

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE CULVER CITY  
STANDING GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CULVER CITY STANDING GOVERNANCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

August 6, 2025  
3:00 p.m.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Council Member Fish called the regular meeting of the Standing Governance Subcommittee of the City Council to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Dan Patacchia Conference Room at City Hall.

Present: Bubba Fish, Council Member  
Yasmine-Imani McMorris, Council Member

Staff Present: Shelly Wolfberg, Assistant to the City Manager  
Christina Burrows, Deputy City Attorney  
Lisa Soghor, Chief Financial Officer  
Elizabeth Shavelson, Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Jeremy Bocchino, City Clerk  
T'Ana Allen, Deputy City Clerk

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Fish led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**Public Comment – Items NOT On The Agenda**

Council Member Fish invited public comment.

Shelly Wolfberg, Assistant to the City Manager, reported that no requests to speak had been received.

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#### **Receipt of Correspondence**

Shelly Wolfberg, Assistant to the City Manager, indicated that no correspondence had been received.

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#### **Consent Calendar Items**

Item C-1

#### **Approval of Minutes of the Special Standing Governance Subcommittee Meeting Held on July 8, 2025**

MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MCMORRIN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER FISH AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE STANDING GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL STANDING GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JULY 8, 2025.

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#### **Order of the Agenda**

No changes were made.

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#### **Action Items**

Item A-1

#### **Presentation and Discussion of Public Participation in the City Budget Process**

Council Member Fish introduced the item; discussed consideration at the last meeting; and timing.

Michelle Dennis, Public Democracy Los Angeles, provided background on herself; noted a request at the last meeting for a presentation on easily implemented changes to improve Culver City's budget process; discussed research; the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) Rethinking Budgeting Initiative; foundational themes; applicability to

the Culver City process; her active participation in the 2025-2026 Culver City budget process; suggestions to increase transparency and budget participation that could achieve goals; staff workload; slight adjustments to the timeline of the budget process and release of documents to the City Council and the public; providing a question and answer (Q&A) session about the facts presented in the mid-year budget report upon its release to replace one of the current CFO (Chief Financial Officer) presentations; holding the Q&A session before City Council consideration of the item; allowing time for consideration; holding the Q&A session on a Saturday when people can attend; use of the time not to debate policy but instead to become grounded in the facts of the budget report; meetings between department heads and residents during the October-February time period to have conversations on what the department does, current work plans, and what residents want the department to work on during the next fiscal year; baseline projections; establishing a context for work plans; allowing for more substantive discussion and engagement with the public; holding a public Q&A session with the CFO when the proposed budget becomes available; the budget deadline; budget study sessions; defining success; providing increased clarity and transparency; and encouraging people to participate in dealing with the substance of the budget.

Discussion ensued between Ms. Dennis, staff, and Subcommittee Members regarding appreciation for the presentation; feasibility; tracking participation since workshops have been implemented; time required to review the large document; opportunities to provide information to help the public understand the massive document; specific interests of the residents who usually participate; constructive work to move the City in a certain direction rather than confrontation; the work of staff to find out what the public wants and needs and then deliver services; timing the budget information sessions currently being held; the new proposal for the first session to consider the mid-year budget report one week before the mid-year budget action item at the City Council meeting to allow time for review; asking questions during the information session rather than advocating or debating items; and taking steps to make information more reasonably available and answer questions beforehand.

Council Member Fish invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Jeanne Black noted the value in providing an additional Q&A session; discussed the difference in public hearings vs. allowing for public exchange; opportunity for public engagement; work plans as an important source of information; concern with variations in work plans; and improvement of work plans.

Phil Lelyveld expressed appreciation for the presentation; discussed supply and demand; the need for increased engagement; creation of a statistically valid study of all Culver City citizens; taking a random sample in order to come up with a representative section of the City; asking people what would motivate them to attend a Q&A session; concern with having the same voices heard over and over again; and the importance of getting people's attention.

Discussion ensued between Ms. Dennis, staff, and Subcommittee Members regarding appreciation for the reasonable suggestions provided; setting the stage at the Q&A sessions with a presentation; providing context; the ten-year forecast; inviting questions; holding the session on a Saturday; providing childcare; taking a public approach; learning through the process; demystifying the budget for the public; providing key facts and allowing questions regarding details; allowing residents to meet with department heads at Vets to share information about things that are important to them and create a connection; engaging in friendly discussion; heading off potential confrontation; money already allocated for a survey; feedback regarding work plans; data; engaging in more of a focused performance measurement program; pre-planning; altering the culture; educating staff; the new City Manager; tying work plan presentations to the goals of the General Plan; defining what will be delivered and how life for residents will be improved; tying work plans to strategic priorities that were drafted to align with the General Plan; PRCS (Parks, Recreation, and Community Services) work plans tied to increased youth participation; other departments with goals that are more vague; shifting the perspective to deliver what the citizens want to know and see; being clear with delivering outcomes and outputs; focused performance; next steps; and review by the full City Council.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee

Members regarding the importance of citizen participation; ensuring that the community is responsive; providing accountability, transparency, and a high level of service; the shorter-term adjustment that can be added if feasible and if staff is amenable; appreciation for the willingness to start the workshops and information sessions; meeting the community where they are; being responsive to all the needs of the community; support for the Q&A sessions; partnership with the Communications Officer for promotion; providing an Eventbrite; working with community partners; impacts of the budget on everyone; allowing the opportunity for connection; sharing consistent information between departments; providing a way to capture feedback from community members; humanizing what goes on in the City to the benefit of the community; and a suggestion to provide a fact sheet or highlights to give people a quick overview of where the City is with links or directions to find additional information.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding appreciation for all of the work of the CFO; support for the suggestions; and engagement in the mid-year budget report.

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#### **Recess/Reconvene**

The Standing City Council Governance Subcommittee took a brief recess from 3:51 p.m. to 3:55 p.m.

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Item A-1  
(Continued)

#### **Presentation and Discussion of Public Participation in the City Budget Process**

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding providing options for holding sessions during times when members of the public are available; identification of necessary resources to move forward; support for standardizing work plan presentations; vast differences between departments; citing strategic initiatives; establishing smart goals; differing metrics; application of measurable goals to the work plan

presentations; looking at what motivates people to be involved in the City; finding out how to accommodate people to give them a voice; ensuring the surveys educate those who take them; valuable information that can be gleaned from surveys; money set aside for the survey; having those planning to engage in the civic assembly process participate in the budget process as part of their education; and creation of a Back to the City Day.

Further discussion ensued between Ms. Dennis, staff, and Subcommittee Members regarding the process; the timeline; paying residents to participate; lived experience of the process; length of an RFP (Request for Proposal) process; City Council consideration and direction; providing input into the discussion; and appreciation to staff and the public for helping build the process.

Ms. Dennis expressed appreciation for the kind reception and suggestions made, and was excited to move forward.

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Item A-2

**Discussion of the Annual Election of Mayor and Vice Mayor and the Biennial Induction of New Council Members**

Shelly Wolfberg, Assistant to the City Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding items that come up and end up getting added to the agenda for the meeting that is supposed to be dedicated to the induction of new Council Members and election of the Mayor and Vice Mayor; the ability to call a special meeting for other agenda items; practices of westside cities for off election years; difficult items ready to be heard but not a lot of meeting space to hear them; getting more City business done; requirements of the City Charter; ceremonial swearing in; appointment; making guests wait until late at night to see people sworn in; time that could be used to do more City business; making a separate day; the practice of holding off on action items until January to allow time for new Council Members to get up to speed; adding a special meeting between the first November meeting and first December meeting; the ability to amend the Charter; clarification that the vote for

Mayor and Vice Mayor and having new Members take their seats must occur at the December meeting; challenges with the many holidays at that time of year; holding a separate ceremonial swearing in celebration; having the vote separate from the induction; Council policy; providing a recommendation from the Subcommittee to the City Council to propose a special meeting to take care of additional items; the resolution amending the calendar of regular City Council meetings set for the year; the ability to amend the resolution; holding a special meeting; making things better moving forward; adding a meeting in perpetuity to designate the December meeting to be put aside purely for the ceremonial changing of the City Council; options for working within what the Charter allows; examination on a year by year basis when the calendar is proposed; the goal to find a permanent solution rather than going on a case-by-case basis; people who want to provide comment once they are seated; scheduling an earlier meeting start; consideration of an update to the Charter; length of time to process changes; time stipulated in the Charter for review; and agreement to agendize a conversation about potential revision of the Charter.

Council Member Fish invited public comment.

Shelly Wolfberg, Assistant to the City Manager, reported that no requests to speak had been received.

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#### **Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)**

Phil Lelyveld discussed a market research firm referenced in Item A-1; experience with municipal surveys; unbiased data collection that is statistically accurate; the iterative process; providing direction to what is wanted; wording of the questionnaire; concern with introducing internalized bias; and the fact that every question has a cost attached to it.

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#### **Items from Members/Staff**

Jeremy Bocchino, City Clerk, reported that election ballots had been mailed and were being returned noting that locked boxes and cameras were everywhere for surveillance.

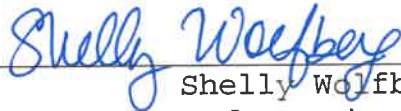
Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding upcoming agenda items; election financing and transparency; campaign disclosures; campaign ads registered with Culver City; amount of money spent per candidate and per PAC (Political Action Committee); public financing; Democracy vouchers; matching funds; limits on self-funding; the Charter Amendment; and date of the next meeting.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 5:45 p.m., the Standing Governance Subcommittee of the City Council adjourned to October 8, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

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Shelly Wolfberg

SECRETARY of the Culver City Standing Governance  
Subcommittee of the City Council, Culver City, California

APPROVED



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Bryan "Bubba" Fish

COUNCIL MEMBER, Standing Governance Subcommittee of the  
City Council, Culver City, California