

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**March 21, 2016**

**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 taken by Leona Vigil, Interim City Manager/City Clerk.

**PRESENT:** Councilor Frank Ortega  
Mayor Pro-Tem Darleen Aragon  
Mayor Jerah Cordova  
Councilor David Carter

**ABSENT:** Councilor Wayne Gallegos

**INTERIM  
CITY MANAGER/  
CITY CLERK:** Leona Vigil, CMC

**REPORTER:** Clara Garcia, VC News Bulletin

**OTHERS:** See attached sign-in sheet

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Jerah Cordova led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Councilor Frank Ortega motioned to approve the agenda. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor David Carter Yes  
Councilor Darleen Aragon Yes  
Councilor Frank Ortega Yes  
Motion Carried

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for an approval of the minutes dated February 15, 2016. Councilor David Carter motioned to approve the agenda. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor David Carter Yes  
Councilor Darleen Aragon Yes  
Councilor Frank Ortega Yes  
Motion Carried

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mayor Cordova asked if there was anyone with a public comment.

There were no public comments at this time and Mayor Cordova closed this portion of the meeting.

**PRESENTATION**

**FISCAL YEAR 2014/2015 AUDIT REPORT: Roseann Peralta, Finance Director**

Roseann Peralta addressed the Mayor and Council. Mayor and Council had previously received a copy of the 2014-2015 Audit. Discussion followed. Roseann commented that the Audit had received an "Unmodified Opinion" for the third year in a row. She stated that this was the best rating available. Audit Findings and possible solutions were discussed in detail. She mentioned that personnel shortage was contributing to the Internal Control Issues. However, they are now using the Caselle Clarity Payroll Module software and support services which will also help with some of these issues. She mentioned that Councilors Wayne Gallegos and David Carter had attended the exit meeting with the Auditor, where detailed discussions had been held. Councilor David Carter suggested that the City Manager and the Finance Director get together and develop a Comprehensive Plan which would be implemented and practiced. He suggested this plan should have a built in time line. Councilor Frank Ortega asked if additional staff would alleviate the issues. Roseann mentioned that there were previously 5 staff members and now they are down to 2. She felt that an additional clerk would help tremendously. A copy of the Audit is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

**ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT: Dan Robb, Police Chief**

Chief Robb addressed the Mayor and Council. He provided a copy of the Belen Police Department Annual Report 2015. Discussion followed. Chief Robb stated that a majority of the crimes were down. There was an increase of DWI arrests, he credits that to the fact that they were able to have a traffic officer assigned specifically to that department. He stated that the matrix included a 5 year trend. He pointed out the graph showed a downward trend. He credited the Code Enforcement Officer stating that having him on board has made a big difference. He stated that there are 3 officers on duty on every shift, and he has developed a plan to replace exiting officers. 2 officers were starting on 3/21/16 and 3 others will be starting in 2 weeks. Councilor Darleen Aragon wanted to know how many of the thefts and robberies investigated were solved. Chief Robb said he did not have that information available but that he would research it and get a number. Councilor David Carter mentioned that the matrix showed the number of citations or arrests for narcotics but did not show a conviction rate. Again Chief Robb said he would research the information and provide the numbers. Councilor Frank Ortega asked about the recovery rate on auto thefts and solve-ability. Chief Robb stated that the recovery rate would be provided. Councilor Frank Ortega also mentioned that the matrix showed that arsons were down. Chief Robb credited his department with having received advanced training in several fields, and felt that the additional training added to the professionalism and high standards that the city requires from the police department. Councilor Frank Ortega requested that the matrix be designed to reflect a positive outcome such as arrests, recoveries, convictions etc. Councilor Frank Ortega asked if there was an MOU in place to allow officers to cross city limits. Officer Robb stated that there are no MOU's in place, but several of the officers do hold "Commission Cards" which allows them that privilege. Mayor Cordova commended the Chief on the work being done by the Police Force, Animal Control and Code Enforcement. A copy of the Statistical Report is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

**DISCUSSION: POSSIBLE ALLEY-WAY CLOSURE FROM SIXTH STREET TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT PROPERTY LINE: Steve Tomita, P & Z Director**

Steve Tomita addressed the Mayor and Council. He stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission had previously met to discuss the options available regarding the alley-way south of City Hall from Sixth Street to the Health Department Property line. He reported that in a seven day period 1,322 cars had been counted using this alley. He stated that it is a very dangerous alley, not only is it narrow, but it is a 2 way alley. There are several reasons why it is considered very dangerous and should be dealt with in the near future, for example there are no safety perimeters, the line of sight is compromised, and parking is also becoming an issue. There was discussion about DOT painting the curb red (South of the first building) to the 1<sup>st</sup> driveway. P&Z had met on this issue and had recommended that action be taken to either close it or make it one way. Steve mentioned that the Health Department is in agreement with closing off the alley. They provided a letter to that effect. Steve commented that there was discussion regarding placing "free flowing gates" thus allowing access to Fire Department or to allow access as needed during special events. Mayor Cordova suggested devising a plan to fence off the Police Department parking area. Councilor Frank Ortega agreed that we should take steps in protecting the Police Departments vehicles. with the free flowing gates, and suggested building a car port for officer's cars. Police Chief Dan Robb mentioned that in the past an individual had intentionally damaged an

officer's car. Councilor David Carter said their actions should consider the accessibility needed by the Solid Waste and Fire Departments. Mayor Cordova requested a long range plan which addresses the options of closing the alley, fencing the Police Department, improving access, alternate routes, including consideration of the alley that connects to Baca, to include improvements, maintenance and budgets. A favorable outcome will consider the recommendations of the P & Z along with improving traffic flow safely and effectively. The packet provided by P & Z is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

**CREATION OF A PUBLIC SAFETY CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD: Jerah Cordova, Mayor**

Mayor Cordova expressed his interest in creating a Public Safety Citizen's Advisory Board. Discussion was held. Mayor Cordova said this board would be instrumental in overseeing public safety concerns. He stated that it would be structured similar to other Boards, Commissions and Committees already in place, implemented by Ordinance and requiring Council Approval. Councilor Frank Ortega agreed that this Advisory Board is a great idea, because it would give the public a different outlet to voice their concerns. Police Chief Dan Robb also agreed that it is an excellent idea, opening up multiple avenues for issues with the Police and Fire Departments. Councilor David Carter stressed the importance of maintaining very strict criteria for membership. Stating, "It would have to be a group of individuals that are logical, knowledgeable and respect and understand law enforcement. The authority of the Board and the By Laws that govern it would have to be very specific." Councilor Frank Ortega suggested that the scope of work be very detailed, and that the Police Chief should serve as a board member. Police Chief and Councilors all agreed that this was a great idea. Mayor Cordova requested that Interim City Manager Leona Vigil research the project.

**DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION**

**APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF THE INTERIM CITY MANAGER COMPENSATION: Jerah Cordova, Mayor**

Mayor Cordova stated that he and Interim City Manager had met and discussed the compensation. It was his recommendation that Interim City Manager Leona Vigil receive compensation in the amount of \$75,000.00 (annual basis) for her term that expires May 15, 2016. Councilor David Carter made a motion that the increase be applied retroactively.

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion. Councilor David Carter so moved. Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a second. Councilor Darleen Aragon, seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor David Carter	Yes	
Councilor Darleen Aragon	Yes	
Councilor Frank Ortega	Yes	Motion Carries

**APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF THE RESOLUTION FOR PHASING THE CDBG INTO TWO PHASES, LA LUZ AND SAN LORENZO WITH REQUIRED CITY MATCHING FUNDS (20%) DISBURSED SEPARATELY FOR EACH PHASE: Steve Tomita, P & Z Director**

Steve Tomita discussed the CDBG Phasing Resolution. He stated that the updated resolution was due Friday March 25, 2016. He reported that he had received a call on Friday 3/18/2016 from the New Mexico CDBG/Department of Finance and Administration, explaining that they had changed the funding process, and therefore an updated resolution needed to be submitted. The full application amount remains at \$500,000; however Phased funding would be \$325,000. Matching funds and interest rate are phased out at 11%. The funding for San Lorenzo Project stands at \$325,000 and La Luz stands at \$275.00. Discussion was held. Mayor Cordova felt the resolution was a bit confusing and instructed Steve Tomita to ensure that the resolution read clearly. A copy of the Resolution is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion. Councilor Frank Ortega, so moved. Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a second. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor David Carter	Yes	
Councilor Darleen Aragon	Yes	
Councilor Frank Ortega	Yes	Motion Carries

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**INTERIM CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

Leona Vigil addressed the Mayor and Council; she stated that the transition was going as expected. She thanked the Directors for all their assistance. She then summarized the list of projects that she had been working on. A copy of the project update report is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

**COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL**

**Councilor Frank Ortega:** He reported that he and Steve Tomita had been working very closely with DOT and State Engineering regarding the properties on West Aragon, namely 105 and 125 West Aragon. He stated that in order to proceed we will need to provide Professional Photographs of the two properties. Once all the information has been submitted, we will be collaborating with the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO), DOT and the Federal Hwy. Since the original planned use of the money didn’t work out, they have agreed to work with us and use the money on a different Historical Building, we considered the old city hall, but since it has not been registered as Historical we opted for the Harvey House. We are also preparing for the 2.27 miles of DCE sewer line. He has a list of residents interested in tying into the sewer line. He will be meeting with DOT on Thursday March 24, 2016 and will discuss the easements. He mentioned that he had attended the Camino Del Llano Ponds Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. He provided a brief summary on how it had progressed. He commented on the Balloon Fiesta, Friday was great, it was well attended, Saturday the balloons didn’t go up, still a lot of people at Eagle Park, Sunday was great. He got a lot of positive feedback from the community. He commented that the lights on the Aragon bridge are working good, however, now that it’s lit up there is visible damage on the west side, he would like that checked out. He mentioned attending the Town Hall meeting and expressed his gratitude to Speaker of the House, Don Tripp, Senators Michael Sanchez & Clemente Sanchez and State Representatives Kelly Fajardo & Alonzo Baldonado, for their help in getting the \$300,000 approved for the sewer line. The City staffers will be working with Molzen Corbin and DOT, updating the waiting list, and creating an MOU between the City, the Belen Schools, and Valencia County. “We are ready to move forward. “

**Councilor Darleen Aragon:** She reported that she had attended the Hispano Chamber Luncheon. She stated that she also attended the Economic Development meeting On March 10, 2016. She conducted the Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies at the Camino Del Llano Ponds. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was well attended. Speaker of the House Don Tripp, Representatives Kelly Fajardo and Alonzo Baldonado were in attendance. The Balloon Fiesta was a huge success. The Darth Vader Balloon Ride winner was an old classmate. Main Street Partnership Board members are trying different ideas on how to bring in new businesses. They are checking into vacant buildings, trying to contact the owners to see if there is a way to utilize the buildings. Claudine Montano recently opened The Becker Street Grill. It is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays. It is reportedly serving really good soups, salads and sandwiches. She encouraged everyone to try it. She also reported that the Corazon De Belen Park clean up was held on March 19, 2016. Phase one was the clean up, Phase two will be planting flowers. She had a good turnout and the group accomplished a lot. She was able to attend the car show up at Eagle Park on Saturday. She didn’t need to go to the Balloon ascension, since they all

flew over her house on Sunday morning. She said it was a beautiful sight she took lots of pictures. She wanted to acknowledge the EMT's she said they had been called out to an emergent situation, and they took complete control and handled the situation expertly. A family member contacted Councilor Aragon to thank the department "Kudos" to the EMT's for a job well done.

**Councilor David Carter:** He also attended the Economic Development Meeting and the Hispano Luncheon. He also reported that he had helped clean the church yard and participated in the "Follow the Star" volunteer dinner held at Abundant Life Church. This was an appreciation dinner for the volunteers that participate in the "Follow the Star" Celebrate Belen Organization. He also attended the Camino Del Llano Ponds Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. He complimented Wayne Gallegos for his outstanding presentation of the history and outcome of the ponds. He also thanked Councilor Frank Ortega for his informative comments. He mentioned that the Balloon Fiesta was a success. Even though the balloons did not go up on Saturday, there were a lot of people in attendance and everyone seemed to enjoy the festivities. Councilor Darleen Aragon stated that Rita's Restaurant had reported a big crowd on Saturday. So the event was well attended and promoted revenue throughout the City.

**Mayor Jerah Cordova:** He reported that he had attended a Town Hall Meeting in Rio Communities relating to the Nativity Scene and other "Belen" issues. He and Manny Garcia, Fire Chief, had preliminary discussions with Molzen Corbin regarding the Fire Station. Molzen Corbin provided some pretty basic plans for the new Fire Station. The funding is not expected until July, but they want to have a head start on it. He stated that he had met with City Department Heads regarding the transition, and with HR to discuss job postings. He also reported meeting with Valencia County Staff. He has had conversations with Tom Greer regarding the sewer back up and subsequent issues. The new website is live and getting a lot of activity. He also reported that we were preparing to proceed with the DCE sewer line extension. He has a list of interested parties to connect in. The list is built on a first come first served basis. A copy will be forwarded to Leona Vigil. Councilor Darleen Aragon, interjected that this would be the last meeting that the Mayor would officiate as a single man. The Mayor commented that he will be getting married early April.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

An executive session to discuss limited personnel matters in reference to the City's interim-positions, as allowed per the Open Meetings Act; Section 10-15-1 (H-2), and Pending or Threatened Litigation referencing the hospital as allowed per the Open Meetings Act; Section 10-15-1 (H-7)

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion. Councilor Frank Ortega so moved. Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a second. Councilor Darlene Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor David Carter	Yes	
Councilor Darleen Aragon	Yes	
Councilor Frank Ortega	Yes	Motion Carries

Councilor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to return to an open meeting from a closed meeting. Councilor David Carter, so moved. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor David Carter	Yes	
Councilor Darleen Aragon	Yes	
Councilor Frank Ortega	Yes	Motion Carries

Councilor Jerah Cordova asked for attestation that discussion was limited to pending and threatened litigation and no action was taken. Councilor David Carter so moved. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor David Carter	Yes	
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Councilor Darleen Aragon    Yes  
Councilor Frank Ortega      Yes    Motion Carries

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to adjourn tonight's Regular City Council Meeting. Councilor David Carter motioned to adjourn. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Frank Ortega      Yes  
Councilor David Carter       No  
Councilor Darleen Aragon    Yes    Motion Carries

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Jerah Cordova, Mayor

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Leona Vigil, City Clerk, CMC