Minutes of the Blythe City Council Meeting
March 10, 2026

The March 10, 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, Public Works Director Elegores and Acting Police Chief Walnoha.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor DeConinck.

The Invocation was led by Council Member Burton.

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.*

No public comment. Council Member Burton moved approval of staff's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Council Member Spraggins with a unanimous aye vote.

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, March 6, 2026.
2. **Approval of the Warrant Register.**
   Recommendation: Approve **3/10/26,** warrants numbered 11433 through 11458 and 80687 through 80742 in the amount of $588,920.22; **3/10/26,** Utility Billing Refund warrants numbered 80743 through 80754 in the amount of $1,203.88, and **3/10/26,** warrants numbered 11459 through 11465 and 80755 through 80790 in the amount of $802,182.69.
3. **Approval of the Payroll Register.**
   Recommendation: Approve **3/10/26,** warrants numbered 55621 through 55635 and Direct Deposits warrants numbered 64463 through 64543 in the amount of $337,760.42; **3/10/26,** warrants numbered 55636 through 55650 and Direct Deposit warrant numbered 64463 through 64543 in the amount of $337,760.42; **3/10/26,** warrant numbered 55651 and Direct Deposit warrant numbered 64624 in the amount of $6,072.033; 3/10/2026, warrants numbered 55652 through 55663, and Direct Deposits warrants numbered 64625 through 64718 in the amount of $101,078.06.
4. **Minutes of the February 10, 2026 City Council Meeting.**
   Recommendation: Approve the Minutes of the February 10, 2026 Meeting.
5. **City of Blythe Permits Issued in the Month of February 2026.**
   Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.
6. **City of Blythe Fire Department Monthly Activity Report for February 2026.**
   Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.
7. **City of Blythe Police Department Monthly Activity Report for February 2026.**
   Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.
8. **Quality of Life Program Activity Report for February 2026.**
   Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.
9. **Continued Participation in the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program.**
   Recommendation: Authorize the Interim City Manager to execute the 2025 Operation Stonegarden Grant Program Agreement once reviewed and approved by the City Attorney and authorize staff to expend $132,140.74 in grant funding.

10. **<u>Agreement with Joe A. Gonzalves & Son for State Legislative Advocacy Services.</u>**
Recommendation: Authorize the Interim City Manager to execute Agreement No. 2026-025.

Council Member Spraggins asked to pull the Quality-of-Life Activity Report for February.

No public comment. Vice Mayor Rodriguez moved approval of Consent Calendar items 1-7 and 9-10. The motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote.

Quality of Life Program Activity Report for February 2026. Active Chief Walnoha provided the February program statistics. Council Member Spraggins asked various questions about the report. The item was received and filed.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Conditional Use Permit 2511-001- LUXE America, LLC. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the Luxe America LLC project is the development of a light manufacturing and inventory storage facility at 150 S. Main Street. This site has a general commercial zoning designation. The Blythe Municipal Code permits light manufacturing in this zone with a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed light manufacturing and storage activities are clean, quiet and have a low impact in nature with machinery producing light humming sounds that do not travel beyond the room they are operating in. The manufacturing process does not produce any fumes, odors or hazardous waste. The property will be modernized to meet City standards of safety and cleanliness, create local employment opportunities, stimulate demand for local suppliers and services and enhance utilization of existing commercial space and contribute to the revitalization of the City's Main Street business District. Notice of application for the subject Conditional Use Permit and adoption of a Notice of Exemption for the project was published in the Palo Verde Times and sent to surrounding property owners on February 25, 2026. No comments were received regarding the proposed project/CUP. As the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City has undertaken preliminary review and determined that the proposed development qualifies for a Categorical Exemption from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 Existing Facilities. Based upon review of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has determined that the proposed project has no conditions as defined in CEQA Guidelines 15300.2 that would make it ineligible for the applicable categorical exemption. Before final approval of the Conditional Use Permit, the City Council shall make the following findings: that the proposed location of the Conditional use is in accord with the objectives of this title and the purpose of the zone in which the site is located. As the BMC allows light manufacturing in a commercial zone with a CUP, the location and proposed use as a light manufacturing and inventory storage facility is in accord with the objectives of this title. That the proposed location in which the conditional use and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare. The development of this site, which is presently vacant, will enhance existing commercial spaces and will not be a public health or safety issue. Developing this site under current building codes and standards will improve the public health and safety of this property and the surrounding area. It should be noted that per the BMC, the Conditional Use Permit issued shall lapse if no improvements have been made, and the holder of the permit shall not have utilized it within one year from the date upon which such permit shall have been granted. Therefore, subsequent to the Public Hearing it is recommended Council adopt Resolution No. 2026-002 and 2026-003.

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.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-002. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE CONTAINING FINDINGS IN SUPPORT OF APPROVAL OF A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 2511-001.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-003. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE CONTAINING FINDINGS AND CONDITION IN SUPPORT OF APPROVAL OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 2511-001 TO ALLOW THE USE OF A LIGHT MANUFACTURING FACILITY ON A PARCEL DESIGNATED AS C-G (GENERAL COMMERCIAL).

CONTINUED BUSINESS:

Palo Verde Hospital Ad Hoc Committee Update. Interim City Manager Crecelius provided an update on the Board of Supervisors filling vacancies on the Palo Verde Healthcare District Board, status of the IGT funds, update on Strike Team and a presentation by the County at the Outlook Conference in April.

Council Member Halby asked about repayment of the City's loan to the Palo Verde Healthcare District.

Vice Mayor Rodriguez stated the Strike Team members are not new employees, they volunteered to come and are doing double duty with their County job. They have been wanting to come since May. They are motivated and very happy with the staff here. If you need medical treatment you should go to the hospital here and give them the business.

The item was received and filed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Termination of Emergency Action Taken by Interim City Manager for the Emergency Repairs to the Sinkhole, Sewer Main and Manholes Near 900 N. Broadway. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the emergency repairs to the sinkhole, sewer main and manholes near 900 N. Broadway were completed to the satisfaction of the Public Works Department on February 23, 2026. Public Contract Code section 22050(c)(3) states that the governing body shall "terminate the action at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant so that the remainder of the emergency action may be completed by giving notice for bids to let contracts." As the repairs are now complete, it is recommended Council terminate the emergency action declared by the Interim City Manager on January 8, 2026, for the repairs near 900 N. Broadway. It is further recommended Council accept the work performed by Robert Yates dba Cholla Construction and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute and file the Notice of Completion for the project and authorize the Interim City Manager to release retention payments once the Notice of Completion is recorded and 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.

State Prison Community Service Crews. Council Member Halby stated when the Ironwood and Chuckawalla Valley State Prisons opened, the City was provided with free inmate

community service crews. Under the supervision of the City's Public Works Department, these crews picked up trash and beautified city parks and open spaces. Although this started as a free service provided by the State for the City allowing the prisons to be built in the City limits, at some point the State began charging for this service. Due to the cost, the city no longer takes advantage of the Inmate Community Service Crews. From time to time the City has researched bringing the inmate labor crews back to assist Public Works with a growing workload. The decision not to move forward has always come down to the cost of the service. State Prison Inmate Community Service Crews were last discussed in 2016. At the time, the annual cost was $147,500. On top of this, the City was required to provide a transportation van for the 8–12 man crew as well as a towable porta potty and provide tools to complete the required work. At the time, crews were available to do graffiti removal, litter removal, painting, weed abatement, landscaping and general cleanup and any other mutually agreed upon activities. I would like to re-engage discussions with the State to resume the Community service crew and staff is looking for direction on how to proceed. I spoke the Warden at Ironwood State Prison last week and they are on board, but it can't cost them anything, It may seem like a big amount, but for an 8-man crew it's worth it. I am not trying to downplay what our guys do; but we only have 2 guys in the parks department, and they can't do it all. This would be a big assist.

Councilman Burton asked about costs, and if it would be better to hire more people.

Vice Mayor Rodriguez stated we have been asking the State for mitigation funds from the CVSP closure, maybe this could be a way to do that without it costing the State too much.

Councilman Halby stated when I was a child our parks were nice, our streets were nice, everything was clean and we had inmate labor. It would be nice to try to get back to that.

Vice Mayor Rodriguez asked if the County would be interested in partnering to help maintain their park in Ripley.

Council Member Halby stated back in the day they went to various places. If we could work with those entities again it may be worth our while.

Mayor DeConinck would like us to do our homework and bring this back.

No public comment. Direction was provided to staff.

Preparation of an Ordinance Relating to Tobacco and Vapor Sales and Smoke Shops. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the Blythe Municipal Code does not contain regulations for Smoke Shops. A smoke shop is defined as any business that primarily sells or offers for sale any smoke and vapor products. Currently, smoke shops can operate in any commercially zoned parcel and follow the same development standards as any other retail use. There are no regulations on proximity to sensitive uses such as schools and daycares, age restriction for entry, signage regulations or requirements for cameras or any other security systems. As the Council is addressing the sale of Kratom and 7-OH products staff is seeking direction on the preparation of an Ordinance relating to tobacco and vapor sales and smoke shops. Should Council wish to provide development standards specific to these businesses, staff

recommends scheduling a study session to address proposed regulations for these businesses. Staff would then take the direction received at the Study Session to draft an Ordinance for Council review and adoption at a later meeting.

No public comment. Vice Mayor Rodriguez moved to hold a Study Session to discuss the item further. The motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote.

ORAL REPORTS:
Interim City Manager Crecelius reported on the 68th Annual Community Outlook Conference and the conclusion of the Facilities Painting Project.

Council Member Halby congratulated District Attorney Tom Daly on his retirement and thanked him for his 23 years of service to the City.

Vice Mayor Rodriguez stated I worked with Tom Daly for many years, and he was very much an advocate for public safety in this community. A lot of our safety is because of you, so thank you Tom.

Mayor DeConinck reported on the upcoming Fair and Livestock Auction.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Bruce Micilizzio of Blythe thanked the civil servants of California, he discussed the I-10 Freeway project. He mentioned Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pritti. He asked Council to rate this administration on a scale of 1-5 and for the goals for this year. He said the theme should be Beautify Blythe.

Jolina Styers of 6525 N. Lovekin stated the sidewalk at 333 Murphy needs to be repaired. We need an Ordinance on the semi's; they park wherever they want and to address their speed through the City. How can we benefit from solar projects? She asked if there will be a hydrogen plant in Blythe.

ADJOURN: The City Council meeting was adjourned at 6:44pm.

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Joseph DeConinck, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Mallory Crecelius, City Clerk