

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
January 30, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IN HONOR OF THE US MILITARY TROOPS

The City Council Meeting was held in a hybrid format (in-person and via Zoom videoconference and broadcast) from the Pinole Council Chambers, 2131 Pear Street, Pinole, California. Mayor Toms called the Special Meeting of the City Council to order at 5:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before we begin, we would like to acknowledge the Ohlone people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. We pay our respects to the Ohlone elders, past, present and future, who call this place, Ohlone Land, the land that Pinole sits upon, their home. We are proud to continue their tradition of coming together and growing as a community. We thank the Ohlone community for their stewardship and support, and we look forward to strengthening our ties as we continue our relationship of mutual respect and understanding.

3. ROLL CALL, CITY CLERK'S REPORT & STATEMENT OF CONFLICT

An official who has a conflict must, prior to consideration of the decision; (1) publicly identify in detail the financial interest that causes the conflict; (2) recuse himself/herself from discussing and voting on the matter; and (3) leave the room until after the decision has been made, Cal. Gov. Code § 87105.

A. COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT

Maureen Toms, Mayor
Cameron Sasai, Mayor Pro Tem
Norma Martinez-Rubin, Council Member
Devin Murphy, Council Member
Anthony Tave, Council Member

B. STAFF PRESENT

Heather Bell, City Clerk
Alex Mog, Assistant City Attorney

City Clerk Heather Bell announced the agenda had been posted on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. with all legally required written notices. No written comments had been received in advance of the meeting.

Following an inquiry, the Council reported there were no conflicts with any items on the agenda.

4. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD (Public Comments)

Citizens may speak under any item not listed on the Agenda. The time limit is 3 minutes and is subject to modification by the Mayor. Individuals may not share or offer time to another speaker.

Pursuant to provisions of the Brown Act, no action may be taken on a matter unless it is listed on the agenda, or unless certain emergency or special circumstances exist. The City Council may direct staff to investigate and/or schedule certain matters for consideration at a future Council meeting.

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, referenced a City Council meeting in November 2023 and expressed his frustration that elected officials had not gotten along while constituents depended on the City Council to get things done. He hoped in 2024 the City Council would display decorum. He also commented that when resident Anthony Vossbrink called in to City Council meetings there had been no follow-up to his questions. He asked that responses to Mr. Vossbrink's questions be provided at the next meeting of the City Council. In addition, having reviewed the City's budget, specifically funds allocated for a consultant to provide equity, diversity and inclusion, he noted there had been no Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant and no City training, and the City's reorganization since 2021 did not appear to be put together. He hoped the new City Manager, when chosen, would be allowed to make his or her own assessments.

Rafael Menis, Pinole, reported there would be a major storm from January 31 to February 1, 2024, with a forecast of several inches of rain, flood risk and significant winds and he urged everyone to be prepared for potential flooding and power outages.

5. CONVENE TO A CLOSED SESSION:

Citizens may address the Council regarding a Closed Session item prior to the Council adjourning into the Closed Session, by first providing a speaker card to the City Clerk.

A. PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Gov. Code § 54957

Agency Representatives: Human Resources Director, Stacy Shell, Assistant City Attorney Alex Mog

Title: City Manager

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, commented that he respected Interim City Manager Neil Gang as the City Manager. As the City Council entered into a Closed Session, he asked that Mr. Gang be considered to remain as the City Manager because of all the great things he had done.

Rafael Menis, Pinole, asked whether the public could be informed of the status of the selection process for a new City Manager, whether candidate(s) had been selected or interviewed by the City Council, whether the Closed Session item was a final interview and whether information could be provided. He also asked whether the City Council could discuss now or at a future date what it was looking for in a City Manager candidate, which would be helpful and transparent to the general public.

Assistant City Attorney Alex Mog clarified the intent was to provide an announcement of any actions after the City Council reconvened from the Closed Session. The City Council may also provide another announcement at the start of its next meeting scheduled for February 6, 2024. Additionally, the City Council majority may decide whether to release any information about the process and discussions in Closed Session.

Anthony Vossbrink, Pinole, stated he been unable to call in during Citizens to be Heard given technical issues and asked for consideration of open public comments prior to the close out of the meeting. As to the Closed Session item, he echoed the comments provided by Mr. Menis. He asked the Mayor and City Council to be more responsible to their constituents in terms of being better equipped to handle transparent communications with the audience in general whether viewing or otherwise. He expressed concern with the lack of updates in the past several months about the status of a new City Manager while the Interim City Manager/Police Chief was being paid to serve in that position. He urged better transparency on the progress, and noted under the Brown Act the City Council and Mayor had a public responsibility to be open and transparent with the public moving forward. Prior to entering into Closed Session, he asked for a brief report on what the Closed Session was about and the status of the new City Manager recruitment process. He otherwise disagreed with the suggestion to consider the Interim City Manager as a candidate for the permanent City Manager position given his existing responsibilities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

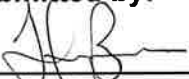
6. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION TO ANNOUNCE RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

At 7:56 p.m., Mayor Toms reconvened the meeting into open session and reported the City Council had interviewed three recruitment firms for a City Manager, and pending a reference check would move forward to contract with one firm.

7. ADJOURNMENT to the Regular City Council Meeting of February 6, 2024 in Remembrance of Amber Swartz.

At 7:57 p.m., Mayor Toms adjourned the meeting to the Regular City Council Meeting of February 6, 2024 in Remembrance of Amber Swartz.

Submitted by:



Heather Bell, CMC
City Clerk

Approved by City Council: March 5, 2024

