the vote if he would directly benefit from the increase. ANN McCAULEY, resident of Los Banos for 29 years, spoke regarding transparency, council compensation, economic development, and city governance. She expressed concerns about proposed council salary increases and stated she did not believe there was enough transparency regarding compensation and benefits received by elected officials. Ms. McCauley also voiced concerns about the city's continued housing growth without enough major living wage jobs for residents. She encouraged the City to focus more on economic development and attracting employment opportunities. She further stated that serving on the Planning Commission provides valuable experience for understanding city government and suggested prior Planning Commission experience would better prepare individuals for serving on the City Council. MIGUEL ALEJANDRE, Los Banos, thanked City staff and recognized several staff members for their assistance and support to the community and local businesses. He shared his experience as a business owner attempting to open a business in Los Banos and discussed concerns regarding parking requirements for businesses and community events. He encouraged the City to consider additional parking accommodations for future parks and public events. Mr. Alejandre also invited the public to several upcoming community events and recognized local efforts supporting veterans and cancer research. He concluded by congratulating the City on the successful State of the City event. POLICE CHIEF REYNA introduced Lieutenant Joey Daniels as the new commander of the Los Banos Area CHP office and stated they had already discussed plans and future collaboration. Lieutenant Daniels addressed the Council and introduced himself, noting he assumed command on March 1 and previously served in the Modesto office. He stated he looks forward to being involved in the community, attending local events, and supporting the City and Police Department through training opportunities and other services. He also offered himself as a resource for questions related to the California Highway Patrol. No one else came forward to speak and the public forum was closed.

City Clerk Mallonee read the following item: letter from Khalid Sanchez, Los Banos District 1 community member, was read into the record regarding proposed City Council salary increases. Mr. Sanchez stated that while he believes raises are deserved due to rising costs, the proposed increase appeared excessive. He suggested the City establish policies for regular salary reviews and expressed concerns about council members voting on their own raises, stating that compensation decisions should involve constituents to ensure transparency and accountability.

Mayor Amabile announced starting with the May 20, 2025 meeting we will be having our meetings at the Los Banos Community Center, 645 7th Street, while the Council Chambers are getting upgraded.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA. Motion by Lewis, seconded by LLamas to approve the consent agenda items as follows: Check Register for #257086 – #257257 in the Amount of $914,323.02; City Council Meeting Minutes for March 9, 2026; City Council Meeting Minutes for March 18, 2026; City Council Meeting Minutes for April 1, 2026; City Council Resolution No. 7078 – Accepting the Construction of Sunrise Ranch Park as Complete and Authorizing the Filing of a Notice of Completion with the Merced County Recorder (Ronny's Inc.); City Council Resolution No. 7079 – Approving and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute Amendment No. 2 to the Professional Services Agreement with Galvin Preservation Associates, Inc. for Environmental Clearance and Landscape Architecture Services for the Pioneer Road Complete Streets Project and Amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget by Increasing Appropriations in the Los Banos Regional Transportation Impact Fee Fund in the Amount of $143,512.00; City Council Resolution No. 7080 – Accepting Public Improvements for Quail Meadows at Stonecreek, The Villages V Phase 3, Unit 4 (Anderson Homes); City Council Resolution No. 7081 – Approving the Acceptance of a $2,250 Best Friends Animal Society Grant and Amending the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget by Increasing the Appropriation Amount for Expenditures and Revenues in the Amount of $2,250. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Chavez absent.

PUBLIC HEARING – TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING AN ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT TO DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES (DIF) TO REFLECT CHANGES IN THE ENGINEERING NEWS RECORD CONSTRUCTION COST INDEX (ENR-CCI) FOR 2026. Community & Economic Development Director Souza Elms presented the staff report, which included a PowerPoint presentation.

Mayor Amabile opened the public hearing. KATHY BALLARD, Los Banos questioned engineering and development costs, stating that high fees may be discouraging the construction of smaller housing options like condos, townhouses, and duplexes. She expressed concern about the lack of affordable housing for incoming workers such as nurses and teachers, and suggested that current costs make it difficult for developers to build needed housing in Los Banos and across California. ERASMO VIVEROS, Los Banos, agreed with prior comments supporting more condos and townhomes and noted that city staff is working on housing options. They asked whether the City publicly reports development impact fees on a regular basis (such as quarterly or yearly), including how the funds are used and what public benefits they provide, in order to improve transparency and public understanding. No one came forward to speak and the public hearing was closed.

Ms. Souza Elms explained that the City uses regional cost indexes (San Francisco area) to calculate engineering and impact fees and noted that Council could consider future adjustments for condos, apartments, and affordable housing. Mayor Amabile shared that staff has held multiple meetings with developers regarding multifamily housing opportunities and emphasized that any fee changes would be a Council decision. He also noted the City's annual AB 1600 Development Impact Fee report, most recently presented on December 17, 2025.

City Manager Than discussed how impact fees are tied to infrastructure costs and compared Los Banos fees to nearby cities such as Newman, explaining that fees are necessary to support growth and development. Council discussed whether fees are passed on to homebuyers, with staff confirming they are generally included in the purchase price.

Council members asked whether impact fees could help encourage construction of condos and apartments, with staff stating it is possible and would depend on future Council direction and updated master plans. Staff clarified that fee deferrals are not currently allowed but may be reconsidered in future planning updates. Council also noted additional costs such as school fees and discussed broader housing market trends, including increasing feasibility of multifamily projects due to state housing mandates and financing changes.

Motion by Lewis, seconded by Perez to adopt City Council Resolution No. 7082 – Approving an Annual Adjustment to Development Impact Fees (DIF) to Reflect Changes in the Engineering News Record Construction Cost Index (ENR-CCI) for 2026. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Chavez absent.

~~PUBLIC HEARING – TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION OF INTRODUCTION AND WAIVER OF FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 2-1.302 AND 2-1.303 OF TITLE 2, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 3 OF THE LOS BANOS MUNICIPAL CODE TO INCREASE ELECTEDS' COMPENSATION.~~ *This item was removed from the agenda at the beginning of the meeting with approval of the agenda.*

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 7083 – APPROVING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF LOS BANOS AND BAE URBAN ECONOMICS, INC. TO PERFORM A MARKET RENTAL RATE STUDY AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT. Finance Director Moreno presented the staff report.

Mayor Amabile invited the public to come forward and speak; no one came forward.

Council Member Lewis asked for clarification on "other public agencies," and staff explained it refers to comparable cities and counties used for analysis. She expressed concern about using high-cost areas like San Francisco or Oakland as comparisons and requested that staff provide examples of more appropriate comparable cities for Council review. Staff confirmed they would work with Council to determine suitable comparables. Ae supported creating a clear policy for public property leasing to improve consistency and transparency.

Motion by Lewis, seconded by LLamas to adopt City Council Resolution No. 7083 – Approving a Professional Services Agreement Between the City of Los Banos and BAE Urban Economics, Inc. to Perform a Market Rental Rate Study and Authorizing the City

Manager to Execute the Agreement. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Chavez absent.

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 7084 – RATIFYING THE CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL OF THE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR ISABEL CARLOS. City Manager Than presented the staff report.

Mayor Amabile invited the public to come forward and speak; no one came forward.

Ms. Carlos thanked the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager for appointing them to the permanent position. They shared appreciation for the welcoming and professional environment they experienced as interim director and said it influenced their decision to apply for the role. She expressed enthusiasm for continuing to meet city staff, support employee development, and work collaboratively with city leadership to help advance the City's goals and vision

Motion by Perez, seconded by LLamas to adopt City Council Resolution No. 7084 – Ratifying the City Manager's Approval of the Employment Agreement with Human Resources Director Isabel Carlos. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Chavez absent.

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 7085 – ADOPTING A CITY CLERK AND CITY TREASURER COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE AND DUTIES POLICY. City Attorney Lerner presented the staff report.

Mayor Amabile invited the public to come forward and speak; no one came forward.

Motion by LLamas, seconded by Lewis to adopt City Council Resolution No. 7085 – Adopting a City Clerk and City Treasurer Council Meeting Attendance and Duties Policy. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Chavez absent.

CANCELLATION OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026 DUE TO LACK OF AGENDA ITEMS. City Manager Than spoke to the meeting being cancelled due to lack of agenda items, but made note that there will be a special meeting on May 5, 2026 for a lengthy Budget Workshop and Goals Setting session, which will include an extensive presentation. As a result, the May 6th meeting will be canceled.

Mayor Amabile invited the public to come forward and speak. KATHY BALLARD Kathy Ballard asked where the May 5th special meeting will be held and whether the public will be allowed to attend and view the presentation slides. Mr. Than responded that all Council meetings, including the May 5th budget session, will be held in the usual location at City Hall and will be broadcast and live streamed for public viewing and public

comment. Mayor Amabile emphasized the importance of transparency in the budget process. No one else came forward.

Motion by Lewis, seconded by LLamas to cancel the Regular City Council Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 2026 due to lack of agenda items. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Chavez absent.

CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS.

Community & Economic Development. Director Souza Elms stated that there are two public hearings scheduled for April 22 Planning Commission Meeting. The first is for a Watermill Express proposal to build a small self-service water and ice kiosk on North Mercy Springs Road. The second is an update to the City's accessory dwelling unit ordinance to comply with recent state housing laws.

Finance. Director Moreno reported that the City is currently in the middle of the budget process, working with all departments to collect and finalize budget numbers. She explained that staff will review the information internally, present it to Council on May 5th, and then bring it back again for further Council consideration on June 3rd. She noted this is her second year going through the budget cycle and expressed enthusiasm for continuing the process. She emphasized a focus on providing effective city services and maintaining transparency throughout the budget development process.

Fire. Chief Tualla provided an update on the Fire Department, noting that the weed abatement program has begun and has been streamlined this year with a new application process to help improve efficiency in sending notices. He also announced an upcoming autism event scheduled for Saturday. He added that he is preparing for his upcoming retirement and has been working closely with Assistant Chief Dorenbush to transition into the interim leadership role. He thanked the Council, staff, and City Manager for their support.

Human Resources. Director Carlos announced and congratulated the City's new hire, six recently promoted employees, and the employee of the month.

Parks & Recreation. Director Heim reported upcoming volunteer workdays, including a Sutter Memorial volunteer group painting the Verona Park basketball court and a public volunteer day at College Greens Park. They also announced upcoming programs such as summer volleyball, fall soccer registration, and a pickleball grand opening scheduled for May 30. He noted ongoing park and trail improvements, including painting court surfaces and street work along the canal trail in preparation for future overlay projects. Council requested that the volunteer event dates be emailed to them.

Police. Chief Reyna provided updates on staffing, reporting conditional job offers for a dispatch candidate and a community service officer, as well as a new police officer candidate in background screening. He highlighted the police traffic unit's current enforcement focus, especially distracted driving, lane splitting awareness, speeding, and

seatbelt use, and urged the public to drive safely. He also reminded residents to lock vehicles, secure valuables, and report suspicious activity as weather improves. Chief Reyna noted preparations for upcoming community events, including the May Day Fair and National Night Out. He also congratulated the Police Explorers program participants for their service and interest in law enforcement careers.

Public Works. Director William Via congratulated Ms. Carlos on her appointment as Human Resources Director and recognized several employees for work anniversaries: Gabriel Cervantes with 4 years of service, Patrick Arambel with 9 years, Randy Daniels with 9 years, and Jelene DeMelo with 25 years of service to the City.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT. City Attorney Lerner reported an update to the City Attorney webpage, noting that animal-related resource links have been added for public access. She thanked Blanche Jorge for assisting in compiling the list of resources.

CITY MANAGER REPORT. City Manager Than announced an upcoming mock City Council meeting with Pacheco High School, where students will participate in a simulated government process, and invited City Council members and School Board Trustees to attend. He also noted Council Member Chavez's neighborhood outreach event at the Community Center on Sunday at 1:00 p.m. He expressed pride in staff for the successful State of the City event, highlighting strong teamwork, unity, and the City's shared vision and commitment to continued progress. He emphasized that staff is dedicated and motivated to improve the community and acknowledged Fire Chief Tualla's upcoming retirement, wishing him well in his next chapter.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS:

REFUGIO LLAMAS – DISTRICT 2: Congratulated Employee of the Month Hailey Leonard and announced the Chamber of Commerce street fair this Saturday, noting vendor applications are still open. He thanked City staff and the Mayor for the State of the City event and said it was well organized and helpful for community engagement. He also reported on his District 2 community outreach event at the park, stating it had strong attendance and good public discussion. He emphasized the importance of resident participation in local government and encouraged continued engagement. He thanked the Police Chief for the new traffic control unit and supported increased traffic enforcement, especially around school areas for student safety.

MARCUS CHAVEZ – DISTRICT 3: Excused absence.

DEBORAH LEWIS – DISTRICT 4: Reminded the public about Autism Day this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and thanked the Fire Department for hosting the event. She also thanked staff, the City Manager, and Council for the successful State of the City event and praised the department heads for their presentations and coordination. She announced a "Tune In and Tune Up" smog repair assistance event on May 9 at the Fairgrounds, explaining it provides grant assistance for qualifying vehicle repairs. She also congratulated the new HR Director and welcomed them to the City team. Mayor Pro

Tem Lewis requested a future agenda item to discuss whether the elected Treasurer position should be moved under the Finance Department, noting it is largely a ceremonial role. Council agreed to place the item on a future agenda for discussion and direction.

MITZY PEREZ – DISTRICT 1: Thanked City staff and department heads for meeting with her and Council Member Llamas to explain City processes, noting it was helpful and improved her understanding for responding to residents. She also praised the recent State of the City event for its turnout and value in promoting transparency and trust, and encouraged more similar community engagement events in the future. She announced her upcoming "Parkside Chat" community event on April 25 at Skylark Park at 11 a.m., and invited all residents to attend.

MICHAEL S. AMABILE – MAYOR: Mayor Amabile thanked staff, department heads, the City Manager, Council, and the public for the State of the City event, noting strong attendance and stating the format was larger and more successful than in past years, with improvements planned for future events. He provided updates on upcoming meetings and community events, including MCAG and LAFCO meetings, the Queens Dinner, the County Fair, student council activities, National Day of Prayer, and local outreach events. He addressed public comments regarding Council compensation, explaining that the responsibilities of elected office have significantly increased over time, requiring more meetings, travel, and engagement beyond regular Council meetings. He also referenced Brown Act rules limiting Council communication outside of public meetings. He concluded by stating the compensation discussion would return to a future agenda for continued public review and emphasized that any decision would follow a fully transparent public process with hearings and further discussion.

CLOSED SESSION – PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMATIVE EVALUATION, TITLE: CITY ATTORNEY, PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54957. Mayor Amabile stated that there was no report and no action taken.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

APPROVED:

/s/ Michael S. Amabile
Michael S. Amabile, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Lucille L. Mallonee
Lucille L. Mallonee, City Clerk