

**City of Laguna Hills
City Council / Planning Agency
Regular Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday, July 8, 2025**

General Business Convening at 6:00 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Sweeney.

Invocation: Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey

Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey

Roll Call of City Council Members

Present:

Mayor Joshua Sweeney
Mayor Pro Tempore Don Caskey
Council Member Jared Mathis
Council Member Dave Wheeler

Absent:

Council Member Erica Pezold

1. Presentations and Proclamations

1.1 Certificates of Recognition - Little League District 55 Tournament of Champions 2025 Winners, Laguna Hills Major Division Dodgers

The City Council congratulated the Laguna Hills Little League Major Division Dodgers for their victory in the 2025 Tournament of Champions for District 55 and Mayor Sweeney presented Certificates of Recognition to the team.

1.2 Certificate of Recognition-Eagle Scout Luke Friedl

The City Council congratulated Luke Friedl for earning the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of Troop 700, and Mayor Sweeney presented him with a Certificate of Recognition in honor of this outstanding achievement.

2. Schedule of Future Events

2.1 Schedule of Future Events

City Clerk Lee announced the upcoming meetings and events.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments on non-agendized items.

4. Consent Calendar

A motion to approve the Consent Calendar was moved by Council Member Wheeler, seconded by Council Member Mathis.

Roll Call Vote Result: Passed

Yes 4, No 0, Abstained 0

Ayes: Mayor Sweeney, Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey, Council Member Mathis, Council Member Wheeler

Nays: None

Abstain: None

4.1 Waive Reading in Full of all Ordinances and Resolutions on the Agenda

Recommendation: That the City Council waive reading in full of all ordinances and resolutions on the agenda and declare that said titles which appear on the public agenda shall be determined to have been read by title and further reading waived.

4.2 Approval of Minutes for June 24, 2025, Regular Meeting

Recommendation: That the City Council approve the City Council Minutes for the June 24, 2025, Regular Meeting.

4.3 Approval of Minutes for June 25, 2025, Special Meeting

Recommendation: That the City Council approve the City Council Minutes for the June 25, 2025, Special Meeting.

4.4 Ratification of July 8, 2025 Warrant Register

Recommendation: That the City Council ratify the accompanying Warrant Register for the period from June 14, 2025, to June 26, 2025, in the amount of \$513,284.96.

4.5 Authority to Advertise Laguna Hills Community Center Electrical Improvements Project, CIP 520

Recommendation: That the City Council: 1. Approve the plans and specifications for the Laguna Hills Community Center Electrical Improvements Project, CIP No. 520; 2. Authorize the advertisement for bids for the Laguna Hills Community Center Electrical Improvements Project, CIP No. 520; 3. Authorize the City Engineer to make minor edits to the plans and specifications as necessary; and 4. Find that environmental review is not required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15301 as a Class 1 Categorical Exemption - "Existing Facilities."

4.6 Opposition Letter to the Proposed Compass Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Facility in San Juan Capistrano

Recommendation: That the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign and submit the attached letter expressing the City of Laguna Hills' formal opposition to the proposed Compass Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility in the City of San Juan Capistrano.

Items Removed from the Consent Calendar

There were no items removed from the Consent Calendar.

5. Planning Agency

There were no separate Planning Agency Business Items for this meeting.

6. City Council Public Hearings

6.1 Confirmation of 2025 Weed Abatement Cost Report

Recommendation: That the City Council:

1. Conduct a public hearing regarding the 2025 Weed Abatement Cost Report; and
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2025-07-08-1: "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Laguna Hills, California, Confirming the 2025 Weed Abatement Cost Report and Providing for the Collection of Weed Abatement Assessments on the Next Regular Tax Bill Levied Against the Subject Parcels for Municipal Purposes."

Mayor Sweeney opened the public hearing, and upon seeing no one rise, closed the public hearing.

A motion to approve staff's recommendation was moved by Mayor Sweeney, seconded by Council Member Mathis.

Roll Call Vote Result: Passed

Yes 4, No 0, Abstained 0

Ayes: Mayor Sweeney, Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey, Council Member Mathis, Council Member Wheeler

Nays: None

Abstain: None

6.2 Proposed Update to City's False Alarm Fee

Recommendation: That the City Council:

1. Conduct a public hearing; and
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2025-07-08-2: "A Resolution of the City of Laguna Hills, California, Updating the City's False Alarm Fee, Repealing Resolution No. 2021-10-12-4, and Finding that the Action is Statutorily Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Per Section 15273 of the CEQA Guidelines and Public Resources Code Section 21080(B)(8)"

Finance Director Hendrickson reviewed the information provided in the staff report and responded to Council Member requests for additional information.

Mayor Sweeney opened the public hearing and, upon seeing no one rise, closed the public hearing.

A motion to approve staff's recommendation was moved by Council Member Mathis, seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey.

Roll Call Vote Result: Passed

Yes 4, No 0, Abstained 0

Ayes: Mayor Sweeney, Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey, Council Member Mathis, Council Member Wheeler

Nays: None

Abstain: None

7. Administrative Reports

7.1 City Manager

The City Manager provided no administrative reports.

7.2 City Attorney

7.2.1 Approval of Resolution to Appoint Joseph Ames as Interim City Manager and Approval of Resolution to Appoint Joseph Ames as Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director/City Engineer After City Council Appoints A Permanent City Manager

Recommendation: That the City Council:

1. Receive an oral report providing a summary of proposed changes to the annual base salary and benefits for Joseph Ames, Assistant City Manager/Public Services Director/City Engineer, to serve as Interim City

Manager as set forth in the Proposed City Manager Employment Agreement;

2. Adopt Resolution No. 2025-07-08-3: “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Laguna Hills, California, Appointing Joseph Ames as Interim City Manager and Approving and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Interim City Manager Employment Agreement”;
3. Receive an oral report providing a summary of the annual base salary and benefits for Joseph Ames, Assistant City Manager/Public Services Director/City Engineer, provided to Joseph Ames upon conclusion of his temporary appointment as Interim City Manager and continuing to serve as Assistant City Manager/Public Services Director/City Engineer as set forth in the Proposed City Manager Employment Agreement; and
4. Adopt Resolution No. 2025-07-08-4: “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Laguna Hills, California, Appointing Joseph Ames as Assistant City Manager and Approving and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Assistant City Manager Employment Agreement”.

City Attorney Simonian City Attorney Simonian provided an oral report summary of the recommendation for final action on the compensation of the Interim City Manager and Assistant City Manager as required per Government Code section 54953.

A motion to approve staff's recommendation was moved by Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey, seconded by Council Member Mathis.

Roll Call Vote Result: Passed
Yes 4, No 0, Abstained 0

Ayes:	Mayor Sweeney, Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey, Council Member Mathis, Council Member Wheeler
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

7.3 Assistant City Manager

7.3.1 Vegetation Management on City-Owned Parcels

Recommendation: That the City Council discuss and provide direction to City staff.

Assistant City Manager Ames reviewed the information provided in the staff report, provided a PowerPoint presentation, and responded to Council Member requests for additional information.

City Attorney Simonian responded to Council Member requests for additional information.

A motion to authorize staff to proceed with the work as set forth in the staff report, direct the City Attorney to prepare the necessary contract document with Specialty Mowing Services, Inc., in the amount proposed in the staff report, and authorize the City Manager and/or Interim City Manager to execute the contract document with Specialty Mowing Services, Inc., in a form that is approved as to form by the City Attorney, was moved by Council Member Mathis, seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey.

Roll Call Vote Result: Passed

Yes 4, No 0, Abstained 0

Ayes: Mayor Sweeney, Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey, Council Member Mathis, Council Member Wheeler

Nays: None

Abstain: None

7.4 Community Services Director

7.4.1 2025 Senior Mobility Program Update

Recommendation: That the City Council receive an update on the Senior Dial-A-Taxi program.

Community Services Manager Gannon introduced Administrative Assistant Cardenas who reviewed the information provided in the staff report, provided a PowerPoint presentation, and responded to Council Member requests for additional information.

Finance Director Hendrickson responded to Council Member requests for additional information.

City Manager Hildenbrand responded to Council Member requests for additional information.

7.5 Chief of Police Services

7.5.1 Public Safety Update

Chief of Police Services, Captain Burk, provided a public safety update report, including a visual presentation, and responded to Council Member requests for additional information.

8. Matters Agendized and Presented by City Council Members

There were no matters agendized by City Council Members.

9. City Council Member Committee Reports

9.1 Committee Assignment Report

The City Council received reports from City Council Members on the City Council Committee Assignments listed in the staff report.

10. City Council Member Comments

Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey

Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey requested more diligence on the maintenance of the freeway on/off ramps, specifically at Alicia Parkway.

City Manager Hildenbrand indicated that the on/off ramps are maintained by CalTrans and that staff will provide notification of the Council's concerns to CalTrans.

Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey expressed concerns regarding ongoing maintenance of City-owned buildings and inquired about the possibility of upgrading the buildings through Capital Improvement projects using Bonds.

Assistant City Manager Ames indicated that a new line item was included in the current biennial budget for ongoing facility maintenance in both the Public Works and Community Services departments for the Civic Center and the Community Center buildings.

Council Member Wheeler indicated that he would like to see an amortization report of City-owned buildings and their maintenance needs.

Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey provided special thanks to the City's solid waste contractor, CR&R, for donating a 40-yard roll off bin of mulch to the City for the Oso Parkway landscape project and also donated a similar roll off bin of mulch to the Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association (NGROA).

Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey addressed outgoing City Manager Hildenbrand, thanking him for the 3 years he served the City of Laguna Hills and wishing him the best in his future endeavors at the City of Orange.

Council Member Mathis

Council Member Mathis addressed outgoing City Manager Hildenbrand, echoing the sentiments of Mayor Pro Tempore Caskey and thanked Assistant City Manager Ames for stepping in as Interim City Manager.

Mayor Sweeney

Mayor Sweeney thanked everyone for making the City's 4th of July celebration a success, thanked the military and first responders, as their service is the reason we can celebrate with peace and pride, and gave special thanks to Community Services Director Gannon and Administrative Assistant Cardenas for their work on the event.

Mayor Sweeney addressed outgoing City Manager Hildenbrand, expressing appreciation for his service to the City, and wished him the best in his endeavors moving forward.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the City Council at this session, Mayor Sweeney declared the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Jennifer Lee, City Clerk

ATTEST:

Joshua Sweeney, Mayor

Approved at meeting of August 26, 2025.