

Minutes of the Blythe City Council Meeting

January 13, 2026

The January 13, 2026 meeting of the Blythe City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers by Mayor DeConinck. Also in attendance were Vice Mayor Rodriguez and Council Members Halby, Burton and Spraggins. Staff in attendance included: Interim City Manager and City Clerk Crecelius, City Attorney Roberto, City Treasurer and Finance Director Elms, Chief Building Official Brown, Public Works Director Elegores, Acting Police Chief Walnoha and Fire Chief Hasler.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor DeConinck.

The Invocation was led by Council Member Burton.

Mayor DeConinck asked for a moment of silence in memory of Joe Cota, former Recreation Center Director and involved community member.

REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION:

City Attorney Roberto stated there was no reportable action.

CONSENT CALENDAR: *Items on the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be enacted with one motion of the Council. If any item requires individual consideration, it will be removed from the consent calendar and acted upon separately.*

1. Posting of the Agenda.

The agenda was posted on the bulletin boards on the outside of the public entrance to the Council Chamber and near the inside entrance of the Council Chamber and on the City's website on Friday, January 9, 2026.

2. Approval of the Warrant Register.

Recommendation: Approve **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 11321 through 11368 and 80491 through 80545 in the amount of \$919,881.94; **1/13/26**, Utility Billing Refund warrants numbered 80546 through 80557 in the amount of \$1,573.64, and **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 11369 through 11389 and 80558 through 80596 in the amount of \$208,073.01.

3. Approval of the Payroll Register.

Recommendation: Approve **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 55525 through 55528 and Direct Deposits warrants numbered 63906 through 63907 in the amount of \$22,559.82; **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 55529 and Direct Deposits warrants numbered 63908 through 63935 in the amount of \$154,407.88; **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 55530 through 55545 and Direct Deposit warrants numbered 63936 through 64014 in the amount of \$303,117.41; **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 55547 through 55561, and Direct Deposits warrants numbered 64015 through 64093 in the amount of \$332,707.15; **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 55562 through 55564 and Direct Deposits warrants numbered 64094 through 64108 in the amount of \$31,140.60, and **1/13/26**, warrants numbered 55565 through 55576 and Direct Deposits warrants numbered 64109 through 64206 in the amount of \$97,095.19.

4. Minutes of the December 9, 2025 City Council Meeting.

Recommendation: Approve the Minutes of the December 9, 2025, Meeting.

5. City of Blythe Permits Issued in the Month of December 2025.

Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.

6. City of Blythe Fire Department Monthly Activity Report for December 2025.

Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.

7. **City of Blythe Police Department Monthly Activity Report for December 2025.**
Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.
8. **Quality of Life Program Activity Report for December 2025.**
Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.
9. **Investment Report for Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2025-2026.**
Recommendation: Accept and file the Quarterly Investment Report.
10. **Authorize Acceptance of Work – Community Center Floor Repair Project.**
Recommendation: Authorize the Interim City Manager to accept the work performed by MT Construction Team, Inc., for the project known as the Community Center Floor Repair Project once completed to the satisfaction of the Chief Building Official, authorize the City Clerk to file the Notice of Completion and authorize staff to release project bonds once appropriate.
11. **Adoption of the 2025 California Codes.**
Recommendation: Adopt Ordinance No. 945-25:

ORDINANCE NO. 945-25. AN OR OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING TITLE 15 (BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION) OF THE BLYTHE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADOPT BY REFERENCE THE 2025 CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARD CODE, WITH LOCAL AMENDMENTS, AND FINDING THE ORDINANCE IS EXEMPT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15061(B)(3) (COMMON SENSE EXEMPTION)

Council Member Spraggins asked to pull item No. 8.

Public comment. Rodney Tuthill, Assistant District Attorney with the Eastern Region introduced himself to Council and made comments related to his work with the Blythe Police Department.

Council Member Burton moved approval of Consent Calendar items 1-7 and 9-11. The motion was seconded by Vie Mayor Rodriguez with a unanimous aye vote.

Quality of Life Program Activity Report. Council Member Spraggins asked Acting Chief Walnoha to read the Quality-of-Life Program Reprot for December 2025.

No public comment. The item was received and filed.

PUBLIC HEARING: None

CONTINUED BUSINESS:

Palo Verde Hospital Ad Hoc Committee Update. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated at our Special Meeting on Friday, we met to discuss terms of a loan for \$330,000 to provide a week of operating capital for the Hospital so the doors did not close at midnight this past Saturday. The City Attorney prepared the agreement and provided it to the District prior to their meeting Friday evening. At that meeting, the Board provided authorization for the execution of that agreement once reviewed and approved by their Counsel. Last Sunday night we had an executed agreement. The funding had some strings, the District had to allow the County to come in, in a management role. If it wasn't going to be the County, the management company needed to be reviewed and approved by the County to take over the management and operation of Palo Verde Hospital. The second requirement was for the Board to fill the vacant seats. We've had discussions with the County related to this, and as of yesterday, the County was still waiting to hear from the District. I reached out to District Counsel, and she shared that a meeting was scheduled for yesterday evening. It's my understanding that the County team had a meeting scheduled today and were going to circle back with the District tonight at 6:30pm. We are all

waiting to see what happens, if the District will allow the County in and honor their commitment to the City.

Vice Mayor Rodriguez stated the hospital put out their Agenda for tomorrow and there is a presentation from a Doctor out of El Centro on the Agenda. A recall petition was filed today on Director Sartin. Those signatures will need to be validated. Board President Carmela Garnica is supposed to be on a radio program this evening at 6:30pm.

Mayor DeConinck complemented the City Attorney on getting this done and the timeline over the weekend to put this together before it was executed late Sunday evening.

Public comment. Leslie Jessop-Watkins stated over this last week Mallory, the City Attorney, Johnny, everyone has been so dedicated without question with diligence and profound process in wanting to do right for what is our community. I cannot thank everyone enough for the professionalism, late hours and resources. I appreciate that, and I know everyone in our community does, regardless of the outcome.

Scott Lord, Business Manager of Mercy Air stated we are here to open a base at the airport to have a local asset in the community. We met with the hospital a few years ago and understand the need to have an asset here. We are ready to get going, and it has been a lot of work up to this point. We will service Riverside County for scene calls and do interfacility transfers to the closest hospital, which would be Desert Regional for trauma. There are concerns with the out-of-pocket costs. Our average out of pocket cost is \$51.06. This is after the co-pay. We are in network with Medicare and Medical. There is also the No Surprise Act, which passed in 2021 where we cannot balance bill the patient.

The item was received and filed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Audited Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Finance Director Elms stated the City is required to complete an independent audit of its financial statements at the end of each year. The Audit for 2024/25 was conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) and is concluded. It is the City's policy to present the results of the audit in an open meeting. I will turn the floor over to Daphney Munoz with CLA.

Daphney Munoz, Principal with CliftonLarsonAllen presented the results of the audit for year end June 30, 2025. We conducted the audit of the financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards. We also provided Audited Financial Statements for the Blythe Financing Authority. As the City spent more than \$750,000 in federal funds we will perform a Single Audit. This is a compliance audit. The Auditor's opinion is an unmodified Opinion. This is a clean opinion. We considered the City's internal controls in the financial reporting. If we find anything that we think merits attention, it will be included in the report. However, we did not have any findings, or nothing to report. There were no difficulties during the audit or no disagreements with management. Management has provided us with a representation letter which represents that no information has been withheld as part of the audit process.

Council Member Halby thanked the Finance Director and her staff and Mrs. Munoz and her team. The Finance Committee reviewed this earlier today. We appreciate all the diligence and hard work.

No public comment. The item was received and filed.

Report on Emergency Action Taken by Interim City Manager for the Emergency Repairs to the Sinkhole, Sewer Main and Manholes Near 900 N. Broadway. Public Works Director Elegores stated this is a report on the emergency action taken by the Interim City Manager for the emergency action taken to repair the sink hole, manhole and sewer main near 900 N. Broadway. This fiscal impact is \$175,210 from the sewer utility fund. In late December 2025, staff received a report that there was a sinkhole located across from 892 N. Broadway. Based upon further investigation by staff, in consultation with Cholla Construction, staff determined the sinkhole was caused by a collapsed sewer line. The collapsed sewer line is resulting in sewer waste backup from residents discharging to that approximately 3,000 linear foot segment of the sewer line. Staff have been manually pumping the 10 manholes along this segment. As of December 31, 2025, a portion of the southbound lane of N. Broadway was closed as a safety precaution due to the sink hole located in the right of way. Public Contract Code section 1102 defines an “emergency” as “a sudden, unexpected occurrence that poses a clear and imminent danger, requiring immediate action to prevent or mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property, or essential public services.” The sinkhole in the roadway caused by the collapsed sewer line poses a health and safety issue. Further, the collapsed sewer line is resulting in sewer waste backup in the manholes located near the collapsed sinkhole. Such backup could result in sewage leaks, which are a public health and safety issue and could result in fines from the State. The project generally consists of emergency repairs to the collapsed sewer main, sinkhole, and manholes immediately upstream and downstream from the collapsed sewer main near 900 N. Broadway. Cholla Construction’s scope of work includes providing vacuum tanker trucks to evacuate the collection system upstream of the repair to facilitate the plugging and isolation of the repair area, removal of asphalt paving and restoring the road section as necessary, providing labor, equipment, and materials to repair up to 20 lineal feet of 8” sewer main in the vicinity of the sinkhole and providing labor, equipment, and materials to rehabilitate and epoxy- coat two manholes. Staff will provide support to Cholla Construction during the project. Therefore, it is recommended Council review the emergency action taken by the Interim City Manager for the emergency sinkhole, sewer main and manhole repairs near 900 N. Broadway. It is further recommended that the Council authorize the Interim City Manager to accept the work when completed to the satisfaction of Public Works Department staff and authorize the City Clerk to file the Notice of Completion upon such acceptance and to release project bonds once appropriate.

No public comment. Vice Mayor Rodriguez moved approval of staff’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Council Member Burton with a unanimous aye vote.

ORAL REPORTS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

2011 E. Donlon Street made comments on the water/salt issue and asked about the status.

The owner of Comfort Inn and Suites asked how long we are going to exist without softeners. Was there an Ordinance passed on the softeners?

Interim City Manager Crecelius stated yes, I believe Section 13.08 of the Blythe Municipal Code talks about salinity and water. However, to follow up Mayor, you asked for an item to be placed on the Agenda to discuss this. I have asked the Public Works Director to prepare that staff report for the February meeting. Until the State allows us to increase the allowable tds limits our hands are tied because violating it would result in hefty fines. I do want to engage with the State to see what we can do for these business owners.

Mayor DeConinck stated we are working on it. Things were put into place back in the day and the State came in and was going to fine us.

ADJOURN: The City Council meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm.

Joseph DeConinck, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mallory Crecelius, City Clerk