

**CITY OF CASTROVILLE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING
1209 Fiorella
City Council Chamber
September 03, 2025
Tuesday
5:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bruce Alexander called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present:

Mayor Bruce Alexander

Scott Dixon, City Administrator

Mayor Pro Tem Sheena Martinez

Debra Howe, City Secretary

Councilmember Phil King

John Gomez, Public Works Director

Councilmember David Merz

Councilmember Robert Lee

Absent:

Councilmember Houston Marchman

II. CITIZENS COMMENTS

The City Council will hear comments from any citizen or visitor. Speakers must address their comments to the presiding officer rather than individual council members or staff; stand at the podium, speak clearly into the microphone, and state your name and residential address before speaking. Speakers will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes for testimony. Speakers making personal, impertinent, profane, or slanderous remarks will be given one warning before losing the privilege to speak or may be removed from the room. In accordance with the State Open Meetings Act, the City Council is restricted from discussing or taking action on items not listed on the agenda. Action can only be taken at a future meeting.

Brenda Haby spoke to Mayor Alexander before the meeting on a request for \$600.00 for new bows for the bridge decorations and better lighting for September Square.

III. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

- a. Discussion and possible action on Budget Presentation #5 for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, including the General Fund, Enterprise Fund, and Airport Fund; review of the DRAFT Comprehensive Fee Schedule; and consideration of dissolving the Castroville Economic Development Corporation as part of the overall budget discussion

Mayor Alexander said he requested this meeting to finalize the General Fund Budget. Mayor Alexander said the City Council only had to pass a General Fund Budget not the Enterprise or Airport Funds at the same time. Mayor Alexander said there would not be any action taken at this meeting. City Administrator Dixon gave an overview of the proposed \$5.45 million FY 25-26 budget with \$250,000 out of the fund balance for street improvements included. The City Council reviewed all of

the departments again and Council questioned why some of the requests from the Library had already been completed out of the current year's fund balance. City Administrator Dixon said his understanding at the meeting when the requests were discussed he had a consensus of the City Council to move forward with the projects. Some City Council members were confused and thought the projects would be completed in the coming year. Mr. Dixon said he had misunderstood their intent and completed the projects. Councilmember King and Merz felt the City Administrator could move forward with smaller projects without coming back to the City Council. Mayor Alexander said there were concerns about spending under the Special Events Activities line item and wanted it to be placed under the City Council with intended use spelt out. Councilmember Merz questioned if it was better practice by placing the full \$38,500 under the City Council with a list and then doing one large transfer. Mr. Dixon asked what the concerns were and from whom. Mayor Alexander said it was citizens. Councilmember King and Merz did not need to have a breakout, just the bottom line of the expenditures. Councilmember Martinez said she did not need a breakout, just details of what made up the line item. Mayor Alexander asked to have more details on outside services in the departments. Councilmember Lee asked about the salary breakout for the various employees with funds coming from the Enterprise Fund. Mr. Lee said to have a better picture of what each of the employees paid from more than one fund he would like to see a total shown. Councilmember Lee wanted the transfers to the General Fund from the other funds to be broken out and what they were being spent on for better transparency. Mayor Alexander said in the last year the citizens had become concerned with the city spending and wanted more detail in the budget. Mr. Dixon said there were ways to get the information out to the public and staff would work on this. Councilmember King felt the police department budget always increased and may need to look at staffing levels. City Council members agreed to a future workshop on police resources and recruitment. Councilmember Martinez said she was in favor of just having ear markers for the funds, not necessarily details. Councilmember Merz said he felt to earn the trust of the citizens the City needed to show the citizens what the taxpayers' money was being spent on, i.e. street maintenance, parks upkeep etc. Mayor Alexander asked about the number of full-time positions shown in the Library, outside services in the City Secretary's Budget, and the funds budgeted for keeping the police vehicles maintained and fuel costs were enough. Mayor Alexander said the certification pay shown in the budget for employees was not being followed as per the personnel policies. Mayor Alexander said the job descriptions also needed to be updated. Councilmember Merz agreed if this was a big deal as the City had trouble with retaining employees. Mr. Dixon said that was correct and he would be bringing back the personnel policy with updates. The City Council continued to identify other items discussed at previous meetings, including municipal court salary increases offset by revenue increases and engineering costs pass threw to customers. Mayor Alexander spoke on his understanding of the \$250,000 from the reserves would be for drainage projects and possibly streets. Councilmembers were not in agreement and said the \$250,000 had been included for street maintenance, the drainage projects were covered by bond money. City Administrator Dixon said to do in-house street repairs and bar ditch maintenance, the City would need additional personnel. Mr. Dixon said at this time the street crews were working on the Geneva/Gentilz Street drainage and the wastewater ponds. Mr. Dixon said the cost of HR/Payroll services provided by ADP was shown at \$90,000. Mayor Alexander felt the Finance Department could do this and the city had legal counsel for HR services. Councilmember Lee felt the city could do it in-house. Councilmember King suggested they look at the contract.

Mayor Alexander recessed the meeting for a short break at 7:09 p.m.
Mayor Alexander reconvened in open session at 7:19 p.m.

The Airport Fund was discussed by the City Council with the \$20,000 removed from the expenses and there were questions on why the Airport was requesting to purchase a starter for planes. Councilmember Martinez said the board had recommended due to a few planes needing to be jumped off. Ms. Martinez said the board was wanting to look at paving in front of Lauderdale hangar and courtesy vehicles. Mr. Dixon said there may be a police vehicle, if they received a grant, and the tourism vehicle. Councilmember Merz asked about the contract with Airport Consultant Chuck Friesenhahn not shown in the FY25-26 budget. Mr. Dixon said Mr. Friesenhahn was not on retainer any longer but on an as needed basis. Mr. Dixon said the outside services consisted of Fuel and lights. Mayor Alexander asked if the amount shown was enough for fuel. Mr. Dixon said it was, and the Ramp Grant was shown as \$100,000 and he would make sure this amount was correct. The Ramp Grant was a 90/10 match now and might have been shown as the full amount not the matching portion. The electric fees were looked at with the City only being able to charge the usage, no markup, and Councilmember King suggested a possible administration fee. Councilmember Lee said the City needed to look at ways to get corporate jets to register in Castroville to receive ad valorem taxes. Councilmember Martinez said this was in the five-year plan. Mr. Dixon said corporate jets needed a certain width and length of runways for insurance to cover. Mr. Dixon said the City would have to improve the runways to have them come in. City Staff was tasked to look at right of way costs. The City Council consensus was good with the General Fund and Airport Funds. Mr. Dixon said in the Enterprise Fund the gas had no data to go by, and the budget was an estimate of what they thought it would be. Mayor Alexander said he would like a meeting with City Administrator, Public Works Director, the Gas Foreman and himself to go over the history of the operation. Mr. Dixon said Simon Pena, Gas Consultant, was looking at staffing, using TRD for training, bookkeeping and reporting with a reduction each year. Mr. Dixon said Mr. Pena was an auditor with expenses depending on how the City did. Mayor Alexander suggested reassigning some of the employees in the electric department and providing cross training. Councilmember Merz clarified the electric department budget had line maintenance including tree trimming. The salaries in electric and sewer were to be clarified. The City Council needed to decide where the water overages fees collected were to be placed. Mr. Dixon said the highest user – the car wash did not have to bring water rights and thought this should be looked at. Councilmember Lee agreed and said the fees needed to be looked at regarding car washes. Mayor Alexander said there seemed to be two-line items the same for outside services and needed to be checked. The City Council wanted to look at the user fees associated with Kiosk. The City Council looked at the Castroville Cares Program with the possibility of reducing the funds the City provided to help citizens with their utilities. The General Fund, Airport, and Enterprise Funds were balanced. Staff was tasked to answer the questions from the meeting, make sure the \$270,000 bond payment was shown in the budget, provide written detailed notes for line items discussed, transfers clarity, and look at the schedule for possible increases to recover more money. Councilmember Lee felt they should look at fees associated with developments to include in the comprehensive fee schedule. Mr. Dixon said those fees associated with developments were not a set amount but negotiated. There was no further discussion.

IV. ADJOURN

Mayor Alexander adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Secretary