

City of Capitola

City Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2026 – 6:00 PM



City Council Chambers
420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010

Mayor: Margaux Morgan
Vice Mayor: Gerry Jensen
Council Members: Joe Clarke, Melinda Orbach, Susan Westman

Closed Session – 5:30 PM

- i. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Gov't. Code §54956.9(d)(2), (e)(3)
One Case

Regular Meeting of the Capitola City Council – 6 PM

- 1. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance** – *The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. In attendance: Council Members Clarke, Orbach, Westman, Vice Mayor Jensen, and Mayor Morgan.*
- 2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda** – *Staff requested to pull Item 8G off the agenda and clarified that it will return at a future meeting date.*
- 3. Presentations**
 - A. *The Mayor presented a proclamation declaring May 18 - May 25, 2026, as National Beach Safety Week to Community and Recreation Services Director Bryant.*
 - B. *The Council received a presentation from the Police Chief on the 2025 Herb Ross Officer of the Year, awarded to Sergeant Kraig Evans.*
 - C. *The Police Chief presented Certificates of Recognition to the inaugural members of the Police Chief Advisory Committee.*
- 4. Report on Closed Session** – *The Council met and discussed one item on the Closed Session agenda. No reportable action was taken.*
- 5. Additional Materials**
 - A. *Item 9A – Thirty-five emails received after publication of the agenda packet.*
 - B. *Item 9B – One email received after publication of the agenda packet.*
- 6. Oral Communications by Members of the Public**
 - *Terre Thomas*
 - *Ed Bottorff*
 - *Pitter Fox*
 - *Speaker*
- 7. Staff / City Council Comments**
 - *Community and Economic Development Director announced that MidPen received funding for an affordable housing project on 38th Avenue that will break ground in November 2026.*

- *Council Member Clarke made comments about National Police Week.*
- *Council Member Orbach made comments about traffic safety.*
- *Council Member Westman made comments about her attendance at a recently attended AMBAG meeting; and thanked the Council for considering a letter regarding proposed Fish and Game regulations.*
- *Vice Mayor Jensen made comments about his attendance at a recently attended RTC meeting, a meeting with the SUESD Board of Trustees, and the first Food Truck Friday event.*
- *Mayor Morgan requested staff look into concerns brought up about the new City website, and commended staff from Public Works and the Police Department for their efforts on getting the City ready for summer.*

8. Consent Items

A. City Council Meeting Minutes

Recommended Action: Approve minutes from the special meeting on April 21, 2026, the regular meeting on April 23, 2026, the special meeting on April 30, 2026, and the special meeting on May 6, 2026.

B. Liability Claim

Recommended Action: Deny liability claim from Julissa Guzman.

C. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Appropriation Limit

Recommended Action: Adopt a resolution setting the Fiscal Year 2026-27 appropriation limit. **(Resolution No. 4484)**

D. Appointment to City Advisory Body

Recommended Action: By motion and vote, appoint Raymond Gaeta to the Capitola Historical Museum Board to a term expiring June 30, 2028.

E. Proposed Expansion of Marine Protected Areas

Recommended Action: Authorize the Mayor to sign a letter opposing the petition under consideration by the California Fish and Game Commission, which requests to expand the boundaries of Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve (SMR) and designate a new state marine conservation area (SMCA) off Pleasure Point.

F. Support for State Budget Request for Public Beach Restoration Program Funding

Recommended Action: Authorize the Mayor to execute a letter supporting the allocation of \$200 million in Proposition 4 Climate Bond funding for the Department of Boating and Waterways Public Beach Restoration Program.

G. Escalona Avenue Right-of-Way Vacation, Parcel Creation, and Reservation of Easements

Recommended Action: Adopt a resolution: 1) vacating a portion of the Escalona Avenue right-of-way, approving creation of a parcel, and reserving a public open space easement and a public access easement over the parcel; and 2) authorizing the City Manager to execute and record all documents necessary to effectuate these actions, subject to minor modifications approved by the City Manager, City Engineer, and City Attorney. **(Pulled from the agenda by staff)**

H. Local Roadway Safety Plan and Long-Term Roadway Safety Goal

Recommended Action: 1) Adopt the City of Capitola Local Roadway Safety Plan; and 2) adopt a resolution establishing a long-term goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Capitola roadways by 2045, consistent with Safe System and Vision Zero principles. **(Resolution No. 4485)**

Motion to approve Consent Calendar Items 8A-8F and 8H: Council Member Orbach

Second: Council Member Westman

Voting Yea: Council Members Clarke, Orbach, Westman, Vice Mayor Jensen, Mayor Morgan

9. General Government / Public Hearings

A. Bay Avenue Corridor Project Update & Rule 20A Coordination

Recommended Action: Receive an update regarding the Bay Avenue Corridor Project, including completed outreach, available funding opportunities, and Rule 20A utility undergrounding coordination; confirm whether to continue coordinating corridor improvements with underground utility work; and provide direction on which project components to advance.

Vice Mayor Jensen recused himself from the item due to the proximity of his residence to the proposed project. Public Works Director Kahn provided the staff report.

Public Comment:

- **David Fox**
- **Brenda Torres**
- **Mel Vento**
- **Nels Westman**
- **Kate Ariat**
- **Pitter Fox**
- **Tory Del Favero**
- **Paula Bradley**
- **Cheryl Ban**
- **Terre Thomas**
- **Bill Anderson**
- **Mick Routh**
- **Bob Hickman**
- **Ed Bottorff**
- **Cami Corvin**
- **Vicky Muse**
- **Linda Smith**
- **Terry Ellisberg**
- **Lynn Jackson**

The City Council discussed the traffic dangers of the intersections along Bay Avenue. The Council requested that staff return with additional ideas for safety improvements (such as additional lighting and the location of a crosswalk at Center Street) and the undergrounding of utilities in conjunction with PG&E.

Motion to direct staff to coordinate underground utilities with PG&E, incorporate a crosswalk at Center Street, upgrade lighting and pavement markings to improve visibility, and move forward with design and engineering plans for a roundabout at Bay Avenue and Capitola Ave: Council Member Orbach

Motion died for lack of second.

Motion to not move forward with installing roundabouts at the Bay Avenue & Hill Street intersection or the Bay Avenue & Capitola Avenue intersections; that staff return with additional information about safety improvements, including but not limited to lighting and an additional crosswalk at Bay Avenue & Center Street; and that staff return at the

May 28th meeting with more information about Rule 20A so the City does not lose funding and the project may gain more community awareness: Council Member Westman

Second: Council Member Clarke

Voting Yea: Council Members Clarke, Orbach, Westman, Mayor Morgan

Abstain: Vice Mayor Jensen

The City Council took a recess at 8:15 PM and reconvened at 8:19 PM.

B. Transition to By-District Elections

Recommended Action: Receive a presentation on the transition to by-district elections, receive community input, and provide direction to staff and the demographer regarding the composition of voting districts and number of districts.

City Clerk Gautho and Doug Johnson, the City's demographer, provided the staff report.

Public Comment:

- **Linda Smith**
- **Cheryl Ban**
- **Terre Thomas**

C. Amendment to FY 2025-26 City Fee Schedule

Recommended Action: Conduct the duly noticed public hearing on the proposed amendments to the City Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2025–26 and adopt a resolution amending the current fee schedule, effective May 14, 2026.

Administrative Services Director Malberg provided the staff report.

Public Comment: None

The City Council discussed the fees for use of the new Community Center.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 4486: Council Member Orbach

Second: Council Member Westman

Voting Yea: Council Members Clarke, Orbach, Westman, Vice Mayor Jensen, Mayor Morgan

D. FY 2026-27 City Fee Schedule

Recommended Action: Conduct the duly noticed public hearing on the proposed changes to the City's Fee Schedule and adopt a resolution approving the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Fee Schedule.

The City Council continued Item 9D to June 25, 2026.

10. Adjournment – *The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM. The next regularly scheduled City Council meeting is on May 28, 2026, at 6:00 PM.*

Margaux Morgan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Julia Gautho, City Clerk