

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Meeting Minutes Special Meeting January 31, 2026

1. WELCOME (MAYOR KLEIMAN) – 9:00 a.m.

Call the Meeting to Order

Present: Mayor Lauren Kleiman, Mayor Pro Tem Noah Blom, Councilmember Michelle Barto, Councilmember Robyn Grant, Councilmember Joe Stapleton, Councilmember Sara J. Weber, Councilmember Erik Weigand

Invocation – Councilmember Barto

Pledge of Allegiance – Councilmember Grant

2. UPDATE ON FINANCIAL STATUS AND BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

City staff will provide an update on the City's fiscal status and a preliminary outlook for City revenues and anticipated expenditures that will be used to develop the FY 2026-27 budget.

City Manager Seimone Jurjis opened the meeting, emphasizing the importance of having a planning session to set priorities for the year.

Administrative Services Director Jason Al-Imam referenced a PowerPoint presentation and presented the financial overview for fiscal year 2026-27, based on the City's 20-year long-range financial forecast.

Councilmember Stapleton sought clarification on the TOT figures, confirming that the \$40 million gross includes about \$7 million paid to Visit Newport Beach, netting approximately \$33 million.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dennis Bress complimented the City's fiscal health.

Jim Mosher sought clarification regarding calculated revenues within the presentation.

Administrative Services Director Al-Imam explained that the remaining 30% comes from other revenue sources like fees for services.

3. CITY INITIATIVES

City staff will provide an update and seek guidance on department initiatives, including crime prevention and public safety priorities, technology and communications improvements, harbor operations and management, and resiliency improvements.

City Manager Jurjis briefly reviewed the City's resiliency program and listed potential areas of improvement.

Police Chief Dave Miner provided a background on crime prevention, public safety initiatives, detailed staff augmentation efforts, and Fourth of July preparations.

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Councilmember Stapleton expressed concern about increased activity, especially on Balboa Peninsula during the spring break season.

Police Chief Miner emphasized the importance of advanced community outreach and education prior to busy seasons.

Councilmember Weigand appreciated the updates, supported the mobile booking station concept and advocated for improving animal shelter accessibility.

Councilmember Grant expressed strong support for reevaluating animal shelter operations and supported extending short-term lodging reforms and restrictions beyond Fourth of July.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dennis Bress suggested using social media to highlight the successful implementation of Flock cameras.

Virginia Anders Elmore thanked staff for addressing emergency evacuation routes and expressed concerns regarding potential flooding.

Adam Leverenz suggested considering police substations.

Lee Pearl noted the significant increase in visitation to Balboa Island during the holiday season.

Jaylee Hillcabaugh requested regulations limiting vehicle idling.

Scott O'Brien, Jack and Allen thanked the police department for their work and suggested extending police presence on beaches past 10:00 p.m.

Councilmember Barto suggested enhancing enforcement regulations related to vehicle noise.

Mayor Pro Tem Blom complimented police department efforts and fully supported staff recommendations.

Councilmember Barto congratulated the police department's recent crime reduction efforts.

Mayor Kleiman expressed full support for all recommendations, supported updating signage at Corona del Mar to reflect current code changes, welcomed the animal shelter potentially moving to Recreation & Senior Services, along with police taking over park patrol and parking enforcement.

Assistant City Manager Tara Finnigan highlighted the City's AI implementation program, social media initiatives, and introduced new Public Information Manager Georgia Rios.

Harbormaster Paul Blank presented a plan to provide services directly to the Balboa Yacht Basin Marina.

Mayor Pro Tem Blom thanked staff for the strategic approach and supported moving forward.

In response to Councilmember Grant's question regarding revisioning the area, City Manager Jurjis explained that staff would return in 6 months with details.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nancy Gardner suggested improved notification regarding details of special meetings.

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Adam Leverenz appreciated paper meeting materials, requested more information regarding marina improvements, and noted concerns with AI.

Jim Mosher inquired about the City website redesign timeline and whether the public would preview the new design before launch.

In response to Mayor Kleiman's question, City Manager Jurjis noted that public can complete a City website survey and staff will return with an update.

4. UPDATES ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECTS

City staff will provide an update on advanced planning projects such as Corona del Mar commercial corridor study, Newport Coast local coastal program, kicking off the 7th Cycle Housing Element, customer service improvements, and supporting development.

Community Development Director Jaime Murillo highlighted that the department has maintained a 95% customer satisfaction rate, noted the future expansion of permitting software, and reviewed the general plan update completion process. He also listed plans for wireless streamlining, CdM corridor improvements, Newport Coast LCP amendments, and 7th Cycle Housing Element preparations.

Councilmember Grant noted the importance of considering ways to manage additional housing mandates, emphasized the need for affordable workforce housing, and requested staff explore ways to prioritize public employees for affordable units.

Councilmember Weigand appreciated the department's customer service focus and noted the importance of Mayor Kleiman's position on SCAG and OCCOG as it relates to the next RHNA cycle.

Mayor Pro Tem Blom praised staff for their innovation and efficiency.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nancy Gardner spoke regarding providing senior and workforce housing.

Lee Pearl praised recent staff promotions within the City.

Adam Leverenz offered thoughts on affordable housing and the LCP process.

Dennis Bress thought workforce housing is vitally important and highlighted public transportation including the trolley.

Jim Mosher commented on the CdM improvements and sought clarification regarding the number of affordable housing units required moving forward.

5. UPDATES ON PUBLIC WORKS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

City staff will provide an update on staffing improvements and updates on some major projects such as lower castaways and the police station and discuss the development of the FY26-27 Capital Improvement (CIP).

Public Works Director Dave Webb explained future staff augmentation plans and highlighted several future projects and program cost adjustments.

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Councilmember Grant questioned mitigation costs related to the police station project and looked forward to future updates on Lower Castaways Park.

Councilmember Weigand strongly supported the police station at the Civic Center and was supportive of a passive park concept for Lower Castaways.

Councilmember Stapleton was supportive of the police station, commented on the immense historic value of Lower Castaways Park and emphasized the need to fully activate the site.

Councilmember Barto prioritized the police station and noted some passive design elements for the park.

Councilmember Weber strongly advocated for the police station at the Civic Center and expressed excitement for moving forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Blom supported funding the police station and fire station projects and envisioned a vibrant downtown at the Civic Center.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dennis Bress commented on the Lower Castaways Park and expressed excitement for relocation of the police station.

Adam Leverenz suggested collaborating closely with the Irvine Company when planning site use for Lower Castaways Park.

Bernie Svalstad asked Council to consider a permanent location for the Balboa Island Museum.

Jim Mosher supported the preservation of open space at Newport Center.

Debbie Stephens stated she preferred keeping a park at the Civic Center.

Mayor Kleiman strongly supported the police station at the Civic Center, future relocation of the fire station, and suggested deferring action on Lower Castaways pending formal ad hoc committee recommendations.

Council unanimously supported funding police and fire station projects. Approved by a straw vote of 7-0-0.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Dennis Bress announced a successful decrease in the noise originating from John Wayne Airport into Newport Beach, emphasizing the concept of high and slow, quiet.

Virginia Anders Elmore expressed concern regarding offshore drilling.

Lee Pearl presented Balboa Island's annual wish list based on a community survey.

Jim Mosher thanked staff for posting the presentation online in advance and providing paper copies for the audience to follow along.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

The agenda was posted on the City's website and on the City Hall electronic bulletin board located in the entrance of the City Council Chambers at 100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach, on January 29, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Lauren Kleiman
Mayor

Lena Shumway
City Clerk

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