

## **Email Templates**

### **Email (AJC Template)**

As a representative of AJC (American Jewish Committee) Northern California, I am deeply concerned by the consideration of a resolution concerning the Israel-Hamas war at the meeting of the Redwood City Council. Here are just a few reasons to vote no on considering any resolution related to the Israel-Hamas war:

- 1) Resolutions like this have caused harm and sowed division in every city where they have been considered; the public comments on the resolution will inevitably elicit extreme and antisemitic opinions that will create strife in the community (even if the resolution is not passed.)
- 2) Such resolutions do nothing to further the cause of peace either in a geopolitical conflict halfway around the world or here in our community.
- 3) Similar resolutions in Richmond and Oakland fomented hateful rhetoric, promoted antisemitic conspiracy theories, and caused the Jewish members of those communities to feel unsafe there.

## Email 1

Dear Foster City Council,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I have been a resident of Foster City for almost 8 years. I am also a registered and conscientious voter. I am writing to comment on Agenda item 12.1 on today's Foster City Council Meeting Agenda: Request to Place an Item on a Future Agenda by Councilmember Sam Hindi Regarding Resolution for Ceasefire in Gaza and Release of Hostages.

I am imploring of the City Council NOT to bring this Resolution to a future agenda.

When we vote in our city elections we are voting for our representatives who will address local city issues, and not comment on foreign affairs. This resolution has no place in the purview of the city council.

Many of us are heartbroken about the ongoing tragedy and devastation in Gaza and in Israel- many in the community are affected personally. The pain is real as is the worry and angst about our families living in the region. However, it is NOT for the Foster City council to "call for a ceasefire" especially when this is an empty declaration: How will this be enforced? How will you guarantee that Hamas does not execute another Oct 7 as they have promised to do "again and again"? These are real questions requiring serious deliberation and not to be taken up by a city council on the opposite side of the globe.

The resolution will not stop the war nor will it result in Hamas' release of the hostages. The resolution will, however, sow division among our community and will leave a significant segment of your constituents feeling alienated and scared. We have seen the vitriol that has resulted in other Bay Area cities that have brought such resolutions to their councils. Please don't bring this atmosphere to Foster City. It will seriously affect my family's and many others' perception of where we fit in the community.

Please also understand that a rejection of this resolution is NOT a disregard of the suffering.

Please deny Mr Hindi's request to place his resolution on any future agenda.

## **Email 2**

Foster City Council Members,

I'm writing to ask you to please not move forward with Sam Hindi's "ceasefire" resolution this evening. No good can come from continuing on this path. As Foster City leaders, you cannot possibly have any impact on the war in the Middle East. But debating this highly volatile issue here will sow hatred and division locally. It will invite agitators into our city to spread their campaign of intimidation and terror on our Jewish and Palestinian residents. I think most of us are hurting for the innocent victims on both sides of this war and would like nothing more than to see permanent peace in the Middle East. But this resolution will only cause unnecessary division in Foster City.

Foster City's Council is elected to serve Foster City. A resolution taking sides in a war between two other countries is far beyond the scope of your duties. As a Foster City resident of more than 30 years, I urge you to please continue to focus on local priorities and to promote opportunities that bring our diverse population together not divide us. Please let this cease-fire resolution end here and not move forward for a vote.

Thank you,

### **Email 3**

Dear Mayor Sullivan, Councilmember Jimenez, Councilmember Froomin, Councilmember Hindi, and Councilmember Kiesel,

I am a resident of San Mateo. However, I am writing to you as a member of the Board of Trustees of two Jewish community institutions in Foster City: Wornick Jewish Day School and Peninsula Sinai Congregation. Foster City is where my children go to school and our family comes to worship. I would like to kindly ask that this council not advance the proposed resolution in item 12.1 to a future council agenda.

I appreciate the complex nature of the discussions around a ceasefire and the release of hostages, understanding that opinions on the matter may vary. I feel the suffering in the region deeply. I have family there, as I know many in Foster City do, and I understand the need for lasting peace and security for everyone involved. These are nuanced and difficult issues of foreign policy that affect residents of Foster City who hold the region in their hearts every day. However, as we engage in these important conversations, I urge you to consider the primary focus of our city's business. The scope of your city's responsibilities lies in local governance, community well-being, and the prosperity of Foster City.

While global issues are undoubtedly important, I believe your primary duty is to address matters directly impacting our residents and local affairs. As you deliberate on moving the resolution to the January agenda, I encourage you to keep our city's core business in mind. *Choosing not to move this resolution forward does not mean you do not care for those suffering in this war.*

Thank you for your time and dedication to the betterment of Foster City. I know you will do the right thing and choose not to advance this resolution. In refusing to do so you will join like-minded colleagues in cities like Berkeley, Pinole, Petaluma, San Jose, and San Leandro who rejected even bringing resolutions to their council chambers and stood on the side of local issues. You are not alone, and we support you.

With sincere gratitude for your commitment to public service,

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P.S. There is no better way to get a sense of the scope of city government than by calling the main phone number for City Hall. These are the core functions of local government, according to the directory of the phone number for City Hall. Notice there is no "Department of State" listed:

For finance, water, sewer billing, business licenses or accounts payable press "1"

For building permits, inspections, home remodeling, code enforcement, the community development department, press "2"

For public works engineering, encroachment permits, garbage, recycling, street lights, traffic signals, water or sewer leaks, press "3"

For communications and City Clerk press "4"

For the Mayor and City council press "5"

For Human Resources press "6"

For Parks and Recreation and City Events press "7"

For Police press "8"

For Fire press "9"

#### **Email 4**

Mayor Sullivan, Councilmember Jiminez, Councilmember Froomin, Councilmember Hindi, and Councilmember Kiesel,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I serve as the Chief Jewish Experience Officer of the Peninsula Jewish Community Center in Foster City and have been a rabbi on the Peninsula for 15 years. As the only JCC in San Mateo County, I can share that a primary aspect of our mission is to build relationships and bridges of understanding across segments of the community, as evidenced by over 70% of our preschool, camp and after-care program students coming from non-Jewish backgrounds, who have chosen to be in our inclusive and loving environment, and a similar number of fitness center members who choose to be part of our community as they improve their well-being. Education, fellowship, and personal relationships tend to be our tactics, and I welcome any members of the Council or other civic leaders to join us.

Two months into the war between Israel and Hamas, "cease-fire resolutions" throughout the Bay Area now have a very charged and dangerous veil over them. Not only can you expect this process to bring non-residents to bully at the coming meetings, but the public comment periods truly unleash vitriol that damages our community deeply. Our large Jewish and Israeli community in Foster City and the surrounding cities is filled with residents who have close family and friends who were, on the October 7th attacks, savagely murdered, taken hostage, survived, were missing for weeks, and internally displaced. As a community rabbi I am pastorally holding scores and scores of these stories, and we are working tirelessly to create a safe environment for traumatized individuals. Creating a process towards a resolution in Foster City undermines our resident's ability to safely grieve, process the ongoing impact of October 7th, and work to build positive relationships with others.

Through interfaith relationships and activities, such as Peninsula Multifaith Coalition's MLK Jr Day of Service that brings together over 500 community members for projects throughout Foster City and the surrounding area, we have a much better chance at reaching the outcomes our Council seeks, of doing good for humanity by strengthening and honoring our commonalities.

All of this said, City Council responsibilities lie in the work of local governance. There is so much work to be done in supporting and improving the issues facing our city and community and the councils' efforts are most effective when they are focused here in Foster City.

As you deliberate on moving the resolution to the January agenda, I urge you to discontinue the process of exploring this resolution, for the physical and psychological safety of the Foster City residents and community. Thank you for doing the right thing and voting no on advancing this resolution. Shalom.

## **Email 5**

Dear Redwood City Council members,

I am a local resident with deep ties to Redwood City. I urge you to reject outside attempts to adopt divisive ceasefire resolutions or any other resolutions about the Israel-Hamas War.

As antisemitism continues to escalate in the Bay Area, the introduction of one-sided resolutions about the Israel-Hamas War will only further inflame tensions for the already traumatized Jewish and Muslim communities and create an escalation in hatred.

As the whole country witnessed in Oakland and Richmond, the consideration of these divisive resolutions results in hours of public comment plagued by antisemitic jeering and hateful conspiracy theories and misinformation.

Ceasefire means different things to different people. I think most everyone would like peace, but there is deep disagreement about the best way that should be achieved. Previous ceasefires over the past decade have been broken again and again by Hamas with rocket attacks at Israel's civilian population centers. Hamas is a terrorist organization which has in its charter the death and destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

There's a sad absurdity to all of this. It's my understanding that people from all over the Bay Area (and beyond?) have been emailing you to pressure Redwood City to agendize a ceasefire resolution. Somebody from San Francisco or Oakland, or anywhere without an intimate tie to Redwood City really, shouldn't have any standing on Redwood City local matters. Similarly, Redwood City should have no input on international affairs. It's my deeply held belief that Israel is defending itself against the horrific genocide by Hamas, as is Israel's right as a sovereign nation. October 7th was a real attempted genocide that occurred with the gleeful and indiscriminate murder and raping by Hamas of men, women, and children. Every civilian hostage that Hamas took on October 7th is a war crime. [Every rocket Hamas fires](#) at Israel's civilian population centers (12K and counting) is a war crime. Hamas uses Gazan civilians as human shields and hides among its civilian population, storing rockets and weapons in hospitals, schools and mosques -- all of these actions are war crimes. In spite of my deeply held beliefs, I wouldn't ask for you to consider a resolution asking for Hamas' unconditional surrender and return of hostages or one condemning Hamas and its sadistic and countless war crimes. Similarly, these resolutions would be outside the local government's purview and don't serve Redwood City residents. There's so much pain and divisiveness right now. People crave city council resolutions as a proxy to feel some agency for expressing personal and deeply held political opinions to support their side in this horrific war that Hamas started.

If a resolution related to an international conflict is considered, it will divide the community further; no amount of local debate is going to resolve this issue. Please take the courageous step of focusing your efforts on local Redwood City policies and not entertaining divisive foreign policy based resolutions. During this time of rising hate and antisemitism, I'm asking you to lead with empathy and ensure all local residents feel supported and welcomed.

Thank you for your compassion and understanding.

Respectfully,

## **Email 6**

Dear Mayor Gee, Vice Mayor Espinoza-Garnica, Councilmember Aguirre, Councilmember Eakin, Councilmember Martinez Saballos, Councilmember Sturken, and Councilmember Howard,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. In addition to living in Redwood City since 2022 and being part of a 5th generation San Francisco Bay Area family, I have worked as a rabbi on the Peninsula for over 15 years. I currently serve as the Chief Jewish Experience Officer of the Peninsula Jewish Community Center (PJCC) in Foster City, the JCC serving all of San Mateo County.

A primary aspect of our PJCC mission is to build relationships and bridges of understanding across segments of the community, as evidenced by over 70% of our preschool, camp and after-care program students coming from non-Jewish backgrounds, who have chosen to be in our inclusive and loving environment, and a similar number of fitness center members who choose to be part of our community as they improve their well-being. Our values include "welcoming all," "wholeness of body and spirit," "repairing the world," and "community of family and friends." Education, fellowship, and personal relationships tend to be our tactics, and I welcome any members of the Council or other civic leaders to join us.

Almost three months into the war between Israel and Hamas, "cease-fire resolutions" throughout the Bay Area now have a very charged and dangerous veil over them. Not only can you expect this process to bring non-residents to bully at the coming meetings, but the public comment periods truly unleash vitriol that damages our community deeply. Our large Jewish and Israeli community in Redwood City and the surrounding cities is filled with residents who have close family and friends who were, on the October 7th attacks, savagely murdered, taken hostage, survived, were missing for weeks, and internally displaced. As a community rabbi I am pastorally holding scores and scores of these stories, and working tirelessly to create a safe environment for traumatized individuals. Deliberating on a process towards a resolution in Redwood City undermines our resident's ability to safely grieve, process the ongoing impact of October 7th and the losses of this war, and work to build positive relationships with others from different perspectives and narratives.

Through interfaith relationships and activities, such as [Peninsula Multifaith Coalition's MLK Jr Day of Service](#) that brings together over 500 community members for projects throughout the Peninsula, we have a much better chance at reaching the outcomes our Council seeks, of doing good for humanity by strengthening and honoring our commonalities.

Having lived through this process in the past few weeks in Foster City where I work, I can attest that it is one of the most divisive experiences I have ever had, leading to fear, mistrust, and broken bonds between community members.

None of us want war. My Jewish tradition calls for peaceful coexistence whenever possible and has myriads of intricacies on how to fight a just war when absolutely necessary. However, what I want even less than war is for our City Council to inadvertently give a public platform for anti-Israel folks and organizations to intimidate the Jewish community with hateful speech. You might visit the AROC and CAIR websites to get a sense of the intensity of these plans.

Until the day after the Foster City meeting, the AROC site showed all the city council meetings where they wanted their followers to show up and protest. At the Foster City meeting we heard an array of language that included calling Jewish community members "pro-genocide", "greedy", "wanting beachfront property in Gaza," "baby-killers" and more. You can easily access the video recording of that meeting to hear first-hand, and watch the last 20 minutes (1:10-1:30am!) to hear the Councilmembers' final reflections.

All of this said, City Council responsibilities lie in the work of local governance. There is so much work to be done in supporting and improving the issues facing our city and community and the Council's efforts are most effective when they are focused here in Redwood City. Additionally, your foreign policy platforms were not shared with the voters or included in your mandate as Council members.

As you deliberate on discussing the proposal of a resolution during the January agenda, I urge you to discontinue the exploration of this resolution - publicly or privately - for the physical and psychological safety of the Redwood City residents and community. Thank you for doing the right thing and not engaging in this divisive process. Shalom.

Thank you,

**Email 7:**

Dear Alameda City Council,

I am a [X-year] resident of Alameda. [Alternatively, I am a Bay Area citizen who visits Alameda.] I am disheartened to learn that Item 10-D on the January 2 City Council Agenda is a letter demanding a change to U.S. foreign policy regarding the Hamas - Israel War.

First, city councils are not elected to speak on behalf of their communities regarding foreign policy. Further, there is more than one morally reasonable response to the ongoing war.

I understand that Alameda City Council, like other local governments, has been deluged by activists demanding a local response to foreign affairs. Most of the people who have spoken in Alameda have made inflammatory comments, claiming Israel is an "apartheid state carrying out a genocide." By placing the issue on the official agenda, Mayor Ashcraft has fanned the flames of these lies.

It is heartbreaking that those activists were praised for their rhetoric by the mayor. Ethical leadership requires you to reject this letter's referral to the Council and to reject the contents of the letter. It is our duty as Americans to support our democratic allies in the fight against terrorism. Further, the only way for government to be effective is for each level of government to focus on the issues within its purview.

Of course, the loss of innocent lives anywhere is painful. It horrifies me that Hamas chose to start this war, continues to hold hostages, and hides behind the civilians of Gaza. I pray for peace.

We won't solve international crises in the Alameda City Council. The only thing Item 10-D on the January 2nd agenda accomplishes is increasing division locally by legitimizing hateful rhetoric.

Sincerely,

[Jane Q. Citizen]

## **Email 8**

Dear Mayor Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Daysog & Council Members Vella, Spencer & Jensen:

The horrible human cost of the events of the last three months in Israel and Gaza have touched us all. We join in the widespread striving for peace and tolerance and hope for a negotiated settlement.

Everyone wants the killings, injuries, and destruction to end, but there are many very strongly held opinions as to how we get there while still respecting the existential rights of both Israelis and Palestinians. Those groups that have reached a consensus as to the resolution of the conflict are certainly acting appropriately expressing their views to our federal officials. However, there is no demonstrated consensus of Alamedans. Therefore, we believe that it would be inappropriate for a representative of our city government to publish an argument that would be presented as representing the opinion of the majority of our citizens.

You must also consider the emotional toll suffered by many of our residents in having this item on the Council agenda and subjected to public comment. For the City Council to be speaking for the entire community in advocating only one point of view on a subject upon which there is no citywide consensus and is clearly beyond its subject matter jurisdiction simply creates more division and pain in the community.

Both Jews and Muslims are feeling physically threatened by the radical views on the issue expressed by antisemites and Islamophobes. Since late November, the City has excluded online public comments on Council meeting non-agenda matters with the express purpose of cleansing them of the expression of the radical statements that have been made at post Oct. 7 Council meetings. Yet the Mayor's referral places the issue on the regular agenda and thus open for online public comment, which may cause these very hateful comments to occur again.

The major negative impact of this referral will occur when it is opened for public comment before an overflow in-person and online audience on Jan. 2. Therefore, notwithstanding our respect for the Mayor's sincere views on this matter, we urge her to reconsider and remove her referral from the agenda. If it is not removed, we strongly encourage you to reject Item 10-D.

Sincerely,

ACT Board of Directors

## **Email 9**

Dear council members,

I live in Redwood City for over 10 years. My kids attended Sandpiper and North Star academy and a daycare in Redwood City. I love our peaceful homeland. I spend my free weekends in down town Redwood City, enjoying the music, the food and the atmosphere. I feel safe sending my kids to hang out with their friends. I feel safe. I feel safe as of today.

I know many city councils are forced to adopt a ceasefire resolution and there is so much deviousness in city halls now. It also brings a lot of antisemitism after each similar meeting. Oakland adopted the resolution and episodes of antisemitism went all the way highest. We can not change what is happening hundreds miles away. But we can surely destroy peace that we have in our local cities. Our local government is elected to help people locally to have safer lives, not to bring more divide and hate into our community.

Some people get manipulated into bringing this resolution for a vote by questioning their humanity. Please do not be a victim of such manipulation. You are not denying humanity by not letting ceasefire resolution to be adopted. You are choosing hate free environment in our city.

And in addition please remember that there are still 129 hostages, including 2 kids, and many wounded people, in Hamas hands. There are over 1200 people who were brutally killed by Hamas by burning them alive, beheading, gang raping. One baby was burned in the oven. Alive. While his mom was watching tied up and could do nothing. All documented by Hamas go pro cameras. Hamas promising to repeat those attacks again and again until state of Israel is destroyed.

Please remember that we voted for you only knowing your experience with local issues, not a foreign policy. We trust you to concentrate on local issues and keep our city safe, antisemitism free and hate free.

In addition I will share with you a link to a real footage from the Hamas atrocities.



October 2023  
[hamas-massacre.net](https://www.hamas-massacre.net)

New York Times article on sexual violence



'Screams Without Words': How  
 Hamas Weaponized Sexual  
 Violence on Oct. 7  
[nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)

And a book that might be interesting to any of you who wants to learn about history of the land :

The Case for Israel <https://a.co/d/4NUcOjH>

I ask you to please vote only on local issues and keep our community safe.

Respectfully and with hope to keep our city hate free,

## **Email 10**

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and Councilmembers:

Since I retired from teaching at AHS and leading the Alameda Education Association, I've missed participating in Alameda affairs (I live in Oakland), but I did want to reach out about the Israel-Hamas resolution you are considering.

There are many reasons for a city council not to weigh in on this matter, and here are mine: I urge this body not to consider a ceasefire resolution.

I attended both the Alameda County Central Democratic Committee's and the Oakland City Council's hearing on such resolutions, and it was absolutely heartbreaking. Not because reasonable people were reasonably debating a complex issue, but because the hearings were simply forums for hatred.

I sat through hours of people heckling rabbis, laughing at Jewish community leaders, shouting social media memes that Zionists are evil; that Jews have all the money, that Israel, not Hamas, raped, killed and mutilated its own people; that Jews aren't Semites and have no connection to the Holy Land; that Hamas is a powerless, benign force, etc. And Zoom attendees? Some had swastika backgrounds and dollar sign backgrounds. I saw few people modeling the peace they were advocating for.

When I sought to share my talking points about Hamas (five facts from Palestinian sources) with a red-headed, freckle-faced young man, he accepted my paper and tore it up. Then laughed at me.

It broke my heart: I've always assumed that speaking face-to-face, human-to-human can move us from positions to shared interests. Not in a mob, it appears. The atmosphere in the room was akin, honestly, to a Trump rally with people chanting, "Lock her up! Lock her up!" It was a mob drunken with righteousness.

This is what you will be inviting to the City of Alameda (and beyond) if you put a ceasefire resolution on. Is this what you want? Is this the wise way forward for sweet Alameda?

The history of the Holy Land is complex and complicated — it is a history of battle and strife, as it's an ancient trade-route crossroad. Did you know the term "Armageddon" comes from a plain in central Israel called Meggido, next to a mountain the word for which in Aramaic and Hebrew is har. "Har Meggido" was the name of this plain where important trade routes crossed. Hellish, gruesome clashes between ancient tribes broke out often enough that, by the time of the Christian Bible, the name had become equated with the end of the world.

The last 75 years of history, since the establishment of the State of Israel, is a product of that long, fractious history. Without this Body understanding all that history, to wade into the debate, no matter how noble a desire, will add to, not lessen hatreds.

I would absolutely encourage this body to aid the path to local peace around this war. Creating a space where the local Jewish and Muslim leaders can speak to each other and share each others' pain, perhaps? Or a forum where people of all faiths who want to listen to each other and replicate the peace we all presumably want, perhaps?

But a resolution that changes nothing in the actual war, and creates a forum for hatred here at home, I would urge, is neither wise politics nor wise humanity.

Thank you so much for your time,

**Published Letters to the Editor**

<https://alamedapost.com/op-ed/letters-editor-12-29-2023/>

**Email 11**

**Dear Redwood City City Council Member,**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a Board Member of Congregation Beth Jacob - a Jewish synagogue located in Redwood City (RWC). I have lived on the Peninsula for over 25 years, and in San Carlos for the past 11 years — just a couple of blocks away from the RWC boundary. My family walks almost daily in RWC. We eat, shop, go to entertainment, and otherwise spend much of our time in Redwood City, and feel lucky to be able to do so. We are districted for Sequoia High School in RWC and my daughter will enroll there in just a few more years.

I am writing to you in your position as a RWC City Council Member to ask that you decline to put onto the agenda of an upcoming city council any resolution regarding the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

The City Council is not an appropriate forum for international (or federal) issues. The City Council has no authority and no power over these types of issues, and raising disputes like this only reduces the City Council's credibility for the issues it has the legitimate authority and responsibility to address. Supporters of such resolutions should instead approach their US Congressperson.

Furthermore, debating the issue of a ceasefire in Gaza will only inflame passions and divide neighbors here in RWC, San Carlos, Menlo Park, and other local communities. It is important to consider that this issue has already resulted in a massive rise in antisemitism and antisemitic acts of violence across the country. It could be dangerous to the Jewish community to further inflame antisemitism here. As a community leader, I hope that while you strive to encourage civic participation, you also help direct different forms and foci of that participation to their most appropriate avenues.

Thank you for making the time to read this request and for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

### **High level Speaking Points (JCRC)**

This is not acceptable in any community. Please help ensure that Redwood City remains a safe place for all of its residents. **High level notes**

- Speaker should explain their tie to the city - resident for x years, member of synagogue or JCC, etc.
  - There was a glaring difference between our speakers and the pro Palestinian ones. Most of ours had long standing ties to the community where most of the others were “residents of the Bay Area” or other phrases that clearly showed them not to be local. This likely registered with the council members.

### JCRC Suggested Talking Points

*Local resolutions regarding the war between Israel and Hamas do not benefit the local community. They only serve to inflame tensions in local communities by providing a forum for blatant antisemitism and animosity against the Jewish and Israeli communities. This amplifies hate and division and is harmful to both the Muslim and Jewish communities.*

### Other things you can say:

*The ongoing war between Israel and Hamas has deeply impacted many members of the Jewish community. Many of us are in mourning. One sided resolutions further traumatize the Jewish community by erasing the impact of the October 7 terrorist attacks and ignoring Israel's right to defend itself.*

*Instead of amplifying hate and division, Santa Clara City Council should lead with empathy and ensure all local residents feel supported and welcomed. The ongoing war between Israel and Hamas has impacted so many members of our community, and non-binding, performative resolutions will not bring peace. During times of crisis, elected leaders must work to bring people together – not tear us apart.*

## **AJC Talking Points**

AJC is horrified by the brutal massacre launched by Hamas, the Iran-backed terror group, against Israel on October 7. AJC stands with Israel against terror.

Hamas murdered, mutilated, and sexually assaulted Israeli civilians and soldiers.

Babies, children, parents, grandparents, the elderly, the disabled. Many woke up to terrorists in their homes.

This was nothing short of a pogrom. Hamas has committed war crimes. This is pure evil.

All people of goodwill must condemn Hamas' actions. Supporters of Hamas have chosen to stand for death and destruction. We stand for morality. We stand for a more hopeful future for Israel, our Jewish community, and the Middle East.

AJC calls for the hostages to be returned safely immediately. This is an international humanitarian crisis.

Israel has every right to defend itself and to work to ensure that the threat of Hamas is eliminated in Gaza.

Every loss of civilian life is a tragedy. We mourn for every Israeli and every Palestinian that has been killed as a result of Hamas' actions. While Israel is doing everything it can to prevent innocent Palestinian casualties in Gaza, because of the way Hamas' embeds its infrastructure among the civilian population of Gaza, civilians have and will be killed. This is tragic, and we all want the threat of Hamas to be eliminated immediately so that we can find a way forward.

## **Prepared Remarks Templates**

### **Example 1 (Foster City)**

Today, I am before you to oppose the Ceasefire Resolution. While the pursuit of peace is a shared aspiration, let me highlight a few reasons against its passage:

Firstly, recent ceasefires did not bring the expected peace. Hamas continues to launch hundreds of rockets daily, endangering lives of Israeli and Palestinians.

Secondly, it is Hamas, not Israel prevents humanitarian aid to Gaza. Hamas is taking food and medications from Gazan citizens. Listen to Gazans who share the truth, not Hamas!!!

Thirdly, our community faces a rising tide of local anti-Semitism and division. I am asking you for your assistance and protection in developing strategies to combat this concerning trend and help unite all of us.

Lastly, there is a misconception about tax money funding the conflict. Local taxes support our local government, and we urge you to prioritize local issues.

I am asking you to stand firm against this resolution, as it falsely presumes help for Gaza as well as fails to address our local concerns. Instead, let us collectively tackle the pressing issue of anti-Semitism, working together to develop effective strategies.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

## **Example 2 (Foster City)**

Thank you city council members. I am a local Jewish parent with so many dear friends in Foster City and have prayed at Peninsula Sinai, attended many community building events at the JCC and at Wornick. I respectfully recommend that you reject agendizing of this item.

We have spent 6 hours listening to this discussion. Emotions are running high. Ceasefire means different things to different people. I think most everyone would like peace but there is deep disagreement about the best way that should be achieved. Previous ceasefires have been broken again and again by Hamas with rockets.

If this is agendized, the discussion of the actual resolution will result in an even longer discussion and more divisiveness.

No amount of local debate is going to resolve this issue. This is absolutely about politics. People saying otherwise are being willfully misleading or ignorant to practical realities. Israel is defending itself as is its right.

Nobody is silencing voices as we've seen from the 6 hours of comments. Take the courageous step of focusing on local issues and not agendizing this divisive resolution.

### **Example 3 (Foster City)**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I have been living in Foster City for the past 2.5 years.

I would like to explain why ceasefire will not solve the issue.

Hamas governs Gaza for the past 17 years. During this time it has been bombing Israel multiple times. Running with a toddler in my hands in a street being bombed is an experience I wish no one.

Hamas was funded heavily by Qatar and Europe. Instead of using this money to make Gaza strip thrive, it used it to get weapons and building tunnels, because its main goal is to obliterate Israel.

Hamas hurts the Gazan people, keeping the people in poverty, forcing 15 year old girls to get married and throwing LGBTQ members from roofs, and then dragging their bodies in the streets for everyone to see.

Both Gazans and Israelis life will be better without Hamas. A ceasefire will allow Hamas to get stronger.

## **Example 4 (Foster City)**

### **1 minute**

Dear Council members,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a peace activist from Israel and a resident of Foster City in recent years. I believe co-existence is the cornerstone of strong communities. Foster City models such a multi-cultural community where all city residents feel safe and secure to have their traditions and welcome others to participate. While Foster City Council has no real influence on the conflict between Israel and Hamas, a resolution regarding the war might have a disastrous impact on our local community, increase hate, extremism and violence. I, therefore, ask you to keep Foster City a beacon of light. Keep the war in Gaza out of the city agenda, Keep Foster City a place where all residents, visitors, and workers feel safe, welcomed, and included. Please keep our wonderful community safe!

### **3 minute**

Dear Council members,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a peace activist from Israel and a resident of Foster City in recent years. During my life in Israel, I witnessed firsthand how fragile and sensitive the fabric of life in a multicultural society can be. Yet, I believe that co-existence is a magic worth dreaming of and worth fighting for.

Co-existence might be fragile, but it is the cornerstone of strong communities, where people find support in their neighbors, smile at strangers in the street, and magnify joy by sharing the holidays of different cultures. I was fortunate to find such a magic beacon of light in Foster City, where so many different communities live next to each other in mixed neighborhoods. Kids make friends in schools, parks, playgrounds, and public events regardless of their religion, origin, and sometimes even language. Leo J. Rayn Park accommodates a Menorah lighting event, a colorful Holi celebration, and the Palestine Cultural Festival, events where all city residents feel welcome and safe.

While Foster City Council has no mandate and no real influence on a conflict thousands of miles away from here, it is responsible for maintaining and carefully nourishing the amazing coexistence of the multicultural community of Foster City. A resolution regarding the war between Israel and Hamas by the Foster City Council will have zero impact on the conflict, but it might have a disastrous impact on our local community. It will increase separation, hate, and extremism.

Since Oct 07, both the Palestinian and the Jewish Israeli communities of Foster City experienced deep pain, fear, worry, and grief. Very little is needed to turn these emotions into hatred, hostility, and violence. We witness this happening all around us. In Oakland, a Menorah

was vandalized just a few days after a resolution regarding the war in Gaza was released by the local city council. Students in Berkley and Stanford feel unsafe on campuses, shops in San Francisco were vandalized, and students at San Mateo County High schools have experienced antisemitic incidents.

I'm confident you all act with good faith and good intentions, so I ask you, city council members, please! Leave the Israel-Hamas war out of the Foster City council agenda. Keep Foster City a beacon of light. Keep Foster City a place where all residents, visitors, workers, and businesses feel safe, welcomed, and included. Please keep our wonderful community safe! Thank you!

### **Example 5 (Foster City)**

This should not be a political discussion. This is NOT the role of the FC City Council. It puts FC residents at risk and disturbs the peace and quiet of our community. If the City Council insists on releasing a statement beyond their purview, it should be to condemn the evil and barbaric atrocities carried out on October 7th by the terrorist organization, Hamas.

I want to make clear that Israel wants peace while Hamas wants all Jews dead. Hamas is no different than the Nazis. You don't have to be Jewish to fight evil; you don't have to be Jewish to fight Hamas. You only need to have a moral conscience. Is it so hard to condemn Rape as resistance? Can you justify placing a baby in an oven and burning him alive?

The proposed resolution excuses the brutality of the terrorists who murdered, raped, beheaded & kidnapped innocent Israelis and Americans. Approving such a resolution would be a moral stain on this council. Hamas apologists should be expelled from any elected position for aligning themselves with a terrorist organization.

**Example 6 (Foster City)**

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I appreciate the Foster City Council for their hard work and support of our community, especially of our students, which I see firsthand as a parent to two elementary school students at Wornick Jewish Day School.

Our school feels very supported by its Councilmembers.

That said, the proposed resolution is incongruous with Councils' scope.

Foster City's website states clearly, the role of the City Council is a "legislative branch of the government" that "makes final decisions on all major city matters."

The role of the Foster City Council is not to create divisive resolutions that can potentially pit one community against another but rather to ensure that Foster City is efficiently run.

Please deny Mr. Hindi's request to place his resolution on any future agenda.

Thank you.

### **Example 7 (Foster City)**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I have been a resident of foster city for almost 8 years. I am not here to provide a solution to Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I am here to implore on the City Council not bring this resolution to a vote. Many of us are heartbroken about the ongoing tragedy and devastation in Gaza and in Israel. Many affected personally. There is true devastation on all sides.

This resolution will not end the war. Nor will it lead to Hamas' release of the hostages. I can guarantee though, that the resolution will sow division among our community and will leave a significant segment of your constituents feeling alienated and scared. We have all seen the vitriol and division in other Bay Area Cities where similar resolutions have come up - let's not bring this to Foster City. I truly value my neighbors and friends in this community and we have managed to have meaningful exchanges in sharing our pain- on both sides. Don't ruin this. Let's instead focus on how we can support each other and bring our community together.

### **Example 8 (Foster City)**

- It is beyond the scope of your purview as ELECTED MUNICIPAL public servants to make INTERNATIONAL level decisions.
- nowhere on your bio was it stated your position on your Palestinian conflict. The voters did not elect you knowing your position. You DO NOT REPRESENT them on this matter.
- If the city votes in favor there will be additional costs associated: More security to Jewish events. More legal defense to the city. See what happens even now in cities: x y z and the colleges that did not handle things well...
- the other side will tell you that that this is not antisemitic, but here we are, Jews in your community, telling you we feel singled out and afraid. Watching with alarm what happens in communities where leadership seems sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. Our children do not feel safe in their colleges. Our brothers do not feel safe in Richmond and Oakland.
- those who are asking you to support this motion will tell us that because we are all tax payers, and you elected officials, you have a say on how our money is spent overseas. You do not make fiscal federal decisions on how our Federal taxes are spent. In the most respectful way, please stay in your lane.

### **Example 9 (Foster City)**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I have been a Foster City resident for over 30 years.

I ask you to please not move forward with this "ceasefire" resolution. No good can come from continuing on this path. As Foster City leaders, you cannot possibly have any impact on the war in the Middle East. But debating this highly volatile issue here will sow hatred and division locally. It will invite agitators into our city to spread their campaign of intimidation and terror on our Jewish and Palestinian neighbors. I think most of us are hurting for the innocent victims on both sides of this war and would like nothing more than to see permanent peace in the Middle East. But this resolution will only cause unnecessary division in Foster City.

{ I have always felt safe in FC until recently. My daughter goes to school and I work at Wornick JDS. We have always had security guards. Since 10/7, we have had to hire extra security. The FC police frequently patrol our campus. We are located in the same city block as this council chambers, City Hall and police and fire stations and yet we still do not feel safe from antisemitic people who wish to do us harm. Please do not invite more hatred and fear into our city with this resolution agenda item }

This Council was elected to serve

Foster City. A resolution taking sides in a war between two other countries is far beyond the scope of your duties. I urge you to please continue to focus on local priorities and to promote opportunities that bring our diverse population together.

### **Example 10 (Foster City)**

I want to start off by saying this whole situation in Israel and Gaza is incredibly sad and depressing. I don't think anyone disagrees with that sentiment. Nobody is praying for civilian deaths on either side.

But this is a war. When the US fought ISIS in 2016 in Syria, the average death toll per air strike was just over 20. Today in Gaza, the average is 10.7. No one batted an eye when it happened in Syria because they all knew we were fighting a terrorist threat to all in ISIS. I find it hypocritical for people to be this outraged when Israel is doing more to protect civilians while it also fights a terrorist threat in Hamas.

Make no mistake, there is no difference between Hamas and ISIS. They are one in the same. Israel has the right to defend itself and keep its people safe. This is a war, not genocide. Israel has one of the most technologically advanced militaries in the world. If their goal was truly genocide, this war would have ended on October 8th. The goal is not genocide. The goal is the eradication of the terrorist organization Hamas, which has publicly vowed on multiple international news outlets to repeat the attacks of October 7th again and again until Israel is wiped off the map.

### **(Extra paragraph for longer time availability)**

That is how I feel about this situation personally. But that is not why I am up here tonight. I'm here tonight to request that the council does not move forward with the resolution proposed by Councilmember Sam Hindi. I understand the thinking that if enough cities throughout the country pass something like this, the state and federal government will see and listen and get on the same page. I think that is very idealistic. The truth is, this resolution will do more harm than good right here in our own community. The community you were all elected to serve, represent, and protect. This resolution will sow division and create divisiveness and animosity amongst the community. Passing it will not make the Palestinian community here safer. Passing it will not make the Jewish community here safer. All it will do is make things more contentious. I ask the council to reject getting involved in international politics and stick to local issues and keeping our community safe and united.

### **Example 11 (Foster City)**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a Foster City resident and voter for the last 24 years.

This proposal should be evaluated from a benefits and costs perspective, just like any other proposal brought before you. That is your mandate and duty

I see no benefits to FC, and certainly none to anyone on the ground in the middle east

There are, however, several disadvantages:

1. Passing such a resolution will create polarization, hatred, conflict, and yes, fear in our community. As we've seen across the country, these resolutions and rhetoric empower Jew haters. Look no further than the city of Oakland
2. In making any city council decisions, looking at associated expenses is imperative. Given these repercussions, we will require increased security at the PJCC, Wornick School, and the Sinai Congregation including 24/7 police patrols with FC residents footing the bill.

Clearly, there is no benefit to this resolution, and only downside, cost, and risk to our city!

### **Example 12 (Foster City)**

Hello Mayor Sullivan and council members. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am a resident of the Peninsula and Foster city for over 10 years, my children went to elementary school at foster city and I am a member of the synagogue and PJCC.

Please vote no to agendize the cease fire.

All lives are equal as many said before me. Including the life of Kfir Bias, an 11 months old baby that was kidnapped by Hammas and is still in captivity. You want us to stay away from politics, but the truth is we can't discuss the cease fire without it being political, which is why you shouldn't support ceasefire agenda item. It simply doesn't mean the same thing for everyone here, and adopting it, will mean you are excluding a large part of our beloved foster city community.

I love Foster city, because of the great diverse community, the wonderful communities and the care and togetherness that we all feel. Cease fire will destroy all of this. I urge all of us to be activists and fight for what we feel is right in the right channels. Foster city council is not one of them. Foster city doesn't have foreign affairs strategy. You should not consider a ceasefire agenda item.

### **Example 13 (Foster City)**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am the CEO of the Peninsula JCC here in Foster city and I am here tonight to ask this council not to bring forward any resolution related to Israel or Gaza at the council.

As The PJCC is the 5th largest employer in Foster City and the largest community service organization in our city serving more than 6,000 residents of Foster city throughout the year, representing more than 20% of the city's population, we see and have contact with more residents of Foster City than perhaps any other organization in our city.

We are a place that welcomes all, celebrates diversity evidenced by 2/3 of those walking through our doors every day are not Jewish. We see people of all backgrounds and religions and believe that the primary reason we exist is to build and strengthen community for fostering belonging and connection.

This is also the role of city government, to build community.

I searched through the charter for this council and could find no reference anywhere that speaks to this council having a voice in foreign policy or anything outside of our community. The charter for this council says its role is to... adopt ordinances and resolutions necessary for efficient governmental operations, approves the budget and acts as a board of appeals.

I strongly urge this council to not take up this issue. Even discussing a resolution, much less passing one no matter how well intended will have the impact of dividing our community and creating anger and resentment from some portion of the community.

As this issue is beyond the scope of the charter of this council, I urge this body to vote no on placing this item for discussion.

A few months ago we stood in this very chamber and this council proclaimed Foster city would not be a place for hate and would not tolerate violence or acts of hatred in our community. As you can see from the number of people here tonight sharing opinions on both sides of this issue, you can see that pursuing this resolution will divide not unite our community.

The strongest and most appropriate response from this council would be to reject even putting this issue on the agenda with the understanding that this action is not the role of this council.

Thank you for your consideration and in joining us to help build and strengthen our community.

### **Example 14 (Foster City)**

General Outline:

Name, residency. Connection to city. Thank you board. (I'm a reasonable person, show empathy)

My ask. Vote No.

I don't agree with wording resolution, but goal is not to debate international resolutions or amend it. Impossible for everyone to agree.

City council should focus on CITY business.

Give them an out. Voting no doesn't mean you don't care about topic. It means you understand it's out of scope of city.

Risk of voting YES.

Please vote No.

Full Text

Thank you council for listening this long night. I'm sure you're all tired. My name is FIRST LAST, current Foster City resident. For the last ## years I have lived and worked here in this community. Today I am asking you to vote NO on agendizing item 12.1.

This resolution is oversimplified, with selectively worded language that purposefully omits key details and context, creating all the conflict we're seeing tonight as we go past midnight. But rather than debate back and forth with how the council should write such resolutions, it's best to avoid these resolutions completely.

Please focus on local Foster City issues that impact us as residents – just like you have for the first 2 ½ hours tonight. (Showing that I have been listening this whole time, and didn't just zoom in for 5 minutes)

Important local issues:

Parking

Housing and Zoning

The REC Center

A NO vote on 12.1 doesn't mean you have no personal opinion on the Hamas-Israel situation. Clearly every person in this meeting has a strong personal opinion. A NO vote is recognition that a city council in California attempting to operate in international policy is far beyond scope. These types of issues appropriately addressed via contacting a congressperson or senator.

A YES vote opens the RISK that Foster City council meetings will have divisive resolutions on every possible situation across the world. How will you possibly decide how to address all these matters of world politics and still do city business?

Please vote NO.

### **Example 15 (Redwood City)**

Public comment RWC

Please vote against agendizing this factually incorrect ceasefire resolution.

Ceasefire resolutions sow hatred, divisiveness and increase antisemitism. All foreign policy based resolutions focused on Israel are a cudgel seeking to delegitimize the state of Israel, the lone democracy in the Middle East and a US ally. You'll notice there's no uproar against, for example, the horrific enslavement of black Christians in Africa or the Iranian women murdered by the Islamist regime. City councils are being viewed as useful idiots. Please don't be used.

I recommend that the city council consider a motion to abolish all future foreign policy based resolutions, or at the very least those that are obviously divisive. Follow the model of San Jose for decades and Gilroy recently.

Let's keep Redwood City safe and allow you all to focus on pressing issues relevant for local constituents.

Now some facts: Hamas is a US-designated terrorist organization. Over 100 hostages are still trapped in Hamas' UN-funded terror tunnel network,

(1 minute)

while Hamas cowardly hides behind its civilians as human shields.

Lastly, antizionism is antisemitism. The lies being told today are hurtful and divisive. "Intifada revolution" and "from the river to the sea..." are both calls for the genocide of Jews in Israel. We know what you mean when you chant them. Nazi collaborator Amin Al-Husseini told us in the 1950s when he helped Arafat and Abbas pave the way for the PLO. Do you know history?

Thank you.

## Vice Mayor of Foster City (Facebook post)



**Vice-Mayor Stacy Jimenez, City of Foster City**

4h · 🌐

Last night was the second most difficult council meeting of my term as Councilmember. It was definitely the longest. Item 12.1 – at the very end of an already packed agenda - brought forth a request to agendize what would become an incredibly divisive request – to issue a proclamation calling for the cease fire of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. This request created a response by our community that saw 1,000 plus emails and over four hours of passionate and vigorous public comment. What resulted is a tear in the fabric of our close knit community. Councilmember Hindi, who made the request to bring forth this topic, should, in all of his experience, have known better.

I have two sets of grandparents who have been married for more than 50 years before death did them part. The same piece of marriage advice was given by both – don't go to bed angry. I have been married for almost 24 years, and I ascribe to the practice that sometimes, it is better to go to bed angry and allow your grievances to be viewed by the calm light of the day. That is exactly what I did last night. At 1:30am, after listening to hours of gut wrenching public comment, I limited my comments to a narrowly tailored statement that may have been seen as un-feeling or cold. I was anything but. I was angry. Angry at a councilmember who allowed his personal beliefs and experiences to get in the way of doing his job. Angry that my humanity was called into question by him because I have a differing view of my role of councilmember than his.

In the light of day my anger has tempered to disappointment that our community may have been harmed by the mere request to agendize this topic, and disappointment that there are those in our community who may feel that I am not empathetic to their deeply personal connection to the conflict and the effect that it is having on their daily lives. In fact, my heart breaks for you. I am grateful to those who braved sitting through hours of our meeting to vulnerably share their thoughts, stories, and heartache. At no point was I sleepy, bored, or disrespectful. I held back tears, and listened, trying each time to put myself in your shoes. The horror of this conflict is not lost on me, and I mourn the loss of innocent life and the current horrific conditions so many innocent people are living through.

My vote to not agendize this topic was difficult and not without soul searching and much discussion with my mentors. In the end I am comfortable with my decision, but it came at a cost. There are many who will not agree with me, and this is perfectly understandable.

In the coming weeks, I hope to reach out and find a way to bring our community together. I hope many of you will consider joining me at my next coffee on January 6th at 9am at Penelope's Coffee and Tea. Let's "break bread" and find ways to bring our community together instead of searching out ways to tear it apart. As a council, we won't always get it right, but I assure you, we are all doing the best we can to make sure our city is the best place to live, work and play. And in the end, while I may not agree with every decision my fellow councilmembers make, I am choosing to replace anger and disappointment with understanding and respect. This, I believe, is the better path and our community will truly be better served. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [sjimenez@fostercity.org](mailto:sjimenez@fostercity.org).