

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

June 05, 2017

6:00 p.m.

Mayor Jerah Cordova called the Regular Meeting of the Belen City council to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll Call was taken by Leona Vigil, City Manager.

PRESENT: Councilor David Carter
Mayor Pro-Tem Frank Ortega
Mayor Jerah Cordova
Councilor Darlene Aragon
Councilor Wayne Gallegos

CITY MANAGER: Leona Vigil

DEPUTY CITY CLERK: Brian McBain

REPORTER: Clara Garcia, VC News Bulletin

OTHERS: See attached Sign-in Sheet

Quorum of the Council was determined present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Cordova led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Cordova asked for a motion to approve the agenda with amendments, striking items 7a (presenter not feeling well and could not attend) and 8a (issue was resolved prior to meeting) Councilor Ortega made a motion. Mayor Cordova asked for a second. Councilor Gallegos seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|----------------|
| Councilor Frank Ortega | Yes | |
| Councilor Darleen Aragon | Yes | |
| Councilor Wayne Gallegos | Yes | |
| Councilor David Carter | Yes | Motion Carried |

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Cordova asked for a motion to approve the minutes dated May 15, 2017 as presented. Councilor Ortega made a motion. Mayor Cordova asked for a second. Councilor Aragon seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|----------------|
| Councilor Frank Ortega | Yes | |
| Councilor Darleen Aragon | Yes | |
| Councilor Wayne Gallegos | Yes | |
| Councilor David Carter | Yes | Motion Carried |

Mayor Cordova asked for a motion to approve the minutes dated May 22, 2017 as presented. Councilor Ortega made a motion. Mayor Cordova asked for a second. Councilor Aragon seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|--|
| Councilor Frank Ortega | Yes | |
| Councilor Darleen Aragon | Yes | |
| Councilor Wayne Gallegos | Yes | |

PUBIC COMMENTS

Mayor Cordova asked if there was anyone with a public comment for the Council, asking that they please limit their time to 3 minute presentations.

Carolyn Huston: I am here this evening speak to the recent article in the Valencia News Bulletin concerning the no confidence vote for Belen Deputy Chief by the ASME Union. I despise this man for what he did to my son and for what he didn't do for him. He is a disgrace to the uniform that he wears but he isn't the only one in this department. Anyone who has confidence in this man is out of their cotton picking mind, but there are other officers who need my support. A hostile workplace is something no one should be forced to endure. I have worked in a hostile environment so I believe I can speak to its reality. There have been several new officers brought into the Belen PD and I am disturbed about what I read in the article, and the letter from the Union. We don't tolerate hostility and intimidation for our officers who deal with us, so how then can we expect them to accept that treatment from their peers, they are all held to a higher standard and rightfully so. Their jobs are dangerous and can be fatal, I believe they are fully aware of that fact but choose to do the job anyway to serve and protect but we don't have the right to expect them to work in an environment of fear, belligerence, slander, and worst of all retaliation. Retaliation takes many forms causing loss of job, loss of career or loss of life. How can any of us expect these officers, particularly the new recruits to learn and preform their jobs when they cannot respect and depend on their seniors to teach them and set an example for them. More alarming they can be in a dangerous situation with no one there to cover their backs because they choose to stand up, alert authorities and tell the truth, that is retaliation. I have been at this podium numerous times trying to convince you of the failures and unacceptable performance of officers associated with the death of Howard Huston, I have also communicated my concerns to the Chiefs and other ranking officers, including some of the old guard. All of my concerns fell on deaf ears or were dismissed out right. My views have always come from evidence or my own personal observations. There are now several other voices who are attempting to relate some of the same criticisms and other more alarming problems, will they be heard? I like Sgt. Natavidad, but this isn't a vendetta or feud, this is a necessity. This is a public and police officers security issue, if one of these officers loses their life, or his or her life on the job, will their case be covered up and swept under the rug just like they did with Howard Huston?

Chris Chavez: I was talking to Mayor Griego, this week I am doing a, for the Senior Center in Los Lunas, and I told the Mayor that I can't find my notes just give me a minute, I can't remember what I was going to talk to you about and he said, well I have that problem sometimes too and he said my problem is when I find my notes, I can't read them, so I am not there yet. I have been here a couple of time prior to discuss my concern of the new Loves gas station/truck stop coming into Belen and my main concern is that I would like to see the city of Belen put in signal lights at the intersection of Christopher Road and Camino Del Llano. I know that the city has put a positive spin on this development but it belies the negative effects that it will cause and I will let other rail against the project again my only concern is that the city put in a signal light, I know the plan now is to put in stop signs, but as far as the traffic count, even a stop sign isn't warranted, you really do not need a stop sign with the little traffic flow that is there. You do have the school buses that go there and I think that is probably the number one concern, and we defiantly don't want to jeopardize the lives of any of the students and an accident. I don't know if there are 30 or 40 buses that go both ways, morning and afternoon. So with the truck stop you are going to have congestion, right now there is nothing, no congestion and no other businesses. I would like to see the Council here vote on whether or not Loves should pay for this stop light, I think they have enough resources to do that and I think that the Council has the authority to mandate that, so all I am asking that someone call it to a vote and see where everybody stands on it one way or another. Again, I think that it is in the best interest of the community, safety and in the long term that road is going to need one but why wait until someone dies before you take it up yourself or the Highway Dept. take it upon themselves to say ok now we need a stop light. I would suggest that at least the sleeves be put in underneath the infrastructure, because I understand the pavement is going to be substantial concrete portions, and at least that should be done. I hope that the Mayor and Council take that advice and vote for the citizens of Belen.

Benny Hodges: I am here to represent my company which is Hodges Oil Company, I am not here to discuss the pros and cons of the Loves truck stop, and I am here rather to see exactly where it stands in the community. There a number of rumors floating around, is it, is it not, if it is, I have heard through the grapevine, nothing official, that the City and the

State DOT have relinquished a number of their requirements to accommodate this truck stop. Every one of our businesses, and I would also go on to say that we are the longest, continuously family owned business in this community, everyone that has done infrastructure work in this community have lived and abided by whatever standards this community said. So first of all I would like to know is it in fact coming in and second, are they receiving preferential treatment over what other businesses have received in this community over the past years? So if you wouldn't mind addressing that, I also think that we have, I have understood that this is treated as economic development and I think we have a disconnect on what that actually means, from a policy perspective; economic development can be defined as efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life, for a community by creating and or retaining jobs and supporting or growing incomes of the tax base. No outside or perhaps property taxes, I don't see how this will create jobs, I don't see how it would add to the tax base, I think essentially what it will do, there are a number of businesses that would be impacted. I am a wholesaler, I am not a retailer, but there are number of retailers that would be negatively impacted. Essentially what it does is take money out of this pocket and turns around and puts it in this pocket, which makes no sense and for us to call it economic development, I don't think that is the case. What I would be interested to hear is if this is an ongoing project, is it not, has it been dealt with above board, or are all your statutes being followed.

Mayor Cordova: To answer your first question, my understanding of the latest status of the project is that the property has sold to Loves, so yes it is moving forward. The answer to your second question is yes, we are abiding by all the statutes.

Benny Hodges: So there was no preferential treatment, it is my understanding at one time, and it wasn't from this body, and I don't mean to insinuate that it came from you guys, but that DOT has suggested that all four exits would have to be redone to accommodate this, and then I understand that this is no longer the case. I understand the traffic lights were ordered, I understand that is no longer the case, but like I said we deal with competition all the time, it's not about the competition, it's about that we all have, we are all playing on the same level playing field.

Mayor Cordova: Absolutely, that is true, thank you.

Joe Trujillo: I am one of the owners to Road Runner Pit Stop and Fat Sats Bar & Grill, I just want to go along with what Benny is saying and if it is all in the up and up, that's fine, competition is what it is, its competition. I do know for a fact that it is going to affect our business as a gas station as well as numerous other ones, so when they talk about economic development coming into Belen, I can understand that, I want that, but does it come at the price of effecting other people? That is defiantly going to effect, it is going to affect us, that's part of the name of the game then I guess that is what we have to live with, but I just sometimes wish the city would think about the adverse effects it will have on other businesses also, I mean it's nice to have a big Loves station come in here, but we are a small business that deals with people from here coming in using the business, we can't even compete with something like this, but that's what it is, that is what it is.

Ms. Martinez: This is kind of on an unrelated note, me as a teenager, if you haven't seen the statistics for human trafficking and human trafficking amongst truckers, and there are school, like multiple schools, in our area of Belen. There are also kids living around this area, because they go to school here. For me I think that it would be kind of scary to have them stop right down the road, it is scary, I feel like my safety would be at risk. I am a fairly small girl, and I just feel that it would be kind of more of a safety risk than anything because it would be right there where there are a bunch of children, and teenage girls around that area, where it would be honestly put by my house.

Debra Vega Cowen: I am new to the community and I am a new home owner at the top of the hill, I just wanted to share some thoughts that if I had known that this truck stop was coming I would have taken my money somewhere else. I have experienced truck stops first hand as I was a trucker wife, so I see what it brings, the filth it brings, the crime, the drugs and for lack of a better word, lot lizards, and I just want to say that I am against it. I bought my house because it was sold on panoramic views and my panoramic view will be a Loves neon sign 24/7. If I can get out of there as fast as I can, I probably will, because that is not why I bought my property. I moved to Belen because it represented country life, country people and not a Loves.

Mickey Cone: I have more than one concern and a lot of them have been brought up already, one of them is security, is the police department going to have this, are they going to have their own security team. Prostitution is rapid at a lot of truck stops plus transients, I live within a mile and a half of this and I know that is going to overfill to some of the

neighborhoods close to the neighborhoods, even across the street at Sunrise Bluffs, Sunset Bluffs, we are just worried about what this is going to bring to our community.

Gloria Sanchez: I have been a volunteer with the city for over 20 years, also I am one of the founders of the 9/11 memorial park and one of the organizers of the Bank of Belen, which is called MyBank now. Also the city is looking great, you guys are doing a good job of cleaning, a lot of yellow jackets out there and the new painted lines between the lanes, really stand out and Camino Del Llano really needed that. Before I received some anonymous communications, I knew nothing about a truck stop off I-25 and Camino Del Llano, which is just down the road from Mesa Rd. where I live. There is also a historical marker there, which played a significant role in the history of Belen, and the word in that marker where mine, so I am very proud of that. Of course we all want more businesses in Belen, but preferably something that does not interfere or take away from inner city established businesses. Another concern is about businesses maybe starting to grow west of the city and through time, isolating the inner city. Also, another point that it is unfortunate that some citizens have to resort to anonymous communications, instead of exercising their freedom of speech, their right to express their views, concerns or objections, in letters to the news or at public meetings. Finally, being that this truck stop seems to be a final deal, I hope it becomes a good thing for Belen, but only time will tell.

Mary Lucero: I am very disturbed about this truck stop being allowed to build over here. We have bus stops just up the street from it, you know young children. I have two young daughters of my own and I am very scared for their safety, it is a huge safety issue, again, like previous persons said, with the drugs and lot lizards, you know that brings prostitution and the guys are on the road for a long time so they are doing things that a lot of us wouldn't consider. For being a parent, I am very, very, disturbed by this because I do, I don't know it is just a safety issue. Abductions can happen, my girls are young and they are built small, like I said we have a school bus that stops up the hill and we have elementary [schools] just by and the high school is just right there across the street pretty much. That is my concern is safety.

Anne Marie Bober: As you know many of us are concerned in the town about building this truck stop and how it occurred so quietly and quickly. I guess my concern is the cost to the town for the infrastructure. There is going to be a lot of roads and I don't know who is paying for that, the cost for the additional policing, the maintenance, the cleaning. Is there going to be food at the truck stop, is it going to be a 24 hour truck stop with cars coming in and out all night? Where is the environmental impact study, can we view them as citizens? Where are the traffic impact studies, which have been done by the city or state prior to this coming in? Also are there economic studies that have been done as well as studies about the crime that may come to the city? We have heard nothing about any of that and I guess it is because it is so new to all of us, but I think before the quickly push along with this project, the citizens and our elected officials should find out more details and provide it to us. Also the timeline, what is the timeline for all of this and do we as citizens and legislatures have time to begin making the changes that will protect our safety and our community?

Joe Trujillo: I mean I am hearing all kinds of stuff and I want to hear from you guys, is this a done deal?

Mayor Cordova: As far as I understand, yes, the property has been purchased.

Joe Trujillo: Loves is coming in no matter what we say, no matter what anyone says, you guys have already signed the paperwork, its coming right?

Mayor Cordova: As far as I understand, yes, the property has been purchased.

Joe Trujillo: So no matter what anyone talks about, the impact on anything, we are just talking, just to talk because it doesn't really matter right?

Mayor Cordova: Well, Steve, as far of the terms of the final plans is that still ongoing?

Steve Tomita: The city has approved the street improvements, the utilities, and the site plan. CID is finishing the plan to approve, DOT has approved, so yes.

Joe Trujillo: So all this is just smoke going nowhere, because it is done. That's all I wanted to know, thank you.

Earl Gleason: I have a subdivision at the other side of the freeway, from where that truck stop will be. Kind of knocks me in the head for a residential subdivision because this truck stop isn't going to be to good right there. And then you guys have begged and have these signs all over town about wanting a hospital and you're fighting with Los Lunas about a hospital, but you are destroying your hospital because you are going to stick a truck stop right there where it should be medical dr. offices, dental offices like there are there with Roland and his son. If you're going to have a hospital, you're going to need more of that, but you're going to stick in a dang truck stop there. Is it a done deal, because my wife called me and said Earl you should come on home, because the news media in Albuquerque, she says I have looked all over at all these stations and they say it is a done deal people. So did you guys sell out? Did you sell out?

Mayor Cordova: It is on private property.

Earl Gleason: Yeah, but you don't have to approve it, unless you zoning is going to be crooked, and maybe be bought by them. You know where it should have been, over there on the North Exit, on the west of the hill, there is nothing there. But Michael Sanchez killed that interchange, that was going to be fixed for entrance into the lands in the west, and then Santa Fe wanted an unloading depot there and Michael Sanchez ruined it for you guys. You didn't do it Michael did it but we got rid of Michael. That would have been good for Belen because you guys would have had an unloading on the Santa Fe main track. They are over there on an alternate track, Los Lunas is. And I don't know why but I don't think you guys ever fought to get that thing over there, you never fought for it, because I didn't see any evidence that you did. But then when I hear and my wife calls me and tells me that all over town, all the news media are saying that you guys already made a deal. You guys need to talk to this crowd about that, did you make a deal or is it just that zoning is saying that we got to have it because we need that taxation? That's not right, that corner over there is right where all the drift, from that diesel is going to drift on those old folks at the new home, it's just been bought by a company called Genesis. Is there anything in zoning, is there anything in your stuff that would make a barrier, a wall or trees to stop the sound from going down on those poor people that are in that nursing home? They can't protect themselves, they are old and warn out. You guys need to get a discussion going to these people about how is it, have you made a deal, I mean I am not proud of Belen, my grandpa was right across the street at Becker's and he was a decent man, and he helped Solomon make statehood happen, and I am proud of what my grandpa did but I am not too proud about what you guys are doing right now, you need to give these people some answers.

Jim Alderfer: I am located in the Sunrise Bluffs residential neighborhood, I like to look out my front window and I see the beautiful valley, I can see the mountain range and down here where the truck stop is going to be. Frankly, I don't know too much about the truck stop because, it has been a big secret, and I don't know why. I am shocked at the city of Belen, and I mean the people that are making this happen and letting it happen, I am flabbergasted and shocked that they can take a major intersection coming into Belen, they could put this truck stop on the outside of town but there putting it right down there with the nursing home, and residential people and I just hope, I realize now that it is a done deal and I just hope that you guys make it so it doesn't, you better keep these trucks quiet. You're going to have to rebuild all those intersections that whole interchange up there is going to have to be rebuilt.

Earl Gleason: Are you guys going to talk to these people, if this is a done deal, because we hear from the news channels in Albuquerque, all 3 news media are saying it's a done deal, you guys have sold out. Are you going to talk to them?

Mayor Cordova: The Council will have an opportunity in the end if they would like to talk.

Karen Martinez: I live up on the mesa, I do also agree with concerns here, especially for our children, we know that trafficking is a little further south and is rapid, why didn't we get a hospital, something that could help everybody here, not just a few people to stuff their pockets. Why didn't we get a hospital, something where we could hire a lot of people and help their lives, this truck stop is a bad deal for the city of Belen and for our children, think of our kids.

Edward Wiser: I agree with everything that has been said, in addition, what will happen to the noise and the fumes, has that been addressed in an environmental study?

Mayor Cordova: Yes, an environmental study was completed, we do I believe have a copy available here at city hall if anyone would like to view that, as well as the traffic impact study.

Edward Wisner: And one other thing, I was a little disappointed, that I get a text on my phone when the garbage dump is closed, shouldn't I get a text for something as important as a truck stop, no notification, what does that mean.

Mayor Cordova: Well I think that generally speaking with economic development projects the companies that anticipate coming to Belen or any municipality located in the State of New Mexico, prefer that their projects remain as low key as possible as they are trying to develop it. It has happened on every economic development project that we work on including Keter plastics, we do not announce this until they are ready to announce it.

Edward Wisner: I understand that, wouldn't it be the responsibility of the Council if there is something that is going to impact the neighborhood to at least share it and ask for public comment?

Mayor Cordova: I believe that we have had a couple of discussions at prior meeting, I know that it has been in the paper previously as well, so there has been information that is available and certainly we do have more information available here at City Hall.

Edward Wisner: Ok, thank you, it sounds like we couldn't have stopped it anyway.

Earl Gleason: You know these guys buy these things, with a binder and if you would turn them down, if you had the guts to turn them down, and protect the school and all that medical area, and the hospital, the binder, its not a done deal with Loves. They don't come in and put \$200,000 down for the land to the Chavez's and not protect themselves, in case it fails. So the whole thing means, that the Council of Belen either has guts or they don't.

Mayor Cordova: Does anyone else have a public comment this evening? Last chance, anybody?

Unknown Audience Member: I haven't heard any positive comment at all.

Earl Gleason: Hey, I wanted to ask you Mayor....

Mayor Cordova: 30 more seconds please, you have had plenty of opportunity to speak.

Earl Gleason: That environmental impact thing, nobody knew about it, so was it advertised?

Mayor Cordova: All of it went through the appropriate processes.

Earl Gleason: No, I am asking planning and zoning.

Steve Tomita: The land was properly zoned, once it is zoned, the public hearing and comments are held during the initial planning of the land that is being zoned, once it is zoned, they have the right to come in and develop [in audible]

Earl Gleason: Yeah but you guys changed the zoning...

Mayor Cordova: Please direct your comments to myself and Council. Do you have anything further?

Earl Gleason: Ok, you guys kept this secret, in fact Albuquerque is already talking about how you kept it secret.

Mayor Cordova: I just explained that, thank you sir.

Mayor Cordova: Public Comment is now closed and we will be moving on in the agenda.

Councilor Carter: Mr. Mayor, may I say something?

Mayor Cordova: Absolutely, please.

Councilor Carter: This is the reason why you don't hear anything positive [points to people leaving the Council Chambers] Now you see why only one side is heard, they got their words in and now they are leaving, and we haven't gotten to the part where the Council will open and communicate with the community and that is what I wanted to interject right here, because I am about to come unglued.

Mayor Cordova: Yes, the Council will have an opportunity to speak under 9b communication from the City Council. We have to go through 9a first, unfortunately we are legally prohibited from making comments under the Public Comment Section, I answered as best I could the questions, but it is considered to be a violation of the Open Meetings Act, if we engage in too much discussion at that time, so we will get to that in just a moment first we are going to do 9a, City Manager's Report.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

City Manager's Report

Leona Vigil: I would like to introduce Brian McBain, he is our Deputy Clerk, he will be serving in that capacity, this is his first meeting. We also have a new HR Manager, Lashae Latasha-Cordova, and we have a custodian on board who started today who is Thomas Bustamante. Our Solid Waste Committee continues to meet to go over our Solid Waste Ordinance, a couple more meeting and we should be wrapping that up. On May 18th we met with our Willie Chavez Park Committee, we received a management plan from Ted Hodoba, from Whitfield, so we are going to use that as a resource to create or own plan. A pre-bid meeting for Dennis Chavez sewer line was held at the Logston Hall on the 24th, I understand that there were several contractors in attendance, so that good competition. Interviews were held for the summer rec leaders and supervisors, so that should get underway. We also hired a temporary crew for weed control, we hired three individuals who started last week. I attended the ground breaking for Belen Railway Credit Union, which was held on June 1st and was nicely attended.

Communications from the Council

Councilor Carter: Lets address the truck stop, the truck stop has been common knowledge all the way, up until the part in which we disclosed their name. It moves me why people that ask for economic development but they are particular about what they want. Loves approached private citizens, also citizens of Belen, who have been here since the beginning of time, like Mr. Hodges said and asked to buy their lot, their property. They negotiated with them, they came to the city to see what the ordinances were, what the restrictions were and they cut a deal, after they worked with the DOT, back and forth with the DOT, back and forth with the city, and then came to a resolution. The truck stop has been discussed by this Council several times, as the Mayor pointed out it has been in the paper. If you don't read the paper, I quit reading the paper last week too, I can understand that. So, I don't know where you get your information but I have been a truck driver since I was 14 years old, I drove trucks up and down Main Street Belen when I was 14, if anyone says what do I do, I am a truck driver. Now I don't know if anyone of you have stopped at a Loves truck stop, it's one of the cleanest, nicest, places that there is. I have stopped at the one in Tucumcari all the time going to see my kids in Kansas. I bring up the kids in Kansas because my kids are leaving, I have three sons, two of them, one in Florida and one in Kansas, I would love to have them here, but there is no opportunities here. Loves comes in, we embraced them, did we sell out, and no I am not making a dime off the deal. The city will make some money off the deal, they didn't point out that the truck traffic that goes up to Los Lunas or goes up to Albuquerque to fuel will come in here. Truck drivers are some of the finest people I have ever met, I have dealt with them for over 30 years, and to come in here and start shaming, blaming, pointing fingers is embarrassing for the city. And for the Council, I barely held my tongue, now do we want economic development or we don't, we want to die, if you're not growing your dying, that is exactly what is happening with Belen. We are attempting to reverse that so if someone want to come in and put a money making operation that will put taxes in the city coffers, then yes, I am for it. Now for these anonymous letters that went by, these snowflakes, that cannot even sign their name, passed out these letter, part truths and half-truths. I have never roomed with Mr. Chavez, one of the Chavez brothers, that is completely false, but you know what, you guys just wish you had a good friend like he. Him and I have been friends since grade school, since we had the tussle school yard, and yes he asked questions and yes I communicated with him but did we sell out, no, we brought economic development, thank you Mr. Tomita. We have got some other things going on, anyone know about Tractor Supply, trying to get it in here too. Circle K is expanding, moving across the street to take up those lots, that's been discussed in the Council, come to Council meetings, stick around, read the paper, find out what is

going on around you. Don't come in on the last minute of the 13th hour, with objections. If you have objections, get them in early, or we could have saved a whole lot of time on this development.

Councilor Ortega: Well somebody made a statement over here that said we are lining our pockets, I got 20 bucks in my wallet, it cost me more to be here, than to be at home watching what I want to see. No guts, who would sit up here and take a beating like we take, trying to take care of our town, we are dying, we got towns like out dying. Go to Mountainair, go to Socorro, go to T or C where they are all struggling right now to find places that will try and get in. He talked about medical, couldn't be by a hospital, we did everything that we could to fight for that hospital, planning and zoning are the ones that take on these tasks and pass them on to us if they are good or bad projects. The Board is here, Steve Tomita is here, our City Manager takes a beating every day, sell out, what is there to sell out too? The saying is that we make money here, I am still wearing the jacket that I have for almost 15 years, ask my wife, and I don't get rid of it, anyone that knows me. Now I know that there are some personal issues and stuff, we are going to address those too, courage, saying that we sell out, that we are cowards, how many of you want to sit here and take a beating like that and then they leave, this is what democracy is all about, if they feel that they can do something, step on up. Ronnie Torres is one of our former Mayors over there, I don't think he found it so easy being up here taking a beating. As far as selling out and Albuquerque has it, what I see is that economic development, which was explained as something to maintain our gross receipts, so that we are able to pay our bills. To make sure that you have good quality water, that we can open the dumps and stuff and send out our e-mails, we don't hid anything. First of all the property is not even our, it belongs privately to the family of Chavez, they are the ones that made the deal, they brought the people in, they are the ones that want the economic strength to be in here, they are the ones that brought it, that is what capitalism is all about right, not communism, its capitalism. Somebody is bi up there in the White House to make sure this is happening, but this is one of the reasons that we have such a hard time. When we choose stuff like this, there is not a lot out there for us to get in here to make this keep going. I would like my kids to be here to have a job, I like to see them here when they graduate from college and have at least an opportunity to want to stay in New Mexico, we are topping in New Mexico on anything, education, the only thing that we are topping I think is DWI. That is nothing to brag about, education is falling, our salaries are falling, if you have any good ideas give them to us and we will work with them, anyway that we can bring economic development to our town, because we are trying to save our town. I don't see it growing, we have had complaints in the newspaper that we have empty buildings, we are trying to fill those buildings whether its property or lots that we have, or to fill those buildings and try to bring them in. We are not asking you where you are from or anything like this, what we want is the economic stability, we have people that work hard here to take the right direction, we don't sell out, we are trying to bring some kind of stability to the City of Belen in order for us to continue. Does everybody forget what happen a few years ago, when the city went bankrupt, and they had to lay off people? They had to go on furloughs from 40 hours to 32 hours, they have families too, we barely maintain and stood up by our boot straps, the only way we have service if we have money in our coffers, because we are not getting anything from Governor Martinez up there. Michael Sanchez was not at fault, the company backed out, they did not have the money, he had the money up front but the company that came did not have it, the company failed in their part so we had to back down on our part. It's tough with the Mayor and Council over here to get beat up and then we don't have a say, they leave and call us cowards, or we are taking a bribe and filling our pockets. I love this town and I want to see it grow and prosper, and if any of you have the answers to this, you have our phone numbers, you know how to contact us, you know how to come here and bring it up. We are willing to listen to anything, it just doesn't mean us now, however, wins the offices and whoever comes up here and does this, we need to put input of our ideas, and if you have any good ideas we have our departments. If there is no money to fund a project, it will be stopped, if we don't have money to pay our employees, they are gone, that means that the services of the city no longer exist. So what we are trying to do is save our city, there is no place to grow because we are trying to catch up to everything else that we lost. I remember all the stores, gas stations, right now the city has \$9.6 million worth of projects that are coming out that wouldn't be possible had it not us getting money and saving money and having these people to make sure these projects are coming. You are going to have a new fire station, we replaced a well that hasn't been used in 10 year, the eagle tank, self-funded, over \$800,000 on a 1 million gallon tank, which no one even knew it was missing but the ISO from the state for the fire ratings, we need that water to put out the fire, that keeps you insurance down, that is how we are saving you money. When I first came into office, we lowered the water bill by \$3 each, and they said well what is \$3, well it is \$76,000 total bills. We saved on you going to the dump, that's \$200,000, we took away a penalty phase that if you were late for your water, there wouldn't be a penalty. That is what we try to do to start helping not only the citizens but the commercial people that are here trying to make a living also. We are here trying to save our town, and that is what we have to do, we are not trying to grow, we are trying to save our town and to continue the way of life over here.

Councilor Aragon: I want to address something, also, with the truck stop. There were some vulgar, and vial letters that were sent out. I mean the stuff that is in this letter, some of the people saw some of it and the other stuff is just disgusting, it is literally disgusting, it offensive to me, it offensive to David Carter, it offensive to the city and it offensive to the residents of Belen. I look at these letter and I think, My God, I am disgusted by the people that are here in my town, and yeah this is my town, I have been here 10 generations, I believe in this town, and I know that some of the people come in and say that we have sold out to Loves and oh the city of Belen has done this or that, this is a private family, this is their property, this is their commercial property, right along the freeway, that is all commercial property. Whether we like it or not, that is the way it is, it is next to a freeway exit, it is next to a freeway, there is going to be sound next to that exit as well as there is going to be fumes from the exit that have always been there, and no, we did not sell out to Loves, this is a private family that did sell to them. I can honestly say that I see Belen dying, this isn't the town that I grew up in, I was born and raised here, 10 generations, I look around at this town, we don't have a lot of options, people aren't knocking at our door to ask to come into our town. I don't know if you realize this, they are going to Los Lunas, huh, I can kind of see why, I don't think they have this, as much adversity as we do here. Everybody that I have told about Loves, you know what they said, wow, something else, we are going to have a place to go get gas, that isn't as high, we go to Los Lunas or Los Chaves to buy gas, for lower prices. Do you know, I had a couple that were in their 70's and they just drove to Florida because they sold their house and you know what they told me, they stopped at Loves truck stops, and do you know why they stopped there, because there is security at these truck stops. They said they were staying at Wal-Marts but they were scared, they are 75 years old with their 5 dogs, and a van, and they were sleeping, and they followed their trip with Loves truck stops because they were safe and felt safe because of the security that is there. I kind of felt like these people are saying it is all going to be prostitution and drugs and things like that, take a look at downtown Belen, I don't know if anybody ever drives down there and sees what is going on in downtown Belen, but we have boarded up businesses, we have places that are boarded, there is nothing going on in downtown Belen. Main Street is trying to redevelop that but I mean I see people, this isn't my Belen, these are people that I know are on drugs and if they are not, they are doing a really good impression of somebody that is on drugs, because it is just sad, sad to see that. I mean maybe people have blinders on and I don't know, but I do see that our little town is dying, we are not progressing, we are digressing. One of the things that I did want to say it this was not done in secrecy, it was not done without the paper, I have the article from the paper that was done in November 2016, and I mean we all need to read the paper, I get all my news there, when I lived in Albuquerque, I got the News Bulletin, I go online, I follow them with Facebook, I check out what the News Bulletin is saying, I check out to see what Los Lunas is doing, I check out to see what Rio Communities is doing, because I don't know on that bases unless I read the paper. I can honestly tell you that I did not raise one finger to bring Loves in, not because I didn't want to see them come in, but I knew that there would be a few people out here that would vilify me, because of my relationship with Reggie, and I mean the letters pretty much state that. So that kind of seems right, that I have been vilified in these letters, I ran on the platform that Belen was open for business, and sometimes I question that every day, whether we are open for business or not, I really do. Nobody is knocking down our door and when something does come in, you know, a lot of the people that threw the rocks, they ran and hid, that's all I have to say, the cowards that wrote these letters also didn't sign them.

Councilor Gallegos: On my report, thank you for sticking around, this is part of our discussion and usually the way it goes is I will report on the 16th I did meet with Our Lady of Belen Fiestas, on the committee, this fiestas has been alive 224 years in this city. I am a proud member of that, and it takes a lot of organization and it is coming and it does bring a lot of people to Belen, what we try and do is encourage other businesses, it's a fiesta. Also, we have had out budget meeting with Roseann, within the last couple of weeks, and their concern is gross receipts tax, we just are staying pretty much flat and not growing a lot in our GRT, we are surviving as a city, we are not in the red like others that you see, we are doing good, but we do want to see those GRT, we get reports every month, on what is accumulated from all businesses and that is what keep us afloat, keeps our city running, so that ties in a little bit with what we are discussing here. Also, what I wanted to go over, is we had a grand opening, I don't know if anybody knew that, at Belen Automotive, the place that shut down, some new people opened it. I volunteered to go make some music over there, hot dogs, whatever they wanted to do to encourage people to come back so we can have two tire stores again, big deal right, but to me it meant a lot, to have another tire store. So I did that and on behalf of the city, thank you for going over there, and having hot dogs and welcoming them to open the store back. That same day on 6th and Reinken, Belen Railway Credit Union, been working with them for over a year now, and they are building a new building, they are moving from 3rd and Reinken, to 6th and Reinken, which is nice empty lot that has been there, that is just empty and they are coming in and putting a very nice, new credit union over there, nice new building, there target is to be opening within 6 months in that area. These are some

of the good things that are happening. Back to what the meeting was I guess about tonight, I had requested an open meeting for this purpose, for information for the public, at the time it was approved, and then we got bombarded with real negative letters kind of nasty, kind of worrisome, so it was pulled off the agenda, but I do want to let people know for the record that it was asked for, it was put on the agenda and then removed because of everything else that had happened. The meeting tonight is still informational, but the first thing that I wanted to talk about was the letters, those letters, anytime you get letters like that, without a signature, watch out, we hear it every time, yes we have to be alert and careful but if it is not signed, there is always something to it. You know it could be someone saying that it is there vested interest that they don't want something to come in or what is the real story, and I think you should be informed and get the whole, all the information and then approach us like you do have the right to. Don't get blindsided by some of these other business owners or families' feuding or whatever is going on, get the whole story and then come. As part of the Chavez, the one person that did speak, that wants more information, his name is Chris Chavez, I have been meeting with him for the last year, on this situation, because he is a land owner and part of the brothers that sold it, and he has different interest there and his concerns are his properties and future growth or land development in that area and he wants to make sure that we do the process that needs to be done. We have been attending to that, we also had him on the agenda but because of what was happening, what we did is we called for him to meet personally, with the City Manager, but our City Manager, Leona and the Mayor Pro Temp, Frank Ortega and it went on record and there is minutes, meet with Mr. Chavez on his needs, infrastructure needs for future development in that area, instead of, I am going to guess that instead of a 2 inch line that maybe he needs a 8 inch water line, a bigger sewer line, whatever is needed and we need to plan for the future and be fair about this. So I have been in contact with one of the Chavez' and there side, yes, no or whatever, and I have talked with them and accommodate as much as we can. We, like the Mayor did state, when a new business comes in, if it is operation orange that is all we know, because of this problem. If you have an existing car dealers and guess what you get another car dealer coming in and you tell them, well all of a sudden it's a bad idea, because I don't want that competition, so we are not allowed to say that and that is a private land owner, the city does not own that land, so they are there for development, there are rules to follow. It has to go through planning and zoning, it has to be zoned, there are issues, permits, all these things are happening, and they should be looked at and you guys should ask questions, as citizens. Yes, we don't want a nuclear plant next door right, so we have to be careful, I live here, I have a vested interest here, I went to school here, I retired out of here, and I committed my life to public safety and committed to serving the public, over 30 something years now, and I retired out of the fire service here, and I am blessed that I live here and have family living here and also have family not living here, they and to move off and go work some other place. Hopefully when they retire like some of us, they can come back to our little town, and I appreciate the new people that have come in here, because we need that new influence, we can't get stuck on old ways, which I think we are seeing some of those old ways tonight. We have a new influence of people and I think it's positive because we have to look all the way around as 360 not just 180, so I appreciate the influence of the other ideas and new people. As far as truck drivers, I got 3 in the family and I don't think that they are that bad, they work hard, a lot of hours, a lot of miles, to make their money, they are out a long time and they appreciate when they come home and see their kids and family, making an honest living. They are always trying to find better ways of what they can do, it's a rough life, like Councilman Carter said, not all of the are rapist or after prostitutes, or bad people, that's not fair, I don't think that is a fair statement. That happens in the bigger cities, we have all heard it, with phrases they were using and all that like lot lizards and stuff, that's the phrase that they use over there. On the other hand, when I got visit my granddaughter, which is here for the summer now, I just picked her up, they have a Loves in a very small community named, Clayton, New Mexico. It is to and from Amarillo, to Raton, to Springer, into Colorado, it is a major highway but in a smaller city than ours, even smaller than Socorro, but that Loves, what it provides is a place for a convenient store for people there, it is competitive with other gas prices. Believe it or not, they have a place to eat after hours, how about that, when the city closes down over there like our at 3 or 6, and there is no place to go eat, they have a Chester's Chicken, people go buy Chicken, in Grants they have another one, it has a different type, in Belen, what I saw on the plans is an Arby's, I don't know if that is what it is going to be for sure. I wanted chicken because we don't have a chicken place, but after hours there is a place, it is lit, off the highway there. These are some of the positive things, some of the bad things, maybe it is going to be bright, I don't know, maybe it's going to be loud, I live about a quarter or half mile from there, so I hope it's not like that. My daughter lives two block away from her Loves and I don't hear any trucks, I hear the trains, and I hear trains here and I love the trains, I was raised around it, and I hear that a little but I don't hear all those trucks, they park get their 8 hours rest, whatever they need and they are gone. You see all other people in and out, so yes you do get all kinds of people in and out, that's the other thing, and there is a balance there so we need to look at that. Please stay informed, don't come at the 9th or 11th hour, get as much information as possible, yes there is a Tractor Supply coming, I don't know if you guys are surprised or not, we have been working with that, and that's not our property either, believe it or not it belongs to the schools. We thought a Tractor Supply would be nice for the area, because the

intent of that Tractor supply is to service everyone in Belen, Veguita, Socorro, and Mountainair, all the farmers like those Tractor Supplies. They are after special building which are ALCO buildings, once upon a time we had an ALCO here, also went away, the building stayed empty, the schools bought it, its empty. In communications with the city and everybody trying to do what we can, I think Tractor Supply is still coming in, there are renovations going on there. Circle K has been here for years, but they are going to update the store, it's going to come a little bit south, bigger lot, more pumps, brand new type 24 hour business, it will have alcohol like they do know, so they are a little closer to a school, I am going to be upfront on that, they have asked for permission and permits and thinks like that but I understand on the Loves, the new one, there is not going to be alcohol. Thank you guys it does matter, a lot of people left thinking it doesn't matter, it's a done deal, they sold out, its half the story, let's get the whole story and do the best we can for this community.

Mayor Cordova: I want to thank you for being here tonight, for providing your comments, this is an important part of democratic process, I do apologize that it is a little late in the process and that we couldn't have had those conversation sooner. As I was explaining a minute ago, with economic development projects it's a little tricky because we get a lot of companies that come to us and say you can't tell anybody, sometimes you have to sign confidentiality and commit to confidentiality, and it's a difficult balance for us as public officials to be sure that you have the information that you need at the right time. I don't know that we always get it right, but I am hoping that now and in the future we can certainly do a better and good job of that. Shortly before this meeting, just to kind of give you an example, I was sitting in the City Manager's office, with a couple of business owners, they were talking about an expansion of their business, it's going to double the size of it, it's going to bring in major investment from a national corporation, that works on the same type of equipment and project that they do. They told us in big, bold letters, this is confidential, which means that we can't talk about it, and this happens, like I am telling you, all day long. That is how these companies approach the situation, again it is strategic on their part because they don't want the information to get ahead of their project. Same thing happened with Keter, we were able to bring 175 jobs to this community, and they told us we had to keep it confidential. So one point I want to make, no to belabor, because I think that the Council did a good job of explaining the situation, is that when I was elected about 3 and 1/2 years ago, I came into office to be one of the most pro-business Mayors that this town has had. On day two here, with the City of Belen, we had a problem with a local business that was getting ready to build, they had made the property purchase, they were coming in but we had a hiccup in the plans were, a city staffer was requiring some sprinkler systems that were not required by law or ordinance. I intervened, and said, we are going to let this business move forward, it is going to build in this town and we are going to have some more economic activity because we need it, and ever since that day I have done the same exact thing, and I will continue to do that for this community. We have struggled here, we know we have too many boarded up buildings, we know we have youth in our community who are leaving because they cannot find a job here. I am somebody that struggles to live here, because I am an educated person, I have got a Bachelor's Degree, I went to school at George Washington University in Washington DC, there is a lot of opportunity for someone like me in a lot of places. I chose to come back to this community because I know that I can have an impact in this community because I not only know the people here and have a strong heart for the people who live in this community, but because I also understand government, I understand policy, law and politics and that is what you need among the people who lead and represent you, because it is tricky out there. Like the Council was saying, people are not coming to our community everyday saying we want to build some beautiful development or some beautiful new business for us and provide you every service you've ever been asking for, doesn't happen. They come rarely and when they come we have to fight tooth and nail to be sure that we win, and we have won repeatedly. We have the Air Force, we have Keter, we have the truck stop, we got Tractor Supply, we are going to have a brand new Circle K, we are going to have a brand new Railway Credit Union, these are really important big projects that are bringing jobs, bringin investment, bringing revenue into the City of Belen and I will continue to fight for that every single day that I am sitting up here. My last comment is to thank Councilor Ortega, he was running the city for the last couple of weeks while I was away on business, so I want to thank him, he did a stellar job for us, and he may have to do it again in the near future, so I am looking forward to continue to work with him on this, so thank you Councilor.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Cordova asked for a motion to adjourn tonight's Regular Council Meeting. Councilor Ortega made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Aragon seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote:

- Councilor Frank Ortega Yes
- Councilor Darleen Aragon Yes
- Councilor Wayne Gallegos Yes

Councilor David Carter

Yes

Motion Carried



Brian McBain, Deputy City Clerk



Jerah Cordova, Mayor