

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
September 2, 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 5:00 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
*Remote Attendance

B. STAFF PRESENT

Kelcey Young, City Manager
Heather Bell, City Clerk
Eric Casher, City Attorney
Lilly Whalen, Community Development Director
Roxane Stone, Deputy City Clerk

City Clerk Heather Bell announced the agenda had been posted on August 28, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. with all legally required written notices. Written comments had been received in advance of the meeting, distributed to the City Council and staff, posted to the City website and made available to the public to view in the Council Chambers.

In addition, a minor correction had been made to the attachment for Item 9E, with a revised amendment made available to the City Council and the public for review. Item 10A would be continued to the September 16, 2025 City Council meeting.

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

4. CONVENE TO A CLOSED SESSION

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.

A. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS

Gov. Code § 54957.6

Agency designated representatives: City Manager Kelcey Young, City Attorney Eric Casher, Human Resources Director Stacy Shell and Finance Director Markisha Guillory

Employee organizations: Pinole Police Employees Association (PPEA) and Management Compensation Plan (MCP)

B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

Gov. Code § 54956.9(d)(4)

In re National Prescription Opiate Litigation, No. 1:17-MD-2804

C. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Gov. Code § 54957

Title: City Manager

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Irma Ruport, speaking on Item 4C, stated she had great concern over the performance of the City Manager. During the City Council meeting of June 17, 2025, she had provided written comments regarding her concerns with the City Manager's performance evaluation (identified as Item 4B on the June 17 meeting agenda). She found the City Manager lacked urgency on some of the issues in the public, minutes were not timely and she had made Public Records Act (PRA) requests, and some of the information received was either wrong or incomplete. She suggested the City Manager was looking out for herself and not anyone else and asked the City Council to read the comments she had made during the June 17 meeting.

Ms. Ruport added the City Manager was on vacation the first week of the month of August, and she had put together and founded the first Citizens Academy with the support of the City's Executive Team, wasting time since she did not have enough staff to do work to prepare agenda items. These discussions had not been televised or held in the Council Chambers, and there was limited attendance. She wanted to attend the academy with one of her neighbors but had been informed there was no room. The City Manager had also canceled the August 19, 2025 City Council meeting and she asked who authorized that action since she understood only the City Council had the authority to cancel City Council meetings.

Ms. Ruport also commented that August 19 was Amber Swartz's birthday and there had been a community event honoring her, with her mother in attendance, with other people who had found out about the event by accident as she had. She was disappointed with the City for not providing proper notice of the event to the public. She found the City Manager lacked concern for the interest of the public and had no idea what the City was about. She emphasized the performance of the City Manager must improve, the City Manager needed to deal with the public and when workshops were requested by the public they should be held. She found the past year had been awful and the City was not progressing as it should. She reported that she planned to start a citizen advisory group to ensure the City Council was accountable.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

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

At 7:32 p.m., Mayor Sasai reconvened the meeting into open session. There was no reportable action from the Closed Session for Item 4A. For Item 4B, the City Council directed the City Attorney to approve the Settlement Agreement and Class Action Opiate litigation, with the City Attorney to provide more detail once the agreement had been executed and more information was available. For Item 4C, there was no reportable action.

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.

Tracy Walker extended her congratulations to all of the graduates of the first Citizens Academy; an inspiring journey she had been privileged to be part of. She thanked those who made the academy possible, including the Chief of Police, City Manager, Public Works and Community Development Directors, City Attorney and others who gave their time, expertise and guidance, with their transparency deepening her understanding about how the City functioned and strengthened her commitment to being actively involved in the community, which experience had been meaningful and motivating. She looked forward to the second phase of the Citizens Academy and the continued engagement in Pinole's civic life in a new and impactful way.

Ann Moriarty and John and Paula Jarvis, representing Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed, explained that the group was committed to make the Pinole Creek Watershed a better place for all and were thankful to collaborate with the City and its citizens to achieve this goal. On behalf of the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed and the hundreds of people involved in its events, they took the opportunity to recognize City of Pinole staff members without whose commitment the City's collaboration was meaningless, with the following staff recognized for their work, which was highlighted for each including: Kapil Amin, Sustainability Project Manager; Matt Jones, Maintenance Supervisor and Kelcey Young, City Manager, and each was provided a certificate of appreciation.

Prem Pariyar provided a document to the City Clerk which was distributed to the City Council. As a community member, he expressed concern with families feeling safe in the community. He spoke to caste discrimination as the oldest and harshest form of exclusion in the world, which had dictated who may marry, where one may live, what jobs could be held and whether one could have dignity in public life. This discrimination did not occur only in South Asia, but in the United States and cities like Pinole, where families in the community had reported discrimination in housing, the workplace, schools and public spaces, with many denied opportunities and families were excluded from communities based on identities they were born into and could not change. He suggested Pinole had a powerful opportunity to lead with dignity, justice and inclusion by ensuring caste was a protected category and where the City could make it clear no families would live in fear of discrimination whether in the classroom, workplace or their neighborhoods.

Mr. Pariyar presented a resolution which was not only symbolic but what he called a concrete step to ensure equal opportunities and protections for all residents and suggested adopting the resolution would send a broader message that Pinole valued diversity, equality and the contributions of all communities and would tell children that they could grow up free from the saddle of bias and ensure families that safety and dignity mattered. He asked the City Council to place the resolution on a future City Council agenda to protect vulnerable families and ensure commitment to building a city where everyone regardless of class, race, religion, gender or background may thrive.

Mayor Sasai advised he would follow up with the speaker on the details of the resolution.

Mariela Labrada reported on her experience participating in the first Pinole Citizens Academy, and as the mother of two young children commented on her efforts to find a home that offered diversity, a strong sense of community and place to feel like her family belonged, and she had found all of that and more in Pinole. She thanked City staff and the representatives who took the time to present during the Citizens Academy. She appreciated the dedication of those who had the vision to launch this initiative, which had been an informative and enriching experience offering valuable insight into how the City operated and the services provided. Knowing how local government worked and how residents could play an active role was important and she highlighted the takeaways from the experience. The Citizens Academy also brought together a mix of residents, including long-term and newcomers and the diversity of experience sparked insightful questions and meaningful conversations and a deeper understanding of the City they loved and cared about. She thanked the City for its commitment to transparency, accessibility, and inclusion which showed in every presentation provided. It was clear the City's values were not just words, but embedded in how the City operated with the City intentionally fostering trust, connection and a stronger sense of community. She was grateful to have been part of the Citizens Academy and hoped there would be more academies in the future. She noted she had encouraged several residents and friends to sign up for the next academy when scheduled.

Sheila Grist, a history buff, and a member of the Pinole Historical Society, commented that the City website only kept documents from City Council and Planning Commission meetings for five years. She asked how citizens could get information for anything older than five years, and while she understood a request form could be filled out to request documents, it included a cost. She suggested it would be easier to put the documents back on the Internet and suggested at least ten years of documents should be made available to the public, which would help the City on its history of properties and businesses, and would be appreciated.

Panu Loui introduced himself as the new U.S. Postmaster for the City of Pinole. He reported he had participated in the Citizens Academy and wanted to show his appreciation. He had learned a lot, and appreciated the time City members put into the sessions. He thanked the City and hoped the program would continue for future Pinole citizens.

Rafael Menis commented on the continued risks of COVID-19, relayed his own personal experience with a recent COVID infection, and strongly encouraged people to get the latest COVID vaccine pursuant to the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) restrictions. He also reported the current rate of COVID-19 spread as measured in the various wastewater tracking points in Contra Costa County was very high. For the state as a whole, the rate was also quite high, but leveling off slightly in the past week. He strongly encouraged getting the booster shot, getting vaccinated and wearing masks in crowded indoor and outdoor spaces as a precaution.

Mr. Menis also spoke to the logistics of the Citizens Academy and he was unsure this was the point in the meeting to raise those points. He asked for clarification.

Mayor Sasai advised Mr. Menis was free to provide his comments now or after the presentation.

Mr. Menis reserved his comments on that topic until the presentation. He otherwise spoke to gerrymandering and while he understood a lot of people wanted to fight back and there needed to be an eye for an eye, if the State of Texas or the Republican Party wanted to undermine the foundations of democracy by gerrymandering so only people of certain political affiliations were able to elect the representatives they chose, the only action that California could take would be to retaliate in-kind. He disagreed and strongly encouraged all eligible voters to vote against Proposition 50 since democracy could not be saved by undermining its foundation.

Irma Rupert reported in the last month that some graffiti had been placed all over the City, with the Mayor having been targeted. She thanked the Mayor for his professionalism, how he acted in interviews with the local media, and asked where Pinole Community Television (PCTV) was in its reporting, particularly when a Council member or Mayor was being targeted. She noted that Mayor Sasai had only been with the City for three years, the problems were not just his own, and she would like to see people rise above and handle things like they should and be who they were. She was disappointed in the City and in City staff for not putting this issue on PCTV and acknowledging the fact the Mayor was being targeted. She suggested when one Council member was being targeted all Council members were being targeted.

Ms. Rupert reiterated her disappointment when the City Manager decided to cancel the August 19, 2025 City Council meeting since there had been a community event recognizing Amber Swartz's birthday. She displayed a T-shirt commemorating Amber Swartz and why each City Council meeting adjourned in her memory. A lot of citizens were unaware or informed of the August 19, 2025 community event and she was angry emphasizing the City needed to get its act together. She also commented on the fact there were some issues the City should be taking care of, which were being delayed and suggested the City Council meetings for the entire month of August should not have been canceled. She would rather see the City Council take care of issues now and not tomorrow. She pointed out the Mayor and Council was in charge, were elected by the taxpayers and any staffer could go at any time. In response to the issues occurring in the Texas legislation, she suggested the State of California was doing the right thing.

Kirk Wong provided a document to the City Clerk for the City Council to review. He explained that he was a resident of a 24-unit mixed use building located on San Pablo Avenue comprised of five commercial units on the bottom and residential units on the top. Recently, the tenants of the building had been presented with a substantial increase in utility charges and he wanted to bring it to the attention of the City Council since it involved a 17 percent increase. The building had been built 15+ years ago and when the residential and commercial tenants signed leases water and garbage had been included; however, starting in 2022, water and garbage started to be charged to the tenants. He provided the City Clerk a copy of an invoice for review, which included a \$3.95 charge/handling fee and with a statement at the bottom of the invoice that stated if a tenant was late on payment there would be a \$10 increase in the utility bill. As a result, some tenants had moved out of the building.

Mr. Wong again wanted to call it to the attention of the City Council so that it was aware of the machinations of what was occurring with the management of the property. When he saw the 17 percent increase in utilities, which equated to around \$14, some may not have questioned the increase but from a business point of view, a 17 percent increase was substantial. Most recently he learned the five commercial units below were not being billed for water and garbage. When he received the increase letter he contacted the property management company and requested a reconciliation of the charges. Redwood Utility Billing Services had started billing tenants in 2022, but by law they should have provided annual reconciliation for the tenants.

Mayor Sasai expressed the willingness to follow-up with the City Clerk to get the speaker's contact information and he would also speak with the City Attorney.

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS

A. Mayor Report

1. Announcements

Mayor Sasai hoped everyone had a good August break. He reported that he had attended the Contra Costa Mayors Conference and participated in a meeting with Congressman Garamendi and his staff as well as leaders in the transportation sector including members of the West Contra Costa Transportation Commission (WCCTC) and Caltrans to discuss updates to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, toll pricing, repairs and maintenance bike access and the like, and that drivers would experience some toll increases to pay for repair costs.

Mayor Sasai reported the bike lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge would be closed Mondays through Thursdays as an aspect of these developments and moving forward the bridge staff would be required to move barriers for bike lanes. A bike shuttle would help bicyclists to access one part of the bridge to the next. Barriers would be in place Fridays through Sundays allowing people to safely ride from Richmond to San Rafael. Residents should be aware of the costs associated with bike access, which would require bridge staff to move barriers for bike lanes twice a week and operate the bike shuttle costing \$1.5 million per year.

Mayor Sasai explained in 2023/24, WCCTC formally adopted a resolution making sure leaders in transportation did not support any limitation in bike access on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and that it would be open 24/7. The changes being made were described as "the middle ground."

The Mayor otherwise commented on the continual movement each week this year in the federal government, and he thanked the Chief of Police who had been doing an amazing job looking into possible federal immigration enforcement sightings in Pinole. He emphasized it was important before anything was posted on social media or a discussion about potential Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sightings in the City, that members of the community reach out to the City Council, City staff and the Police Department, who had done a wonderful job looking into each individual situation to confirm whether the sighting was real or not. To date, there had been no confirmed ICE sightings in the City of Pinole or to his understanding in West County.

B. Mayoral & Council Appointments: None

C. City Council Committee Reports & Communications

Mayor Pro Tem Tave wished his mother Barbara Tave a Happy 77th birthday. He was glad to be back on the City Council after the summer recess.

Council member Murphy was also glad to be back on the City Council after the summer recess. He reported he had attended the City's first Art Walk and expressed his gratitude to the City of Pinole's team and the small businesses and local artists who had made the event successful, in particular Uptown Yard, East Bay Coffee and Diosa Restaurant for being great partners.

Council member Murphy provided an update on some of the work of Marin Clean Energy (MCE) with the MCE Technical Committee to meet on Friday, September 5, 2025, to discuss a proposed renewable power purchase agreement for an 80-megawatt wind facility in Alameda County, and he highlighted the details of the project. He encouraged residents to continue to email him and ask questions, with more details at mcecleanenergy.org. He had also heard from a number of residents who had issues in the community, whether related to maintenance, safety or another matter and he encouraged residents to continue their emails to him and City staff. The City website was also interactive, with residents encouraged to visit pinole.gov and report any problems and submit service requests.

Council member Murphy also reported the WestCat commuter link bus that ran between the cities of Hercules, Pinole and San Francisco, was a vital transit link for Contra Costa County residents and helped thousands of commuters to get to work quickly and affordably without having to drive. WestCat was celebrating 20-years of link services by offering 20-days of free rides on all link bus routes from September 1 through September 29, 2025.

Council member Murphy further welcomed Sake, a new and all-you-can-eat sushi restaurant located at 1361 Fitzgerald Drive; reported the East Bay Economic Development Alliance discussed the following legislation: Assembly Bill (AB) 265, Small Business Recovery Fund Act and Senate Bill (SB) 587, Personal income taxes: credit: manufacturing: sales and use taxes. He also encouraged people to attend the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) series of Community Listening Sessions to share ideas, feedback and priorities with WCCUSD leadership. There would be five community listening sessions, one for each trustee area, with the sessions open to the public and with participation available both in-person and virtually.

The listening session for Area 1, which included most of the cities of Pinole, Hercules and a piece of Richmond, had been scheduled for September 9, 2025 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Pinole Valley High School cafeteria. He thanked residents for their continued engagement and investment in the City's future.

Mayor Sasai added as part of his report that he had attended the 45th Birthday rally for Amber Swartz at Amber Swartz Park, and was proud to stand with staff and some of his colleagues to discuss the investigation and ensure the commitment to never stop looking for Amber Swartz. He thanked Amber's mother, Kim Swartz for traveling from out of state to participate in the event.

Council member Toms reported for the benefit of the audience that the City Council had previously voted to take off the month of August for summer recess. She reported she had attended the Ribbon Cutting ceremony for Club Pilates, a Pilates studio at the Trader Joe's Shopping Center; East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments meeting where they received a report from the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) on its efforts for wildfire resilience with the next Coalition meeting scheduled for September 24, 2025 in the City of El Cerrito; Ribbon Cutting ceremony for the Berkeley Humane Society, co-located at Petsmart in the City of Pinole off of Fitzgerald Drive, along with other Council members; and the birthday recognition for Amber Swartz and she thanked both Communications Director Fiona Epps and the City Manager for attending at the last minute with last-minute notice and with PCTV also in attendance making it a nice event and hopefully PCTV would have some video that could be posted.

Councilmember Toms reported that she had also attended the very end of one of the Citizens Academy sessions and recognized all the work of City staff. She was proud the City was creating some active citizens who were very eager to participate. In addition, she attended the successful Art Walk and thanked staff for putting it together and on September 5, 2025, she planned to attend the East Bay Regional Communications System Authority (EBRCSA) Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Meeting in Pleasanton, and stated that EBRCSA meetings were held every other month.

Council member Martinez-Rubin confirmed the cancellation of the two City Council meetings for the month of August for summer recess had been agreed to by the City Council. She also pointed out City staff did not fully enjoy a break even though there were no City Council meetings in August given there was other planning and administration business that had to be taken care of including the Citizens Academy and a workshop related to the General Plan, which all required preparation. The City website also provided means to communicate with the City for different services and she encouraged residents who didn't yet have the app to download the City of Pinole App on their cell phones, which app was free and provided an opportunity to learn about community events around the City and receive signal alerts.

Council member Martinez-Rubin also reported she had participated in a number of community related events, including the partnership between the Berkeley Humane Society and Petsmart to provide accessible and affordable clinical care to pet companions at Petsmart on Fitzgerald Drive; and the recognition event held for Amber Swartz and she too thanked the Swartz Family and all community members who supported the Swartz Family through participating and helping with the family's ongoing grief. She reporting the Pinole Police Department was making additional efforts on investigation. She thanked PCTV for recording the event and she hoped to see some of the snippets from the event in the future.

In addition, Council member Martinez-Rubin stated she had participated in the Art Walk and liked the presentation on how businesses and local artists could work together. She thanked the City Manager's Office staff, particularly Administrative Coordinator, Prajwol Bhandari, for spearheading the event and she hoped to see more involvement from the local businesses to promote themselves with the inclusion of local artisans and artists. Such events supported businesses, brought out community members and manifested a sense of inclusion and entertainment in a fun way, and informally staff and some Council members could be introduced to the public as they participated in such events. She thanked all City staff involved in the event.

D. Council Requests for Future Agenda Items

Council member Murphy asked of the status of the commercial cannabis work and plans for a future financial workshop, to which City Manager Kelcey Young reported a debt financing workshop had been planned for the month of October and she hoped to schedule a financial workshop sometime in the month of October, date pending.

City Attorney Eric Casher reported the cannabis commercial work had been scheduled for the City Council meeting of November 4, 2025 for a presentation to the City Council. He understood that date was election day but it was also the first Tuesday of the month when regular City Council meetings were held.

ACTION: Motion by Council member Murphy/Mayor Sasai to have a discussion on potential action to pursue placing a measure before the voters regarding the direct election of a Mayor in the City of Pinole, at a future date before the end of the year.

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

Council member Murphy offered a motion, seconded by Mayor Sasai to bring back a discussion and take additional steps on a banner program and additional opportunities for a banner program that may include an additional appropriation.

On the motion, Council member Toms asked for clarification on the banner program.

City Manager Young stated there were two banner programs going on; one would have potential sponsors for banners and the other to honor veterans and other members of the community.

In the midst of the City Clerk taking roll call on the motion, Council member Martinez-Rubin commented that if the banner programs were as mentioned by the City Manager, she would vote yes.

City Clerk Bell asked for clarification of the motion.

Council member Murphy clarified his motion was to bring back a discussion the City Council had before about the banner program and take additional steps and find potential opportunities for an expanded City Banner Program.

City Clerk Bell asked if the motion included both banner programs.

Council member Murphy understood the City had a banner program established and the motion, as stated, was to discuss that and take potential action to expand it.

City Clerk Bell noted Council member Martinez-Rubin's yes vote was conditioned. With the clarification, she asked Council member Martinez-Rubin to clarify her vote.

Council member Martinez-Rubin asked which banner program had been established.

Council member Murphy deferred to the City Manager who made the presentation on the banner program.

City Manager Young explained the banner program was still under finalization and it could be brought back with some potential options including the two directions she mentioned if that was the direction of the City Council.

Council member Martinez-Rubin suggested the motion could be amended to clarify that both banner programs would be presented.

On the motion, Mayor Pro Tem Tave noted the vote had been called and the motion was on the floor. He asked to continue with the City's business.

ACTION: Motion by Council member Murphy/Mayor Sasai to bring back a discussion and take additional steps on a banner program and additional opportunities for a banner program that may include an additional appropriation.

Vote:	Passed	4-1
	Ayes:	Sasai, Tave, Murphy, Toms
	Noes:	Martinez-Rubin
	Abstain:	None
	Absent:	None

ACTION: Motion by Mayor Sasai/Mayor Pro Tem Tave to request a proclamation to declare October 25, 2025 as Larry Itliong Day.

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

E. City Manager Report / Department Staff

City Manager Young reported the City had conducted a survey about the Safety, Health and Environmental Justice Element and community members were encouraged to participate. She thanked staff for the General Plan Workshop and all community members who attended and she hoped for continued interest. She also reported the first Pinole Accessible Living (PAL) Workshop had been held with the second workshop scheduled for September 4, 2025, from Noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Senior Center, to be hosted by Chief Building Official Keith Marks who would discuss what required a building permit.

Art Walk had been a success and City Manager Young thanked everyone who had participated, particularly the work of her staff including Administrative Coordinator Bhandari, Pinole Artisans, local businesses and the City staff and Council members who had attended. Additionally, the next Coastal Cleanup had been scheduled for September 20, 2025 at Bayfront Park and she would purchase coffee again for those who picked up more garbage than she did, and school was back in session with days getting shorter and darker and everyone was asked to drive with care and adhere to posted speed limits.

City Manager Young clarified in response to Council member Murphy that she did not have a report on Public Works Department operations, but could send it out to the City Council and the report could be provided to the public at the next City Council meeting.

F. City Attorney Report: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED (Items 7A through 7F)

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

8. RECOGNITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / COMMUNITY EVENTS

A. Proclamations

1. World Suicide Prevention Day and Suicide Prevention Week

The City Council read into the record a proclamation recognizing September 10, 2025 as World Suicide Prevention Day and September 8 through 14, 2025 as Suicide Prevention Week.

Mayor Sasai asked that anyone experiencing a crisis or who may be having suicidal thoughts, contact 988 or visit 988california.org and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which provided resources 24/7 across the state and country.

2. Rosh Hashanah

The City Council read into the record a proclamation recognizing September 22 through 24, 2025, as Rosh Hashanah.

3. Constitution Day

The City Council read into the record a proclamation recognizing September 17, 2025 as Constitution Day.

4. Building Staff Appreciation Day

The City Council read into the record a proclamation recognizing September 1, 2025 as Building Staff Appreciation Day with the proclamation presented to Community Development Director Lilly Whalen and her staff.

Community Development Director Lilly Whalen thanked the City Council for the proclamation recognizing the staff of the Building Division, a small but mighty team that cared for the Pinole community. She was pleased to have such amazing staff. She reminded everyone the Chief Building Official would present a PAL Workshop at the Senior Center on September 4, 2025, from Noon to 1:00 p.m. on the requirements for building permits. There would be a focus on seniors and aging in place with the workshop to be recorded and posted on PCTV and the City website.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED (Item 8)

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

Mayor Sasai declared a recess at 8:44 p.m. The City Council meeting reconvened at 8:56 p.m. with all Council members present at the dais and Council member Martinez-Rubin attending remotely.

B. Presentations

1. Citizen Academy Presentation

City Manager Young provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Citizens Academy, which had been approved as a Community Engagement Initiative in 2022. She highlighted the following: Other City Examples of Citizens Academies (Non-Law Enforcement) for the cities of Vallejo, Alameda and American Canyon; a recap of the free-to-attend event with the academy having been open to the public, with limited seating, and while capped at 30 applicants there was also a wait list. The sessions were held in-person, with four staff members having attended in their free time and with the entire Executive Team present for most of the sessions. Topics discussed were also highlighted along with the attendees, survey responses, outcomes and potential improvements to be considered for the next academy.

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

- The topics discussed, as outlined in the PowerPoint presentation, clarified the designation of a 5 STAR Ambassador was for those participants who scored 100 percent or close to it on the final exam and those who attended all three sessions. The types of questions from the community involved a wide range. As an example, when the Police Chief discussed the Police Department there had been questions about the number of officers and how the City could provide more traffic officers.

Governance had been briefly discussed as well as the fact the City was a General Law City with a Council/Manager form of government as part of the introductory session. (Martinez-Rubin)

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Irma Ruport reported that she had emailed the City Manager a week before the academy was held when she learned the academy was already full and 30 participants had already been selected. She questioned the fact that only 30 participants had been selected when the room used for the sessions could have held more than 100 people. She also referenced the email response from the City Manager, who stated PCTV would not be present and no Council members would participate. She questioned why one Council member had shown up and others had not. She asked the City Manager if she could attend and was informed she could not participate. She questioned a City-hosted event that had deliberately omitted a class of people that could not attend such as the disabled and seniors. She resented the fact the information presented during the academy, while valid, was controlled, with the narrative controlled and if someone had deep questions those questions could have been submitted. She asked what questions the 30 participants had asked and suggested if the resources of PCTV were not going to be used by the City, she would advocate for the City to eliminate PCTV. Rather, PCTV should be used to maximize City events. She suggested the City Manager was holding the City underwater and was not being transparent. She also disliked when Council members contradicted themselves and emphasized the taxpayers who voted for them.

Rafael Menis, commented it seemed as if there were two core functions for the academy; one staff having explained to the community various things about how the City ran and operated its departments, rules and the like, and the other half involved citizens asking questions both about the topics discussed and broader questions related to the functioning of the City as a whole. He asked if there was some way to separate out those two so there could be a City of Pinole One-on-One Course that could be broadcast more broadly, and a hybrid in-person, on-line Q&A session to avoid space limitations and constraints but also provide access to a broader range of the public and not just those who were able to attend in-person or could attend in-person but not within the physical limitations of the space. He was uncertain why the academy was limited to 30 people and he understood there was a 30 percent drop-off between the initial enrollment and the final graduation. He suspected if a more hybrid approach was available there may have been a higher graduation rate.

Mr. Menis also commented about the cost of the event and suggested it would be helpful to have a more detailed breakdown before the City decided what to charge for future events. He noted that charging any amount for such an event in the future would exclude lower income members of the community unable to afford to attend. Additionally, he was unable to attend any of the academy events since they were scheduled during work hours and he asked how the scheduling had been done for the first academy and how the scheduling would be planned in the future.

Sheila Grist echoed the comments from Ms. Ruport and Mr. Menis, particularly the breakdown on the cost. She understood the City allocated \$50,000 for the event and charged participants \$25. She asked if the \$25 included the entire binder participants could take home. Also, she suggested the questions from the participants and answers should be published at some point so they would not ask the same questions and get the same answers at future sessions.

Anthony Vossbrink also echoed the comments of the previous speakers in terms of instructive comments for improvements to the program. He reported he had not been notified of the academy until the last minute from someone's email and could not find the event having been publicly promoted or advertised in any detail in terms of an R.S.V.P., advanced registration or whether reservations were required, which would have been nice to know. He suggested the process should have been more succinct and spelled out in advance, particularly given the cost of the event and the highly paid staff involved. He also suggested after attending the first couple of sessions imposing a \$25 fee was a little late and that component should have been planned and thought out in advance, with clear cut goals and objectives that were publicized to the general public. He was unable to attend the academy and thought he could participate but two door keepers informed him sign-up was required in advance with no way to get in and listen. He suggested people should have been allowed to at least come in and listen to the discussions. He was uncertain of the City's objective with the Citizens Academy and questioned whether it had been politicized and used as a recruitment arm for some type of volunteer-ship or something else, since many of the participants were commercial type people with businesses in the City or those affiliated with public or government jobs.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

Council member Toms commented the Citizens Academy had been publicized through several channels and the number of participants had been limited to allow discussion in the Council Chambers. She confirmed she had sat in the back of the room for the last session for the last hour to observe since she had heard criticism about the program and wanted to observe. She noticed there had been good discussions. She asked the City Manager whether the participants would be as eager to participate if they were being televised. She suggested the smaller group fostered a lot of personal discussion but she would not be opposed to having the presentations recorded, which could be useful. She also understood there was no charge for materials but that had been an idea that came up for the future. She noted Council members used laptops during Council meetings and materials could be made available online to avoid the material costs. Changes to the program could be made for the next session but she found the first Citizens Academy had been very successful and the first group of people had been happy to participate. She would like to see whether participants were interested in serving on various City Commissions.

City Manager Young clarified no one had been charged a fee and a \$25 material fee had not been needed. The overall cost for the program was very minimal. Existing materials had been used, the slides were printed out, and the sessions involved primarily the Executive Team, none of whom took that much time. The reference to \$50,000 as a cost for the event had come from a reference on the City website, when the City Council had initially discussed the types of programs the City may like to see happen should there be additional Measure I funds, and the \$50,000 was a guestimate for a far more robust program than what the City ended up moving forward with given the desire to be good stewards of the City's budget.

Mayor Sasai congratulated staff on the program. He commented on his other work in civic engagement with the community and emphasized the importance of citizens to understand what it meant to be part of City government; how to engage with staff and the City Council and understand the workings of City Hall.

Mayor Sasai reported that he had been notified a number of participants in the Citizens Academy had applied to City Commissions, which he found to be a big win. He suggested what citizens were rediscussing now was transparency and what happened during the sessions. He thanked Council member Toms for being present and stated he had been unable to attend any sessions. He asked the City Manager to provide the City Council with the slides from the presentations.

City Manager Young advised the information had been posted on the City website but she could forward a link to the City Council.

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 July 15, 2025.
- B. Receive the July 12, 2025 - August 29, 2025 List of Warrants in the Amount of \$6,527,369.42, and the July 18, 2025 Payroll in the Amount of \$566,917.49, the August 1, 2025 Payroll in the Amount of \$533,417.49, the August 15, 2025 Payroll in the Amount of \$563,571.65, and the August 29, 2025 Payroll in the Amount of \$543,378.62.
- C. Adopt a Resolution Approving the Reclassification of Laboratory Analyst II.
Action: Adopt Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Stacy Shell, Charlene Davis)
- D. Approve an Amendment to the Employment Agreement for the City Manager.
Action: Adopt a Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Stacy Shell)
- E. Approve an Amendment to the Employment Agreement for the City Clerk. **Action: Adopt Resolution per Staff Recommendation. (Stacy Shell)**
- F. Reallocation of Remaining Funds for Technical Assistance on Single-Use Plastics Ordinance Implementation in Fiscal Year 25/26. **Action: Adopt Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Lilly Whalen, Kapil Amin)**
- G. Adopt a Resolution Amending the City of Pinole Master Fee Schedule to Establish a New Parking Violation Fine Related to Parking Near Intersections in Violation of Assembly Bill 413. **Action: Adopt Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Eric Casher, Melissa Klawuhn, Heba El-Guindy)**
- H. Adopt Resolution Accepting STMP Funds of \$645,000 and OBAG Funds of \$1,020,000 for CIP Project RO1902 Pedestrian Improvements at Tennent – Bay

Trail and Authorize the City Manager to Execute Necessary Agreement and Documents to Receive These Awarded Grant Funds. **Action: Adopt Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Heba El-Guindy)**

- I. Appoint Councilmembers as Voting Delegates for the 2025 League of California Cities Annual Conference General Assembly Meeting. **Action: Appoint Councilmembers per Staff Recommendation (Heather Bell)**

Mayor Sasai referenced Items 9D and 9E and reported pursuant to Government Code Section §54953(c)(3), both items were recommendations to provide the City Manager and the City Clerk with a three percent Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) in accordance with their Employment Agreements. These items had a fiscal impact of \$3,078 to the General Fund, as the City Clerk's COLA had not been incorporated into the Fiscal Year 2025/26 budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Rafael Menis stated most of his comments on the Consent Calendar had been provided in writing in advance of the meeting and responses had been provided by staff. He thanked staff for taking the time to respond to his written questions. As to Items 9D and 9E, he noted the City Manager's COLA increase had been accounted for in the budget but the City Clerk's COLA had not. He was curious as to which was the intended outcome in the systems the Finance Department staff set up. Since it had been linked and negotiated at the time of the budget, there would be a three percent COLA for the AFSCME bargaining unit, which should have triggered both the City Manager and the City Clerk, and he asked if there had been an error and sought clarification.

Mayor Sasai advised staff would get back to Mr. Menis with an answer to his question.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

ACTION: Motion by Council members Toms/Murphy to adopt Consent Calendar Items 9A through 9I, as shown.

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

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Adopt a Resolution Confirming the Assessments and Ordering the Levy for the Pinole Valley Road Landscape and Lighting Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2025/2026. **Action: Adopt Resolution per Staff Recommendation (Heba El-Guindy)**

Mayor Sasai stated as the City Clerk reported, the item would be continued to the City Council meeting of September 16, 2025. He asked for a motion to continue the item to a date certain of September 16, 2025.

ACTION: Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Tave/Council member Murphy to continue the public hearing to consider a Resolution Confirming the Assessments and Ordering the Levy for the Pinole Valley Road Landscape and Lighting Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, to a date certain of September 16, 2025.

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

11. OLD BUSINESS: None

12. NEW BUSINESS: None

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.*

Anthony Vossbrink asked that his comments not be cut off since cutting him off in the middle of a sentence was rude, unprofessional and discriminatory against one member of the public versus another and may be because he was unable to attend the meeting in person. He asked the City Council about a June/July expense for travel and training for City Treasurer Roy Swearingen. He understood a check had been issued for an expense close to \$5,000. He asked for a report on what had been attended and what had been learned, with a report back to the community.

Mr. Vossbrink also reported the timers for the public restrooms in City parks needed to be changed since the restrooms were being locked early while it was still daylight, which issue had been raised with several people on staff, a member of the City Council and the City Manager. He also asked of the status of increased security at Bayfront Park and referenced an incident where a woman had been brutally attacked.

Mayor Sasai encouraged Mr. Vossbrink to put his comments in writing to staff and copy them to the City Council.

Mayor Sasai asked that the meeting adjourn in memory of Ricky Delos Reyes, a treasured member of the community and member of the St. Joseph Church community and a school volunteer. He read into the record a statement issued by St Joseph Church about Mr. Delos Reyes' contributions to the church. He had been blessed to know Mr. Delos Reyes and know how loving and generous he could be.

14. ADJOURNMENT to the Regular Meeting of September 16, 2025 in Remembrance of Amber Swartz and Ricky Delos Reyes.

At 9:35 p.m., Mayor Sasai adjourned the meeting to a Regular City Council Meeting on September 16, 2025 in Remembrance of Amber Swartz and Ricky Delos Reyes.

Submitted by:



Heather Bell-Spears, CMC

City Clerk

Approved by City Council: September 16, 2025

