



**CITY OF LATHROP
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025, 5:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL
390 Towne Centre Drive, Lathrop, CA 95330**

MINUTES

PLEASE NOTE: There was no Closed Session prior to the Special Meeting. The Special Meeting commenced at 5:09 p.m.

1. PRELIMINARY

1.1 CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Akinjo called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

1.2 ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Akinjo; Vice Mayor Torres-O’Callaghan;
and Councilmembers Diallo and Lazard.

Absent: None

1.3 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – City Clerk Teresa Vargas led the pledge of allegiance.

2. SCHEDULED ITEMS(S)

2.1 APPOINTMENT OF CITY COUNCIL VACANCY

Director of Government Services and City Clerk Teresa Vargas provided the presentation, which included a summary of the appointment process to fill the City Council vacancy and provided the list of City Council applications received. The list of candidates considered for the vacancy as listed on the agenda, in alphabetical order by last name, first name:

- Camarena, Paul
- Dresser, Stephen
- Fazel, Mansoor
- Majid, Fadwah
- Mariam, Padma
- Zaca, Susan

A question and answer period ensued following the presentation. City Attorney Salvador Navarrete provided additional information.

The following in person speakers spoke in support of appointing Stephen Dresser, as the applicant and City Council Municipal Election Candidate with the next highest number of votes: Sheilla Zaballos, Larry Belfield, Carole Friesen, Craig Heise, Stephen (Steve) Dresser, Mike Doughty,

Rosy Gill, Gloryanna Rhodes, Bennie Gatto, and Jimmy Zien. The following speakers spoke in support of appointing applicant Padma Mariam: Anoop Srivastava, Pranita Madhaorao, Ravinder Kumar, and Om Prakash. City Clerk Teresa Vargas announced a public comment letter received by Greg Leland in support of appointing Stephen Dresser, as the applicant and City Council Municipal Election Candidate with the next highest number of votes.

The question and answer period continued. The City Council discussed the option of appointing with and without asking the applicants questions. Councilmember Lazard spoke in support of appointing a candidate. Councilmember Diallo and Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan spoke in support of asking candidates questions prior to considering an appointment. Mayor Akinjo spoke in support of appointing applicant Stephen Dresser.

MOTION FAILED by Mayor Akinjo, and seconded by Councilmember Lazard, to appoint Stephen Dresser, due to lack of third affirmative vote:

Ayes: Lazard and Akinjo
Noes: Diallo and Torres-O'Callaghan
Absent: None
Abstain: None

On a motion by Councilmember Diallo, second by Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan, the City Council provided direction to move forward with asking questions of the applicants.

Ayes: Diallo Lazard and Torres-O'Callaghan
Noes: Akinjo
Absent: None
Abstain: None

MOTION FAILED by Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan to ask the eight (8) provided on the applicant questionnaire, due to lack of second.

On a motion by Councilmember Diallo, second by Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan, the City Council provided direction to move forward with asking questions #2, #4, #5, and #8 of the applicant questionnaire.

Ayes: Diallo Lazard and Torres-O'Callaghan
Noes: Akinjo
Absent: None
Abstain: None

MOTION FAILED by Councilmember Diallo, seconded by Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan, to rank candidates based on a ranking system, in which each question will have a point value (1 being the lowest to 5 being the highest score), due to lack of third affirmative vote:

Ayes: Diallo and Torres-O'Callaghan
Noes: Lazard and Akinjo
Absent: None
Abstain: None

MOTION FAILED by Councilmember Diallo, seconded by Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan, to rank candidates based overall best performance – no ranking system, due to lack of third affirmative vote:

Ayes: Diallo and Torres-O'Callaghan
Noes: Lazard and Akinjo
Absent: None
Abstain: None

MOTION FAILED by Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan, seconded by Councilmember Diallo, to ask candidates questions in a random order (name draw) for each question asked, due to lack of third affirmative vote:

Ayes: Diallo and Torres-O'Callaghan
Noes: Lazard and Akinjo
Absent: None
Abstain: None

MOTION FAILED by Councilmember Diallo, seconded by Vice Mayor Torres-O'Callaghan, to ask candidates questions in a random order (name draw) for the entire process, due to lack of third affirmative vote:

Ayes: Diallo and Torres-O'Callaghan
Noes: Lazard and Akinjo
Absent: None
Abstain: None

City Attorney Salvador Navarrete explained that consensus was already received to move forward with asking four of the eight questions, and at the conclusion of the question and answer period with the candidates, the City Council could entertain new motions. Mr. Navarrete also recommended that each applicant receive the customary 5 minutes to speak.

Based on said City Council consensus (prior vote), the following questions were asked in the order listed below (as listed on the agenda and rotating applicants with each question):

Question No. 2. *Please tell us about your interest in serving on the City Council. Additionally, if you did not run for Council in the 2024 Election, what made you apply now?*

Candidate Order: Paul Camarena, Stephen Dresser, Mansoor Fazel, Fadwah Majid, Padma Mariam, and Susan Zaca.

During applicant Fadwah Majid's turn to speak, the applicant withdrew her application citing support for the candidate with the next highest votes during the most recent Municipal Election.

Question No. 4. *What do you consider the top/most important issue or challenge facing the City of Lathrop today?*

Candidate Order: Stephen Dresser, Mansoor Fazel, Padma Mariam, Susan Zaca and Paul Camarena.

Question No. 5. *What is your vision for Lathrop in the next ten years, or how would you like to see Lathrop ten years from now?*

Candidate Order: Mansoor Fazel, Padma Mariam, Susan Zaca, Paul Camarena, and Stephen Dresser.

Question No. 8. *Council has a referral process by which Council Members may bring new items for Council consideration. Please give an example of a referral item you might consider proposing to Council. Explain why this is important to you?*

Candidate Order: Padma Mariam, Susan Zaca, Paul Camarena, Stephen Dresser and Mansoor Fazel.

At the conclusion of the question and answer period, the City Council commented on the candidate interviews. The City Council reviewed candidate applications submitted, asked questions of the candidates as indicated above, and considered the appointment of a candidate for the City Council vacancy.

On a motion by Councilmember Diallo, seconded by Councilmember Lazard, the City Council appointed Stephen (Steve) Dresser to fill the City Council vacancy until the next regularly scheduled Municipal Election to be Held November 3, 2026, by the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Diallo, Lazard, Torres-O'Callaghan and Akinjo
Noes:	None
Absent:	None
Abstain:	None

City Clerk Teresa Vargas announced that appointed Council Member Stephen Dresser would receive his Oath of Office prior to the Regular City Council Meeting of January 13, 2025.

3. **ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Mayor Akinjo adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.



Teresa Vargas, MMC
Government Services Director
City Clerk