



# Minutes

## Lakewood City Council

Regular Meeting held  
September 8, 2020

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**MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER** at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Rogers in the Weingart Ballroom at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

**INVOCATION** was offered by Vice Mayor Jeff Wood

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Mayor Todd Rogers

**ROLL CALL: PRESENT:** Mayor Todd Rogers  
Vice Mayor Jeff Wood  
Council Member Steve Croft  
Council Member Ariel Pe

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

Mayor Rogers announced that the meeting would be adjourned in memory of Maria L. Solache, the mother of Jose Solache, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce.

The Mayor advised that the presentation listed on the agenda to honor Cerritos College's 65th Anniversary had been rescheduled to the meeting on September 22.

Mayor Rogers also announced that he had signed a proclamation declaring September to be National Preparedness Month in Lakewood. He stated that through the City's eMagazine, residents and businesses would receive information about the steps to take to be prepared for emergencies, and that a new "Survive For 7" video which would provide online training was due out soon.

Mayor Rogers announced that although a public gathering was not possible due to the pandemic, a live-stream event through the City's website and on CityTV would be held to commemorate Patriot Day on September 11th, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Rogers also expressed a special thank-you to the thousands of firefighters working on the front lines right now across California to protect the forests and communities from a series of wildfires.

Council Member Croft provided a brief update on the impacts of the COVID-19 virus on the community, stating that to date, over 1,200 Lakewood residents had tested positive for the virus and that twelve members of the community had lost their lives.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:** Continued

Mayor Rogers stated that there had been many questions regarding lockdowns and stay-at-home orders. He advised that the City Council did not have the legal authority to override the executive orders of the Governor and that the City was also under the authority of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. He stated that the City Council and City staff were working with the agencies to convey the needs of the City's residents and businesses. He encouraged residents to continue to express their thoughts and suggestions.

Vice Mayor Wood reminded everyone of the importance of completing the U.S. Census. He noted that the response rate to date had been very good and encouraged anyone who had not yet responded to please take the time to complete the short survey.

**ROUTINE ITEMS:**

COUNCIL MEMBER CROFT MOVED AND VICE MAYOR WOOD SECONDED TO APPROVE ROUTINE ITEMS 1 THROUGH 9.

RI-1 Approval of Minutes of the Meetings held April 14, 2020

RI-2 Approval of Personnel Transactions

RI-3 Approval of Registers of Demands

RI-4 Report of City Council Committees' Activities

RI-5 Appointment to Project Shepherd Board

RI-6 Approval of Renewal of Agreement for Catered Events at Monte Verde Park with TGIS Catering Services, Inc.

RI-7 Approval of Twelfth Amendment to Recreation Lease for Lakewood Equestrian Center

RI-8 Authorizing Appropriation of Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Funds

RI-9 RESOLUTION NO. 2020-51; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD ADDING A JOB CLASSIFICATION AND AMENDING EXISTING PAY RATE IN ATTACHMENT B OF RESOLUTION NO. 2020-15

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Croft, Wood, Pe and Rogers

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

### **3.1 • REPORT ON COMMUNITY DIALOGUE**

City Manager Thaddeus McCormack gave a presentation providing an update on the progress made and the initiatives of the Community Dialogue. He reported that two Town Hall meetings had been tentatively scheduled to offer Lakewood residents the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences on the issue of racial equity and strengthening community/law enforcement relations in Lakewood. He stated that Council Member Pe and Council Member Croft, acting as the Ad Hoc Committee on the Community Dialogue, would be participating in the Town Halls via Zoom teleconference, the first tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 26th, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., with the second scheduled for Wednesday evening, September 30th, from 6 to 8 p.m. Final arrangements on the Zoom teleconference would be made available to residents via the eMagazine and social media in the next few days. He noted that Lakewood residents not able to participate in a teleconference meeting would be offered the opportunity to share their thoughts and recommendations either in writing or by email, with opportunities for safe, in-person meetings still being explored. He reported that there were twenty religious community leaders from Lakewood participating on the Interfaith Council and a third meeting was scheduled for later this week. He noted that the members of the Interfaith Council had expressed a willingness to help in other ways including helping with the Town Halls and possibly meeting with people who would prefer a non-Zoom method for participation.

He noted that consistent with the Mayor's Pledge, the Public Safety Committee, composed of Mayor Rogers and Vice Mayor Wood, would continue its review of the Sheriff's Department use of force policy once the additional policy and training documents relevant to understanding the Use of Force policy, were compiled.

Lastly, he stated that the City would continue to communicate regularly with residents on this subject through the eMagazines, Lakewood Living Magazine, the City website and *Lakewood Community News* articles.

Deidre Norville, Lakewood, addressed the City Council stating she appreciated the updates and suggested the addition of any information regarding current issues with local law enforcement.

Mayor Rogers thanked his colleagues for their commitment to this issue and all of the work that was going into making the Community Dialogue meaningful. He stated that in order to be effective, input from the community was vital and he encouraged residents to participate by sharing their perspectives, experiences and recommendations.

Council Member Croft noted that recently the Board of Supervisors had approved the use of and funding for body cams for deputies and that the Lakewood Station would be part of the pilot program scheduled for October.

**MAYOR ROGERS STATED THAT THERE BEING NO OBJECTION, THE ITEM WAS ORDERED RECEIVED AND FILED.**

### **3.2 • CONSIDERATION OF ACTION TO FILL CITY COUNCIL VACANCY**

Steve Skolnik, for the City Attorney, gave a presentation based on the memo in the agenda and stated that Council Member Diane DuBois had submitted a letter of resignation to the City Clerk, with an effective date of August 31, 2020, and applicable state law provided that the City Council was required, within sixty days from the commencement of the vacancy, to either make an appointment to fill the vacancy for the remainder of her term ending in March 2022, or call a Special Election. He reported that due to requirements of the State Elections Code, a Special Election could not be held until March 2, 2021, leaving the seat vacant for approximately seven months. He noted that the City Council election in March of this year had cost approximately \$230,000, and that a special, standalone election was expected to be significantly higher. It was the recommendation of staff that the City Council take action to fill the City Council vacancy resulting from the resignation of Council Member DuBois no later than sixty days from August 31, 2020.

The City Attorney responded to a question from Council Member Croft by stating that it was likely that any person elected in a March 2021 special election would have to wait thirty days for vote certification before beginning to serve.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Wood, Mr. Skolnik stated that the estimated cost of an election was based upon the number of registered voters in the City.

Clarifying for Council Member Pe and Mayor Rogers, the City Manager stated that although there had been previous estimates as high as \$600,000 for a special, standalone election, with the County's new voting system technology available, the cost would not be as high, but would likely to be higher than \$230,000.

Charity Chandler Cole, Lakewood; Joy Janes, Lakewood; Sarah Mendoza, Lakewood; Alan Gafford, Long Beach; Cassandra Chase, Lakewood; Marisa Perez, Lakewood; Deidre Norville, Lakewood; addressed the City Council regarding the filling of the vacancy. Recommendations included calling for a Special Election; appointing a qualified resident; appointing an unsuccessful candidate from a prior election; and appointing a resident who would commit to not running for the seat at the next election. Correspondence was received from Dr. Olga Rios, Lakewood, and Debbie Cuadros, Lakewood, in support of a Special Election.

Mayor Rogers closed the public comment period.

Vice Mayor Wood stated that his inclination would be to hold a special election.

Council Member Pe stated that he had concerns about the cost of a Special Election and the length of time the seat would remain vacant, especially during such a difficult time period.

Council Member Croft stated that while the cost was a concern, his major concerns were the current workload under pandemic conditions. He noted that there were obligations regarding Measure L capital projects, the Community Dialogue with the Interfaith Council and Use of Force Review, trying to assist local businesses and residents impacted by the pandemic, and

**3.2 • CONSIDERATION TO FILL CITY COUNCIL VACANCY - Continued**

families impacted by the school closures. He stated that of major concern was that should a Council Member either contract the virus or be exposed and have to be quarantined, the City Council could be left with an insufficient number of Members to be able to conduct the City's business. He noted that any appointee would face the voters in 2022 and either be elected or replaced based on his or her performance. He stated that he supported making an appointment.

Mayor Rogers thanked the speakers for their input into the process. He stated that if State law allowed for a special election this November, it would be his obvious choice and that in normal times, having a vacancy for a seven-month period would be difficult, but doable. He expressed concern over the expense of a special election at a time when the City was trying to provide assistance to as many local businesses and residents who were struggling due to the pandemic. He noted that although there had been many good people that had run for election during the previous two election cycles, there were also many good people that had not been able to run during that time for various reasons. He concluded by stating that although his default position would be to call for a special election, under current circumstances, he was in support of making an appointment.

Mr. Skolnik clarified that the suggestion that an appointee be required to agree not to run for election at the end of the term was not a legally binding option.

Vice Mayor Wood stated that in the event of an appointment, he would like for the community to have an opportunity to participate. He noted that not being able to discuss the issue and options except at an open City Council meeting, and waiting, in deference to Council Member DuBois, until after the public announcement of her resignation had prevented any discussion of the matter with any concerned community members. He suggested that an appointment be held over to the next regular meeting.

Mayor Rogers stated that current circumstances were such that he felt that it was necessary to move forward immediately and he was prepared to make a nomination at this time.

Council Member Pe stated he was concerned with the fairness of the process, but questioned whether an additional two weeks would be enough time to have any real impact.

Council Member Croft and Council Member Pe each stated that an additional two weeks would not change their position on the matter.

VICE MAYOR WOOD MOVED AND MAYOR ROGERS SECONDED TO HOLD THE ITEM OVER TO THE NEXT REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION FAILED.

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Wood and Rogers

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Croft and Pe

**3.2 • CONSIDERATION TO FILL CITY COUNCIL VACANCY - Continued**

COUNCIL MEMBER CROFT MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER PE SECONDED TO MOVE FORWARD IMMEDIATELY AND MAKE AN APPOINTMENT AT THIS MEETING. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Croft, Pe and Rogers

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Wood

COUNCIL MEMBER CROFT NOMINATED VICKI STUCKEY TO FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF COUNCIL MEMBER DIANE DUBOIS.

Council Member Croft enumerated Ms. Stuckey's qualifications including her nineteen years of service, first on the Community Safety Commission and then the Planning and Environment Commission, currently as its chairperson. He stated that Ms. Stuckey was a 28-year resident of the City and had been active in community organizations such as the Pan American Association and as a governing board member of the Lakewood Regional Medical Center.

VICE MAYOR WOOD NOMINATED MARISA PEREZ TO FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF COUNCIL MEMBER DIANE DUBOIS.

Vice Mayor Wood reviewed Ms. Perez' qualifications including her current service as President of the Cerritos College Board of Trustees and a former candidate for City Council.

Mayor Rogers stated that both were great candidates for the position, but given the years of service on the City's highest level commission, he felt Ms. Stuckey would be in a better position to hit the ground running.

MAYOR ROGERS SECONDED THE MOTION TO NOMINATE VICKI STUCKEY.

THE MOTION TO NOMINATE MARISA PEREZ DIED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION TO NOMINATE VICKI STUCKEY WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Croft, Wood, Pe and Rogers

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

Responding to a question from Mayor Rogers, the City Manager stated that the process of swearing in Ms. Stuckey as a Council Member did not require that the ceremony take place at a regular City Council meeting.

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**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None

Gus Jauregui, Lakewood, addressed the City Council regarding illegal dumping behind the businesses in his area.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Rogers adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m. to Tuesday, September 22, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Maria Solache.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Mayberry, CMC (by DRH)  
City Clerk