

CITY OF WESTMORLAND

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: February 4, 2026
FROM: Laura Bryant
SUBJECT: Staff Report – Part-Time Manager

Grants Awarded

1) Public Safety Building:

Congressional Funding has been approved for \$1M and USDA Disaster Relief Grant for Public Safety Building \$2.7 M for a total of \$3,837,500.

The press release is attached for your review. I will be sending it out for publication after the meeting.

2) SCAG REAP Grant-Downtown Overlay Project

Information is provided in the agenda packet.

3) Expedited Drinking Water Grant (EDWG).

Update: I completed the Request for Bid Solicitation form, Self Certification Form, Budget Projections, Rate Study, audited financial statements and a related debt letter to the Water Board last week.

Previous Info: The Water Board approved including all of the items we requested into the EDWG grant, which will increase our grant amount significantly. Additionally, we asked that some discretionary funds be released so we could update our design and plans to include the new items in the plans. These funds were released. The Holt Group, our engineers and construction management team, are working on updating the design and specs with the updated components and we expect to be ready to bid the construction project in April. The bidding of the project has to be timed with the approval of the water rate increase being prepared by our consultants LT.

4) PHLA Grant

Update: I submitted the grant application for two years. Working with ILG Boost program we have developed the implementation plan. Once the grant is approved, we will bring more information to Council.

Previous Info: I have been working with ILG Boost representatives to prepare and submit a PHLA grant which will provide some funding to home owners who need assistance with accessibility in their home. The grant application is ready to submit and I will be working to develop the scope and guidelines for the project. We should be ready to start the program within the next six months.

5) CMAQ Sidewalk Improvements

Update: Ramiro has the lead on this project. We are meeting on Tuesday prior to the meeting with The Holt Group to get a status update.

Previous Info: The city has hired The Holt Group to prepare designs for the CMAQ sidewalk improvement project with funding through the Imperial County Transportation Commission. Ramiro is the lead on this project, but I will be helping him with tracking finances and reporting.

6) Water – Drought Relief Funding of new filter at Water Plant and pipeline installation on 7th Street - \$2.9 M

On the agenda for this meeting.

This is Mr. Hamby's project and he just received word that the final reports have been submitted and accepted. The final payment has been issued by the State and Mr. Hamby will have a final report for City Council acceptance at the next meeting.

Grants Submitted – Waiting Notification

7) AB 617 – Paving Projects -1st Street, 7th Street and City Hall Parking

Update: Ramiro and I attended the AB617 meeting last week. The committee will be visiting the proposed grant improvement sites and will award at the next meeting. There is about \$4M in funding available with over \$11M grant applications received.

Previous Info: We put together a team to work on these applications and submitted them to APCD. We received word that the applications were accepted. The AB617 committee will be meeting next week to review the applications. Ramiro and I will be at that meeting to encourage the committee to select Westmorland applications.

Finance:

8) Rate Study.

Update: On the agenda for this meeting.

Staff has been working with LT Municipal Consultants to develop our rate study. Staff is working with our consultants and our attorney to get the notifications prepared and mailed.

9) Public Safety ½ Cent Sales Tax.

Update: I received word that all 25 years of submittals are under review.

We have received a total of \$58,646 for three years. I have prepared and submitted several documents and forms required to apply for our Public Safety ½ Cent Sales Tax from 2001 through 2026.

10) Auditors and Accountants.

Update: I have been putting a lot of time and effort into getting our accounts in order for the audit. W2 reports are completed and sent to staff.

Previous Info: Staff is working with our accounting firm to get our trial balances submitted.

Other administrative items in the works.

- RDA ROPS

Update: The City's ROPS were accepted and approved by the Oversight board on 1/23/26.

- Park Design – Community Outreach

Update: We provided the QR Code in the utility bill for this month and we hope to get more results. We will report back at our next meeting.

Previous Info: I prepared a QR code to gather input from the community during the Honey Festival. The results will be shared at the meeting tomorrow.

Hours worked.

My timecard submitted on 1/26/2026 reported 62 hours worked.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Bryant

House Passes \$6 Million in Funding for Coachella Valley, Imperial County Projects

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed two spending bills that would direct more than \$6 million to California's 25th Congressional District, according to Rep. Raul Ruiz's office.

The bills, H.R. 6938 and H.R. 5371, now move to the Senate for consideration. If approved, the funding would support three projects: flood infrastructure in Cathedral City, dust reduction efforts near the Salton Sea, and a new public safety building in Westmorland.

The largest allocation—about \$4 million—would go to the Bombay Beach Project, an effort by Audubon California to restore 560 acres of wetlands at the Salton Sea while reducing airborne dust near the town of Bombay Beach. The project also includes plans for public recreation access. Cathedral City's Coachella Valley Water District would receive roughly \$1.1 million for a regional stormwater channel connecting areas north of Interstate 10 to the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel. The project aims to reduce flooding risk for homes in the area.

The City of Westmorland in Imperial County would receive about \$1.1 million to construct a combined fire and police station.

February 4, 2026

Contact: Laura Bryant, 760-344-3411, lbryant@CityOfWestmorland.net



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**City of Westmorland Awarded \$2.73 Million USDA Grant and \$1.1 Million
Congressionally Directed Community Project Funding to Establish New
Emergency Operations Center for Fire and Police**

WESTMORLAND, CA MThe U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service has awarded the City of Westmorland a \$2,737,500 grant under the Community Facilities Loans and Grants program. Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz just announced that the City of Westmorland was awarded and additional \$1.1 Million grant through Congressionally Directed Spending Community Project Funds.

The City will use the grant funds, totaling \$3,837,500, to remodel an existing building and construct additional facilities to establish a new Emergency Operations Center that will house the city's fire and police departments.

The current fire department building is in extreme violation of current codes and standards. Fire Department personnel are currently housed in reused FEMA trailers, which serve as both housing and office space for the volunteer fire department and standby firefighters. The Police Department is currently operating out of a 500-square-foot single room at City Hall, where officers conduct bookings, bookings, and all other police operations. There are no interview rooms, evidence lockers, or facilities for detainees.

After Tropical Storm Hilary in 2023, our fire department was damaged beyond repair. The city has an urgent need to upgrade our emergency response capabilities to protect the community from future disasters, said Westmorland Mayor Justina Ytina Cruz. This is truly a life-changing amount of funding for our small city, and we are grateful to the USDA and Congressman Ruiz for recognizing our need and selecting us for these grants.

According to Edgar O. Ortega, the grant manager for the Community Facilities Loans and Grants Program in Imperial County, USDA Rural Development chose this project because it reflects the heart of rural resilience: neighbors looking out for one another and investing in the spaces that keep everyone safe.

This project is about more than repairing a building. It's about giving Westmorland families peace of mind. A new fire station means faster response times, safer working conditions for

Firefighters, and a stronger foundation for the community to face future emergencies together," said Ortega. "By supporting Westmorland, we're helping ensure that the community has the tools it needs to protect lives, homes, and the future of this proud town."

The recently authorized Congressionally Directed Community Project Funds from Congressman Raul RuizPorte secured an additional \$1.1 Million that will allow the City of Westmorland to fund planned phase which will expand and improve the Police Department facilities at the new Emergency Operations Center. The Emergency Operations Center will house both the Police and Fire Departments:

- The project site will leverage an existing commercial building at 198 E. 3rd Street.
- The additional Congressional funding will ensure improvement are made so that the police department can relocate to the new facility with safe and modern amenities.
- The project will add new construction on adjacent city-owned parcels, which will serve as the Fire Department station living quarters and apparatus bays.
- The project will also add parking and sidewalks to support the new function.

The Institute for Local Government (ILG) is a nonprofit organization that supports local government agencies throughout California. ILG assisted Westmorland with writing the grant, as part of its BOOST Imperial Valley technical assistance program. BOOST is a public-private partnership between ILG, the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC), and community-based organizations to foster infrastructure and community investments in Imperial Valley.

The ILG team has been phenomenal in bringing needed capacity and expertise to help the city secure and implement these grants," said Westmorland City Manager Laura Bryant. "We value their close partnership, including leading the environmental review process and conducting outreach to secure match funding."

The City anticipates breaking ground on the project soon and will offer occasional updates to the public through reports during City Council meetings held the first and third Wednesday of every month.

About the City of Westmorland

The City of Westmorland was incorporated in 1934, and has a population of approximately 2,400 residents. Westmorland is located in the fertile Imperial Valley in Southeastern California, 12 miles south of the Salton Sea and 31 miles north of Mexicali, Mexico. It is a small residential community that sits along state Highway 86, a major highway and transportation corridor. Visit the City's website at www.cityofwestmorland.net for more information.

##

WESTMORLAND PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

