

CITY OF LOS BANOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
July 1, 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 6:02 p.m.

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

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

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

PRESENTATIONS.

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION – EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH FOR JUNE 2026 – SANDRA RODRIGUEZ, ADMIN CLERK I, COMMUNIT ECONOMIC & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT. Mayor Amabile presented the certificate to Sandra Rodriguez who was in attendance to accept.

NEW EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTIONS. Human Resources Director stated that Fire Fighter Raymond Lopez had been promoted to Fire Engineer. Mr. Lopez was unable to attend the meeting, and the Council agreed to recognize and introduce him at a future meeting.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY AIR POLLUTION OCNTROL DISTRICT, E-MOBILITY GRANT UPDATE – COUNCIL CHAMBER PROJECT. City Manager Than provided an update on the new Council Chambers agenda and virtual meeting technology funded through the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District E-Mobility Grant and introduced Aaron Tarango of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, who joined the meeting remotely to demonstrate the new system. Mayor Amabile thanked the Air District for the \$150,000 grant, noting the project modernized the Council Chambers and improved transparency and public accessibility by allowing residents to participate remotely. Council Member Lewis expressed appreciation for the grant, stating the upgrades help the City comply with state requirements while expanding opportunities for public

participation, and thanked the Air District, City staff, contractors, and everyone involved in securing and implementing the project. Council Member Chavez thanked the Air District for the grant and commented that he had the opportunity to test the new technology. Mr. Tarango expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the demonstration and stated he was pleased the City was able to take advantage of the grant funding.

DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN DISCUSSION. Community & Economic Development Director Souza Elms presented the staff report, including a PowerPoint presentation, regarding the proposed Downtown Parking Management Plan. She reviewed existing parking conditions, preliminary parking utilization data, key concerns expressed by merchants and the public, and the proposed Request for Proposals (RFP) process to prepare a comprehensive parking management plan. Police Chief Reyna discussed the types of downtown parking complaints received by the Police Department and noted that enforcement primarily involves abandoned vehicles, fire lane violations, handicap parking violations, and occasional time-limit violations. Public Works Director Via stated there is ample parking available downtown but acknowledged the perception that parking is limited. He explained the purpose of the RFP is to evaluate current parking conditions and future parking needs as downtown continues to grow. City Manager Than explained the item was brought forward to obtain Council and public input before issuing the RFP. He noted the study would evaluate parking management strategies and that the current budget includes improvements such as alleyway resurfacing, parking lot slurry seal and restriping, and additional parking signage while the study is underway. Mayor Amabile commented on the need for a parking study to support future parking regulations and enforcement and invited public comment.

Mayor Amabile invited the public to come forward and speak. ANN MCCAULEY recommended making 6th Street one-way, converting additional streets to diagonal parking, evaluating employee parking locations, conducting the parking survey on weekdays rather than Fridays, and establishing time limits to improve parking turnover. CARLOS FLORES commented that parking issues are most noticeable during weekend events, expressed concerns regarding vacant downtown buildings and the cost of retrofitting older buildings, suggested looking at Morgan Hill's downtown parking structure as a model, encouraged long-term planning, and recommended designating employee parking areas. KATHY BALLARD asked whether additional signage could direct motorists to public parking, suggested evaluating the future Police Annex property for parking, and questioned whether City staff could perform the parking study instead of hiring a consultant. KATHLEEN, a downtown business owner, stated that customer parking should remain available near businesses and suggested employees utilize alternate parking locations to preserve convenient customer access. NORMA BLACKWOOD spoke about the importance of convenient parking for elderly and disabled individuals and encouraged employees to park in alternate locations. JOANNE HOFER expressed concerns regarding pickup trucks partially blocking sidewalks and stated that some businesses allow employees to occupy customer parking throughout the day. FRANK VIEIRA commented on limited parking near the Post Office during school hours, underutilized public parking lots, and vehicles not parking close enough to the curb.

Mayor Amabile explained the parking study would be conducted by an independent consultant to ensure an objective and unbiased evaluation. No one else came forward to speak.

City Clerk Mallonee read two letters into the record: LEAH COSTA of Fleur de Luz, expressed appreciation for the continued growth and activity in downtown Los Banos. The letter encouraged business owners and employees to utilize available off-street parking options to help preserve street parking spaces for customers visiting downtown businesses, restaurants, and events. CHASE KALJAIN, property owner of the Bank Building/Miller and Lux Building located at 836–848 I Street, provided comments regarding the proposed parking configuration affecting the building frontage. The letter requested maintaining two 15-minute parking spaces in front of the San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority offices, converting two existing 15-minute spaces to two-hour parking spaces, retaining the two existing ADA parking spaces, and keeping current parking regulations along the I Street side of the property unchanged.

Council Member Llamas thanked the public for their comments and stated he looked forward to developing a parking management plan, noting the issue is one of parking management rather than parking supply. Mayor Pro Tem Lewis stated that parking challenges will continue as the City grows, supported completing the parking study to address current and future needs, referenced Morgan Hill as an example of successful downtown planning, and emphasized the importance of ensuring employees park in appropriate locations. Council Member Chavez supported obtaining an independent study, encouraged business owners to educate employees regarding appropriate parking, and stated the common goal is to help downtown businesses thrive. Mayor Amabile stated the first step is educating business owners and employees regarding parking, expressed support for evaluating one-way streets in the future, noted that parking impacts vary throughout downtown, and supported installing additional parking signage and completing alley improvements while the study proceeds. City Manager Than clarified that the parking management study will evaluate the entire downtown area, including the Post Office and school vicinity, and will consider both current conditions and future parking needs.

ELECTION LAW TRAINING. City Attorney Lerner presented the staff report and introduced Jim Priest, Attorney with Best & Krieger, who provided a detailed overview of election laws and campaign-related restrictions. Mr. Priest discussed the distinction between public officials/employees acting in their official capacity and as private citizens, including restrictions on the use of public resources for campaign activities.

Mayor Amabile asked about interactions with state and federal candidates at City-related events and where the line is regarding endorsements. Mr. Priest provided guidance regarding appropriate practices. Council Member Lewis asked about private citizens or City employees attending City-sanctioned events and engaging in campaign activities. Mr. Priest addressed the concern and discussed considerations related to public forums and City resources.

Mayor Amabile invited the public to come forward and speak. CARLOS FLORES asked about campaign contributions to City Council candidates.

Mr. Priest responded that campaign contributions are governed by state law and applicable contribution limits. No one else came forward to speak. Ms. Lerner asked Mr. Priest to speak about time, place, and manner restrictions for council members discussing ballot measures as private citizens for which Mr. Priest explained there are generally no restrictions as long as public resources are not being used. The City Council thanked Mr. Priest for the presentation.

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. AMY BONILLAS spoke regarding her experience with recovery and the importance of recognizing that substance use affects people from all walks of life. She shared information from a recent Merced County meeting and expressed concerns regarding community safety and access to naloxone, emphasizing harm reduction efforts and the role naloxone plays in preventing deaths. MARINA PHILLIPS thanked sponsors and community members supporting the upcoming veteran honor event scheduled for July 5 and provided information regarding the planned activities and services. CARLOS FLORES commented on the City's \$165 million budget, expressing the need for continued investment in roads and community improvements. He also shared concerns regarding the recent increase in City Council compensation and questioned whether the increase was appropriate. He additionally raised concerns regarding development oversight and building inspections. KATHY BALLARD commented regarding the Consent Agenda item related to City Council compensation. She stated she supported compensation increases due to the time commitment associated with Council responsibilities but expressed concerns regarding providing benefit packages, noting that elected officials are not City employees and questioned eligibility for benefits such as health, vision, dental, and retirement. ANN MCCAULEY also commented regarding City Council benefits, questioning why elected officials would receive benefit packages. No one else came forward to speak, and the public forum was closed.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA. Motion by Lewis, seconded by Chavez to approve the consent agenda items as follows: Check Register for #258434 – #258686 in the Amount of \$2,965,454.47; City Council Meeting Minutes for June 17, 2026; City Council Resolution No. 7118 – Approving the Acceptance of a \$50,630 Grant Awarded by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (A.B.C.) Related to the Enforcement of Alcohol Related Crimes and Amending the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget by Increasing the Appropriation Amount for Expenditures and Revenues in the Amount of \$50,630; City Council Resolution No. 7119 – Approving a Roadway Maintenance Agreement within Merced County Right-of-Way at the Intersection of Pioneer Road and Ortigalita Road, Contract #300-1422 and Authorizing the City

Manager to Execute the Agreement; City Council Resolution No. 7120 – Approving Amendment No. 1 to the Professional Services Agreement with Mark Thomas & Company, Inc. for Engineering Design Services for the State Route 165 and Vineyard Drive Intersection Project, Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Amendment, and Approving a \$30,000 Budget Amendment Increase; City Council Resolution No. 7121 – Accepting a Grant Deed for a 390+ Square Feet Public Pedestrian Easement Located at 709 and 717 Nevada Avenue and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute all Required Documents for this Dedication Acceptance; Ordinance No. 1215 – 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 up to \$1,275 Per Month for City Council Members and \$1,500 for the Mayor; City Council Resolution No. 7122 – Amending the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget for Elected Official Salaries and Benefits in the Amount of \$43,876. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, LLamas voting NO and Perez absent.

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 7123 – AUTHORIZING AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH FEHR & PEERS FOR ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN SERVICES AND AUTHORIZING A RELATED BUDGET ADJUSTMENT. Community & Economic Development Director Souza Elms presented the staff report, which included a PowerPoint presentation regarding the proposed Transportation Master Plan Amendment and roadway alternative analysis.

Mayor Amabile invited the public comment to come forward to speak. ANN MCCAULEY asked about alternative routes out of town, whether large trucks would continue using Highway 152, the design of proposed roundabouts, and clarification regarding where four-lane roadway improvements are planned. She expressed concern that continued truck traffic on Highway 152 would continue to create congestion issues. KATHY BALLARD asked whether Caltrans is involved in the planning process and emphasized the importance of maintaining communication with Caltrans to ensure future improvements meet their requirements. No one else came forward to speak.

Mayor Amabile commented on concerns related to truck traffic on Highway 152, proposed roundabouts, coordination with Caltrans, and future four-lane improvements on Pioneer Road. City Manager Than provided additional information regarding Caltrans coordination and roadway planning.

Motion by Chavez, seconded by Lewis to adopt City Council Resolution No. 7123 – Authorizing Amendment No. 1 to the Professional Services Agreement with Fehr & Peers for Additional Transportation Master Plan Services and Authorizing a Related Budget Adjustment. The motion carried by the affirmative action of all Council Members present, Perez absent.

BRIEF CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS.

Community & Economic Development. Director Souza Elms stated that there will be no Planning Commission meeting on July 8, 2026m with the next meeting on July 22, 2026, in the Council Chambers and with the added Zoom capability.

Finance. Absent

Parks & Recreation. Director Heim reminded the community of upcoming events, including the downtown association's America's 250th birthday celebration on July 4 at Henry Miller Plaza, beginning at 6:00 p.m., with fireworks scheduled for approximately 9:00 p.m. The event will include activities such as a car show. He also announced the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the City's new pickleball courts at the Ag Sports Complex, located at 700 North Mercy Springs Road, scheduled for July 18 at 9:00 a.m. The courts will be open for use following the ceremony.

Human Resources. Director Carlos Human Resources Director Isabel reported that the City held an employee recognition luncheon on June 24, 2026, to recognize and appreciate City employees for their hard work and dedication. She noted that the event was well received by the City team and supports employee engagement, retention, and a more unified workforce. She thanked the Kudos Crew for organizing the successful event.

Public Works. Director Via noted that July 1 marked the beginning of the new fiscal year and thanked the Mayor and City Council for approving the budget and recognized Public Works staff for their efforts in preparing for the upcoming year and the work ahead.

Fire. Interim Fire Chief Dorenbush thanked the Mayor and City Council for approving the budget and highlighted the additional staffing included in the approved budget. He reported that one new recruit started that day, another will begin on Friday, and three additional recruits are expected to start next month. He noted that the increased staffing has been positively received by crews and has improved morale.

Police. Chief Reyna congratulated new Police Officers Roland, Officer Rodriguez, and Officer Northey on graduating from the Fresno Police Academy. He also recognized Officer Arturo Solis for successfully completing motorcycle officer training. He reminded the public that additional police staffing will be in place during the Fourth of July holiday and emphasized that illegal fireworks are prohibited and may result in citations. He encouraged residents to celebrate safely and responsibly.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT. City Attorney Lerner reported that the impartial analysis for the ballot measure related to the City Treasurer position has been submitted to the County Elections Office. She confirmed that all required documents related to the measure have been completed and submitted.

CITY MANAGER REPORT. City Manager Than thanked City staff and Mid Valley IT for their efforts in preparing the Council Chambers and meeting technology to comply with SB 707 requirements within a short timeframe. He noted that while there were challenges, the meeting was able to proceed with Zoom participation and presentation capabilities. He reminded residents about Fourth of July safety, particularly the impact of fireworks on pets. He encouraged residents to secure pets, check fences and gates, ensure pets have identification tags and microchips, and plan ahead for pets that may experience anxiety. He noted that Animal Control and Animal Services have shared additional safety tips with the public. Mr. Than also announced that Merced County Clerk services are now available on the West Side at the fairgrounds, including certified copies of birth certificates and other services. The program is currently being piloted on the first Wednesday of each month.

BRIEF CITY COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS:

MITZY PEREZ – DISTRICT 1: Absent

REFUGIO LLAMAS – DISTRICT 2: Provided remarks recognizing Independence Day and reflected on its historical significance, including the sacrifices and difficult decisions made by those who fought for independence. He encouraged the community to remember the history and meaning behind the holiday.

MARCUS CHAVEZ – DISTRICT 3: Wished the community a happy Fourth of July and encouraged residents to celebrate safely and responsibly. He reminded residents to be considerate of neighbors and pets affected by loud noises and fireworks, and to help prevent unnecessary calls for emergency services. He thanked City staff and technology teams for their work implementing the new meeting system and recognized the improvements to the Council Chambers. He also expressed appreciation for the updated chamber decorations.

DEBORAH LEWIS – DISTRICT 4: Wished the community a safe and happy Fourth of July and reminded residents to be mindful of pets and children who may be frightened by fireworks and loud noises. She encouraged residents not to purchase or use illegal fireworks and noted that violations may result in significant fines. She shared that she will provide a future update regarding the Air Board. She also reported that the Air Board approved a budget exceeding \$300 million for the upcoming fiscal year and noted upcoming legislative changes related to dust control requirements within city limits.

MICHAEL S. AMABILE – MAYOR: Thanked City Manager Than and staff for their work preparing the Council Chambers and downtown decorations for the upcoming Fourth of July celebration. He also thanked Merced County officials for launching County Clerk services at the fairgrounds and expressed hope that expanded services will follow as the program grows. He provided updates on recent meetings, including MCAG's approved budget and the arrival of a hydrogen trailer as part of future hydrogen bus efforts. He also announced that Peninsula Clean Energy will now be known as West Light Energy and noted the organization's recent budget approval. He then shared that he presented a

proclamation honoring Catherine Silveira Marks' 100th birthday and recognized the significance of the milestone. He also commented on the Council Chambers technology upgrades, noting that the new system improves audio, video, transparency, and public access through Zoom participation. He discussed the City Treasurer ballot measure and suggested that, regardless of the outcome, the City should consider developing a formal job description outlining the responsibilities and expectations of the City Treasurer position. He noted the role has evolved over time and suggested the position serves as an oversight and public liaison regarding City financial matters.

CLOSED SESSION. Mayor Amabile invited the public to come speak. No one came forward to speak.

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION, PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54956.9(D)(1), NAME OF CASE: CITY OF INDIO V. ERICK OPPENHEIMER, FRESNO SUPERIOR COURT CASE NO. 24CECG04779.

Mayor Amabile stated that there is no reportable action.

CLOSED SESSION – CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION, INITIATION OF LITIGATION PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH (4) OF SUBDIVISION (D) OF SECTION 54956.9 OF THE GOVERNMENT CODE (DECIDING WHETHER TO INITIATE LITIGATION): FOUR CASES.

Mayor Amabile stated that direction was given to staff stated that there is no reportable action.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

APPROVED:

/s/ Michael S. Amabile

Michael S. Amabile, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Lucille L. Mallonee

Lucille L. Mallonee, City Clerk