

PORTOLA VALLEY TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER 9, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mayor Wernikoff called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Present: Councilmembers Jeff Aalfs, Mary Hufty, Vice Mayor Judith Hasko and Mayor Sarah Wernikoff

Absent: Councilmember Craig Taylor

Others: Interim Town Manager Corie Stocker, Finance Director Anthony McFarlane, Community Development Director Terrence Grindall, and Clerk Consultant Christine Boland

2. PRESENTATIONS / PROCLAMATIONS

None.

3. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Interim Town Manager Stocker updated the Town Council on several items:

- Expressed appreciation to the League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County for hosting the 2024 Council Candidate Forum on Oct. 8, 2024;
- Announced a special Council meeting would be held on October 30, at 7 p.m. to review Mid-Peninsula Open Space District's Hawthorne area plan project;
- Thanked staff members Tony McFarland for his work on the Town's finances and retiring Sr. Management Analyst, Kari Chinn;
- Noted the Town's Housing Element has not received recertification yet; and
- The Town's website is undergoing several updates.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The following members of the public addressed the Town Council:

- Dale Pfau
- Carolyn Vertongen
- Duff Sunheim
- Rita Comes
- Kristi Corley

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Wernikoff invited public comment on the Consent Agenda.

The following members of the public provided comment:

- Dale Pfau

Councilmember Aalfs moved approval of the Consent Agenda items a, c, d, e, f, and g, seconded by Vice Mayor Hasko. Motion carried 4 – 0 – 1. Councilmember Taylor was absent.

- Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2024
- Approve Special Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2024

Councilmember Aalfs noted his attendance at the meeting. Councilmember Aalfs made a motion to approve the Minutes of September 19, 2024, as amended, Page 1, to delete his name appearing under “Absent,” seconded by Vice Mayor Hasko. The motion carried by 4 – 0 – 1. Councilmember Taylor was absent.

- Approve Special Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2024 (Workshop)
- Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2024
- Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2024
- Approve Warrant Lists of September 30, 2024 and October 9, 2024
- Adopt Resolution No. 2949-2024, Approving and Authorizing Disposition of Surplus Town-Owned Property
- Approve response to San Mateo County Grand Jury Report: “Restaurant Exteriors: The Neglected Space.”

Vice Mayor Hasko proposed amending the response to the Grand Jury, Page 1, Finding F1:

Finding F1. Sanitary conditions of the exterior of restaurant facilities fall outside current inspections of the County Health Department. The varying unsatisfactory conditions in the waste removal areas of the facilities shows something is lacking in the regulatory process, to state:

Response: The Town of Portola Valey agrees with the first sentence of this finding. The Town does not have information available to agree or disagree with the second sentence in Finding F1.

Community Development Director Terrance Grindall addressed Council and agreed with the proposed amendment on Page 31. A motion was made by Councilmember Hufty, seconded by Vice Mayor Hasko. The motion carried by 4 – 0 – 1. Councilmember Taylor was absent.

6. REGULAR AGENDA

- a. Consideration of Awarding a Contract to Matrix Consulting Group for a User Fee/Nexus Study, in an amount not to exceed \$66,000

Director of Finance Tony McFarlane, presented the report, noting the industry standard is five years and a study had not been conducted in almost 10 years. Mr. McFarlane answered questions of Council.

The following members of the public provided comment:

- Dale Pfau
- Karen Askey
- Peter Lipman
- Kristi Corley
- Ronny Krashinsky
- Danna Breen

A motion was made by Councilmember Aalfs to approve a contract with Matrix Consulting Group for a User Fee and Nexus Study, in an amount not to exceed \$66,000, seconded by Councilmember Hufty. The motion carried by 3 – 1 – 1, with Mayor Wernikoff voting no. Councilmember Taylor absent.

- b. Consideration of approving Town Manager Employment Agreement and Budget Amendment

Town Attorney Engberg outlined provisions contained in the agreement for Corie Stocker-Pedalino to act as Interim Town Manager, for three and one-half months, or until a new Interim Town Manager could be hired. She noted the agreement also authorizes a budget amendment up to \$50,000 for consultant services to backfill the vacant Town Clerk position.

The following members of the public provided comment:

- Dale Pfau
- Rita Comes
- Carolyn Vertongen
- Cathryn Gawne
- Danna Breen
- Kristi Corley
- Vicki Baker

A motion was made by Councilmember Aalfs, seconded by Councilmember Hufty, to approve an Employment Agreement with Ms. Stocker-Pedalino and accompanying budget amendment of up to \$50,000, subject to review by the Mayor and Vice Mayor at their weekly meetings. (Amended by the Town Council at its 10/9/2024 meeting). The motion carried by 4 – 0 – 1. Councilmember Taylor was absent.

c. Discussion of Revenue Enhancement options Under Consideration by the Finance Committee

Mayor Wernikoff read prepared remarks into the record regarding the existing structural deficit, due to costs associated with increasing expenses and Housing Element expenses. She called upon the Town Attorney Engberg, who presented three possible scenarios to enhance revenue for the Town.

Town Attorney Engberg stated Scenario 1 (Utility Users Tax) would temporarily divert two (2%) percent of the Utility Users Tax from Open Space Fund to the Town's General Fund for a fixed period of time, noting that a simple majority (50% +1) would be required to pass. This option could be placed on the March, 2025 special election ballot, if a declaration of fiscal emergency is passed by the Town Council.

Further, Ms. Engberg outlined Scenario 2 (Parcel Tax), would impose a parcel tax at a fixed rate for a fixed period of time, noting that a super majority (2/3rds, or 66.67%) would be required to pass. This option could be placed on the March, 2025 special election ballot, if a declaration of fiscal emergency is passed by the Town Council.

Finally, Ms. Engberg outlined Option 3, (Charter City, plus companion Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT)) is an option to become a charter city, pursuant to procedures in the Government Code and adopt a companion Real Estate Transfer Tax. A simple majority (50% +1) would be required to pass. This option is only available to be placed on a Statewide general election and the soonest could be the November 2026 ballot.

Council discussion ensued but no action was taken on the item. Mayor Wernikoff stated the Finance Committee would be meeting to discuss the three scenarios above on Tuesday, October 15, 2024. She invited public comments.

The following members of the public provided comment:

- Kristi Corley

7. COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE, LIAISON COMMITTEE, AND REGIONAL AGENCIES REPORTS

Councilmembers provided several updates on the committees they attended:


Councilmember Aalfs reported on the Emergency Services Committee; Councilmember Hufty reported on the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Traffic Safety Committee and the Skyline Boulevard project; Vice Mayor Hasko reported on interviews held with recruiting firms to assist in the selection of an Interim Town Manager, following Ms. Stocker-Pedalino's assignment, and held interviews to select members of the ad hoc Site Evaluation Committee.


The following members of the public provided comment:

- Carolyn Vertongen

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Wernikoff adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.



Sarah Wernikoff, Mayor

Christine Boland, Clerk Consultant

Approved by the Town Council at its meeting of October 23, 2024.