

KECHI CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Ashley Velazquez called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

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

City staff present: JT Kraus, City Attorney; Kamme Sroufe, City Administrator (CA); Debra Creekmore, City Clerk; Kris Brown, Deputy City Clerk; Police Chief Braden Moore; Lt. Amanda Smith; Police Officer, Josh Meyer and Thomas Bevan, Public Works Director.

Guests present: Randy & Donna Booth; Dan Rogers; Teresa Lies; April Owens; Cheryl Hobson; Wendy Lowmaster; Victoria Jackson; Blaine Harris; Nancy Glenn; Michael Cote; Cynthia Gray; Larry & Neta Sherrill; Angela Le Sage; Artys Hallacy; Betty Washington; David Hopkins; Ethan Gomez; Tom & Bobbi Jolly; Gary & Jalena Raleigh; Linda Erb; Karen & Jack Clay; Sonya & Jim Wilson; Roger Roper; Terry Janke; Marilyn Penner; Cindy & Richard Wolf; Jill Stackley; Dave & Sandra McConnaughay; Mike Ronen; Jake Fry; Kale & Mary Kroupa; Joanie Harris; Cathy Pierce; Taylor Messick and Terry & Kris Brown.

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

B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda

1. City Council Minutes of August 24, 2023

Motion by Matt Brewer 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. Motion seconded by Matt Brewer and carried 5-0-0.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Kechi Civic Groups/Committees – None

B. Kechi Good News

We received 3 inches of rain. September is Hispanic Heritage Month and Suicide Awareness Month. Kechi UMC will be serving hot dogs, chips, and drinks at the Kechi Park on September 24, 2023, from 5:30 – 7:00 pm.

C. Public Forum

Joanie Harris, 109 Chippewa Street, spoke regarding the budget. She shares her criticism regarding lack of conversation among council members, the mayor and city administrator with the residents of Kechi. She is also frustrated about issues being brought to the council such as COLA and Huffman Road that have not been addressed. There seems to be no resolution to what is being brought as concerns before the council.

She wishes to hear what the council representatives have to say and are thinking about these issues. She feels the citizens need to know.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. WAMPO TIP FEE

This is 2.4% of the grant funding for the Oliver & Kechi Road Project. What is due from Kechi is \$881,364, which includes the grant match, original contract design and right of way purchase.

Motion made by Brian Adams to approve the WAMPO TIP Fee of \$58,412.47, seconded by Kendra Baldrige. Carried 4-1-0 with Richard Haddock voting NO.

B. REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE PUBLIC HEARING – 2024 BUDGET

a. Open Public Hearing for the Revenue Neutral Rate

Dan Rogers, 9969 N. Hillside, spoke of having no specials but paying taxes to pay for it. He is against a property tax increase as there is no rational justification to do so. He feels that capital infrastructure should be funded through utilities or specials. He doesn't feel there is not enough crime to justify another police officer especially since police calls overlap with other city officers. He proposes a tiered form of taxing. Cheryl Hobson, 622 N Shawnee Ct, stated that a tax increase of 51% will not be accepted by the community. She suggested of a 1-2 mill increase and "make do." She asked about when the sidewalks would become a project and the cost for that. She asked when the council will be addressing what the residents want. Joanie Harris, 109 W Chippewa, asked that the budget be pulled apart in the next fifteen months to get a better understanding of it. She referred to an article in the Ark Valley News where the Valley Center Council turned the budget back to city staff to find cuts to make. She challenged our council to do the same and not make the burden on the citizens. Michael Cote, 1255 E. 101st, represents North Kechi. He pays taxes for "no city anything." He wants to know what North Kechi will be getting for the 51% increase. He stated that the US was founded because of people being forced to pay taxes and not getting anything in return. John Clay, 2201 Coliseum Circle, stated it has been a rough year economically with inflation increasing. He has found a way to budget for it and challenges the council to do the same. April Owens, 602 N. Prairie Creek Dr., reminded the council that the vote for the 1% sales tax was a tool to keep the mill levy low. Mike Ronen, 337 E. Kodiak, thanked council members for representing the people and volunteering. As a superintendent of schools, he has had the opportunity to ask different city and school district leaders about their mill rates. The highest response was an increase of 5%. He asks the council to rethink the increase. Jim Wilson, 429 E. Kodiak, turned in a petition with 61 signatures. He hopes the council will rethink.

b. Close the Public Hearing at 7:43 pm.

C. PUBLIC HEARING – 2024 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

a. Open Public Hearing for the Recommended 2024 City Budget

Kale Kroupa, 457 E. Kodiak Court, thanked the council for volunteering their time. He stated that it was nice to see the police around town. He expressed his frustration with the council in that their vision and communication needs to be better. He does not support the new position of communications person but would like to get everyone on the same page. Shirley Rogers, 9969 N. Hillside, looked at the budget online. She could only find a one-

page synopsis and asked where to find a more detailed budget. She wants to see present and past budgets to know where the money has gone and is going. CA Sroufe stated the Power Point slides and a budget summary are posted online. She also stated that a call can be made to the city for an Open Records Request. In addition, the budgets can be found on the state website and are also available in the online council packets. Jalena Raleigh, 2537 Sunnydale Ct., asked the council one question, "Starting tomorrow, if you know that in 45-60 days your income will decrease by half how would you feel and what would you do knowing that this was out of your control?" She does not accept the answer of "this is the best we can do." She asks the council to be good stewards of the city's money and to be considerate of what they are asking the citizens to do.

- b. **Close the Public Hearing at 7:56 pm.**
- c. **Adopt the 2024 City Budget and 2024-2028 CIP and Authorize the City Clerk to Certify to the Sedgwick County Clerk**

The mill levy for the proposed budget is 36.76. It is a Status Quo Budget with no line items for an addition police office, communications person and not move money for Public Works. The mill levy for the general fund is 3 mills leaving a surplus of \$13,000. Brian Adams noted that in 2010 to now \$1 has increased to \$1.41. Wages have increased 48% and property assessed values have increased 69.4%. He does not support a tax increase.

A motion was made by Brian Adams to leave the mill levy at 36.76 and seconded by no one. Motion failed.

Matt Brewer appreciates the public input at the meeting. He realizes the residents don't want an increase but noted that work on the major infrastructure has been put off for years. He would like to have a conversation before another motion is made. Richard Haddock would like the mill levy to stay the same plus a couple additional mills added for the sewer. CA, Sroufe noted that the city has quite a few infrastructure problems, many of which have been brought to the council over the years with no long-term plans. She stated that the water is not as dire as the sewer is now. We currently have undeveloped portions of the city that are unable to connect. Thomas Bevan spoke regarding the sewer which may have been inspected incorrectly or earthquakes have caused portions to become shifted. There are sections of clay sewer line that need to be relined. North Woods and Prairie Creek need to be fixed ASAP. Some of the sewer lines are 50-60 years old. Water meters should be checked or replaced every ten years, but most have been installed for 20-30 years. There are three laterals on the west side of Sioux and west of Oliver that are gravity fed and close to capacity sustaining an additional 2-3 housing developments. This portion might reach Sunnydale. Prairie Creek and North Woods are supported by the lift station. East of Kech has potential for growth, especially with the development of Integra. Other facilities will soon follow. What other cities around us are doing is not being told to us such as the development of Amazon and additional road maintenance falling to Kechi. Thomas feels it is his due diligence to tell the council this information. He states that he will deal with whatever comes his way. Matt Brewer would like to sustain what we currently have but to prepare and avert a crisis in the future. This is an old town, and the infrastructure needs to be addressed soon. The city needs to prepare for those needs. He would like to see an option where a certain number of mills were to be dedicated for that specific purpose. Todd Hedstrom that if there is no upkeep or money saved for this purpose, we will have issues. He is worried. There are several other councilmembers that have businesses in Kechi. Like the residents, this affects him as well and he pays and is hit twice for owning his home and business in the city. He states that we have neglected the infrastructure. We haven't raised

taxes and now it is catching up with us. If we don't do anything we will have bigger problems than what we have now. The sewer has had a cumulative effect. If a couple of small developments are added he feels we will be ok, but he doesn't feel we can ask developers to pay/fix the whole thing. Matt Brewer feels we should raise 1-2 mills at a time and prepare for the infrastructure. He stated that Public Works has been frugal and is doing a great job as well as the Police Department (PD) getting back and doing a great job under the new chief. Brian Adams also feels that Public Works and the PD are doing a great job. He knows we need to replace meters and the current infrastructure is important. He also doesn't think it is fair to pay for items that you don't have, such as in Sunnydale. He feels this cost should be captured with increased user fees. He also feels that the general fund should not be used to fund utilities. Kamme Sroufe stated that it is not appropriate for utilities to pay for what should be paid by property tax. For example, Public Works non labor supplies has increased 50%. She is trying to be good stewards of all "pots" of money that she is responsible for. Matt Brewer thanked the staff and those in attendance for coming. He hopes there is an understanding of the challenges they are facing as a council.

A motion was made by Matt Brewer to keep the mill levy at 36.76 for the 2024 budget, approve Resolution 23-755, and seconded by Brian Adams. A Roll Call Vote was held but not all votes were heard. At 8:37 pm, the attorney's recommended the meeting pause, and a budget certificate be printed for each councilmember so they would be aware of exactly what they were voting on.

A motion was made by Matt Brewer to recess until 8:55 pm and seconded by Brian Adams. Carried 5-0-0.

Budget certificates were presented to each council member. A Roll Call Vote was taken upon the above motion to approve the budget:

Richard Haddock – Yes
Kendra Baldrige – No
Brian Adams – Yes
Matt Brewer – Yes
Todd Hedstrom – Yes

Carried 4-1-0.

Motion by Brian Adams to approve the 2024-2028 CIP and to authorize the city clerk to certify to the Sedgwick County Clerk, seconded by Todd Hedstrom. Carried 5-0-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. BUSINESS LICENSE ORDINANCE 1819-23

ORDINANCE NO. 1819-23

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS AMENDING CHAPTER V, ARTICLE 1, SECTIONS 5-101 THROUGH 5-108 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF KECHI, KANSAS REGARDING THE GENERAL BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION FEE AND BUSINESS LICENSE REQUIREMENTS.

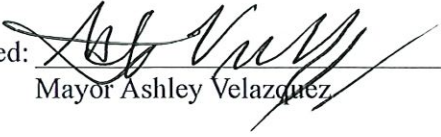
A resolution will be adopted after the ordinance is passed. If the business license has not lapsed, the business owner will not be recharged the \$30 fee.

Motion by Brian Adams to approve Business License Ordinance 1819-23 and seconded by Richard Haddock. Carried 5-0-0.

V. ADJOURN

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

The meeting closed at 9:08 pm.

Signed: 
Mayor Ashley Velazquez

Attest: Debra Creekmore
Debra Creekmore, City Clerk



