



ADJOURNED REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 – MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER – The Closed Session meeting was called to order by Mayor Stephens at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Buley, Council Member Marr (Arrived at 5:02 p.m.), Council Member Pettis, Council Member Reynolds (Arrived at 5:02 p.m.), Mayor Pro Tem Chavez, and Mayor Stephens.

Absent: Council Gameros.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – NONE.

CLOSED SESSION ITEMS:

1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - INITIATION OF LITIGATION – FOUR CASES

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)(4), Potential Litigation.

2. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)(1)

Name of Case: RDK Group Holdings, LLC v. City of Costa Mesa,
Orange County Superior Court Case No. 30 2025 0149581 CU WM WJC.

3. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)(1)

Name of Case: City of Costa Mesa v. Pacific Shores Recovery, LLC, et al.,
Orange County Superior Court Case No. 30-2019-01100581-CU-OR-NJC.

City Council recessed at 5:02 p.m. for Closed Session.

Closed Session adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER - The Adjourned Regular Meeting of the City Council and Housing Authority was called to order by Mayor Stephens at 6:02 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Mayor Stephens.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Buley, Council Member Gameros, Council Member Marr, Council Member Pettis, Council Member Reynolds, Mayor Pro Tem Chavez, and Mayor Stephens.

Absent: None.

CITY ATTORNEY CLOSED SESSION REPORT – Ms. Hall Barlow reported on potential litigation on four cases, motion by Council Member Buley and seconded by Council Member Marr to authorize staff to initiate litigation in all four matters listed in Closed Session item number 1.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Stephens recused himself from New Business item No. 1 due to a potential conflict of interest, due to campaign contributions received from the Apartment Associations and the decision on this item could indirectly affect them. Mayor Pro Tem Chavez assumed the role as presiding officer in his absence.

1. UPDATE ON SUPPORT SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE FOR RESIDENTS AND TRACKING OF AT-FAULT EVICTIONS

Presentation by Ms. Reyes, Deputy City Manager, Mr. Escobar, Management Analyst, and Mr. Barkman, Government Affairs Manager.

Council Member Buley questioned the action taken at the August 5, 2025 Council Meeting regarding the allocation of \$100,000 to two non-profit organizations.

Ms. Hall Barlow, City Attorney, responded that the item had been properly agendaized but recommended that the City Council ratify the decision through a motion.

Public Comments:

Christian Lopez, Resilience Orange County, spoke in support of a rental registry and tracking of all evictions, urged the City Council to support tenant rights and housing stability, prevent unlawful evictions, requested landlords to provide advance notice to tenants, and establish clear procedures.

Perry Cliffero, spoke in support of a rental registry.

Victor Valladares, Resilience Orange County, spoke in support of a rental registry.

Roberto Herrera, Resilience Orange County, spoke on immigration enforcement/actions and its impact on evictions, requested to require the eviction notice prior to the eviction, advocated to provide the city more time to review and intervene, and spoke in support of a rental registry.

Brook Gray, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of a rental registry and tracking no-fault evictions.

Margaret Sharp, spoke in support of a rental registry and tracking no-fault evictions as well as rental assistance.

Speaker, advised the City Council to conduct exploratory work regarding a rental registry and expressed support of tracking data, emphasizing being mindful about the data collected.

Shawn Drexler, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of a rental registry.

Juana Trejo, Promotoras de Salud de Orange County, spoke on the funds that helped individuals pay their rent and assist with medical treatments. Spoke on abandoned apartments, stated constituents are living in fear and are not reporting crimes due to fear of being detained. Thanked the City Council for not being part of the systemic violence and for everything they have done.

Speaker, spoke against a rental registry.

Priscilla Baltezar, Costa Mesa, thanked the City Council for the \$100,000 donation, helping the community, and spoke in support of a rental registry.

Speaker, spoke in support of a rental registry.

Carmen Ramirez, spoke on how members of the community are unjustly being evicted and in support of a rental registry.

Speaker, Costa Mesa, thanked the City Council for the donation but requested to increase allocation for housing, food, and legal expenses, spoke in support of a rental registry, requested the Council to contract with an experienced immigration law firm and spoke in favor of the City joining the Perdomo case.

Blanca Ministerio, Costa Mesa, spoke on rent hikes, fear in the community, a situation where her son and husband were kicked off a soccer field and questioned the accessibility to parks and fields in the City.

Ashley Anderson, Costa Mesa, spoke on public safety concerns, rents and supports a rental registry.

Veronica Rios, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of rent control legislation and thanked the City Council on behalf of the Shalimar community for everything that has been done.

Speaker, expressed support for rent control legislation and advocates for protecting Latino communities facing evictions and unfair rental practices.

Speaker, expressed concern about overpromising to constituents and the potential duplication of services by hiring staff for issues already addressed by established organizations. Recommended the City appoint a liaison to collaborate with these organizations and help direct constituents to the most appropriate resources.

MOVED/SECOND: Council Member Reynolds/Council Member Marr

MOTION: Update the tenant protection ordinance to require notice of any eviction, for staff to develop a proposal for a Costa Mesa rental registry modeled after the City of Santa Ana's rental registry (minus the rental cap), and establish a Network for Renters' Solutions; modeled after Costa Mesa's Network for Homeless Solutions (NHS) with a focus on improving outreach communication to the renter/landlord population and help identify and propose solutions for key renter/landlord challenges.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Council Member Gameros, Council Member Marr, Council Member Reynolds and Mayor Pro Tem Chavez.

Nays: Council Member Buley and Council Member Pettis.

Absent: None.

Abstain: Mayor Stephens.

Motion carried: 4-2

ACTION:

1. City Council requested staff to update the tenant protection ordinance to require notice of any eviction.
2. Directed staff to develop a proposal for a Costa Mesa rental registry modeled after the City of Santa Ana's rental registry (minus the rental cap).
3. Directed staff to establish a Network for Renters' Solutions modeled after Costa Mesa's Network for Homeless Solutions (NHS) with a focus on improving outreach communication to the renter/landlord population and help identify and propose solutions for key renter/landlord challenges.

Mayor Stephens returned to the dais at 7:46 p.m.

MOVED/SECOND: Mayor Stephens/Mayor Pro Tem Chavez

MOTION: Ratify the decision from the August 5, 2025 City Council Meeting to donate \$100,000 to two local non-profit organizations, Enough for All Fund (\$50,000) and Someone Cares Soup Kitchen (\$50,000).

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Council Member Gameros, Council Member Marr, Council Member Reynolds, Mayor Pro Tem Chavez, and Mayor Stephens.

Nays: Council Member Buley and Council Member Pettis

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried: 5-2

ACTION:

City Council ratified decision from the August 5 Council Meeting to donate \$100,000 to two local non-profit organizations, Enough for All Fund (\$50,000) and Someone Cares

Soup Kitchen (\$50,000).

2. UPDATE ON OPTIONS FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR RESIDENTS AND POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN LAWSUIT CHALLENGING ROAMING IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT PATROLS

Presentation by Ms. Hall Barlow, City Attorney.

Public Comments:

Betsy Desmore, Costa Mesa, spoke on the contribution and benefit of immigrants in the community/economy, requested City Council support with at least \$200,000 in assistance, and creation of an advisory committee formed of community members, and provided copies of the most recent customs and immigration forms and fees.

Roberto Herrera, Resilience Orange County, spoke in support of joining the Perdomo case, legal assistance, and prioritizing Costa Mesa residents, and spoke on the latest Supreme Court ruling.

Speaker, Party for Socialism and Liberations, spoke on the recent ICE U-Haul incident in Costa Mesa, the latest Supreme Court ruling, and in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Perry Cliffero, spoke on a past political event attended at the Pacific Amphitheater and in support of a legal defense fund.

Speakers, Costa Mesa, spoke together in support of a legal defense fund.

Speaker, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Jackie Gomez, Changing Hearts and Minds of Youth (CHAMOY), spoke in support for a legal defense fund and a rental registry.

Speaker, Santa Ana, spoke in support of a legal defense fund.

Itzel Ibarra, Yahaira Aguilar, Kevin Gonzalez, Changing Hearts and Minds of Youth (CHAMOY), spoke on impacts of immigration enforcements.

Speaker, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Speaker, Costa Mesa, thanked the City Council who supported the \$100,000 donation and spoke in support of joining the Perdomo case and a legal defense fund, requesting \$400,000 from Council.

Garrett Rincon, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Emily Glanton, Costa Mesa, thanked the City Council who supported the \$100,000 donation, spoke on the recent ICE U-Haul incident in Costa Mesa and spoke in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Shawn Drexler, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Speaker, spoke on the City's reserve funds, support of a legal defense fund, requesting \$400,000 in funds, and in support of joining the Perdomo case.

Speaker, Orange County Rapid Response Network, spoke on Costa Mesa's history regarding communities of color, and in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Speaker, Costa Mesa, spoke in support of a legal defense fund; specifically for Costa Mesa families affected by immigration enforcement, and supports joining the Perdomo case.

Juana Trejo, spoke on efforts with Mayor Pro Tem Chavez of assisting families with drafting Power of Attorney letters in case of family separation, the fear the community is facing, and praised the City Council's leadership.

Melissa Shepard, The Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef), spoke on services and resources of ImmDef and in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Priscilla Baltezar, Costa Mesa, thanked the City Council for the \$100,000 donation, rental registry, and spoke in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Hallie Stohler, spoke in support of a legal defense fund and joining the Perdomo case.

Speaker, spoke against funding a legal defense fund.

MOVED/SECOND: Mayor Stephens/Mayor Pro Tem Chavez

MOTION: Approve the creation of a legal defense fund in the amount of \$200,000, direct staff to enter into an agreement with The Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) as primary provider, and the Public Law Center as the secondary provider. Include that the fund would benefit Costa Mesa residents (including those detained outside the City), individuals detained within Costa Mesa, and City staff and their families. Authorize the fund to be open for public donations and for staff to provide a report upon the fund reaching \$50,000, outlining expenditures to date, and assessing the need for additional funding for City Council discussion and allocation. Lastly, sign on to Amicus Brief in the case of Perdomo, et al. v. Noem, et al.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Council Member Gameros, Council Member Marr, Council Member Reynolds, Mayor Pro Tem Chavez, and Mayor Stephens.

Nays: Council Member Buley and Council Member Pettis

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Motion carried: 5-2

ACTION:

1. City Council approved the creation of a legal defense fund in the amount of \$200,000.
2. Directed staff to enter into an agreement with The Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) as primary provider, and the Public Law Center as the secondary provider.
3. Specified that the fund would benefit Costa Mesa residents (including those detained outside the City), individuals detained within Costa Mesa, and City staff and their families.
4. Authorized the fund to be open for public donations.
5. Directed staff to provide a report upon the fund reaching \$50,000, outlining expenditures to date, and accessing the need for additional funding for City Council discussion and allocation.
6. Directed staff to sign on to the Amicus Brief in the case of Perdomo, et al. v. Noem, et al., United States District Court for the Central District of California, Case No. 2:25-cv-05605-MEMF-SP.

ADJOURNMENT – Mayor Stephens adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Minutes adopted on this 7th day of October, 2025.

John Stephens, Mayor

ATTEST:

Brenda Green, City Clerk

DRAFT