CITY OF AVENAL
Pistachio Capital of the World®"
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL/SUCCESSOR AGENCY/PF
A MEETING MARCH 26, 2026; 5:15 P.M.
AVENAL THEATER & EVENT CENTER, 233 E. KINGS ST., AVENAL, CA

Study Session: 4:15PM: Discuss Proposed Sublease for Nodal Power at the Avenal Regional Landfill 5:00PM: Meet & Greet Jose Verduzco, PG&E Local Government Affairs Representative

Members of the public had questions and concerns regarding the feedstock for the proposed landfill plans. Bryan Black, Nodal Power Representative offered his contact information for additional questions.
Jose Verduzco, PG&E Representative, provided his contact information incase residents have questions on services, 801-310-8151.
Study Session ended at 5:10 P.M.

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: by Mayor Preciado at 5:27 P.M.

ROLL CALL: Councilmembers: David Reynosa, Ricardo Verdugo, Mayor Pro Tem, M. Leticia Gamez; Mayor, Alvaro Preciado.

ABSENT: Hernandez.

STAFF: Velasco, Martinez, Curiel, Ortiz, Bermudez, López.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Moses Diaz.

CITY CLERK:
Government Code Section 54952.3: Members of the City Council/Successor Agency are entitled to receive a total of $450.00 per month due to their serving on the City Council. They receive no other compensation for serving as members of the Successor Agency.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS & UNSCHEDULED APPEARANCES:
This time is reserved for members of the audience to address the City Council on items of interest that are both on the Agenda or not on the Agenda, and are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the City Council/Successor Agency. State Law prohibits any member of the Council from commenting or acting on matters not on the agenda. The Council asks that you keep your comments concise and respectful. Criticism, concerns, or support are welcome, provided they are expressed with appropriate courtesy. Each speaker will be allowed three minutes. A timer will notify you when your time is expired. Please begin your comments by stating your name and place of residence.

Special Recognitions: **Felix Herreria & Trino Aranda -** *Volunteerism at Food Distributions & Contributions to Senior Nutrition Program*
Parent University, Digital Literacy Course: **Antonia Herrera; Pablo Herrera; Mauricio Paniagua; Rosa Herrera; Gloria Pulido; Silvia Castaneda; Adriana Raya Medina; Victor Gervacio; Carmen Laguna; Victor Jose Pariona; Petra Almanza; Silvina Estrada; Miryam Pamela Arce Gutierrez; Paola Medina**
New Staff Presentation: Administrative Interns: **Bailey Martinez, Natalee Lomeli**
Officer **Francisco Martinez** - ***Courage to Lead Award***, presented by *Chief Velasco*

City Manager Antony V. Lopez presented Certificates of Recognition to community members for volunteering at local food distributions and the Senior Nutrition Program.

Assistant City Manager/Deputy City Clerk Karla Curiel presented Certificates of Recognition to community members who completed the Parent University/West Hills College Digital Literacy Course. She also extended a special thank-you to Jenny Torres, who served as the instructor for this course.

Assistant City Manager/Deputy City Clerk Karla Curiel also introduced new administrative interns Bailey Martinez and Natalee Lomeli. Both interns introduced themselves to the City Council, staff, and members of the public.

Chief Velasco presented the Courage to Lead Award to Officer Francisco Martinez.

Public comment was opened by Mayor Preciado at 5:54 PM.

Sheila Verdugo, Avenal resident, had several questions to be read into the minutes regarding ordinances on the agenda. For Ordinances 2026-04 and 2026-05, she asked: for clarity, what constitutes the official call date under Section 2-5.05, the vacancy event itself or the issuance of the signed election order? How does the call date align with the 114-day requirement under Government Code 36512(c)(1)? Why does the ordinance sunset on January 31, 2027, and what policy or rationale supports a temporary vacancy framework? Regarding vacancy qualifications, does the ordinance create any grounds beyond those listed under Government Code Section 1770? If the Council makes a finding of a fiduciary breach or malfeasance, what specific due process procedure applies before a vacancy may be declared, and what evidentiary standard would apply to such a finding? Is a judicial determination required before a seat may be declared vacant, or can a Council finding alone declare the vacancy? How does a six-year disqualification align with state law for office, and does the ordinance apply prospectively only, or can it be interpreted retroactively? She also stated she is very happy to see the City hiring more help for staff, as it is needed as the City grows. She added that she continues to wait for CPRA requests and would like the City to "stop playing games" and provide the public records without citing government codes.

Kelly Guzman, Avenal resident, expressed concern to the Council about Ordinances 2026-01 through 2026-05, stating they are not regular housekeeping measures, as they involve financial and council seat matters. She also stated these measures should clarify limits and not be bundled for adoption. Each ordinance should be clearly explained to the public, including why they are being considered at this time. At minimum, she asked for them to be considered separately.

Dalilah Barajas, Avenal resident, shared that voting for the recall matter will be available to the community on March 30 and encouraged everyone to vote. She stated that, regardless of the outcome, it will be accepted, but she hopes important lessons are learned—not only by the Council, but also by the community to become more involved. She also asked where the people are who the City Council claims support them, as they are not in attendance.

Frank Lopez, Avenal resident, shared information about several events, including an Easter egg hunt for children with autism on Saturday, an Autism Car Show on April 18, and Old Timer's Day on May 1 and 2. He encouraged community members to come out and volunteer and confirmed there will be a Lucha Libre event. He also stated "vote no" regarding the recall vote.

Veronica Aguirre, Avenal resident and environmental advocate, shared her concern about the absence of Zoom meetings following the last incident during a Council meeting. She stated that online/virtual participation is needed for those with mobility issues and others. She also noted there has been no update regarding the investigation and expressed hope that future meetings will include Spanish translation.

Maribel Villegas, Avenal resident, stated that only the initial agenda page is translated into Spanish and that there is a need to translate the entire packet. She said it would be more fair and transparent for the whole community to have access to important information in Spanish.

Public comment was closed at 6:15 PM by Mayor Preciado.

Mayor Preciado opened public comment at 8:03 PM.

Sergio Grajeda, Avenal resident, shared information about a marijuana celebration event on April 19.

Public comment was closed at 8:08 PM by Mayor Preciado.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

All items listed under the consent calendar are routine or for approval only and are enacted by one motion: (Action).

A. Consider City of Avenal/Successor Agency's Approval of Minutes for March 12, 2026 Regular Meeting.
B. Consider FY 2026/27 Local Transportation Fund Claim (LTF): **Resolution 2025-19.**
C. Waive Second Reading and Adopt Ordinances: **Resolution 2025-20**
    A. Ordinance No. 2026-01 – Finance Code Amendment (Depositories and Signatories)
    B. Ordinance No. 2026-02 – Planning Cost-Recovery and Indemnification
    C. Ordinance No. 2026-03 – City Manager Contract Signing Authority
    D. Ordinance No. 2026-04 – Filling of Vacant Council Seats by Special Election
    E. Ordinance No. 2026-05 – Determination of Qualifications and Vacancies for City Council Seats

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Gamez motioned approve items 4A and 4B in the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa and motion carried.

ROLL CALL VOTE:
AYES: Gamez, Reynosa, Verdugo, Preciado.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Hernandez.
ABSTAIN: None.

Item C was moved to Section 5B.

RESOLUTION 2025-19: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AVENAL AUTHORIZING A CLAIM TO BE MADE FOR THE LOCAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDS FOR THE 2026/27 FISCAL YEAR, FINDING NO UNMET PUBLIC TRANSIT NEEDS AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO MAKE AND AMEND SUCH CLAIMS.

MAYOR & COUNCIL MEMBER/ SUCCESSOR AGENCY/ ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

A. Presentation on Disaster Preparedness by Jose Verduzco, PG&E Local Government Affairs Representative (Information).

Jose Verduzco, PG&E Local Government Affairs Representative, shared presentation as submitted.

B. Waive Second Reading and Adopt Ordinances: Resolution 2025-20
    A. Ordinance No. 2026-01 – Finance Code Amendment (Depositories and Signatories)
    B. Ordinance No. 2026-02 – Planning Cost-Recovery and Indemnification
    C. Ordinance No. 2026-03 – City Manager Contract Signing Authority
    D. Ordinance No. 2026-04 – Filling of Vacant Council Seats by Special Election
    E. Ordinance No. 2026-05 – Determination of Qualifications and Vacancies for City Council Seats

Antony V. López, City Manager, presented report as submitted and clarified reasoning for the bundle ordinances. Councilmember Verdugo requested a summary of loans from grant programs to be given to Council for review. Councilmember Verdugo also stated there is a state law that may trump Ordinance 2026-05.

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Gamez motioned to approve Resolution 2026-20. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa and motion carried.

ROLL CALL VOTE:
AYES: Gamez, Reynosa, Preciado.
NOES: Verdugo.
ABSENT: Hernandez.
ABSTAIN: None.

RESOLUTION 2026-20: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AVENAL WAIVING THE SECOND READING OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES INTRODUCED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2026; AND APPROVING THEIR ADOPTION.

ACTIVITY REPORTS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS & COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Activity Reports:
1. None.

PUBLIC HEARING(s):

Joint Hearing of the City of Avenal Successor Agency RDA Trust Obligations Fund/Public Finance Authority:

A. None

OLD BUSINESS:

A. None.

CLOSED SESSION: (City/Successor Agency):

A. PENDING LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9). It is the intention of this governing body to meet in closed-session concerning:Conference with legal counsel – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9(d)). Significant exposure to litigation (Government Code § 54956.9(d)(2)). Number of potential cases is: 1.

Facts and circumstances clearly known to potential plaintiff (if any) that might result in litigation (Government Code § 54956.9(e)(2)):

a. *City of Avenal v. Lupe Villa, County of Kings, et al.,*

B. PENDING LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9). It is the intention of this governing body to meet in closed-session concerning:Conference with legal counsel EXISTING LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9(d)(1)).

Parties, case/claim no: *County of Kings DA, v. City of Avenal*
(Kings County Superior Court, **Case No. 25CU0549**)

C. INITIATE LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9(d)(4)).

Conference with legal counsel - ANTICIPATED LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9(d)(4)).
Initiation of Litigation (Paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Gov. Code § 54956.9)).
Number of potential cases is: 1.

D. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATOR(S) (Government Code § 54957.6).

It is the intent of this governing body to meet in Closed Session to review its position and to instruct its designated representatives: Designated representatives- **Police Chief**

City Council went into closed session at 7:07 P.M. City Council came out of Closed Session at 7:38 P.M. with nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Consider Approval of Chief of Police Employment Agreement, Amendment #1 (Discussion/Action).

B. Consider Approval of Clarification of Differential Pay Incentives for Bargaining Unit 4 (Management) (Discussion/Action).

City Manager, Antony V. López, presented report as submitted. Mayor Pro Tem Gamez shared multiple accomplishments by Chief Velasco.

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Gamez motioned to approve Resolution 2026-21. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa and motion carried.

ROLL CALL VOTE:
AYES: Gamez, Reynosa, Preciado.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Hernandez.
ABSTAIN: Verdugo.

City Manager, Antony V. López, presented report as submitted. Mayor Pro Tem Gamez asked for clarification on department head's approval for bilingual pay. City Manager, Antony V. López, clarified procedure.

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Gamez motioned to approve Resolution 2026-22. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa and motion carried.

ROLL CALL VOTE:
AYES: Gamez, Reynosa, Verdugo, Preciado.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Hernandez.
ABSTAIN: None.

RESOLUTION 2026-21: AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE AMENDMENT NO.1 TO POLICE CHIEF EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT.

RESOLUTION 2026-22: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AVENAL CLARIFYING THE APPLICATION OF DIFFERENTIAL PAY INCENTIVES TO BARGAINING UNIT 4 (MANAGEMENT).

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CLOSING COMMENTS:

Any Council member may request an item be placed on a future agenda, provided that a simple majority also support adding said item. Discussion or action on any item not on the current agenda is strictly prohibited. Closing comments are intended for Council members to report attendance of any special events and pertinent information back to the public.

- Upcoming/Future Agenda Items to Consider.
- Correspondence/Announcements/Information/Closing Comments.

City Clerk Angie Ortiz reminded the City Council that, if they have not submitted their Form 700, they should make an appointment with her. Assistant City Manager/Deputy City Clerk, Karla Curiel, shared the need for help conducting Avenal Speaks surveys this weekend and invited Council members to participate. City Manager Antony V. López shared information about multiple events taking place this weekend. Councilmember Reynosa also invited the community to attend and stated he would be involved. Councilmember Verdugo shared that he toured the new

Grand Jury office and hopes to attend more public transportation meetings. He also stated he attended an Amtrak meeting last week and shared their initiatives to transport people, as well as other amenities for long-distance travelers. He further stated that the City is doing a disservice to the community by not having Zoom meetings and that the City needs to return to that format. He also expressed that he would like Council packets delivered on Fridays instead of Mondays to allow more time for review. Mayor Pro Tem Gamez shared with the community the importance of completing the Avenal Speaks 2026 community survey. Mayor Preciado stated he attended A&M Engineering events, which had a good turnout. He also attended a Nisei Farmers League event and stated they are working on supporting the Dignity Act. He further shared that he attended a Confia event. He added that he will be attending a meeting at Millerton Lake tomorrow to review water infrastructure and participate in a workshop. City Manager Antony V. López shared a staff memo addressing animal control concerns related to stray dog complaints.

ADJOURNMENT:

City Council meeting was adjourned at 8:22PM by Mayor Preciado.

/s/ Karla Curiel
Karla Curiel, Deputy City Clerk