

MEETING MINUTES

The City Council/Successor Agency of the City of Firebaugh
Vol. No. 25-10-20

Location of Meeting: Andrew Firebaugh Community Center
1655 13th Street, Firebaugh, CA 93622

Date/Time: October 20, 2025/5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER Meeting was called to order by Mayor Valdez at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL Mayor Freddy Valdez
Mayor Pro Temp Silvia Renteria
Council Member Brady Jenkins
Council Member Felipe Perez
Council Member Elsa Lopez

ABSENT

OTHERS: City Attorney Christina Smith; City Manager, Ben Gallegos, Deputy City Clerk, Rita Lozano; Finance Director, Pio Martin; Acting Police Chief, Magda Martinez; Battalion Chief, Hector Marin; John Patlan, Fernando Campa, Raquel Tabares, Stephanie Gonzales, Dr. Carla Tweed, Wanda Breshears & others.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE *Council Mayor Valdez led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion to amend the agenda to remove agenda item #7, by Council Member Jenkins, seconded by Council Member Perez, motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

PRESENTATION

- *Swearing in Officer Victor Albarran and Officer Valentin Rodriguez*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Carla Tweed of West Hills College provided an update on Measure K, approved in the November election. It was a 25-million-dollar bond. The funds are to stay locally and can't be taken on by the state. I want to tell you what it means for Firebaugh. A Bond Oversight Meeting was held two weeks ago, and the committee was updated. To date, about \$5.1 million has been allocated, and funding has been used for campus security/cameras and security window screens in some of the rooms. We are currently installing turf and will be installing overhead tarps, so it is cooler when outdoor events take place. Also, completed classroom technology upgrades. The goal is to have solar, battery, and overhead parking, but these projects are taking longer; it will be going before the board within the next two months for approval, so we moved forward with the other projects first. Once the solar, battery, and parking get approved, it will be about an 18-month project.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Meeting Minutes from October 06, 2025.
2. WARRANT REGISTER – Period Starting September 01, ending September 30, 2025.

September 2025	General Warrants	#48236 - #48368	\$ 1,371,047.00
	Payroll Warrants	#72632 - #72662	\$ 269,472.58
		Total Warrants	\$ 1,640,519.58

Motion to approve the consent calendar by Council Member Jenkins, seconded by Council Member Lopez, the motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

3. **ORDINANCE NO. 25-04 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FIREBAUGH, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 16.5 OF THE FIREBAUGH MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING PUBLIC NUISANCE ABATEMENT – CONTINUED.**

The Public hearing opened at 6:11 pm - Stephanie Gonzales stated her **concerns about undue burdens on responsible property owners**: expressed that the proposed amendment, with new registration requirements, annual fees, fencing mandates, penalties, and potential liens, may unfairly impact property owners who already maintain their properties responsibly. **Request for data and impact studies**: She asks for clarification on the number of unresolved nuisance cases, the effectiveness of existing codes and enforcement tools, and the specific gaps the proposed amendment aims to address. **Implementation, monitoring, and accountability**: Emphasizing the need for a sunset clause, review periods, measurable metrics, annual reports, and clear communication to property owners about implementation deadlines, penalties, and fencing requirements. **Transparency in fee usage**: She requests clarity on how collected registration fees will be used, advocating for them to be directed toward enforcement and abatement activities rather than absorbed into the general fund. **Alternative approaches**: Gonzales suggests considering a targeted pilot program or tiered system for chronic problem properties and a trial period of enhanced enforcement under the existing ordinance before implementing tougher measures. – Hearing closed at 6:20 pm.

A Public Hearing Notice will be republished, and ordinance will be re-introduced for a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

4. **THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FIREBAUGH TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER THE POLICE CHIEF SALARY BRACKET AND ANY ADDED PERKS.**

The City Attorney reported that an amendment to the adopted budget and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required to adjust the salary scale. Accordingly, the MOU for unrepresented employees will need to be reopened for negotiations to incorporate the necessary amendments.

Motion to give staff direction to reopen the negotiations of the MOU to remove current first two steps of the police chief salary scale and add two steps at the end of the salary scale approved by the consensus of the Council.

5. **THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FIREBAUGH TO DISCUSS ALL CITY STAFF HAVING EMAILS.**

Mayor Pro Tem suggested that all employees should have city emails. Staff replied that only about 5 employees may not have city emails.

The consensus of the city council is to proceed with issuing all city employees official city emails.

6. **THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FIREBAUGH TO DISCUSS AN UPDATE ON ORDINANCE REGARDING HOMELESSNESS – UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS.**

Update on this matter: A Police Department staff member had been working on this ordinance, but was reassigned to other duties, and the matter has not yet been reassigned. The City Manager added that he expects the new Police Chief to continue working on the ordinance once they are hired.

7. **THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FIREBAUGH TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER THE FIREBAUGH CANTALOUPE ROUND UP AND ELECTRIC PARADE.**

Agenda item was pulled from the agenda.

STAFF REPORTS

- **Acting Police Chief Magda Martinez** – Nothing to report.
- **Battalion Chief, Hector Marin** – Nothing to be added to the submitted staff report.
- **Public Works Director/Fire Chief, Michael Molina** – City Cleanup is Oct. 20th to 25th from 7:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday – Friday, We had our first rain, so I want to provide an update on the pump station, water drains to the ponding basin or river. The Fire Department will be participating in Firebaugh Middle School's Truck or Treat on Oct 22, 2025, from 5 pm – 8 pm. Fire Department will hold a Truck or Treat on Oct. 31, 2025, with the Police Department between 6:30 pm -8:30 pm. Council Member Jenkins inquired about the repairs at the Water Park. Staff have received the parts/controllers but still need to do the repairs.
- **City Manager, Ben Gallegos** – Q Street is under budget, will request to add additional work at the middle school to Saipan, there are other sidewalks that need to be replaced, so if they let us do repairs because it's in the scope of the project we'll proceed. Will hold opening bids Thursday for the test Well project; the wastewater plant did go out to bid. The State made us wait, we had a meeting with them, and they said that if the project wasn't awarded by December, we would have to start the process over. Went to Sacramento, had a good meeting, met with the Upper San Joaquin Levee District to seek grant funding for repairs to the levees in our city. Some of the information they had was incorrect, so I was able to explain and show where the areas are issues, and tell them what the city needs. It would protect the wastewater plant, which will include a trail, and other project would be near the water plant., So they will be advocating for us with those projects.
- **Deputy City Clerk, Rita Lozano** – I want to sincerely thank everyone for their support and understanding during a very difficult time for me. It's been challenging trying to catch up on 8 months of work and still move forward at the same time. I'm grateful to be back on my feet and walking again. We were sure for a while, but I'm still continuing my recovery, so I kindly ask for a little patience as I transition back to work. I'm doing my best to get back up to speed.
- **Finance Director, Pio Martin** – Nothing to add to my report.
- **City Attorney, Christina Smith** – Will provide online training for AB 1234 – Ethics, Sexual Harassment, Brown Act, and Public Records Act on January 24th.
- **Council Member Perez** – reported Oct. 30, 2025, will be the last day of the market for this year.
- **Council Member Lopez** – I think there's a lot of confusion and anger regarding the vacant lot ordinance, so I recommend whatever we do, we do it right.
- **Council Member Jenkins** – Nothing to report.
- **Council Member Renteria** – reported a change to the Brown Act. Attorney replied she will be addressing and reporting the changes that will take effect July of 2026, which passed Oct 3, 2025. Council Member requested a list of training employees have received or attended and suggested looking into a company or software/system for online training and tracking so the city has a record of all the training the employees receive and improve the supervisor's job in making it easier. Change is hard, but I want change to improve the city and employee training. It would be beneficial to all departments, and the cost of the system for future budgeting purposes. It has been mentioned to the clerk that Keenan and Associates is a system my employer uses. The city could look into, so when the city gets new employees, and employees' leaving will be easier in tracking their training. Look into training for Code Enforcement, make sure all the new laws are updated, so there are companies that can assist the city with this issue. Asked staff to look into the cost of the services to start budgeting for them. It will be beneficial to the city, code enforcement officer, and helpful in court cases when doing it correctly.
- **City Attorney, Christina Smith** – Will provide online training for AB 1234 – Ethics, Sexual Harassment, Brown Act, and Public Records Act on January 24th.

- **Council Member Valdez** – Attended a League of Cities conference was a lot of work and networking, which helps us in bringing back all of these great ideas, and agrees with the Mayor Pro Tem that we need to start looking and moving forward to the employees can start doing their jobs successfully.

COUNCIL MEMBERS AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Valdez – would like to revisit how we rotate the mayor’s position and have the council decide or vote on the mayor, similar to how it is done in Mendota.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS ONLY

None

- ❖ ***Council Member Jenkins motioned to enter the closed session, which was seconded by Council Member Perez, motion passed by a 5-0 vote at 6:22 p.m.***

CLOSED SESSION

8. Government Code Section 54957

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE EVALUATION: City Manager.

- ❖ ***Council Member Jenkins motioned to enter the open session, which was seconded by Council Member Perez, motion passed by a 5-0 vote at 7:25 p.m.***

ANNOUNCEMENT AFTER CLOSED SESSION

No action is to be reported at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

- ❖ ***Motion to adjourn at 7:26 pm by Council Member Jenkins, and second by Council Member Perez, motion passed by a 5-0 vote.***