CITY OF AVENAL
Pistachio Capital of the World®"
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL/SUCCESSOR AGENCY/PF
A MEETING APRIL 23, 2026; 5:15 P.M.
AVENAL THEATER & EVENT CENTER, 233 E. KINGS ST., AVENAL, CA

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: **by Mayor Preciado 6:18 P.M.**

ROLL CALL: Councilmembers: David Reynosa, Ricardo Verdugo, Pablo Hernandez; Mayor, Alvaro Preciado.

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tem Gamez.

STAFF: McAfee, Velasco, Curiel, Ortiz, 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: **-2026 Old Timers' Day, Legends of our Heritage, Special People:**
Grand Marshals **– Jimmie Don & Cheryl Tuttle**
Favorite Son **– OG Carnal** *Favorite Daughter* **– Lucy Gonzalez**

City Manager, Antony V. López, presented certificates for the 2026 Old Timers' Day Legends of Our Heritage Special People: Grand Marshals, Favorite Son, and Favorite Daughter. He also shared Certificates of Honor from Congressman David Valadao's Office for these individuals.

Public comment began at 6:35 P.M. by Mayor Preciado.

Frank Lopez, Avenal resident, shared that Jimmie Don "Tuttle" used to be President of the Chamber of Commerce 43 years ago when they took over the Old Timers' Day event and opened a time capsule. He also shared event information for next weekend's Old Timers' Day Festival regarding the Lucha Libre and other activities.

Sheila Verdugo, Avenal resident, read a statement on behalf of Veronica Aguirre regarding the Nodal Power project. The concern is that the public needs more information and there needs to be clear mitigation plans. The statement has been attached and entered into the record.

John Chamberlain, Kings County Fire Chief, shared that Kings County Fire would be resuming services to Avenal out of Station 12 effective 08:00 Saturday. He also stated that it does not matter what Avenal Fire Chief McAfee's opinion is related to the fire code because, according to the court, he, John Chamberlain, is the Fire Chief for Avenal. He also said he continues to work with Fire Chief McAfee on matters regarding Avenal starting its own department. He added that he bears the burden of maintaining the Avenal community's fire safety, which includes the Community Center. He also directed that no additional events take place at the Community Center, as it still has a water system issue and is not yet operational. He proceeded to share recommendations regarding fixes to the water system or suggested negotiating out of the Kings County Fire contract so Fire Chief McAfee can assume all liability for substandard life safety systems. He stated that until then, he would not be signing off on the Community Center. He also expressed that he would like more communication from the City regarding any water issues.

City Manager, Antony V. López, responded regarding the main water line break. He clarified that the water levels in the tanks have been maintained at 21 feet for Tank 6 and 18–20 feet for Tank 3. He added that, as directed by the Fire Department in the past to Public Works, unless Tank 3 goes below 10 feet, they are not required to notify the Fire Department, and the levels have not dropped to that point. He also respectfully asked Fire Chief Chamberlain that, despite possible animosity and miscommunications, he continue to show respect and greet him before barking orders in the meeting chamber.

Mayor Preciado also added that there will be an Avenal High School reunion during Old Timers' Day weekend.

Public comment was closed at 6:47 P.M. 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 April 9, 2026 Regular Meeting.

B. Consider Amending Agreement with OpenGov to include Payroll Services (Resolution 2026-24).

C. OIP Investment Report for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2026 (Information Only).

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Verdugo motioned to approve Item A & C agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa and motion carried.

ROLL CALL VOTE:
AYES: Verdugo, Reynosa, Hernandez, Preciado.

NOES: None.
ABSENT: Gamez.
ABSTAIN: None.

Item 4B under Consent Calendar was moved to New Business 9A.

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

A. None

ACTIVITY REPORTS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS & COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Activity Reports:

1. Police Department Activity Report: Cecilio Velasco, Chief of Police.

Mayor Preciado asked if this time will be the first time the Police Department is fully staffed. Chief Velasco responded that they will be at 19 staff members. He also shared that there will be new information on the Community Engagement Team.

2. Fire Department Activity Report: Jacob S. McAfee, Fire Chief

Fire Chief McAfee presented his report as submitted. Mayor Preciado asked if there is a limit on the intern program. Fire Chief McAfee responded that there is no limit and that two of the interns who will hopefully join the City are from Avenal. Mayor Preciado also inquired about a mutual aid agreement with Avenal State Prison. Fire Chief McAfee stated there will be an update soon and that he is currently determining the best methods for mutual aid agreements, as he is also speaking with Fresno County Fire regarding wildland matters. Mayor Preciado asked if even the interns will get fit tested for PPE and SCBAs. Fire Chief McAfee responded yes, everyone on board will be fit tested and trained. Mayor Preciado also inquired about pulmonary tests for firefighters. Fire Chief McAfee responded that they will be working on a comprehensive medical exam.

3. Community Development Activity Report: Joshua McDonnell, Contract City Planner, 4Creeks.

Joshua McDonnell, 4Creeks Contract City Planner, presented report as submitted. Mayor Preciado inquired on pulling out of the Housing Element. Joshua's recommendation was that the City stay with the Multi-Jurisdictional Effort as it has been excellent working together and was put together quickly.

4. Economic Development & Grant Writing Report: John Basmajian, Governmental Affairs Manager, the CrisCom Company.

John Basmajian, Governmental Affairs Manager, presented his report as submitted. Councilmember Verdugo expressed concern regarding the California deficit affecting various grants. Basmajian responded that federal grants would not be affected, but state grants may be. He also added that other cities being in a deficit should not affect state grants. Mayor Preciado inquired if CrisCom will be in Washington, D.C., lobbying for grants. Basmajian stated he would double-check certain dates, but if Mayor Preciado is in Washington, CrisCom would be happy to set up meetings. City Manager, Antony V. López, shared information about the scheduled site visit to the water plant with Congressman Valadao on May 5th.

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.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Consider Amending Agreement with OpenGov to include Payroll Services (Resolution 2026-24). City Manager, Antony V. López and Finance Manager, Brian Arellano, explained the benefits to moving over to OpenGov for Payroll Services as all processes will be streamlined and reduce staff time. Mayor Preciado shared that it will also be easier at the time of audits if everything is in one place. Councilmember Verdugo inquired on how errors in payroll are handled or the system crashes. Charlie Hazelton, Open Gov Representative, shared they have quick responses and they will work with staff to ensure all employees are paid on time and they have never had that issue. Mayor Preciado asked Finance Manager Arellano how it has been with Open Gov. Arellano responded that he would rank them a 9 out of 10.

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa motioned approve Resolution 2026-24. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Hernandez and motion carried.

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

RESOLUTION 2026-24: CONSIDER ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH OPENGOV AND TIMECLOCK PLUS FOR PAYROLL SERVICES.

B. Consider Sublease for Nodal Power at the Avenal Regional Landfill (**Resolution 2026-25**): (Discussion/Action).

City Manager, Antony V. López, explained there was already a study session on this item prior with extensive questions answered, he also presented report as submitted. He also clarified that this resolution is for Nodal Power to be able to use the property and does not approve the full project. Mayor Preciado also shared some history to another project and shared that he will be open to the community asking questions. He also shared that it is a great project in regards to methane gas but the project is still at a preliminary stage. Councilmember Verdugo suggested there be another community meeting for this project to let residents ask more questions.

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa motioned approve Resolution 2026-25. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Hernandez and motion carried.

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

RESOLUTION 2026-25: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AVENAL AUTHORIZING A SUBLEASE AGREEMENT FOR NODAL POWER AT THE AVENAL REGIONAL LANDFILL.

C. Consider adopting a Resolution Authorizing Participation in the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System Chief McAfee (**Resolution 2026-26**): (Discussion/Action).

City Manager, Antony V. López, presented report as submitted.

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Hernandez motioned approve Resolution 2026-26. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa and motion carried.

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

RESOLUTION 2026-26: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AVENAL AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE CALIFORNIA FIRE AND RESCUE MUTUAL AID SYATEM AND DESIGNATING AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES.

D. Consider Approval of Job Descriptions for Avenal Fire Department, Chief McAfee (**Resolution 2026-27**): (Discussion/Action).

City Manager, Antony V. López, presented report as submitted.

Council Member/Successor Agency Member Reynosa motioned approve Resolution 2026-27. The motion was seconded by Council Member/Successor Agency Member Hernandez and motion carried.

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

RESOLUTION 2026-27: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AVENAL APPROVING FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING POSITIONS, ADOPTING JOB DESCRIPTIONS, AND ADOPTING A FIRE DEPARTMENT SALARY SCHEDULE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AVENAL FIRE DEPARTMENT.

City Council went into a recess at 8:51 P.M.

City Council went into Closed Session at 9:04 P.M.

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.

Assistant City Manager/Deputy City Clerk, Karla Curiel, shared information regarding tomorrow's E-Scooter Obstacle Course event at the Veterans Hall parking lot at 6:00 P.M., along with the Bike Rodeo by A&M Engineering at the APD Block Party. City Clerk, Angie Ortiz, stated she received some mail for Mayor Preciado. City Manager, Antony V. López, shared that he is proud to highlight individuals at the Old Timers' Day Festival.

Councilmember Reynosa shared that the Meet & Greet event with Fire Chief McAfee was very good. Councilmember Verdugo thanked District employees, staff, and Kings County Supervisor Richard Valle for their help with the water bottle distribution. He also shared that he would like to see agenda packets delivered Friday afternoons instead of Mondays. In addition, he shared that the Catholic Church will be offering breakfast Friday morning during Old Timers' Day weekend. He also inquired about the warranty on the 18-inch water line. City Manager López stated that it may have been a material defect. Regarding the warranty, there was only a one-year workmanship warranty, and the City continues to look at what options are available. Councilmember Verdugo also shared that various large cities in California are operating with budget deficits and stated he would like to see a budget report from the Finance Department. Councilmember Hernandez thanked community members who attend the meetings. Mayor Preciado shared that he has attended multiple meetings, including some regarding water projects. He also shared information about the City looking for additional water as it continues to grow.

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 EXISTING LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9(d)(1)).
Parties, case/claim no: *City of Avenal v. Lupe Villa, County of Kings, et al.,*
(Kings County Superior Court, **Case No. 26CU0106**)

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. **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: *City of Avenal v. County of Kings, John Chamberlin, et al.,*
(Kings County Superior Court, **Case No. 26CU0138**)

D. **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: *Center for Biological Diversity et al. v. United States Bureau of Reclamation, et al.* (United States District Court, **Case No. 1:20-cv-007606-DAD-EPG**).

E. **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: Ross Family Properties, LLC, v. City of Avenal

City Council came back from Closed Session at 9:25 P.M.

Legal Counsel Moses Diaz shared for item 11D, Council approved to continue appeal in joint litigation. He also shared for item 11A, Council motioned to authorize Legal Counsel Colantuono to proceed in Court of Appeal and/or Supreme Court if necessary.

ADJOURNMENT:

City Council meeting was adjourned at 9:28 P.M.

/s/ Karla Curiel
Karla Curiel, Deputy City Clerk