



Minutes

Lakewood City Council
Regular Meeting held
September 8, 2026

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 7:32 p.m. by Mayor Wood in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

INVOCATION was offered by Father Mina Ghebrial, Christ the Redeemer American Coptic Orthodox Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Scouting America Pack and Troop 371

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Jeff Wood
Vice Mayor David Arellano
Council Member Cassandra Chase
Council Member Todd Rogers
Council Member Rudy Villarreal

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA – None

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Mayor Wood 1) acknowledged the catastrophic flooding at the China/Nepal border and dangerous conditions in Long Beach and Seal Beach resulting from Hurricane Maria, extending condolences to those affected; 2) proclaimed September as a) National Preparedness Month, further highlighting the City's annual Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Expo to be held on September 26, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; and b) September 25, 2026, as Dolly Parton Day in the City of Lakewood; 3) remembered those lost in the September 11 terrorist attacks and recognized the courage of first responders and citizens, noting that the Annual Patriot Day Ceremony will be held on September 11, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.; 4) announced the new "Mosey with the Mayor: City Council + Community Connect" series, with the first event to be held on October 3, 2026, at Del Valle Park; and 5) reported on his attendance at a) Lakewood Center Summer Bingo Nights; b) Chalk the Walk at Cleveland Elementary; and c) the City of Cerritos' remembrance and moment of silence gathering honoring those impacted by the August 31, 1986, air crash.

Council Member Rogers 1) highlighted the Lakewood Education Foundation's annual golf tournament and noted that spots remain available; and 2) remembered those lost in the September 11 terrorist attacks, further recognizing the heroes who responded.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS – Continued

Vice Mayor Arellano 1) highlighted the a) grand opening of Orange Grill and thanked the Economic Development Department and CityTV for supporting the business community, further encouraging residents to shop locally and support small business owners; and b) City's Fall/Winter youth sports programs, including the inaugural girls' flag football season, further encouraging residents to enroll; and 2) thanked City Manager McCormack and Public Works staff for their work on the traffic calming pilot project and consideration of residents' feedback.

Council Member Villarreal 1) reported on his attendance at the California Contract Cities Association Fall Education Summit held on September 5-7, 2026; and 2) remembered those lost in the September 11 terrorist attacks, further thanking those who served.

ROUTINE ITEMS:

It was moved by Vice Mayor Arellano, seconded by Council Member Chase, and carried unanimously by the following roll call vote, to approve the balance of the actions stipulated on the Routine Items:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

- RI-1. Approval of Meeting Minutes held August 11 and August 25, 2026
- RI-2. Approval of Personnel Transactions Report
- RI-3. Approval of Registers of Demands
- RI-4. Approval of Conflict of Interest Code
- RI-5. Approval of AB1234 Report
- RI-6. Approval of Public Display of Fireworks – Lakewood High School
- RI-7. Approval of Subcontractor Substitution – Public Works Contract 22-07
- RI-8. Approval of Annual Streets and Alley Resurfacing and Traffic Calming Project Update
- RI-9. Approval of Subcontractor Substitution – Public Works Contract 23-01

1.1 Community Development Block Grant – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER).

For the record, 1) Mayor Wood introduced the item; and 2) Director of Community Development Cervantes provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Staff Report.

Mayor Wood opened the public hearing at 7:56 p.m. and called for anyone in the audience wishing to address the City Council on the matter.

For the record, City Clerk Wallace stated that no members of the public were participating remotely.

There being no one in the audience wishing to address the City Council on the matter, Mayor Wood closed the public hearing at 7:57 p.m.

It was moved by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Vice Mayor Arellano, and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, to 1) conduct a public hearing to solicit citizen comments on the City's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026); and 2) direct staff to take into consideration all comments received, submit those comments, if any, along with the CAPER to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

3.1 NEW CITY WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

Mayor Wood introduced the item.

Deputy City Manager Beltran 1) provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Staff Report; and 2) along with Public Information Specialist Davis, responded to Council Members' questions and comments.

At the request of Vice Mayor Arellano and Council Member Rogers, Deputy City Manager Beltran 1) stated that if approved by the City Council, GovStack could begin development of the site map and migration of the existing website pages within a few weeks, noting the new website is tentatively scheduled to launch by March 31, 2027; 2) confirmed that GovStack serves 475 city and county clients, including the City of Cerritos; and 3) explained that GovStack provides robust Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility tools, which would allow the City to realize cost savings by discontinuing services from various accessibility providers whose products would no longer be needed.

3.1 NEW CITY WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – Continued

In response to questions and comments provided by Mayor Wood, Deputy City Manager Beltran 1) stated that additional GovStack features include “Cludo” site search, Artificial Intelligence (AI) chat functionality to identify keywords and expand search parameters, and a full-featured calendar accessible to residents; and 2) confirmed that staff would conduct public outreach to inform residents about the new website.

For the record, and without objection, Mayor Wood requested a report related to the changes of the website be brought to the City Council for consideration prior to the launch of the website.

Following discussion, it was moved by Vice Mayor Arellano, seconded by Council Member Chase, and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, to 1) award the service agreement for the design, implementation, maintenance and support of a new City website and content management system to GovStack; and 2) authorize the Mayor to sign the five-year agreement with GovStack that begins in Fiscal Year 2027-2028, in a form approved by the City Attorney:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

3.2 CONSIDERATION OF A COMMUNITY CARD CUSTOMER AGREEMENT WITH YIFTEE, INC. FOR THE DISCOVER LAKEWOOD COMMUNITY CARD PROGRAM.

Mayor Wood introduced the item.

Director of Community Development Cervantes 1) provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Staff Report; and 2) along with City Manager McCormack, responded to Council Members’ questions and comments.

At the request of Council Member Rogers, Council Member Villarreal, and Mayor Wood, Director Cervantes 1) explained that between 15 and 18 local businesses have been identified as potential participating businesses, noting that a) staff and HdL Companies, the City’s consultant, will market the Program to local businesses and assist them through sign-up and launch, including providing on-site support as needed to ensure a smooth rollout; and b) cards are redeemable only at businesses that have signed up to participate in the Program; therefore, training of staff at participating businesses is vital; 2) stated that, if approved, the Program is tentatively scheduled to launch in October 2026 and that participation is free for merchants; and 3) confirmed that he will look into State law regulations regarding gift cards.

3.2 CONSIDERATION OF A COMMUNITY CARD CUSTOMER AGREEMENT WITH YIFTEE, INC. FOR THE DISCOVER LAKEWOOD COMMUNITY CARD PROGRAM – Continued

For the record, and without objection, Mayor Wood suggested that 1) the City establish meetings with local merchants to encourage participation; and 2) staff provide quarterly reports on the status of the Program to the City Council for consideration, in addition to providing a list of participating merchants by City Council District so the corresponding Council Member may visit the businesses.

Following brief discussion, in response to questions and comments from Vice Mayor Arellano and Council Member Chase, Director Cervantes 1) stated that the goal is to provide a shop-local incentive to Lakewood residents and businesses; and 2) explained that, at this time, participation by no more than 20 businesses is preferred; however, staff can return to the City Council at a later date with other strategies to increase the number of participating businesses.

For the record, Council Member Rogers stated that the City Council is also willing to assist in encouraging local businesses to participate in the Program.

Following discussion, it was moved by Mayor Wood, seconded by Council Member Villarreal, and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, to 1) approve the proposed Community Card Customer Agreement with Yiftee, Inc.; 2) authorize the City Manager to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City of Lakewood; and 3) authorize the City Manager to administer the Discover Lakewood Community Card Program, including entering into initial and subsequent BOGO campaigns via the Yiftee Community Card BOGO Campaign QuickStart Agreement, until Program funds are exhausted:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

3.3 FALL/WINTER PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

For the record, 1) Mayor Wood introduced the item; and 2) Director of Recreation and Community Services Frost provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Staff Report.

Following brief discussion, Vice Mayor Arellano and Mayor Wood thanked staff for their hard work and dedication to the community and highlighted the positive feedback received from residents regarding the Fall/Winter catalog.

For the record, and without objection, the report was received and filed.

LAKEWOOD HOUSING SUCCESSOR AGENCY

1 REGISTER OF DEMANDS

It was moved by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Council Member Chase, and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, to approve the register of demands:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Kay Ewing Donato, resident, 1) submitted written materials for the record; 2) expressed concerns regarding the presence of federal agents, including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, near polling locations, stating that election workers across the United States have faced threats and an investigation into conduct at polling locations has been ordered in Wyoming; and 3) questioned how the City will help ensure that every eligible voter can participate safely, freely, and without intimidation.

Bert Johnson, resident, relative to the City's Neighborhood Watch Program, 1) encouraged residents and Neighborhood Watch members to use their cell phones to report issues or matters of concern; 2) reported that he has contacted other Neighborhood Watch Captains and is compiling a list of their contact information, further requesting that the City Council encourage known Neighborhood Watch Captains to contact him so their information may be included; and 3) suggested that the City consider notifying the corresponding Neighborhood Watch Captain when a new resident moves into a neighborhood.

Susan Singer, resident, 1) thanked Kay Ewing Donato for addressing voting safety, expressing the opinion that voting safety for elderly and diverse residents is important; 2) expressed concerns about visiting vendors located within the City due to the presence of ICE; 3) thanked the City for its efforts to promote diversity and encouraged the City to prioritize safety for residents; and 4) noted the upcoming Jewish High Holidays, including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and wished the City Council and residents a happy and sweet New Year.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – Continued

Philip Norris, resident, 1) brought attention to a street takeover involving approximately 100 bicyclists at Los Coyotes Diagonal and Harvey Way; 2) expressed support for the development of bike lanes connecting to “Iron Pony Park”; 3) raised traffic safety concerns regarding evening programs held at Monroe Elementary School; 4) questioned whether the City has considered hiring its own police officers to supplement Sheriff’s Department services, noting that approximately 70 Long Beach police officers may be laid off, which could present an opportunity for recruitment; 5) stated that he used artificial intelligence (AI) to review crime information and found that a block from his residence was identified as an “extreme area”, further questioning whether the City uses AI to analyze crime statistics; 6) expressed concern with the implementation of AI and the City’s new website, stating he hopes it does not affect the residents’ ability to research City ordinances; 7) questioned whether the City’s proposed Community Card program would affect discounts or participation by non-City youth sports organizations, noting that Lakewood schools and youth sports organizations have previously used community discount cards; and 8) requested that the City place additional emphasis on recreation programs for “Alpha Sports”.

Justin Clayton, resident, 1) introduced himself as a candidate for Los Angeles Superior Court Judge, Office Number 65; 2) stated that he is a Los Angeles native and described his experience as a public defender, including supervising misdemeanor and felony attorneys; 3) described his service as Deputy in Charge of the Los Angeles County Public Defender’s Office in Inglewood and his work with justice partners who contribute to the functioning of the court system; 4) identified himself as a community servant and expressed appreciation for the City’s recreation programs, noting that he is a coach for youth sports in his community; and 5) stated that he shares values with the City of Lakewood and, if elected, would preside over courts that impact Lakewood residents, further encouraging residents to vote on November 3, 2026.

Teddy Lloyd, resident, 1) reported that Congressman Robert Garcia commented that the City will have pickleball courts at Bloomfield Park, further expressing enthusiasm regarding the project; 2) suggested that the City a) provide the public with information regarding the anticipated timeline for construction of the pickleball courts at Bloomfield Park; and b) review the implementation of pickleball courts in the Cities of Cypress and Irvine for potential guidance; and 3) offered to provide residents with guidance regarding college applications.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Wood adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m. to Saturday, September 12, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Executive Board Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakota Wallace, CMC
City Clerk