

KECHI CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
August 24, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Ashley Velazquez called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Council present: Todd Hedstrom, Richard Haddock, Brian Adams, Kendra Baldrige, Matt Brewer, and Mayor Ashley Velazquez.

City staff present: Andrew Kovar, City Attorney; Kamme Sroufe, City Administrator (CA); Theresa Morlan, Finance/HR Director; Debra Creekmore, City Clerk; Police Chief Braden Moore; Lt. Amanda Smith; Police Officer; Josh Meyer and Thomas Bevan, Public Works Director.

Guests present: Blaine & Joanie Harris; Chris Strunke, AVN; Terry Janke; Arnel Thomas, Jr.; Sandra & David McConaughay; Bea Burkhalter; Bette Smith; Stephanie Kullman; April Owens; Tom Jolly; Don & Judy Hankins and John Speer.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE – Led by Mayor Ashley Velazquez.

B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda

1. City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2023
2. City Council Meeting Minutes August 10, 2023

Motion by Richard Haddock to approve the consent agenda and seconded by Todd Hedstrom. Motion carried 5-0-0.

C. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Brian Adams to approve the agenda as written with the deletion of item V. (Executive Session). Motion seconded by Richard Haddock and carried 5-0-0.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Budget Discussion

Administrator Sroufe presented that the general fund is currently at 36.76 mills for a total of \$1,105,189. The value of 1 mill equals \$30,065. 2024 Budget Revenue and Budget Tax Revenue was presented. 1.1 mills in the 2024 budget comes from property tax revenue. The largest part of the budget expenditure is for Personnel, which is 40 mills. These expenditures were also broken out by Department and Category. The council had previously expressed an interest in knowing what the mills would be for the following: Public Works = 2.53 mill, Communication = 2.00 mill, Police Officer = 3.83 mill and Capital investment = 3.33 mill for a total of an additional 11.67 mills needed for these positions.

Public Works Director Bevan noted that the second week of October work on the water tower will commence. It will take 30-45 days to complete.

B. Kechi Civic Groups/Committees – None

C. Kechi Good News

It was good to have Matt Brewer back at City Council. He thanked everyone for their thoughts, prayers, and amazing outpouring of love from the community. Edward Jones will be hosting a food drive from August 23 – September 18, 2023. The North Kechi (Sunnydale) Community Building will have a cake and ice cream social on August 26, 2023, at 6:00 pm. Theresa Morlan won a 2-night trip to NYC for a Disturbed Concert. Residents enjoyed going to the park. Public conversation with the mayor and council members was good and well attended. The next scheduled meeting will be September 23, 2023, from 8:30-10:30 am in the Community Room.

D. Public Forum

Joanie Harris, 109 Chippewa Street, spoke regarding the budget. She feels that there has been a lack of communication on this matter. Livestreaming might help with this. She doesn't believe that residents support future growth and development due to inflation, fixed incomes, increased property values and utility costs. She asks why road maintenance, water, sewer, etc. are such big issues during the budget season. She would like the council to ask questions and work to obtain long-term goals and communicate with the residents over the next year. She requests no action be taken in the current budget. Sandra McConnaughay, 542 Cheyenne Court, spoke regarding the mill levy. She noted that with the 11+ increase of mills, her taxes would raise approximately \$800. She is retired and on a fixed income and cannot afford that kind of increase. She wonders why this increase could not be budgeted over the years instead of all at once. She is bothered by the fact that a lot of people work for the city who don't live in Kechi and therefore do not pay taxes here. She doesn't like suggestions of how money is to be used here by these people when they do not pay a penny in taxes. She hopes there can be a good solution to keep people from leaving Kechi. Arnel Thomas, Jr., 205 E. Kechi Road, spoke regarding the 61st and Oliver Project. He feels that Kechi is in trouble. He asked whose idea it was to construct the "circle" downtown. He stated that 3,000 people did not vote on this project and wants to know why these people were not asked their opinion on this project or if their opinion doesn't count? He stated that the ditch is hard to mow and that he is never mowing it again. He claims that the city does not maintain his ditch except for one day each year in preparation for the street dance. He is tired of people that do not live in Kechi telling him what to do. He stated that the intersection project be stopped if the city is not going to mow his ditch. He also stated that there is a sinkhole waiting to happen at the culvert on Foreman Street. Bea Burkhalter, 427 Sioux Court, spoke on road repairs. She did not know that Kechi was not paving the roads. She is asking for communication and wants to know the "rest of the story." Stephanie Kullman, 532 N. Prairie Creek Drive, spoke on rezoning of Paramount. This is possibly slated to become apartments. She is worried about it being too close to the park where children play. April Owens, 602 N. Prairie Creek, spoke on multi-housing units and tax increase. She is also concerned about apartments being built next to the park and the safety of children playing there. She is worried about a high turnover rate at a potential apartment, and it makes her feel uneasy. She is also concerned that these will not be permanent residents and could be voting on important issues affecting the city. She claims the proposed tax increase will raise her taxes by \$500. This kind of increase will hit her budget hard. She is not opposed to supporting the city by increasing the mills, but the proposed amount is shocking. She asked the council to reconsider the amount so that families can re-budget. She also shouted out kudos to the Kechi Police Department in the way they handled the park incident. Administrator Sroufe asked to address the council. She stated that she has been subjected to abuse online. She thanked Public Works Director Beven for his dedication to the city. She stated that if all city staff must live in the community, then the city would have to basically hire all new staff. She asked those present to consider how long it has taken to hire for the police department. She asked who in the community was willing to get certified for these positions. Currently there is nowhere within the city limits to come and build a home if that were a requirement to work for the city. Because of this, we cannot mandate that all employees live in the city. Finance Director Morlan stated that in the last six positions that have been posted only two city residents applied, of which one was hired.

The public hearing closed at 8:08pm.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. FAIR FALL EVENT – ALCOHOL PERMIT USE

ORDINANCE NO. 1816-23

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS AMENDING CHAPTER III, ARTICLE 1, SECTION 3-104 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS REGARDING THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR AND CEREAL MALT BEVERAGES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY DURING APPROVED SPECIAL EVENTS.

This ordinance is regarding the consumption of alcohol on public property during approved special events and must be approved by the council. A licensed vender must go to the state to obtain a temporary license to serve alcohol off their premises. The previous city code allowed for NO ALCOHOLIC CONSUMPTION on public property. This ordinance will allow for this with the council's approval for special events. This does allow for BYOB (bring your own bottle.)

Motion made by Richard Haddock to approve Ordinance 1816-23, seconded by Todd Hedstrom. Carried 5-0-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 23-754

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL EVENT ON CITY PROPERTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY'S SHELLEBRATE FALL 2023 FOR THE SALE, SERVICE, AND CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR AND CEREAL MALT BEVERAGES WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS.

Motion made to approve Resolution No. 23-754 by Brian Adams, seconded by Kendra Baldrige. Carried 5-0-0.

B. BUSINESS LICENSE PROCESS & APPLICATION

A city code has been in place since 1992 that requires all businesses within the city to have licenses. Currently there is no process, application, or fee in place. The licenses expire annually on December 31. This process is to be the responsibility of the City Clerk. Because this has never been recorded, the city does not know which businesses are legal or not. For those businesses who wish, a list can be maintained on the website. It was noted that the Chamber of Commerce has not updated the business listing for six years. License renewals would allow for this information to be kept up to date. The license process would allow businesses, either brick and mortar or home occupations, currently operating within the city to apply for license with no fee if they do so before January 1, 2024. Staff recommends beginning January 1, 2024, all new business applications require a \$30 fee. It is also being recommended no fee for renewal applications since this is it is mainly for informational purposes. No fee resolution is needed until the fee is ready to be enacted. Finance Director Morlan asked that if the council does not wish to enforce this current code, she asked for it to be rescinded. Violations of this code will be \$500 per day. Publication will be made available to businesses regarding this process in The Lamp, on the city Facebook page, and in the utility billing. Councilmember Adams asked if the renewal could be changed from yearly to every three years. The code will need to be changed as it now

states it is a yearly fee. Attorney Kovar stated that a fee resolution and policy change will be ready for the next council meeting.

C. APPROVE NOTICE OF HEARING TO EXCEED REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE AND BUDGET HEARING – THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2023, AT 7:00 p.m. AT CITY HALL

A motion was made by Richard Haddock to approve the Notice of Hearing to exceed revenue neutral rate and budget hearing to be held on September 14, 2024, at 7:00 pm in Kechi City Hall. Seconded by Matt Brewer and carried 5-0-0.

D. STANDARD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE & UNIFIED PUBLIC OFFENSE ORDINANCE

1. ORDINANCE NO. 1817-23

AN ORDINANCE INCORPORATING BY REFERENCE THE STANDARD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE FOR KANSAS CITIES (50th EDITION), AS PUBLISHED BY THE LEAGUE OF KANSAS MUNICIPALITIES IN 2023; AND AMENDING CHAPTER XIV, ARTICLE 1, SECTIONS 14-101 AND 14-106 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS.

Motion made by Brian Adams to approve Ordinance No. 1817-23 and seconded by Todd Hedstrom. Carried 5-0-0.

2. ORDINANCE NO. 1818-23

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING PUBLIC OFFENSES WITHIN THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS; INCORPORATING BY REFERENCE THE UNIFORM PUBLIC OFFENSE CODE FOR KANSAS CITIES (39th EDITION), AS PUBLISHED BY THE LEAGUE OF KANSAS MUNICIPALITIES IN 2023, WITH CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS; AND AMENDING CHAPTER XI, ARTICLE 1, SECTIONS 11-101 AND 11-102 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS.

Motion by Richard Haddock to approve Ordinance No. 1818-23 and seconded by Brian Adams. Carried 5-0-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Brian Adams stated that it was helpful to hear from the speakers during the public forum. It was good to hear from the citizens. Council meetings are a “great place to let us know how you feel.” He hopes this type of engagement can continue every year.

V. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Richard Haddock to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Brian Adams. Carried 5-0-0.

The meeting closed at 8:32 pm.

Signed: 
Mayor Ashley Velazquez

Attest: Debra Creekmore
Debra Creekmore, City Clerk

