

**CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
CITY HALL, 291 N. MAIN STREET  
PORTERVILLE, CALIFORNIA  
FEBRUARY 17, 2026, 5:30 PM**

Call to Order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Council Member AJ Rivas, Council Member Stan Green,  
Council Member Raymond Beltran, Vice Mayor Edward L. McKervey, Mayor Greg Meister

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**CITY COUNCIL CLOSED SESSION:**

A. Closed Session Pursuant to:

- 1 - Government Code Section 54956.8 – Conference with Real Property Negotiators/Property: APN: 197-090-018. Agency Negotiator: Richard Tree. Negotiating Parties: City of Porterville and City of Lindsay. Under Negotiation: Terms and Price.
- 2 - Government Code Section 54956.9(d) (2) – Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation – Significant exposure to litigation: 2 case(s) in which facts are not yet known to Potential Plaintiff.

**6:31 P.M. RECONVENE OPEN SESSION AND REPORT ON REPORTABLE ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION**

City Attorney Lew reported that no reportable action had taken place during closed session.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Beltran.

Invocation – members of the public came forward and gave invocations.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

- Council Member Beltran reported on the Tule River Parkway’s recent pop-up event promoting community use of the trails. He also shared an example of the community helping each other when Tree of Life promptly responded to correct a tangled flag at Grocery Outlet. He also referenced the tragic incident involving a young girl, Isabella, who was struck on Morton Avenue, and acknowledged the family’s decision to donate her organs to help other children. He encouraged residents to consider becoming organ donors.
- Vice Mayor McKervey reported attending several community events. He served as his family’s designated driver for the downtown Wine Hop hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, which was sold out with approximately 150 attendees. He also attended the World Ag Expo in Tulare, where he met with Undersecretary of Agriculture Luke Lindberg. Additionally, he attended an event hosted by Mothers United Against Gang Violence and

commended Mary Martinez for her leadership. The Vice Mayor also spent time at the Porterville Rescue Mission and noted the positive community engagement.

- Mayor Meister reported on recent community engagement activities, including a radio appearance, attendance at heritage and community events, and participation in the World Ag Expo. He noted his endorsement of Ian Bakke for County Supervisor District 5. The Mayor also met with developers to discuss streamlining City processes and expressed support for regulatory and permitting improvements. Additionally, he reported securing a \$100,000 donation from American Tower and a \$5,000 contribution from County Supervisor Dennis Townsend to support community projects and events.

## **REPORTS**

### I. City Commission and Committee Meetings

#### 1. Parks & Leisure Services Commission - February 5, 2026

Commissioner Arlene Pena reported on recent Parks and Recreation activities, including restoration of the Salute to the Farmer statue, updates to the Military Banner Program, ongoing fitness and youth sports programs, upcoming pool party reservations, and the scheduled Youth Fish Derby at Murray Park.

#### 2. Charter Review Committee - February 5, 2026

Chairman Shelton reported that the committee completed its assigned work, including preparation of ballot measure language for Council consideration, and confirmed that self-performed street maintenance was addressed with strong committee support. He noted the committee remains available should Council wish to refer additional items.

#### 3. Youth Commission - February 11, 2026

Youth Commissioners Zeke and Jordan Perez presented the Commission's annual goals, reported on recent volunteer activities, and provided updates on the upcoming art contest and planned community engagement initiatives, including cleanups, business support efforts, movie nights, and leadership workshops.

## **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- Teresa Gonzalez, Porterville, thanked the Mayor for showing concern during power outages at Plaza de Santa Fe, and presented a list of 129 faded street signs throughout the city that need replacement.
- David Horowitz, Porterville, expressed concern about public safety issues downtown, sharing two incidents where he reported problems but felt the police dispatch didn't respond appropriately - one involving a person hanging inappropriate items from trees, and another involving a drunk individual making antisemitic threats.
- Brock Neeley, Porterville, requested that items 1, 2, 9, and 14 be pulled from the consent calendar and attempted to distribute documents related to item 21.
- Luis Gonzalez, Porterville, expressed appreciation for civic participation in the meeting and suggested a future discussion about using the armory or an alternative location for people experiencing homelessness. He also advocated for improving ADA accessibility at traffic intersections and bus stops.

- Chris, Porterville, spoke about their mission to provide supervised tent spaces as a bridge to help those experiencing homelessness, addiction, and mental health struggles.
- Alexis Espinoza, Porterville, shared her personal story of facing housing instability after escaping domestic violence, and praised the Porterville Rescue Mission for helping her clean and prepare a living space for herself and her three-year-old son.
- Jean Vafeades, Porterville, raised concerns about funding allocations, suggesting that \$50,000 of the \$100,000 from the American Tower Agreement should go to the library fund.
- Brittany Smith, a resident of the Porterville Rescue Mission, shared her personal journey of recovery from addiction, regaining custody of her son, and working toward completing her EMT studies.
- Diane Wagner, Porterville, responded to Vice Mayor McKervey's recent letter to the editor, expressing concerns about city governance, transparency, and public input.
- Jason Castle, Porterville, introduced himself as a candidate for the economic growth consultant position, highlighting his real estate experience and connections with national companies.
- Fernando Rios, Visalia, spoke in support of item 1 on the agenda, recommending that the city hire a local consultant group for streamlining planning operations.
- Karen Anderson, Porterville, expressed concerns about the city's use of "In God We Trust" on city property and vehicles, suggesting it feels less genuine when displayed so prominently. She also suggested improving transit shelter benches instead of using poles with plastic seats.
- Michael Botano, a staff member and pastor at the Porterville Rescue Mission, shared his personal story of recovery from addiction after finding the mission when he had nowhere else to go.
- Austin Slater, Porterville, criticized Mayor Meister's comments on addressing homelessness through incarceration rather than funding the armory, arguing that marginalized people should be treated with dignity as individuals made in God's image.
- Paul Saldana, from Economic Growth Strategies spoke regarding item 2, noting that although his firm is headquartered in Bakersfield, he and his colleague reside in Tulare County.
- David Olson, Porterville, suggested council members walk through different parts of the city to witness class disparities firsthand, and proposed repurposing the abandoned sheriff's station for homeless housing rather than pursuing new commercial development.
- Scott Bowler, from the Chamber of Commerce reported on the success of the Wine Walk event with approximately 150 attendees, and announced upcoming events including the Spring Festival on March 8th with over 100 vendors and a Taco Frenzy competition.
- Lee Qualls, Porterville, expressed support for holding drug users accountable, arguing that enabling continued drug use is not compassionate.
- Taha Saleh, Porterville, shared concerns about items 1 and 2 on the consent calendar, questioning the wide range of proposed costs among bidders and the process of selecting consultants.
- Former Mayor Martha A. Flores, noted the significance of February 18th, the anniversary of the library fire in 2020, recalling how the community came together during that tragedy and remembering the firefighters lost in the blaze.

- Debra Roman, Porterville, stated her belief that all faiths should be celebrated, and suggested that the city's spending priorities don't align with the Christian values of caring for the poor and marginalized.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- Council Member Beltran acknowledged homelessness as a significant issue and stated that funding is insufficient to fully resolve it. He explained that rehabilitating the old courthouse would be cost-prohibitive and operationally inefficient. He encouraged community support for the Rescue Mission and navigation center through volunteerism and donations.
- Council Member Rivas reported on a visit to the Rescue Mission, commended its programs, and noted the Council had extended armory operations beyond the original timeline. He emphasized the importance of programs focused on rehabilitation and recovery.
- Vice Mayor McKervey spoke about the anniversary of the library fire and the need for community healing. He addressed public concerns regarding bus stop infrastructure, confirmed that the new library project is funded and underway, referenced prior voter approval of the City motto, and clarified that the armory was intended as a temporary measure with a transition toward faith-based partnerships.
- Mayor Meister concurred with prior comments and clarified that county funds allocated to the Police Department's SMART team support programs designed to assist individuals in transitioning off the streets.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Item No. 9 was pulled at the request of Mayor Meister, Item No. 14 at the request of Council Member Beltran, Item Nos. 1, 2, 16 and 17 at the request of Vice Mayor McKervey, and Item No. 10 at the request of Council Member Green.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**            MOVED by Vice Mayor McKervey, SECONDED by Mayor Meister that the City Council approve Items Nos. 3-8, 11-13, and 15. The motion carried unanimously.

3.                                    AUTHORIZATION TO FUND AND IMPLEMENT THE POLICE RADIO SYSTEM UPGRADE PROJECT

Recommendation:            That the City Council:

1. Authorize the Police Department Radio System Upgrade Project, as identified in the 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan, to be allocated in FY 2025/2026;
2. Approve the allocation of Equipment Replacement Reserve funds in the amount of \$1,556,180 for the Police Department Radio System Upgrade; and
3. Authorize staff to negotiate and finalize the project equipment list and payment schedule, including components associated with Sierra View Medical Center, prior to issuing a purchase order, consistent with the approved project budget.

Documentation: M.O. 01-021726

Disposition: Approved.

4. AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE PLAYGROUND SURFACING FOR FALLEN HEROES PARK

Recommendation: That the City Council authorize the purchase and installation of playground surfacing for Fallen Heroes Park from Kompan in an amount not to exceed \$169,554.75, which includes a ten percent (10%) contingency, subject to the availability of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Park Improvement Funds.

Documentation: M.O. 02-021726

Disposition: Approved.

5. AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE WATER UTILITY DATA MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Recommendation: That the City Council authorize the purchase of AllMax Software licenses and custom reporting services for the Water Utility Division in an amount not to exceed \$26,051, including a 10% contingency.

Documentation: M.O. 03-021726

Disposition: Approved.

6. AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE PLAYGROUND SHADE FOR FALLEN HEROES PARK

Recommendation: That the City Council authorize the purchase and installation of playground shade structures for Fallen Heroes Park from Ross Recreation Equipment in an amount not to exceed \$61,792, subject to the availability of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Park Improvement Funds.

Documentation: M.O. 04-021726

Disposition: Approved.

7. ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT DEED FOR LOMBARDI SUBDIVISION LIFT STATION

Recommendation: That the City Council:  
1. Accept the Grant Deed of Dedication from Presidio JJR Brookside 110, LLC for the Lombardi Subdivision lift station parcel;

2. Authorize the Mayor to execute the draft resolution accepting the Grant Deed of Dedication; and
3. Authorize the City Clerk to record the signed Grant Deed of Dedication.

Documentation: Resolution No. 03-2026

Disposition: Approved.

8. APPROVAL OF COMMUNITY CIVIC EVENT APPLICATION — BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF THE SEQUOIAS "LOVE OUR KIDS 5K FUN RUN AND WALK" EVENT

Recommendation: That the City Council approve the Community Civic Event application submitted by the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Sequoias for the "Love Our Kids 5K Fun Run and Walk" event on April 18, 2026, at the Sports Complex, subject to the restrictions and requirements contained in the Application and Agreement, Exhibit A, Exhibit B, and Outside Amplifier Permit.

Documentation: M.O. 05-021726

Disposition: Approved.

11. AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL LIGHTED BUS STOP SIGN POLES

Recommendation: That the City Council authorize the purchase of twenty-four (24) additional lighted bus stop sign poles from Smart Era Lighting Systems (SELS) for the Bus Stop Sign Replacement Project in an amount not to exceed \$64,880.08.

Documentation: M.O. 07-021726

Disposition: Approved.

12. AUTHORIZATION FOR ACCESS TO STATE AND FEDERAL SUMMARY CRIMINAL HISTORY INFORMATION

Recommendation: That the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the Human Resources Division of the Administration Department to access state and federal level summary criminal history information for employment purposes, including volunteers and contract employees.

Documentation: Resolution No. 04-2026

Disposition: Approved.

13. AUTHORIZATION TO REPAIR HVAC SYSTEM AT FIRE STATION 73

Recommendation: That the City Council approve HVAC system repairs at Fire Station 73 to be performed by EMCOR Services under the City's existing service contract, in an amount not to exceed \$18,035.

Documentation: M.O. 08-021726

Disposition: Approved.

15. AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE SYNTHETIC GRASS FOR THE MURRY PARK POOL DECK AND AUTHORIZATION TO ISSUE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Recommendation: That the City Council:  
1. Authorize the purchase and installation of synthetic grass for the Murry Park pool deck from Synthetic Grass Expert in an amount not to exceed \$52,500, which includes a ten percent (10%) contingency; and  
2. Authorize staff to issue a Request for Qualifications for ADA accessibility improvements at the Murry Park pool deck.

Documentation: M.O. 09-021726

Disposition: Approved.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

18. ADOPTION OF AMENDED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Recommendation: That the City Council:  
1. Conduct a public hearing to receive public testimony; and  
2. Adopt the amended Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizen Participation Plan.

City Manager Tree introduced the item, and Community Development Director Claudia Calderon presented the staff report.

Mayor Meister opened the public hearing at 8:19 p.m. and closed the public hearing at 8:19 p.m. when no one came forward to speak.

**COUNCIL ACTION:** MOVED by Council Member Beltran, SECONDED by Vice Mayor McKervey that the City Council adopt the amended Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizen Participation Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation: M.O. 10-021726

Disposition: Approved.

19. APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP FOR THE MORTON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation: That the City Council:

1. Conduct a public hearing to receive public testimony on the proposed Tentative Subdivision Map for the Morton Residential Development;
2. Find that the proposed Tentative Subdivision Map is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332; and
3. Adopt a resolution approving the Tentative Subdivision Map for the Morton Residential Development, subject to the conditions of approval.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and Community Development Director Claudia Calderon presented the staff report.

Mayor Meister opened the public hearing at 8:24 p.m. and closed the public hearing at 8:24 p.m. when no one came forward to speak.

COUNCIL ACTION: MOVED by Council Member Beltran, SECONDED by Council Member Green that the City Council find the proposed tentative subdivision map is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15332, and approve the tentative subdivision map for the Morton Residential Development subject to conditions of approval. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation: Resolution No. 05-2026

Disposition: Approved.

20. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR VILLAS AT DELLA FARMS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Recommendation: That the City Council:

1. Conduct a public hearing to receive public testimony regarding the proposed amendment to the Conditions of Approval for the Villas at Della Farms Development Project;
2. Find that the proposed amendment is consistent with the previously adopted environmental document and that no further environmental review is required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and
3. Adopt a resolution approving the amended Conditions of Approval for the Villas at Della Farms Development Project.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and Interim Engineering and Project Management Director Daniel Cervantez presented the staff report.

Mayor Meister opened the public hearing at 8:27 p.m. and closed the public hearing at 8:27 p.m. when no one else came forward to speak.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**            MOVED by Council Member Rivas, SECONDED by Vice Mayor McKervey that the City Council find that the proposed amendment is consistent with the previously adopted environmental documents and that no further environmental review is required pursuant to CEQA, and approve the amended conditions of approval for the Villas at Dela Farms development project. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation:            Resolution No. 06-2026

Disposition:            Approved.

**SCHEDULED MATTERS**

**21.                    CONSIDERATION OF DONATION TO THE PORTERVILLE RESCUE MISSION**

Recommendation:            That the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing a donation to the Porterville Rescue Mission from the Special Purposes Reserve Fund in an amount to be determined by the City Council.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report and explained that Vice Mayor McKervey requested consideration of a potential donation to the Porterville Rescue Mission at the February 4th meeting. Staff recommended that Council determine whether a donation should be made and if so, the amount to be contributed from the Special Purpose Reserve Fund.

Vice Mayor McKervey spoke in support of making a donation, noting the organization's positive impact on the community and its role in helping individuals who previously used the armory shelter. He highlighted the mission's success in transforming lives, with 73 individuals who have gone on to join the military or pursue medical careers. He recommended a \$5,000 donation with no strings attached.

Council Member Beltran disclosed that his father volunteers at the rescue mission and that he personally has donated to the organization since 2020. He suggested that the donation be similar to the reunification funding previously provided to the navigation center, and recommended a \$5,000 donation with a follow-up report in June.

Fred Beltran and Bobby from the rescue mission addressed the Council, stating they hadn't requested funding but appreciated the council's consideration. They emphasized their work would

continue regardless of receiving city funds, and expressed appreciation for the improved relationship with the city.

Council members discussed the faith-based nature of the mission, with the City Attorney clarifying that as long as the mission does not require religious participation in exchange for services funded by public money, there is no legal issue with providing a donation.

Mayor Meister expressed support for the one-time donation but noted concerns about tent cities and the mission's current location, suggesting future discussions about potentially relocating the mission to a more suitable site.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**            MOVED by Council Member Green, SECONDED by Council Member Rivas that the City Council approve a \$5,000 donation to the Porterville Rescue Mission from the Special Purposes Reserve Fund, with no strings attached. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation:            Resolution No. 11-021726

Disposition:            Approved.

22.                            APPOINTMENT OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AS MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE TULE EAST GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY BOARD

Recommendation:            That the City Council appoint one member of the City Council to serve as the City of Porterville's Member Representative on the Tule East Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**            MOVED by Mayor Meister, SECONDED by Council Member Rivas that the City Council appoint Council Member Green as the city member representative to the Tule East Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation:            M.O. 11-021726

Disposition:            Approved.

23.                            CONSIDER AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 15.20 OF THE PORTERVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING TO ENTERTAINMENT ZONES

Recommendation:            That the City Council:  
1. Authorize the initiation of an amendment to Chapter 15.20 of the Porterville Municipal Code to establish a Downtown Entertainment

- Zone, to be activated only in conjunction with approved Community Civic Events; and
- 2. Approve the Downtown Entertainment Zone Operating Standards to serve as the management plan governing Entertainment Zone events; and
- 3. Schedule and conduct a public hearing on March 3, 2026, to consider adoption of an ordinance amending Chapter 15.20 of the Porterville Municipal Code.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report which originated from a discussion in the downtown committee about allowing participants at a car show to walk around with alcoholic beverages. Staff drafted operating standards for an entertainment zone, proposing that it be limited to Main Street from Olive to Morton. The standards include hours of operation, insurance requirements, and other regulations.

Mayor Meister expressed support for the proposal and suggested adding the airport to the entertainment zone to accommodate events like car shows and air shows. Council Member Beltran suggested dividing the downtown area into two zones to better manage security needs and provide options for family-friendly areas. He also raised concerns about the cost to taxpayers for providing security and suggested that wristband fees could help offset these costs.

Vice Mayor McKervey clarified that downtown businesses serving alcohol were consulted and all were interested in participating, noting they would need temporary ABC licenses for such events.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**            MOVED by Mayor Meister, SECONDED by None that the City Council approve staff recommendations for amending Chapter 15.20 of the Porterville Municipal Code relating to Entertainment Zones, with the addition of the airport to the zoning.

AYES:            Rivas, Green, McKervey, Meister  
 NOES:            Beltran  
 ABSTAIN:        None  
 ABSENT:        None

Documentation:            M.O. 12-021726

Disposition:            Approved.

1.                    CONSULTANT SELECTION AND AUTHORIZATION TO NEGOTIATE CONSULTANT CONTRACT FOR STREAMLINING PLANNING OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESSES

Recommendation:        That the City Council:

1. Review the results of the proposal evaluation conducted in accordance with the Request for Proposals and authorize staff to negotiate a scope of services and contract not to exceed \$74,971 with the top-ranked firm, GHD, Inc. for the provision of consultant services for streamlining planning operations and development review processes; and
2. Authorize staff to negotiate a scope of services and contract not to exceed \$74,660 with Berry Dunn if staff is unable to negotiate an acceptable contract with GHD, Inc.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report.

This item was pulled from the consent calendar by Vice Mayor McKervey, who recommended selecting Hartman Engineering despite their lower ranking in the staff evaluation. He emphasized the value of choosing a local company with experience in the city's permitting processes. Fernando Rios from Hartman Engineering had addressed the Council earlier, noting his eight years of experience working for the city of Porterville in the planning department.

Council Member Beltran expressed concern about selecting a firm that scored significantly lower, questioning whether the city would get a quality product for the same price. Council Member Rivas and Council Member Green voiced support for choosing a local business.

COUNCIL ACTION:            MOVED by Vice Mayor McKervey, SECONDED by Council Member Rivas that the City Council authorize staff to negotiate a consultant services agreement with Hartman Engineering for services to streamline planning operations and development review processes, within the \$75,000 budget.

AYES:            Rivas, Green, McKervey, Meister  
 NOES:            Beltran  
 ABSTAIN:        None  
 ABSENT:        None

Documentation:            M.O. 13-021726

Disposition:            Approved.

2.                    CONSULTANT SELECTION AND AUTHORIZATION TO NEGOTIATE CONSULTANT CONTRACT FOR ENHANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS

Recommendation:        That the City Council:

1. Review the results of the proposal evaluation conducted in accordance with the Request for Proposals and authorize staff to negotiate a scope of services and contract not to exceed \$47,030 with the top-ranked firm, Hinderliter de Llamas and Associates, for the provision of

- consultant services for enhancing economic development operations;  
and
- 2. Authorize staff to negotiate a scope of services and contract not to exceed \$75,000 with Economic Growth Strategies if staff is unable to negotiate an acceptable contract with Hinderliter de Llamas and Associates.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report.

This item was also pulled from the consent calendar by Vice Mayor McKervey. Similar to the previous item, he recommended selecting a local firm, Graham and Associates, despite their lower ranking in the staff evaluation. He noted the presentation by Jason Castle earlier in the meeting and highlighted his local connections, commercial water experience, and understanding of the community. He also suggested that selecting a Visalia-based organization might help repair relationships with the county.

Council Member Beltran pointed out the inconsistency in the argument that "you get what you pay for" while choosing a lower-ranked firm for the previous item. Council Member Rivas supported the local option, stating that sometimes organizations that claim to be the best don't deliver the best results, and that someone striving to prove themselves often works harder.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**        MOVED by Vice Mayor McKervey, SECONDED by Mayor Meister that the City Council authorize staff to negotiate a consultant services agreement with Graham Associates for services to enhance the City's economic development operations, with negotiations at the \$80,000 budgeted amount.

AYES:            Rivas, Green, McKervey, Meister  
 NOES:            Beltran  
 ABSTAIN:        None  
 ABSENT:         None

Documentation:        M.O. 14-021726

Disposition:         Approved.

9.                    CONSIDERATION OF A LETTER OPPOSING CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY BILL 1421 (MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE STUDY)

Recommendation:    That the City Council:

- 1. Approve a letter of opposition to Assembly Bill 1421 and authorize the Mayor to execute the letter on behalf of the City Council; and
- 2. Direct the City Manager to transmit the letter to Assemblymembers who voted in favor of the bill.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report.

Mayor Meister requested the city consider a formal letter opposing AB 1421, which would continue funding for a mileage-based user fee study. He noted that while the bill is framed as targeting only electric vehicles, it actually affects all vehicles including commercial, diesel, and gasoline-powered. He suggested adding language to the letter highlighting that California residents already pay the highest gas taxes and vehicle registration fees in the nation, and that the state should focus on cutting wasteful spending on projects like high-speed rail rather than seeking new taxes.

Vice Mayor McKervey noted that the tax would disproportionately affect rural communities and mentioned that local tribal leaders were also concerned about the impact. Council Member Rivas compared the proposal to previous emissions regulations that drove businesses out of California and expressed support for deregulation.

COUNCIL ACTION:            MOVED by Mayor Meister, SECONDED by Council Member Green that the City Council approve the letter opposing California Assembly Bill 1421 with the amendments suggested during the discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation:            M.O. 15-021726

Disposition:            Approved.

10.                    AUTHORIZATION TO REPAIR FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMAND VEHICLE #2214

Recommendation:        That the City Council authorize Golden State Paint and Body to complete the repairs to the Fire Department command vehicle #2214 for a total cost of \$6,526.08.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report.

Council Member Green pulled this item to clarify the circumstances of the damage. Fire Chief Cogburn explained that a battalion chief's vehicle was struck while parked on the side of the road with emergency lights activated as the chief was providing aid to victims of a traffic accident at Linda Vista and Highway 65.

COUNCIL ACTION:            MOVED by Mayor Meister, SECONDED by Council Member Rivas that the City Council authorize Golden State Paint and Body to complete repairs to Fire Department Command Vehicle #2214 in the total amount of \$6,526.08. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation:            M.O. 06-021726

Disposition:            Approved.

14. AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE LAND LEASE AGREEMENT WITH AMERICAN TOWER

Recommendation: That the City Council authorize the Mayor and City Manager to execute the First Amendment to the Land Lease Agreement with American Tower to extend the lease term through April 30, 2068, modify rent escalation provisions to provide for ten percent (10%) increases every five (5) years, and accept a one-time lease consideration payment in the amount of \$100,000.

City Manager Tree introduced the item and presented the staff report and explained that this item involves amending a 2008 land lease agreement for a wireless communication facility located near Fire Station 72. American Tower initially proposed a one-time payment of \$20,000 for extending the lease term, but after negotiations led by the Mayor and Vice Mayor, the company agreed to increase the payment to \$100,000.

Council Member Beltran, who pulled this item, expressed appreciation for reducing the lease extension from 50 years to 35 years and increasing the payment amount, but questioned whether allocating the funds to celebrations was the best use of the money given budget constraints. He suggested directing the funds toward the library.

Mayor Meister noted that the funds would go to the general fund and could offset spending on the monument and battleship-themed playground. Vice Mayor McKervey supported the direction, emphasizing that the money would return to the general fund.

COUNCIL ACTION: MOVED by Mayor Meister, SECONDED by Vice Mayor McKervey that the City Council authorize the Mayor and City Manager to execute the First Amendment to the Land Lease Agreement with American Tower to extend the lease term through April 30, 2068, and accept a one-time lease consideration payment of \$100,000.

AYES: Rivas, Green, McKervey, Meister

NOES: Beltran

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Documentation: M.O. 16-021726

Disposition: Approved.

Vice Mayor McKervey pulled both items 16 and 17, which concerned setting public hearings for amendments to development agreements with cannabis businesses. He requested that these items go through the cannabis committee first, explaining that while the security changes seemed acceptable, he wanted to audit compliance with original agreement conditions such as local ownership requirements, local hiring practices, downtown beautification including murals, and

educational outreach efforts.

Council Member Rivas requested copies of the original proposals and agreements with signature blocks for review. Council Member Beltran noted that some of the educational outreach is conducted through funding for school resource officers.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**            MOVED by Mayor Meister, SECONDED by Vice Mayor McKerverey that the City Council table items 16 and 17 until after review by the cannabis committee. The motion carried unanimously.

Documentation:            M.O. 17-021726

Disposition:            Approved.

16.            AUTHORIZATION TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDED AND RESTATED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AND RELATED ORDINANCE FOR COAST-TO-COAST CAREGIVERS CORP. DBA CULTURE CANNABIS CLUB

Recommendation:            That the City Council authorize the setting of a public hearing for March 3, 2026, to consider an Amended and Restated Development Agreement and a related ordinance for Coast-to-Coast Caregivers Corp. Dba Culture Cannabis Club.

Disposition:            **Item postponed to a future city council meeting.**

17.            AUTHORIZATION TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDED AND RESTATED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AND RELATED ORDINANCE FOR HAVEN #7 LLC

Recommendation:            That the City Council authorize the setting of a public hearing for March 3, 2026, to consider an Amended and Restated Development Agreement and a related ordinance for Haven #7 LLC.

Disposition:            **Item postponed to a future city council meeting.**

### **AB 1234 REPORTS**

1. Local Initiatives Navigation Center Committee (LINC) - February 4, 2026

Council Member Beltran reported that the LINC committee reviewed minutes and budget with no changes. The navigation center is fully operational with all beds occupied. The committee discussed the Point in Time count conducted in January to assess the homeless population and secure state funding, noting challenges with sheriff's department sweeps displacing homeless individuals just before the count. He also highlighted the ongoing

expansion at the navigation center, including construction of showers, restrooms, and a cooling/warming center with a full kitchen, expected to be completed by late summer.

2. Eastern Tule Groundwater Sustainability Agency JPA (ETGSA) - February 5, 2026

Council Member Green reported on the approval of an office lease agreement with Rico Property Group, discussion of non-compliant property owners and wells, and budget approval through June 2026. He noted that the ETGSA is scheduled to be dissolved potentially by the end of April 2026.

3. Heritage Committee Meeting - February 9, 2026

Mayor Meister reported that the daughters of American Revolution are working on a historic marker plaque for Veterans Park that will commemorate America's 250th anniversary. Porterville College students presented their design for a first responder mural on the Premium Blossom building. Additional topics included design concepts for a mural on the Earth Angel building, the painting of a patriotic fire hydrant on Main Street, and progress on the Washington Monument at Veterans Park.

The Mayor also mentioned the Flag Day committee meeting held that day, which established "250 Years of American History" as the theme and dedicated the event to Judy May, who started Flag Day 45 years ago with the Porterville Emblem Club.

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- Jean Vafeades, Porterville, expressed disappointment that the Council did not allocate the \$100,000 from American Tower to the library, urging YouTube viewers to get involved and advocate for library funding.
- Diane Wagner, Porterville, expressed concern about the RFP process used for consultant selection, noting that companies invest time and money in responding only to have Council ignore the ratings. She also questioned the decision to spend \$1.5 million on encrypted radio equipment when state law does not require encryption, asking whether alternatives were considered.
- Luis Gonzalez, Porterville, commented on the Porterville Rescue Mission's refusal of the donation, suggesting it indicated a lack of trust in the city, though the Council ultimately approved the donation anyway.
- Taha Saleh, Porterville, suggested that the Council prioritize customer service and expressed concerns about the consultant selection process, questioning why lower-ranked firms were chosen. He also suggested the \$100,000 from American Tower should go into the general budget rather than toward celebrations.
- Adrian Moraga, Porterville, thanked the council for their votes and provided an update on the national anthem for the upcoming Flag Day event.
- Lee Qualls, Porterville, spoke about the gravity of drug overdoses in Tulare County and California, advocating for a focus on corrective help and recovery programs.

**OTHER MATTERS**

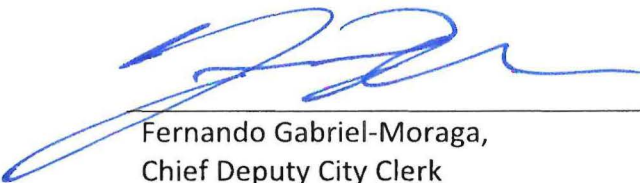
- Council Member Rivas reported that there were 61 opiate-related deaths in Tulare County in 2023, and nearly 12,000 overdose deaths statewide in a single year. He also responded to earlier comments about his communication style, acknowledging he would try to be more mindful of his tone.
- Council Member Beltran expressed concern about the RFP process and potential consequences for future proposal submissions if Council continues to override staff recommendations. He announced upcoming events, including a little library dedication ceremony on February 17th at 1 PM at 466 East Putnam honoring Captain Figueroa and Firefighter Jones, and a February 27th fundraiser in Exeter benefiting the Porterville Rescue Mission
- Vice Mayor McKervey clarified several points from public comments, emphasizing that the city is working with the community to address homelessness, that the library is fully funded and in process, and that the city's "In God We Trust" motto was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2008. He also explained that the armory shelter was always intended to be temporary and that the radio encryption was necessary for communication with other police agencies
- City Manager shared upcoming meetings, including a February 20th meeting with Congressman Fong to discuss airport expansion and public safety, and committee meetings scheduled for the following week. He defended staff's work on reports and negotiations, particularly noting efforts to secure better pricing on the radio equipment.

**CLOSED SESSION**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Council adjourned at 10:28 p.m. to the meeting of March 3, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.



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Fernando Gabriel-Moraga,  
Chief Deputy City Clerk

SEAL



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Greg Meister, Mayor