

City Council – Minutes

Thursday, September 21, 2023, at 6:00 PM

Keene City Hall

Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Pledge to Texas Flag:

Mayor Parrish called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, Mary Gutwa gave the invocation, all Council lead the Pledge of Allegiance and Pledge to Texas Flag.

Councilmembers present: Mayor Parrish, James Belz, Ray Johnson, Thomas Gutwa, Owen Larson, and Gwen Beeson.

Councilmember absent: Rob Foster.

Department Heads present: Brent Batla, Don Martin, Tabatha Mansell, Charles Williams, Nathan Drambareanu, Derek Malone, Chief Kidd, and Chief Warner.

1. Mayor Comments:

Introduced Mary Gutwa, Chancellor from Kenya and Councilmember Gutwa's mother, and presented her with the key to the City.

2. Public Comments:

Debbie Belz (2900 CR 805B), Councilmembers Johnson and Beeson spoke during public comments.

3. Consider approval of City Council minutes dated September 21, 2023.

Motion to approve made by Councilmember Beeson, seconded by Councilmember Larson

Motion carried 5-0-0 (Councilmember Foster absent).

4. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give direction to staff regarding issues staff are experiencing with charging flat rate sewer fees on subdivisions within the city.

Assistant City Manager Don Martin presented to Council.

Mayor Parrish spoke on the topic.

Councilmember Beeson spoke on the topic.

Councilmember Larson spoke on the topic.

Councilmember Gutwa spoke on the topic.

Wes Schram (1002 W 4th St) spoke on the topic.

Councilmember Belz spoke on the topic.

City Engineer Tristan King spoke on the topic.

Samantha Gillin (218 W 4th St) spoke on the topic.

5. Public Hearing: Conduct a public hearing to hear and discuss the recommendation of change in zoning request from Derrick Chiu, for approximately 0.3836 acres more/less of land. Lot 5, Blk 1, Windmill Courts Sec 1; 211 N Eastern Street request to change the current zoning from Single Family 2 (SF-2) to Two Family (T-F).

Mayor Parrish opened the public hearing at 6:48 pm.

Assistant City Manager Don Martin presented the zoning request to Council.

Mayor Parrish spoke during the public hearing.

Councilmember Larson spoke during the public hearing.

Troy Smith (310 Woodlawn) spoke during the public hearing.

Councilmember Gutwa spoke during the public hearing.

Derrick Chiu (211 N Eastern St) spoke during the public hearing.

Mayor Parrish closed the public hearing at 7:01 pm.

6. Consider approval of an ordinance authorizing the zoning change for approximately 0.3836 acres more/less of land. Lot 5, Blk 1, Windmill Courts Sec 1; 211 N Eastern Street changing the current zoning from Single Family 2 (SF-2) to Two Family (T-F).

Assistant City Manager Don Martin presented to Council.

Motion to approve Ordinance No. 2023-661 made by Councilmember Larson, seconded by Councilmember Beeson.

Motion carried 4-0-1 (Councilmember Belz abstained. Councilmember Foster absent).

7. Public Hearing: Hold a second public hearing to receive written or oral comments regarding the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year proposed budget.

Mayor Parrish opened the public hearing at 7:02 pm.

Finance Director Charles Williams spoke during the public hearing.

Mayor Parrish closed the public hearing at 7:04 pm.

8. Public Hearing: Hold a second public hearing to receive written and /or oral comments regarding the Ad Valorem Tax Rate and levy on assessed property subject to taxation within the City of Keene, Texas, for the 2023 tax year for the use and support of the municipal government of the City of Keene for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023, and ending on September 30, 2024.

Mayor Parrish opened the public hearing at 7:04 pm.

Mayor Parrish spoke during the public hearing.

Wes Schram spoke during the public hearing.

Finance Director Charles Williams spoke on the topic.

Councilmember Beeson spoke during the public hearing.

Troy Smith (310 Woodlawn Dr) spoke during the public hearing.

City Secretary Tabatha Mansell spoke during the public hearing.

Councilmember Larson spoke during the public hearing.

City Manager Brent Batla spoke during the public hearing.

Councilmember Gutwa spoke during the public hearing.

Assistant City Manager Don Martin spoke during the public hearing.

Samantha Gillin (218 W 4th St) spoke during the public hearing.

Councilmember Johnson spoke during the public hearing.

Tatiana Romanova (202 E. Eastern) spoke during the public hearing.

Don Beeson Sr. (607 Woodlawn) spoke during the public hearing.

Charles Davis (414) spoke during the public hearing.

Mayor Parrish closed the public hearing at 7:49 pm.

9. Consider approval of an ordinance approving and adopting a budget for operating the municipal government for the City of Keene for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023, and ending on September 30, 2024; and appropriating money for the various funds and purposes of such budget including appropriations of money to pay interest and sinking fund requirements on all indebtedness.

Motion to approve Ordinance No. 2023-659 made by Councilmember Beeson, seconded by Councilmember Johnson.

A record vote was taken with the following results:

For: Ray Johnson, Place 1
James Belz, Place 3, Mayor Pro Tem
Gwen Beeson, Ward 2
Owen Larson, Ward 3

Against: Thomas Gutwa, Place 2

Abstain: None.

Absent: Rob Foster, Ward 1

Motion carried 4-1-0.

A ratification vote was taken with the following results:

For: Ray Johnson, Place 1
James Belz, Place 3, Mayor Pro Tem
Gwen Beeson, Ward 2

Owen Larson, Ward 3

Against: Thomas Gutwa, Place 2

Abstain: None.

Absent: Rob Foster, Ward 1

Motion carried 4-1-0.

- 10. Consider approval of an ordinance approving and adopting an Ad Valorem Tax Rate and levy on assessed property of a proposed tax rate of \$0.834134 per \$100 valuation for the tax year 2023 for the City of Keene, Texas including a Levy for Debt Obligations (\$0.091650) and a levy for Maintenance and Operations (\$0.742484) consistent with the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Municipal Budget.**

Motion for tax rate \$0.834134 made by Councilmember Beeson, seconded by Councilmember Belz.

A record vote was taken with the following results:

For: Ray Johnson, Place 1
James Belz, Place 3, Mayor Pro Tem
Gwen Beeson, Ward 2
Owen Larson, Ward 3

Against: Thomas Gutwa, Place 2

Abstain: None.

Absent: Rob Foster, Ward 1

Motion carried 4-1-0.

- 11. Consider authorizing a contract renewal with Johnson County Emergency Services providing fire extinguishment and emergency services for FY 2023-2024.**

Fire Chief Dan Warner presented to Council.

Motion to approve made by Councilmember Larson, seconded by Councilmember Belz.

Motion carried 5-0-0 (Councilmember Foster absent).

- 12. Discuss and give staff direction regarding an engine brake ordinance.**

Mayor Parrish presented to Council.

Councilmember Larson spoke on the topic.
Councilmember Johnson spoke on the topic.
Police Chief James Kidd spoke on the topic.

Mayor Parrish polled Council to see who wanted to move forward creating an ordinance and all agreed.
Staff were directed to create an engine brake ordinance.

- 13. Discuss and give staff direction regarding possible changes in agenda formatting and adding consent agenda.**
City Manager Brent Batla and City Secretary Tabatha Mansell presented to Council.

Mayor Parrish spoke on the topic.
Councilmember Larson spoke on the topic.

Mayor Parrish and Council gave staff direction to move forward with agenda changes.

- 14. Department Report.**

Finance Director Charles Williams presented to Council the August Financial Summary Report and announced his retirement.

- 15. City Manager Report.**

City Manager Brent Batla addressed Finance Director Charles Williams and thanked him for his legacy.
Presented a reminder about bulk trash scheduling, updates on: Starfest, Christmas Committee, RFPs for Lawn Service,

and Impact Fees. Thanked Nathan Drambareanu for installing the Robert G. Cooper letters for the Council Chamber. Mayor Parrish spoke during the City Manager Report. Police Chief James Kidd spoke during the City Manager Report.

16. Executive Session: Pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, the City Council reserves the right to convene in Executive Session closed to the public, as deemed necessary during this meeting for any posted item, to receive advice from its attorney as permitted by law, and by the following authority:
Council convened into Executive Session at 8:38 pm.

- (a) Personnel Matters Pursuant to Section 551.074
 - Review, deliberate, and discuss the job title changes for Public Works personnel.

17. Reconvene into Open Session for possible action resulting from any item posted or discussed in Executive Session.

Council reconvened into Open Session at 8:56 pm, no action was taken.

18. Requests for future agenda items.

Councilmember Johnson requested Type A and B Boards notify Council when they spend \$25,000 or more.

19. Meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.

By: Lisa Parrish

Lisa Parrish, Mayor

Attest: Tabatha Mansell

Tabatha Mansell, City Secretary