

# CITY OF BELEN REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

May 16, 2016

6:00 PM

**CALL TO ORDER** 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 Wayne Gallegos  
Councilor David Carter

## **INTERIM**

**CITY MANAGER/** Leona Vigil, CMC

## **CITY CLERK:**

**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 Wayne Gallegos motioned to approve the agenda. Councilor Frank Ortega seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

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

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for approval of the minutes dated May 2, 2016. Councilor Frank Ortega requested that the minutes be amended regarding the 911 Presentation: He requested that the amount of \$601,000.00 that Living Cross Ambulance is in arrears be included in the minutes. He also requested a correction regarding Charles Eaton's title from Fire Chief, Los Chavez to Valencia County Commissioner Chair. Councilor Frank Ortega motioned to approve the minutes dated May 2, 2016, as amended. Councilor Wayne Gallegos seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT 3 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS:**

Gene Green addressed the Mayor and Council, he stated that his concern was the fact that Ronnie Torres was being let go. He commented that Ronnie has done so much for the Belen Harvey House Museum, The Buggs Lights, the Library and the community. "He has done an awful lot for the community. It would be worth every penny to keep him. If you lose Ronnie Torres you lose me."

CeCe Aragon stated that since Ronnie Torres was hired he had brought in quiet a few events, "a lot of events and a lot of people". She said that they had recently held a "Museum Luncheon" with over 200 attendees. The Buggs Lights Christmas Display attracts over 10,000 people. She stated "Ronnie has volunteered hundreds of hours. He does a great job recruiting and organizing volunteers. Not because he feels obligated, but because he has the Heart for it and for the City of Belen. His efforts have promoted sales at local restaurants and at The Belen Art League & Gift Shop. As city leaders you control the budget. If you replace Ronnie, will his replacement do everything that Ronnie does; he might have the same passion, but they will not come close to what Ronnie has done. This individual has to be respectful of the City of Belen and the Harvey House."

Heida Green addressed the Mayor and Council; she is a docent at the Harvey house. She is very disappointed that the City sees such little importance for their activities. She does not understand how the City is not able to bring up his salary. She said all it would take was \$2000.00 a yr. to bring up some one as important as Ronnie. "He is the brains behind the activities. Without him there will be no Bugg Lights. He brings in lots of people to start the Bugg's Lights in October. It will be truly disappointing." She hoped the council would see their way clear. She stated that there has to be a "slush" fund that could support the increase. Mayor Cordova commented that a salary study had been conducted in 2015 and that Mr. Torres had received approximately \$3.00 per hour increase. He stated that shows appreciation. Mrs. Green stated "If it's just a buck an hour to show him appreciation. He feels unappreciated. Please think about it".

Mike Moreno approached the podium; he introduced himself as a volunteer at the Harvey House and member of the Library Board of Trustees. He represents the volunteers. He stated that the Library Board is willing to help fund the position. "Whatever amount that is" He stated that Ronnie Torres was not looking for a raise. "All he wants is appreciation and pride". He urged the Mayor and Council to take whatever steps necessary to change the title. He understands there is a process and procedures in place. He stated that the Volunteers were willing to raise the money. He also stated that he would pay it out of this own pocket. Ronnie is doing this for the City of Belen. I see what he brings to the City of Belen. "We cannot afford to not have the Bugg's Lights, we cannot go dark. Please think this through, have a negotiation and see what can be done. It's not about the

money it's about his pride and appreciation and his willingness to give to the community.”

Lonnie Killiom addressed the Mayor and Council he expressed concern about Ronnie Torres leaving. Mr. Killion is a volunteer at the Harvey House. He said the volunteers started setting up the Bugg's Lights in September. He and his wife greeted visitors to the event every night, and everyone liked it, they liked the set up, “everybody likes the Bugg's lights. “ He asked that they please work out the problem with Ronnie Torres.

Richard Garcia representing the Valencia County Sheriff's Posse addressed the Mayor and Council. He stated that there had been several rodeos in the past few months. Each one bringing in several hundreds of people. He was requesting help from the City of Belen to improve the grounds. He mentioned that the recent National High School Rodeo brought in thousands of people. He wanted to know if the City would be able to “wet down” the grounds, in an attempt to keep the dust down. He understood that there are policies and procedures in place and wanted direction as to how we could improve the working relationship.

Charles Cox Commander of the Chavez Curran Post 2387 addressed the Mayor and Council. He discussed the Memorial Day weekend events. Saturday May 28<sup>th</sup> volunteers will be placing flags at the seven cemeteries in Belen. He invited anyone who was interested in helping to meet at the VFW Post located at 122 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street at 8:00 a.m. He said a “cook out” would follow. On Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup> a Memorial Day service will be held at Terrace Grove Cemetery at 10:00 a.m. he extended an invitation to the Mayor and Council and the general public.

Richard Garcia Valencia County Sheriff's Posse approached the podium again to provide the dates for the upcoming Rodeo. It will be held May 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>.

Robert Miller addressed the Mayor and Council. He Congratulated Manny Garcia on EMS week. He expressed his thanks to the firefighters and EMT's. He stated that this week is also National Police Officer week. He thanked the City, County and State Police Officers. He stated that it is not a shared week by accident, but by the mere fact that the “combined efforts of these departments make it happen. The unity makes the process work. “

Muriel Killian addressed the Mayor and Council. She introduced herself as a proud Belen resident for the past year. She stated that she moved here because of the family friendly activities. She takes her out of town family, friends and guests to the Harvey House Museum. She commented that she and her husband had volunteered for the Balloon Rally and for the Bugg's Light set up, and also as greeters. She said they greeted over 10,000 people in the 6 weeks that it was open, and received wonderful comments.

Gloria Sanchez addressed the Mayor and Council; she stated that she has been a volunteer for many years. She feels that Ronnie Torres has shown dedication to the City of Belen, he has a full time business and still finds time to volunteer hundreds of hours to

the Harvey House, and several other projects, i.e. Walking Trail on Mesa Rd., The Gazebo, and the 911 Memorial Park, and the 1<sup>st</sup> National Night Out. She stated that he is a good listener, has energy, very smart and he loves Belen, she hopes he stays.

Mary Huhn addressed the Mayor and Council. She is a volunteer at the Research Library. She researches Genealogy. "Ronnie is a critical resource he has so much knowledge about the citizens of Belen. He is a wealth of knowledge and dedication. The Museum would not be what it is today without Ronnie's hard work and dedication."

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

### **2016 EMS Week Proclamation: Jerah Cordova, Mayor**

Mayor Jerah Cordova read the "2016 EMS Week" Proclamation. Fire Chief Manny Garcia recognized the following members of the audience Kathy Peoples, EMS Division Chief, Charles Cox, Fire Inspector/Fire Investigator along with the following firefighters, John Pairett, Julio Mares and Justin Thomas. Chief Garcia accepted the Proclamation and thanked the EMT's and the firefighters for their hard work and dedication. A copy of the proclamation is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

### **2015 Fire Department Report: Fire Chief Manny Garcia**

Fire Chief, Manny Garcia addressed the Mayor and Council. He stated that they had recently sponsored an EMT Conference which was facilitated by Infinity High School. There were over 172 attendees all receiving Continuing Education Credits. He received a lot of positive comments. Chief Garcia presented copies of the 2015 Fire Department Report. Discussion was held regarding personnel (training and retention) response times, issues with volunteers, a workshop was suggested to address the situation. The importance of staff training and "Preparedness" were stressed. Short and long term goals were discussed. Mayor and Council thanked Chief Garcia for doing an excellent job. A copy of the 2015 Report is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

An executive session to discuss pending or threatened litigation regarding the hospital as allowed per the Open Meetings Act; Section, 10-15-1 (H-7) and personnel matters referencing the City Manager position and the Planning and Zoning Department as allowed per 10-15-1 (H-2).

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to enter into executive session. Councilor Wayne Gallegos 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	
Councilor Wayne Gallegos	Yes	Motion Carries

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to re-enter into an open meeting from a closed meeting. Councilor Wayne Gallegos, so moved. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

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

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for attestation that discussion was limited to discussions of pending or threatened litigation regarding the hospital as allowed per the Open Meetings Act; Section, 10-15-1 (H-7) and personnel matters referencing the City Manager position and the Planning and Zoning Department as allowed per 10-15-1 (H-2) and no action was taken. Councilor Wayne Gallegos so moved. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

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

#### **DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION**

##### **Approval or Disapproval of the appointed City Manager position: Jerah Cordova, Mayor**

Mayor Jerah Cordova nominated Leona Vigil as City Manager. He stated that discussions had been held and that Leona Vigil Interim City Manager had agreed to the appointment. Mayor Cordova asked the council for comments, there were none. He then asked for a motion to approve the Appointment. Councilor Frank Ortega motioned to approve the appointment. Councilor Darleen Aragon seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

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

##### **Approval or Disapproval of the continuation of the Caselle Payroll Contract: Roseann Peralta, Finance Director**

Roseann Peralta addressed the Mayor and Council. She presented the Caselle Payroll Contract. Discussion was held. A copy of the contract is attached hereto and made an integral part of these minutes by reference.

Mayor Jerah Cordova asked for a motion to approve the Contract. Councilor Frank Ortega motioned to approve the Contract. Councilor Wayne Gallegos seconds the motion. Roll Call Vote:

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

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

#### **City Manager's Report:**

Ms. Vigil stated that she had nothing to report at this time. All information had been previously emailed to the Mayor & Council.

#### **Communication from City Council:**

##### **Frank Ortega Reported:**

Passed

##### **Darleen Aragon Reported:**

She watered her garden.

She attended the Economic Development meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

She is planning on attending the Belen High School Graduation on 5/17/2016.

##### **David Carter Reported:**

He attended budget hearings on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

He was involved in the National Day of Prayer on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

He attended a workshop on May 6<sup>th</sup> at City Hall regarding sidewalks.

He attended Open Enrollment.

May 10<sup>th</sup> he sat on the interview panel for the City Manager position.

May 12<sup>th</sup> he attended an Economic Development meeting.

May 13<sup>th</sup> he did something, but can't remember what.

##### **Wayne Gallegos Reported:**

He attended the Budget hearings on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

He attended the National Day of Prayer @ Ana Becker Park on May 5<sup>th</sup>.  
He attended a breakfast for all Valencia County High School Seniors.

He attended the Library Board Meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup>. He was pleased to report that the Deborah Graham Memorial Scholarship had been awarded.

**Mayor Jerah Cordova Reported:**

He also attended the Budget Hearings on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> he welcomed the group @ Ana Becker Park for the National Day of Prayer.

On May 6<sup>th</sup> He attended the Workshop at City Hall regarding the sidewalks.

On May 10<sup>th</sup> he sat on the interview panel for the Chief of Police and City Manager positions. He reported that he was pleased that a City Manager had been selected, and that the top three candidates for the Chief of Police position would be participating in a second round of interviews.

On May 10<sup>th</sup> he attended a hospital board meeting for continued discussions.

On May 13<sup>th</sup> he was scheduled for appearances at the High School Graduations beginning at 1:00 p.m. @ Infinity High and ending 8 hours later.

**11) ADJOURNMENT:**

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

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

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Jerah Cordova, Mayor

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Leona Vigil, City Clerk, CMC