

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
February 4, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IN HONOR OF THE US MILITARY TROOPS

The City Council Meeting was held in a hybrid format (in-person and via Zoom videoconference and broadcast) from the Pinole Council Chambers, 2131 Pear Street, Pinole, California. Mayor Sasai called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 5:07 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before we begin, we would like to acknowledge the Ohlone people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. We pay our respects to the Ohlone elders, past, present and future, who call this place, Ohlone Land, the land that Pinole sits upon, their home. We are proud to continue their tradition of coming together and growing as a community. We thank the Ohlone community for their stewardship and support, and we look forward to strengthening our ties as we continue our relationship of mutual respect and understanding.

3. ROLL CALL, CITY CLERK'S REPORT & STATEMENT OF CONFLICT

An official who has a conflict must, prior to consideration of the decision; (1) publicly identify in detail the financial interest that causes the conflict; (2) recuse himself/herself from discussing and voting on the matter; and (3) leave the room until after the decision has been made, Cal. Gov. Code § 87105.

A. COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT

Cameron Sasai, Mayor
Anthony Tave, Mayor Pro Tem
Norma Martinez-Rubin, Council Member
Devin Murphy, Council Member*
Maureen Toms, Council Member
*Arrived after Roll Call

B. STAFF PRESENT

Kelcey Young, City Manager
Roxane Stone, Deputy City Clerk
Eric Casher, City Attorney
Fiona Epps, Assistant to the City Manager

Deputy City Clerk Roxane Stone announced the agenda had been posted on January 31, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. with all legally required written notices. No comments had been received in advance of the meeting. A correction to the draft resolution for Item 12A had been distributed to staff, the City Council, posted on the City website and made available to the public in the Council Chambers.

Following an inquiry, the Council reported there were no conflicts with any items on the agenda.

4. CONVENE TO A CLOSED SESSION: None

Citizens may address the Council regarding a Closed Session item prior to the Council adjourning into the Closed Session, by first providing a speaker card to the City Clerk.

5. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION TO ANNOUNCE RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

There was no Closed Session.

6. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD (Public Comments)

Citizens may speak under any item not listed on the Agenda. The time limit is 3 minutes and is subject to modification by the Mayor. Individuals may not share or offer time to another speaker. Pursuant to provisions of the Brown Act, no action may be taken on a matter unless it is listed on the agenda, or unless certain emergency or special circumstances exist. The City Council may direct staff to investigate and/or schedule certain matters for consideration at a future Council meeting.

Rafael Menis asked the City Council to exercise its power under Section §54956.5 of the California Government Code to declare a State of Emergency in response to Elon Musk's attempted coup to gain control of the United States Government, through taking control of the Treasury Department, taking control of the systems for the Office of Professional Management and for attempting to violate the Constitution by destroying congressionally mandated departments without authority of law. Since this was a power beyond what the City could take on alone, he also asked the City in its declaration of a State of Emergency to invoke Government Code Sections §8680.9 and §8625, to request the aid of Governor Newsom in declaring a State of Emergency at the state level to address this issue. The ordinary systems of checks and balances that were supposed to mitigate the possibility of a coup were at the present time not functioning, with the Executive Branch defying judicial orders and with the legislative branch having decided to abdicate its responsibility to act as a check on the Executive Branch.

Therefore, Mr. Menis suggested due to the eminent threat to the health and safety of everyone in the City of Pinole, due to a rogue agent like Elon Musk taking control of the Department of Treasury and with the personal information of every person who had entered the federal government's Human Resources systems, the City of Pinole was currently in a State of Emergency and the City should pass a resolution to recognize this effect and call on the Governor to assist in the matter, which was beyond the ability of the City of Pinole to address on its own. He suggested the City had the power per Section §54956.0 of the California Government Code to declare a State of Emergency, as defined by this section which he read into the record.

Cheri Johansen agreed with Mr. Menis' request for the City to consider declaring a State of Emergency. She expressed concern with members of the community who were comprised of different ethnicities. She attended Mayor Sasai's celebration of his swearing-in as Mayor, was aware Pinole was culturally diverse, and based on what she had gathered on what was occurring on the national level, citizens were in grave danger of having their rights taken away. She hoped the City Council would consider Mr. Menis' request.

Mayor Sasai modified the meeting agenda with the City Council to consider Item 8. Recognitions/ Presentations/Community Events, B.1 Presentations at this time.

8. RECOGNITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / COMMUNITY EVENTS

B. Presentations

1. Presentation from the Contra Costa County Community Awareness Emergency Response Organization (CAER)

Assistant to the City Manager Fiona Epps introduced members of the Contra Costa County Community Awareness Emergency Response Organization (CAER) that included Executive Director Tony Semenza and Executive Assistant Lori McDonald, who provided a PowerPoint presentation on CAER. CAER had been organized in 1987 and was comprised of safety and emergency response professionals who worked with the Contra Costa County Health Services Department and formed a Community Notification Committee to provide recommendations on a county-wide Community Warning System (CWS).

An overview of CAER's efforts and activities was highlighted including the formation of a number of CAER Action Teams that supported people operating in the fields of public affairs, safety, communications, industrial hygiene, emergency management, fire, security and outreach. The teams shared and learned from each other and created opportunities to support and work with agencies and communities. CAER's core objectives, Mission Statement, and major accomplishments were highlighted.

In response to questions from the City Council, Mr. Semenza and Ms. McDonald clarified the following:

- CAER was funded as a non-profit with its membership from industry, agency and different cities who paid dues to belong to the CAER organization. Dues were used to fund the Action Teams, a full-time Executive Assistant and part-time Executive Director. (Toms)
- CAER grant opportunities included applications from schools, senior centers, cities and different companies/organizations, not just non-profits. CAER provided funds for emergency equipment, different types of drills or the stock pile of emergency equipment. Additional information on grant opportunities could be provided to the City Council via email. Over the past several years, CAER provided over a quarter million in funds to different organizations. (Murphy)
- Some cities in Contra Costa County had direct membership with CAER. Cities were charged less than \$1,000 to be a member of CAER. Benefits of membership included attending safety summits, working with a city or organization on emergency preparedness, training staff on the CWS and its use and what to do in the event of an emergency, as examples. (Murphy)
- CAER's Mentorship Program involved younger people looking for a career in fire services or emergency preparedness, as examples. Those individuals were invited in, worked with CAER, and the program worked well.

When the individual graduated high school or college, they could move forward to available fire service or emergency services programs. (Murphy)

- Acknowledged interest in finding ways to partner with CAER. (Mayor Pro Tem Tave)
- Clarified again the CAER grant opportunities where CAER allotted anywhere from \$10,000 to \$15,000 for grants each year, and if only a few members applied, the grants may be increased but the highest range for an individual grant so far was \$2,000. (Martinez-Rubin)
- The CWS was currently an opt-in system with CAER recommending an opt-out system where everyone was included and had the option to opt-out, but the only way to get the information at this time was to opt-in and register one's phone number with the CWS. Information would be provided either over the telephone or via text. (Martinez-Rubin)
- Between 50 to 60 percent of residents in Contra Costa County had opted-in to the CWS. CAER would like to see a much higher number but it was difficult to get people to opt-in. Information on the percentage of Pinole residents who opted-in to the CWS could be provided to the City Council at a later date. (Martinez-Rubin)

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there were no comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

Mayor Sasai thanked CAER for the presentation. He looked forward to additional information in the future.

The City Council moved to Item 8A.1 at this time.

A. Proclamations

1. Black History Month

The City Council read into the record a proclamation recognizing the month of February as Black History Month with the proclamation presented to James Andrew Harris II, who thanked the City Council for the proclamation. He suggested his late father Pinole resident James Andrew Harris, a groundbreaking nuclear chemist who helped to discover two previously unknown elements while working at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, would be thrilled to see this proclamation since he was an advocate for diversity, education, inclusiveness and bringing everyone together. He too was thrilled with the proclamation and shared his history when he moved to Pinole in 1971 when the City had been predominantly white as compared to its current diversity. What he loved about Pinole was that it diversified naturally and everyone got along. He also shared some history of his father's career at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, a high-level quasi-government entity doing heavy research on all sorts of topics, his work as an advocate for diversity in science and who had traveled to motivate young people from different races who were interested in science.

Mr. Harris also provided the background of his mother Helen Harris a former long-time instructor at Contra Costa College. He added that additional information about his father was available on the Internet.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there were no comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

The City Council returned to Item 7. Reports & Communications.

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS

A. Mayor Report

1. Announcements

Mayor Sasai hoped everyone had a great January and he wished everyone a Happy Lunar New Year and Black History Month. He reported he had attended the West County Mayors' and Supervisors' Association meeting, which included an update of the Countywide Transportation Plan from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), and reported he could make copies of the presentation available via email. He had also attended the West Contra Costa Transportation Commission (WCCTC) meeting, which included the election of officers. He also took the opportunity to express his appreciation to the City Manager and City staff for the productive Council Retreat held on February 1 and 2, 2025, and he looked forward to holding an annual Council Retreat.

Mayor Sasai added the City had been notified this date that Safeway intended to close its store in the Appian-80 complex, with staff gathering additional information and communication with the property owner. An update would be provided to residents once more information was available. He was cautiously optimistic this closure would open the door to new possibilities and reported the property owner had indicated they still planned to have a grocery store at the site. He understood this was a sensitive topic for some and the City would provide assistance by pointing employees to available resources. He reminded everyone the City had a variety of amazing grocery stores including small businesses and he recognized the work of staff to retain existing businesses and welcome new businesses to Pinole. He also referenced the adoption of the Economic Development Strategy in 2022 and the goals of that plan. Residents were encouraged to contact staff and the City Council with any questions.

Mayor Sasai invited everyone to the Pinole Valley Park Soccer Field Grand Re-Opening on February 2, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

B. Mayoral & Council Appointments: None

C. City Council Committee Reports & Communications

Council member Martinez-Rubin reported she had attended the League of California Cities Revenue and Taxation Policy Committee meeting and briefed the City Council on the discussions. She also wished everyone a Happy Valentine's/Friendship Day.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave reported he had attended the Council Retreat and thanked his colleagues for considering all ideas and vision for the City of Pinole. He acknowledged that roads had been at the forefront of the discussions. He had also attended a meeting of RecycleMore and provided the background of Senate Bill (SB) 244, the Right to Repair Act, and announced that RecycleMore along with other agencies would host a Repair Workshop. The next no-cost workshop was scheduled for March 22, 2025 at 7007 Moeser Lane, El Cerrito, and he highlighted the items that could be brought to the workshop. He encouraged everyone to participate.

Council member Murphy thanked the City Manager and City staff for the Council Retreat. He appreciated the discussions on sustainability, resilience, the condition of City roads and issues that were pertinent to City residents. He also provided an update on Marin Clean Energy's (MCE's) focus in 2025 on its Strategic Plan as it related to energy services, affordability for residents and more grant funding. He briefed the City Council on MCE's latest Executive Board meeting with a discussion of MCE's budget. Residents were encouraged to remain involved, with more information on the MCE website.

Council member Murphy also looked forward to celebrating Black History Month including attending the Pinole Valley High School African-American Student Union Black History Jubilee scheduled for February 15, 2025. The event would be open to the public, attendees were asked to purchase tickets, which helped to continue the tradition of the event each year.

Council member Toms reported she had attended the League of California Cities Housing, Community and Economic Development Policy Committee meeting and briefed the City Council on the presentations; attended the Council Retreat also thanking City staff for all of the hard work putting the retreat together, and appreciated the City Council discussions on priorities. She had also attended the Crab Feed sponsored by the Rotary Club who honored Police Officer of the Year Amy Eubanks.

D. Council Requests for Future Agenda Items

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Rafael Menis requested the City Council consider declaring a State of Emergency for the reasons outlined during public comment. He asked whether the request could be considered at this meeting or as a future agenda item. He asked the City Attorney to provide direction on the City declaring a State of Emergency pursuant to State law.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

Mayor Sasai reported the request would be followed-up with Mr. Menis after the meeting.

E. City Manager Report / Department Staff

City Manager Kelcey Young reported the new Chief of Police Melissa Klawuhn would start employment with the City starting March 3, 2025, and would be introduced to the City Council on March 4, 2025 with a formal swearing-in ceremony. The new Public Works Director/City Engineer had tentatively been scheduled to start employment with the City on March 3, 2025. She planned to attend the California ICMA City Manager's Conference from February 5-7, 2025 and she would be available via email and text but not available for office hours this week.

City Manager Young also reported her office hours would be extended the week of February 10-14, 2025 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., and she invited any community members with questions to email her or contact her office. She thanked the Public Works Department for its hard work to prevent flooding in the City and the Public Works Department and Community Services Director for ensuring that all the trees at Fitzgerald Park had been maintained.

City Manager Young also thanked City staff for all of their hard work to prepare for the Council Retreat and the City Council for its hard work and transparency. She looked forward to seeing those efforts move forward into the budget season.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there were no comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

F. City Attorney Report: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED (Items 7D through 7F)

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there were no comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

9. CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters under the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and noncontroversial. These items will be enacted by one motion and without discussion. If, however, any interested party or Council member(s) wishes to comment on an item, they may do so before action is taken on the Consent Calendar. Following comments, if a Council member wishes to discuss an item, it will be removed from the Consent Calendar and taken up in order after adoption of the Consent Calendar.

- A. Approve the Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on January 21, 2025.
- B. Receive the January 18, 2025 – January 31, 2025 – List of Warrants in the Amount of \$855,476.31 and the January 31, 2025 Payroll in the Amount of \$506,241.03
- C. Adopt a Resolution Approving Side Letter Agreement to the Memorandum of Understanding Between the City and AFSCME Local 1 to Amend Article II – Recognition and Attachment A – Salary Schedule. **Action: Adopt Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Stacy Shell, Charlene Davis)**

- D. Resolution Designating Hinderliter de Llamas & Associates as Consultant Authorized to Examine Transaction and Use Tax Records. **Action: Adopt a Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Eric Casher, Markisha Guillory)**
- E. Approve the 2025 Council Committee Assignment List **Action: Approve the 2025 Council Committee Assignment List (Heather Bell)**

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there were no comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

ACTION: Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Tave/Council member Murphy to adopt Consent Calendar Items 9A through 9E, as shown.

Vote:	Passed	5-0
	Ayes:	Sasai, Tave, Martinez-Rubin, Murphy, Toms
	Noes:	None
	Abstain:	None
	Absent:	None

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

11. OLD BUSINESS: None

12. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Increase City Council Training and Travel Budget by \$38,750. Action: Discuss and Provide Direction (Heather Bell)**

City Manager Young presented the staff report dated February 4, 2025, and recommended the City Council consider the request to increase the City Council Training and Travel Budget.

Responding to questions from the City Council, City Manager Young clarified:

- Just over \$35,000 had previously been cut from the staff training budget. (Toms)
- The current City Council Training and Travel Budget had been shown in the staff report. Funds not used would roll back into the General Fund. Increasing this budget, as requested and as detailed in the staff report would allow for City Council travel and training and did not have to be just for the attendance at the National League of Cities (NLC) and Civic Well Conferences, as outlined in the staff report. (Murphy, Mayor Sasai)

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there were no comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

Council member Martinez-Rubin noted the Mayor and Council member Murphy offered and seconded the motion for discussion and given they were most interested in further enhancing the City Council Training and Travel Budget, she asked how travel to other conferences would support the City of Pinole, how the conference content in which they were interested in attending; i.e. Civic Well and NLC Conferences, would inform policy development and decision making on the City Council. She commented that one of the benefits of attending state, regional, local or national conferences was the networking aspect with the presumption that could lead to something that could be readily used. In this case, and speaking of this fiscal year, she would like to know how attendance at these conferences would readily apply to the planning and discussions about the activities and initiatives that were currently needing to be completed in this fiscal year and for Pinole residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave spoke in response to the questions raised by Council member Martinez-Rubin and noted that networking, understanding policy and what was happening in other cities would be unknown unless someone was sitting in a Council seat. The League of California Cities Conferences were used to bounce off ideas with Council members and others, and he offered examples on how good feedback was provided on certain topics that could be brought back to the Council. It was important for Council members to utilize those conferences as a networking opportunity and learning experience, similar to the City Manager attending the upcoming ICMA Conference. He suggested the current conversation was about expanding that network and bringing more information into the City. On a national level, it may be more difficult since different states and counties had different rules, but creativity would come from that and he encouraged his colleagues to consider those benefits, particularly for those Council members who may not have had that experience.

Mayor Sasai commented the different committees and policy institutes offered value in balancing off ideas from regional partners, such as the League of California Cities where many were dealing with the same issues as the City of Pinole. Cities of similar size as Pinole also offered opportunities to ask questions about what was done in those communities and he offered examples, such as how to generate revenue and deal with structural deficits. The increase in the budget would allow a Council member to get more into the policy issues the City of Pinole could learn from, and the different training opportunities were an investment in the City Council in terms of how each member could better himself/herself to be the best elected representative to serve the City of Pinole.

Mayor Sasai also suggested it would also set up success for future Councils. From an equity lens, he wanted to ensure all members of the Council had the opportunity to travel, have training and have that access. Having spoken to some past Council members, oftentimes the cost of attendance for some conferences had come out of pocket of the Council member, which would impact those with a lower income or those who may be a single parent, as examples, and suggested it was not right for them to pay out of pocket for travel and training that would enrich that Council member as a public servant and policy maker. He supported the request to amend the budget, as shown.

Council member Murphy thanked staff for prioritizing the item on the agenda.

Council member Murphy commented in the past he had requested presentations about the NLC and Civic Well and staff had produced those presentations and there had been a number of services and benefits staff members from those organizations had produced. He encouraged any Council member who had questions about the benefits of the organizations or their conferences to check on those presentations. He noted that he and Council member Toms had attended Civil Well conferences and he urged his fellow Council members to take advantage of those opportunities.

Council member Toms explained that she had voted no to bring the item forward as a future agenda item because she was troubled by having this brought in out of sequence, without a discussion of the total budget. The City Council reviewed the total budget with quarterly updates, and she suggested this request should be reviewed in context of the total budget. She had clarified to others in the past that future agenda items diverted staff from doing their regular work and they had to prepare something new. For this current fiscal year, the City Council had gone into the reserves and made cuts across the board to other City Departments, including reducing the training budgets for employees who did not have the ability to attend training staff needed to implement the work the City Council was directing be done. She was bothered by that since not only had the Council travel expenses been cut, an increase almost three times the original budget was being requested in a year where the City had a structural deficit and when the City Council should not be increasing its expenses. The budget currently allowed attendance at League of California Cities Policy Committee meetings and East Bay Cal Cities meetings.

Council member Toms commented that most of her attendance at Civic Well conferences had been covered with some out-of-pocket expense but that was not something she would do each year. She noted there were plenty of webinars available through the League of California Cities and there were free legislative updates. She also suggested they did not have the issue where someone had to arrange for childcare or other issues on the current City Council. In a fiscal year where the City Council had gone into the reserves, she found it reckless for the City Council to increase its budget.

Mayor Sasai appreciated the mindfulness of the fiscal year, where they were in the budget process and reductions in the travel and training budget for City staff; however, he had tried to register for the NLC for this year, but the budget would not cut it and he did not have any personal capacity to attend the conference at this time, which he thought was the reason for the increase. He commented that if Council members did not fully use their portion of the travel and training budget, they did not have to, which was the same policy for the Council stipend, with those funds to return to the General Fund.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave understood the increase would be shared amongst the Council and if for whatever reason he did not attend a particular conference, his portion of the budget would be able to be transferrable to others, but City Manager Young stated the program was not currently set up that way.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave asked when the funds would go back to the General Fund, to which City Manager Young explained the unused funds would go back to the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year.

Council member Martinez-Rubin appreciated the gained perspective when she attended conferences and she loved to support something but Councils should keep top of mind fiscal prudence and stewardship of the public's funds. She suggested that fiscal discipline applied to Council members since the Council served as role models in a way to how well they managed the City's limited funds at the beginning of the year, which were not allotted willy nilly, and there was a process to get to an adoptable budget.

Council member Martinez-Rubin pointed out at the beginning of fiscal year 2024/25, the City Council adopted a budget with each Council member to have \$4,200 for travel and training and Council members were mindful and responsible to recognize that was what was available to each member in the fiscal year. While budget adjustments could be made, she could not support the requested increase in budget and rather would like to see the City Council keep the allotment it had at the beginning of the fiscal year. She noted that not only the Council was limited in its funding to attend conferences but staff did not have the professional development and training since the City Council cut those funds to allow a structurally balanced budget in Fiscal Year 2024/25.

Council member Martinez-Rubin suggested if the budget increase was approved, it would be an increase of \$38,750, as estimated by staff and 32 percent of the Council budget, which would be a consideration when planning for the next fiscal year. That amount could be used for activities currently in process that remained to be completed. She was aware the Mayor thought differently about the funds and attendance at the conferences but suggested the Mayor was smart enough to recognize what it meant when a Council was requesting an increase in its budget when there had been cuts in other areas in the same fiscal year, which did not sit right with her and other members of the public.

Council member Martinez-Rubin suggested that if not able to attend a conference there were other ways to get that information, much of it available online about organizations that could be brought back to the entire City Council for discussion. She asked the Mayor to consider the comments and how his desire to attend unfunded conferences would reflect overall on the City Council and the impacts of requesting additional funds for a training budget for the City Council when the training budget for staff had been diminished in the same fiscal year and she asked that the impact on staff morale be taken into account.

Mayor Sasai appreciated the passion on the subject and hoped the comments were heard on the Council, staff and the public. He reiterated if members of the Council did not want to use the increased amount of the budget it would go back directly into the General Fund.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave commented the City Council had considered budget cuts for a structurally balanced budget but there was a benefit to this request and this City Council, in his opinion, valued training. He suggested when moving forward to consider mid-year adjustments, the City Council should consider whether to reinstate funds for staff training, and he encouraged staff to look at its training budget and bring that back for Council consideration.

Mayor Sasai agreed and noted this was a training budget, an opportunity for the elected representatives to learn, network and come back as a better elected representative for the City of Pinole.

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported public comment had come in after the public comment period had been closed.

Mayor Sasai allowed the public comment at this time.

Anthony Vossbrink, speaking on behalf of himself and other seniors, suggested this rogue move by certain City Council members who had collaborated on this request was at this point in time wrong given the fiscal budget situation, state of the economy and the unknowns moving forward with the new Presidential Administration. He found an increase of 300 percent and up to \$39,000 per year was fiscally irresponsible and there were other projects on the drawing board that had not moved forward. He stated the community was concerned for streets, street light outages, pot hole repair, traffic calming signs, recyclable trash bins and the like, and he echoed the concerns expressed by other members of the City Council. He asked whether the City Manager had provided any feedback and suggested a 50 percent increase would feel better than a 300 percent increase and some of that increase should go to staff, Directors, Managers and associates for their training and travel. He asked about the percentage going to travel versus training and asked whether the Council would be held accountable. He also asked what the City of Hercules provided for Council training and travel as part of its budget.

Mayor Sasai closed public comment.

Mayor Sasai recognized costs had increased for both travel and training.

Council member Murphy offered a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Tave to approve a resolution to increase the City Council Training and Travel Budget by \$38,750.

On the motion, Mayor Sasai acknowledged there was disagreement on this issue but if a Council member did not feel comfortable using the increase in the budget, the funds would go back to the General Fund. He looked forward to having more discussions about this topic during the budget season as well.

Council member Martinez-Rubin commented on the differences between want and need and wondered if the vote reflected a want or a need on the part of the Council members.

ACTION: Motion by Council members Murphy/Mayor Pro Tem Tave to approve a resolution to increase the City Council Training and Travel Budget by \$38,750.

Vote:	Passed	3-2
	Ayes:	Sasai, Tave, Murphy
	Noes:	Martinez-Rubin, Toms
	Abstain:	None
	Absent:	None

Council member Toms asked how other expenses were coming out of the City's General Fund to pay for Council expenses. As an example, if a Council member wanted to attend Cal Cities meetings or the Mayors' Conference or Crab Feed, she offered a motion that those incidental items also come out of the budget since it would come out of the General Fund.

Council member Toms explained there had been plenty of times she had attended the Mayors' Conference and saw a name tag for someone to attend but that person did not show up. The same thing where the City paid for Crab Feeds and some people did not show up and she had seen it time and time again. She suggested that would be one small way they could tighten up what had just been adopted.

Mayor Sasai asked whether that fit under the scope of the agenda item.

City Attorney Eric Casher understood the motion was a clarification on the use of the newly-allocated funds and Council member Toms commented the allocated funds included all other items that were paid for such as Cal Cities, Mayors' Conference, Crab Feeds and other events that Council members attended, which would come out of that fund. She suggested people would be more mindful about confirming attendance if it came out of their personal allotment.

City Attorney Casher thanked Council member Toms for the clarification, however the agenda item was for an increase to the travel and training budget and a discussion about the budget more broadly and the language in the resolution talked about the use of the funds for travel and training, and if there was an interest in having further clarification, that motion could be entertained.

Council member Toms restated her motion that other expenses including, but not limited to, Mayors' Conference, Cal Cities events and dinners, and special events for Council members also come out of the City Council Training and Travel Budget.

On the motion, Council member Martinez-Rubin commented the language "out of the individual allotment" of the Council members should be included since the increase at this point would not all be used. She noted any travel or events associated with the Council members representation as a Council member of the City of Pinole should come out of their individual allotment.

Mayor Toms accepted the amendment to her motion.

Further discussing the motion, Mayor Pro Tem Tave commented that Crab Feeds, as an example, benefitted the Pinole Rotary Club and the community at-large and he asked if the intent was for an accounting of that budget.

Council member Toms sought more thought in confirming attendance at various events.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave understood events such as the Mayors' Conference and Cal Cities meetings could be slotted in but he was troubled including non-profits.

Council member Toms commented that several community members had commented on empty seats. She reiterated since the vote to increase the budget, the ticket for that event should come out of the allotment for each Council member. She again suggested that Council members would be more mindful of reserving attendance at an event if it came out of that member's allotment.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave understood the accounting but did not want the Council to get into a name and shame type of environment and while he understood the reason for the accounting for budget purposes, he noted the number may go down if there was that accounting.

City Manager Young clarified the events currently came out of the General Fund. There were a few line items for events. If the motion moved forward, she suggested there would be an accounting exercise but it would be a particular set amount having to do with the Council budget and viewed from that perspective as opposed to other events.

Council member Murphy did not support the motion. While he acknowledged Council members had a responsibility to show up for events and there were absences on occasion from some events because of overbooking or the need to attend as many events as possible in the community, he stated there were usually excused absences. He encouraged the City Council to continue to do what it was doing and suggested they were doing it right, and the original item was an opportunity for the Council to continue its work.

Council member Martinez-Rubin suggested the motion would not only be an accounting exercise but an accountability practice and not address the matter of an absence so much as the cost incurred due to an absence. She recognized part of the role of the Council was to be out there amongst the community but at the same time Council members had to recognize the limitations of available funding. She suggested the recommended motion would help in that regard.

Mayor Pro Tem Tave recognized the accountability portion and recognized the expectation for the entire Council to attend some community events, and asked if there was a way to look back and have an idea of what that could be, which could be provided in a memorandum form, particularly as they planned out the rest of the fiscal year.

City Manager Young advised that would be challenging since staff was not always at those events and taking attendance; however, staff could pull together what had been spent and what not participating would have cost the City. She clarified that for the Mayors' Conference, as an example, staff was not always in attendance. Council members were asked to R.S.V.P. with the expectation the Council member would attend the events. Oftentimes, staff declined to attend certain events if that budget had already been allocated for Council members, and staff may not have awareness of the Council attendance at some of those types of events where it would be aware at City of Pinole events. She stated it was up to Council members to be good stewards of the tax dollars and keep track of attendance.

ACTION: Motion by Council members Toms/Martinez-Rubin that other expenses, including but not limited to, Mayors' Conference, Cal Cities events and dinners, special events for Council members, come out of the individual allotment of the Council members in the City Council Training and Travel Budget.

Vote:	Failed	2-3
	Ayes:	Martinez-Rubin, Toms
	Noes:	Sasai, Tave, Murphy
	Abstain:	None
	Absent:	None

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there was additional public comment on this item.

Mayor Sasai allowed for additional public comment at this time.

Rafael Menis commented he would have liked to have made his comments prior to the vote on the item. He suggested in the future and during the budget cycle, the Council should reconsider this idea since it would be worthwhile to not just have funds for events to come from the General Fund as a whole, but have the funds be allocated to a particular Council member, which would be clearer. In the future, as an accountability measure and as part of the budget cycle, he again suggested it would be worthwhile to revisit the proposed motion even though it did not pass at this time.

The City Council returned to Item 7.C to allow Council member Murphy to provide additional City Council Committee Reports & Communications.

Council member Murphy reported he had been contacted by the Senior Field Representative for Congressman John Garamendi, who announced a Telephone Town Hall would be held on February 5, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. to address some of the work Congressman Garamendi was doing to support his constituents, with every resident of the 8th Congressional District invited to participate, with additional information at www.garamendi.house.gov.

13. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD (Continued from Item 6) (Public Comments)

Only open to members of the public who did not speak under the first Citizens to be Heard, Agenda Item 6.

Citizens may speak under any item not listed on the Agenda. *The time limit is 3 minutes and is subject to modification by the Mayor. Individuals may not share or offer time to another speaker. Pursuant to provisions of the Brown Act, no action may be taken on a matter unless it is listed on the agenda, or unless certain emergency or special circumstances exist. The City Council may direct staff to investigate and/or schedule certain matters for consideration at a future Council meeting.*

Deputy City Clerk Stone reported there were no comments from the public.

14. ADJOURNMENT to the Regular Meeting of February 18, 2025 in Remembrance of Amber Swartz.

At 6:56 p.m., Mayor Sasai adjourned the meeting to the Regular City Council Meeting of February 18, 2025 in Remembrance of Amber Swartz.

Submitted by:



Heather Bell, CMC
City Clerk

Approved by City Council: March 4, 2025

