


**MINUTES of the
KEENE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF
KEENE
TEXAS**



Thursday, February 13, 2020

**Gary Heinrich
Mayor**

**Lisa Parrish
Place I**

**David Bass
Place II**

**James Belz
Place III**

**Rob Foster
Ward I**

**Gwen Beeson
Mayor Pro Tem (Ward II)**

**Robert Cooper
Ward III**

Attendance

Present

- Mayor Gary Heinrich
- Councilmember Lisa Parrish
- Councilmember David Bass
- Councilmember James Belz
- Councilmember Rob Foster
- Mayor Pro Tem Gwen Beeson
- Councilmember Robert Cooper

Absent

- None

CALLED TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM

Invocation was given by Rob Foster

Pledge of Allegiance & Texas Pledge

1. Public Comments: **None**
2. Mayor's Comments:
Mayor Heinrich welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council Member Parrish introduced a student from Keene Junior High School – Kelly Brady. Ms. Brady is in the 6th grade and she wants to start a business in Keene named Brady's Berries.
3. Consideration of City Council Minutes dated January 30, 2020.
Mayor Heinrich called for a motion. Councilmember Cooper moved to approve the minutes from January 30, 2020 as presented, second by Mayor Pro Tem Beeson. Motion carried unanimously (6 Yes – 0 No).
4. Discussion of the 2020 US Census.
City Manager Boese briefly talked about the meeting with the US Census departments staff regarding the upcoming census.
5. Discussion and possible action regarding the approval of Ordinance No. 2020-607 regarding Noise Nuisance in the City of Keene.
City Manager Boese briefly discussed some of the revisions made to the ordinance with the recommendation from Council such as:
 - **Section having the definition of animals.**
 - **Section having the construction work hours.**
 - **Councilmember Parrish stated that she thought the 8pm was too early especially during the summer when the days are longer and still wanted 10pm to 6 am as nighttime hours.**
 - **Councilmember Bass expressed that 9 pm or 10 pm would be a reasonable time for the nighttime hours.**
 - **Mayor Pro Tem Beeson was wondering if during the summertime, would the time be taken in consideration. Mr. Boese explained the key to the ordinance is the "unreasonable noise" and that having different times during the summer versus the rest of the year, it would be harder**

for officers to remember to enforce. Mr. Boese stated that in the ordinance, the work hours were made the same so that there would be no confusion.

- Councilmember Parrish clarified that the “unreasonable noise” is for day and night and this section is regarding a special restriction on the construction people, trash people, and revving of the engines.
 - Resident Donna Jones talked about loose dog in her yard. Mayor Heinrich asked Mrs. Jones if she was in favor or against the noise ordinance. Mrs. Jones stated that she was in favor of dogs that are not restrained or retained to be picked up and put into a humane shelter and not allowed to run the streets and run into peoples yards. Interim Chief Sherwin advised the Council that the Police Department has been in contact with Mrs. Jones’ neighbor regarding the issue she was facing.
 - Section having the exemptions: added “licensed childcare facility.”
 - Section having the enforcement: added “no warning or notice of violation is required before a criminal citation may be issued for an offense under this Article.”
 - Section having the penalties: lowered the maximum fine amount a judge can set from \$2,000.00 to \$500.00 per violation.
 - Councilmember Foster moved to approve Ordinance No. 2020-607, second by Councilmember Bass. Motion carried unanimously (6 Yes – 0 No).
6. Discussion and possible action regarding approval of Ordinance No. 2020-608 regarding a Tax Freeze for Property Owners Aged 65+ and/or Disabled.
- City Manager Boese discussed information about the current senior and disabled exemptions that City of Keene provides. Mr. Boese explained the impact that the tax freeze would have on the city budget and provided comparison from other cities using the same exemptions. Mr. Boese provided examples for other options as requested by councilmembers.
- Councilmember Parrish stated that she supports the tax freeze and that she believes that this would be beneficial to the senior and disabled citizens. She advised that this tax freeze would give them a stability in their senior years when their income is fixed.
 - Councilmember Cooper stated that once you enact a tax freeze, you are stuck and due to financial problems in the city, he does not believe a tax freeze is needed.
 - Mayor Heinrich stated that the council can talk more about this or table it. He advised that he likes the idea of increasing the homestead exemption to possibly \$20,000 or \$25,000 like Joshua. He advised that this gives residents an immediate tax reduction versus freezing the taxes which would not affect the residents for another year or so.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Beeson stated that the tax freeze would affect the rest of the residents in upcoming budget years since the city has specific obligations. She agreed that the city needs to do everything they can to help senior citizens. She advised that as a senior citizen herself, she would love to have her taxes frozen. She stated that as she looks at the obligations of the city and how they will get paid, it makes her wonder if this is the best option for the city at this time. She advised that the tax decrease of 3 cents was a great step for the city, but she is on the fence about it. She advised that the \$5,000.00 extra exemption would be a better option.
 - Resident Samantha Gillin spoke in favor for the tax freeze.
 - Resident Cindy Hopps spoke in favor for the tax freeze.
 - Resident Shelly Brady spoke in favor for the tax freeze.

- **Resident Clara Cavallaro spoke in favor for the tax freeze.**
- **Resident Darlene Connell spoke in favor for the tax freeze.**
- **Councilmember Bass stated that he does not believe that anyone over the age of 65 and worked their entire life should question whether they will lose their house to taxes. He advised that the city did struggle last October to lower the taxes, but he believes that the tax freeze should have been created a few years ago. He advised that this is something that needs to be done. Mayor Heinrich gave an example of Burleson removing their exemptions when they enacted the tax freeze. Councilmember Bass stated that the resident should have one or the other, either the tax freeze or the exemptions. He advised that the city can handle the tax freeze and that the city should have done few years ago.**
- **Councilmember Belz stated that 20 years ago when he originally built his house, he had no idea that the house would have this high of an evaluation. He advised that every penny of his social security goes to pay for his taxes. He advised that he hopes to be able to pay for his taxes for the next 10 or 20 years or he would have to move.**
- **Mayor Heinrich advised that people build homes in hope to use the rise in evaluation for their retirement when they downsize.**
- **Resident Nick Chesney spoke about the tax assessment amount.**
- **Mayor Pro Tem Beeson moved to table it until the next council meeting, second by Councilmember Foster. Motion carried (5 Yes – 1 No / Councilmember Cooper).**

7. Department Reports

- **Police Department – Rob Sherwin, Interim Chief**
Interim Chief Rob Sherwin provided a monthly report on Police Departments' activity regarding:
 - **Interim Chief Sherwin presented the 2019 Racial Profiling Report and the January 2020 Police Activity Report while highlighting the major cleaning project of the evidence room.**
 - **Councilmember Bass asked if there have been any accidents at the crossing located by the college gym on N. Old Betsy Rd. Chief Sherwin advised the council that this time of year, it gets dark much earlier and due to not enough lighting, there is low visibility. Chief Sherwin advised that communication with TxDOT regarding this issue will continue.**
- **Public Works – Don Martin, Director**
Public Works Director Don Martin provided a monthly report on Public Works' activity regarding:
 - **Water production levels for Well #6**
 - **Status update on Well #11**
 - **Status update on S. College & Fourth St sewer project**
 - **Well Capital Improvement Budgets**
 - **Well #1 & Well #5 (\$9,998.00 spent out of budgeted \$32,100.00)**
 - **Well #14 (\$8,173.00 spent out of budgeted \$10,300.00)**
 - **Well #6 (\$4,548.00 spent out of budgeted \$18,500.00)**
 - **Update on the new work order system that is being used by Public Works**
- **Administration – Michael Boese, City Manager**
City Manager Michael Boese provided a monthly report on Administration' activity regarding:
 - **Mr. Boese advised council the city is still waiting for a proposal response regarding our current contract with Republic Waste Services.**

- Mr. Boese also mentioned that the city started the process of negotiating with Oncor as they have submitted a request for a 40-year Franchise Agreement.
- Mr. Boese advised that the city received 33 application for the next Police Chief search and interviews will be scheduled in March.
- Mr. Boese provided an organizational staffing update.
- Mr. Boese talked about the meeting with a representative from the Texas Workforce Commission. They discussed about a TWC program that would provide job opportunities for residents in our community 55 years or older. Residents would be able to work for the city and receive on the job training while being paid minimum wage by TWC. This program would not affect the city budget as the wages would come from TWC.
- Councilmember Belz advised that he would like to see bigger perimeters regarding the bulk trash pickup as he feels like the amount to be picked up has become more limited. Mr. Boese advised that the trash company was in favor of having more frequent pickups as it is much easier and convenient for people.

8. Executive Session: Council convened into executive session at 7:79 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Keene, Texas, reserves the right to convene into executive session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed above, as authorized by Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), 551.073 (Deliberations about Gifts and Donations), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices) and 551.086 (Economic Development).

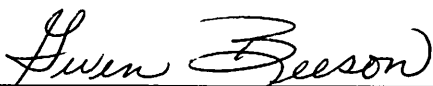
a. Personnel Matters: City Secretary Six Month Review


9. Reconvene into Open Session for possible action resulting from any item posted discussed in Executive Session. Council reconvened into Open Session at 8:26 p.m.

Mayor Heinrich called for a motion accepting the resignation of City Secretary Patsy Patten.

Councilmember Parrish moved to accept resignation, second by Councilmember Belz. Motion carried (5 Yes – 1 No / Councilmember Cooper).

10. Adjourn: There being no further business, Mayor Heinrich adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

By: 
Gwen Beeson, Mayor Pro Tem

Attest: 
Natanael Drambareanu
Assistant to the City Manager