

Lynda Stokes     Mayor  
City Council:  
Eric Hunter     Pro-Tem  
Ken Parnell     PI #1  
John Basham    PI #2  
Bonnie Black    PI# 3  
Billie Steele    PI #5



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## MINUTES

### Regular City Council Meeting

September 26, 2016 - 7:00 pm

**1. Call to Order and Announced a Quorum was Present.**

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Lynda Stokes; Mayor Pro Tem Eric Hunter; Council Members: Billie Steele, Bonnie Black and Ken Parnell.

Absent: Councilman John Basham

**2. Invocation.**

**Council Member Black led the invocation.**

**3. Pledge of Allegiance to the American and Texas Flags.**

*"Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas,  
One state under God, One and Indivisible"*

**4. Mayor's Announcements**

Mayor Stokes said she has something she would like to talk to them about. She said she has thought a long time on how to respond to what is going on and she's not sure on how to respond. She wonders to herself how long citizens can listen to the media and the trash that is out before it becomes true in their minds. All they hear is lies, half truths and innuendos without a response. She said she has heard that bad lies often have an element of truth in them. She said some do and some are outright lies to create discord so are we going to let it? She said two (2) months ago she was accused of bad mouthing Parker County. She said she has read the minutes and she has listened to the tapes. She said she did not. She said Parker County was told that information – did they fact check – no they did not. She said instead they got upset so they pulled our dispatch leaving us with two (2) months to find an alternative.

Mayor Stokes said now Parker County can add blackmail to their list by telling Councilman Hunter that all of Reno's problems would go away if she would resign. She said now most of them know the problems here have been around for a long time before she ever came into the picture. The problem is with Parker County. That is all she is going to say on that issue at the moment. So her answer to Mr. Hunter when he asked her two (2) months ago – no she will not step down. She said the citizens of Reno elects the Mayor and Council not Parker County. They asked her to put ego aside – she's not sure she has one after being drug through mud. She said she had a job to do – you all put her in this place and she had to find dispatch and she did with the help of Mr. Polino, Chief Hinkle, Blue Mound Fire Chief, Chief Smithers, Mike Hunter, COG and Mr. Leonard. She said they will have dispatch through Blue Mound, TX. She said she took this job a long time ago because citizen's were treated disrespectful and the employees were treated disrespectful. She said she did not take the job for the money. She said she took the job for them so they would have a voice. She said Mr. Martin started it and she continued it that as long as they wanted to speak she would be there. She said they are going to go on and she is going to continue to the end of her term and hopefully further on to serve them in the best way that she can without ever trying to put the city in jeopardy.

Mayor Stokes said the Council decided on ten (10) paid holidays – New Years Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after, and Christmas Day. She said if the Council doesn't object and the office is slow on Christmas Eve they will close at noon. She said if the holiday falls on a Saturday they usually get the Friday before or if it falls on a Sunday it is usually the day after.

Mayor Stokes said the next meeting will be October 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### 5. Action Items

**THE BUDGET WILL RAISE LESS REVENUE FROM PROPERTY TAXES THAN LAST YEAR'S BUDGET BY AN AMOUNT OF \$50,880.65 WHICH IS A 10 PERCENT DECREASE FROM LAST YEAR'S BUDGET. THE PROPERTY TAX REVENUE TO BE RAISED FROM NEW PROPERTY ADDED TO THE TAX ROLL THIS YEAR IS \$8,073.29**

Motion was made by Councilman Parnell to open the Public Hearing at 7:16 p.m. adopting an annual operating Budget for fiscal year October 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2017. Motion was second by Councilman Hunter, motion carried 4-0.

- A. Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance 2016-06, adopting an annual operating Budget for fiscal year October 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2017.

No Comments.

Motion was made by Council Member Steele to close the Public Hearing at 7:18 p.m. Motion was seconded by Council Member Parnell, motion carried 4-0.

- B. Discussion and/or action on proposed Ordinance 2016-06, adopting an annual operating Budget for fiscal year October 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2017.

Motion was made by Council Member Steele to adopt Ordinance 2016-06, adopting an annual operating Budget for fiscal year October 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2017. Motion was seconded by Council Member Black, motion carried 4-0.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hunter to open the Public Hearing at 7:19 p.m. adopting the tax rate of .530000 per \$100 - Maintenance and Operations \$0.405181 and Interest & Sinking \$0.124819. Motion was seconded by Council Member Steele, motion carried 4-0.

Motion was made by Councilman Parnell to close the Public Hearing at 7:22 p.m. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hunter, motion carried 4-0.

- C. Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance 2016-07, adopting the tax rate of .530000 per \$100 - Maintenance and Operations \$0.405181 and Interest & Sinking \$0.124819.

No Comments

- D. Discussion and/or action on the proposed Ordinance 2016-07, adopting the tax rate of .530000 per \$100 - Maintenance and Operations \$0.405181 and Interest & Sinking \$0.124819.

Motion was made by Council Member Steele to adopt Ordinance 2016-07, adopting the tax rate of .530000 per \$100 - Maintenance and Operations \$0.405181 and Interest & Sinking \$0.124819. Motion was seconded by Councilman Parnell, motion carried 4-0.

- E. Discussion and/or action reducing the Mayor's annual salary from \$1,200.00 a month to \$600.00 a month, as well as a reduction of Councilmember's compensation for meetings from \$50.00 a meeting to \$25.00 a meeting, to take effect after the next General Municipal Election.

Motion was made by Councilman Parnell to reduce the Mayor's annual salary from \$1,200 a month to \$600 a month, and reduce Council Member's compensation from \$50 a meeting to \$25 a meeting to take effect after the next General Municipal Election on May 6, 2017. Motion was seconded by Council Member Black, motion carried 4-0.

- F. Discussion and/or action concerning suspension of the Mayor's City credit card.

Council Member Steele made a motion to authorize Joe Polino City Administrator to do an internal investigation on the alleged miss-use on the Mayor's city credit card and to report his findings to the City Council in a timely manner. Mr. Polino will be authorized to conduct a complete investigation to include the City Personnel if necessary. She said that was her motion. She said when they have any allegation they want these things cleared up. She said this is the way it should be handled.

Mayor Stokes said she wanted to go through her charges. In October 14, 2015 she had a charge with Oriental Trading for \$348 on Halloween last year. In December there was a charge for Albertson's for \$112.44 that she didn't have a receipt for. It had to do with Christmas.

Mayor Stokes said there is not a receipt on it. We may be able to get a receipt from Albertsons. She said there was a receipt at Target for \$108.24 for a bicycle for Toys for Tots. They were short a bicycle. On December 28<sup>th</sup> there was a charge at Staples for \$78.48 for certificates for us to print ourselves. She said they have been used five (5) times this year.

Councilman Parnell asked if there was a limit on the card.

Mayor Stokes said there was a \$5,000 limit. She said the most she has ever spent was at Easter and she was getting to that. She said at Easter they have to buy plastic eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt and candy. The total amount spent for Easter was \$1,381.07. She said they did spend \$220.00 on a Bunny Costume. She said they spend \$75 - \$80 a year renting the Bunny Costume. She said when you come in the front door you can see the real pretty bushes with the red flowers – that was a empty dead flower bed. She said she did spend \$129.00 at Calloway's for bushes. She said they found they were one (1) short and she bought one (1) out of her own pocket.

Mayor Stokes said the thing that is in question is the *Letter of Truth*. She said at Election time she agreed to help in a campaign with some council people. She said she went down to Staples to take a letter from them and she laid their letter on the counter. She said she also had the *Letter of Truth* with her and she laid the Letter of Truth off to the side. She said when she got ready to go she picked up their letter and walked out the door and left the *Letter of Truth* by accident. She said it was a City document, it was for the City. She said when she went in and realized what had happened she used her City credit card and she brought it here immediately to City Hall and it got set up here and it got passed out to the citizens here. She said it was not nor was it ever passed out by Billie Steele or Bonnie Black.

She said she realizes that this is what started all of this. She said Mr. Polino I will let you have it. She said she has both receipts. She said something was on there for \$2.98. She said when she brought the receipt where they had taken off the taxes she handed it to Jenni along with \$3.00 in cash. She said she did not pay cash at the counter which this is insinuating She said she gave cash at City Hall. She brought it in and said those were hers. She said when you lay things down on the counter she put the cards over them and they grabbed the cards and rang the cards through which shouldn't have been done.

Joe Polino asked Mayor Stokes to hold those records for him. He asked the Council to direct any of the employee's to cooperate with the investigation and policing any records and giving him any information when he calls.

Council Member Steele said she would add that to her motion. For all employees to go along with whatever Joe Polino needs in the investigation.

Mayor Stokes said a little before July 18<sup>th</sup> there were Officers in Dallas and Louisiana that were shot and killed. She said she spent \$60.43 for a memorial display in memory of those Officers. She said everything is still here. She said those are the only things that are on her charge card. The total amount is \$2,324.58. She said she was willing to turn all of this over to show there has been no misuse on her card. She said she would give them her card tonight and they can put it in the safe.

Mayor Stokes said she had a motion on the floor and called for a second.

Motion was seconded by Council Member Black, motion carried 4-0.

Walt Leonard said on a technical point the Mayor has indicated that she is turning over the card to Ramah Burns and that is satisfactory.

Council Member Steele said the first of it was suppose to be discussion and action concerning suspension of the Mayor's city credit card.

Mayor Stokes asked if they would be satisfied if she just gives the credit card to Ramah and she puts it in the safe.

Council Member Steele said they need to add that to the motion.

Motion was amended by Council Member Steele to include Mayor Stokes turning her City Credit Card over to Ramah Burns to put in the safe until they come back after the investigation for the City Council to make a decision. Motion was seconded by Council Member Black, motion carried 4-0.

- G. Discussion and/or action setting limits on the maximum allowable dollar amount to be charged per purchase on City credit cards by individual staff members, for City business only and prior approval required for purchases exceeding those permissible maximum amounts.

Council Member Steele said this is an attempt for the City to save some money and stop the over spending. She said several people asked her during the election to see if she could get some of the over spending under control. She said she is trying to do her best to see what she can do. She said Ramah has a Compass Bank credit limit of \$1,000, Scott \$5,000, Lynda \$5,000, and Joe \$5,000.

Mayor Stokes said the Council set a \$1,500 limit for her not to go over and she hasn't.

Council Member Black said locking in an amount is important but even more important than that is – every person that has a credit card – needs to make sure – they're the ones using it – that is they do use it they accompany it with a receipt and an explanation of what was bought. She said not just amount. But the person that bought it – what it was bought for and the amount. She said they can't manage this City doing this.

Motion was made by Council Member Steele for the Department Heads to bring this back on the October 10, 2016 agenda. Motion was seconded by Council Member Black, motion carried 4-0.

- H. Discussion and/or action on Briar-Reno VFD contract.

Motion was made by Council Member Steele to approve a 90 day extension of the existing contract. Motion was seconded by Councilman Parnell, motion carried 4-0.

- I. Discussion and/or action on 10 wheel trucks operating on city streets, to **exclude 18 wheelers.**

Motion was made by Council Member Black to send this to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hunter, motion carried 4-0.

- J. Discussion and/or action on Animal Control.

Motion was made by Council Member Steele to send this to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Motion was seconded by Council Member Black, motion carried 4-0.

- K. Discussion and/or action concerning food and snacks at City Council Meetings.

Walt Leonard said if the City is charging the food on a credit card that is fine perfectly okay and if Mayor Stokes wants to make a donation for the cost then that is okay.

Mayor Stokes said she would reimburse for the food.

Meredith Hull said she can help anytime and she said she would clean up.

Council Member Steele said they need to talk with the City Auditor on this.

- F. Joe Polino asked if Item F could be re-opened solely for clarification on his direction from the Council.

Motion was made by Council Member Black to re-open Item F. Motion was seconded by Councilman Parnell, motion carried 4-0.

Joe Polino said his understanding is of this investigation is to look into the Mayor's use of her City credit card. He asked if there was a time frame that the Council has set on this. Do they want to go back for the last twelve (12) months? He said it was Council Member Steele's motion.

Council Member Steele said he could go back to the first of the year – January through September 2016.

Joe Polino said should he meet with Council Member Steele to get the time frame she is looking at. He said when he meets with the employee's they will be instructed to keep what is discussed confidential.

Mayor Stokes asked if they had a problem with using Ramah's City credit card since Walt Leonard said it was okay.

Council Member Black asked if Ramah doesn't have time to do it do you have a contingency plan?

Mayor Stokes said either Meredith Hull will or she will. She said it is usually \$50 – \$70 a month if you buy water, plates and cups. She said she paid \$51.00 last month for the food. She said in the summer it could be a vegetable tray and fruit. In the winter we could do coco and cookies.

Council Member Steele said anyone that wants to can bring food.

- L. Discussion and/or action regarding expenses associated with the City sponsored Annual Easter Egg Hunt, National Night Out, Halloween and Christmas.

Mayor Stokes said they put out a lot of money on Christmas. They put out cookies and pies. She said Halloween she said everything is pretty well purchased. She said the Council will be happy to know that pretty much all of the candy has been covered this year. She said Scott orders flashlights, pens and other items to pass out on National Night Out. She said on the Easter Egg Hunt is the most expensive because of the eggs. She said they spent about \$1,500 on Easter and \$220 of that was the bunny costume.

Council Member Black asked about the Porta Potties because we have it in a remote location.

Mayor Stokes said the kids like the Easter Egg Hunt and that's what the citizens want and the kids want it and we don't have nothing here for our citizens here. We don't have a park.

Council Member Black said we do things for them all of the time.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunter said in the Budget Meeting they talked about forming an Events Committee for planning. He asked if the citizens are still interested in that.

Mayor Stokes said they are interested no one has gotten with her.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunter said they could take action forming a City Events Committee responsibly for donating and things like that.

Granville Martin said he would suggest doing a couple of raffles. They generate a lot of money. You can sell raffle tickets

Mayor Stokes said whoever is interested in they can come up after the meeting and give her their names. She said last year she came up to stuff eggs and the girl's had already stuffed them. She said usually she takes a whole box home and she stuffs 500 to 600 eggs a night. She said most of them have sat up here and she has always said the holidays are coming and they need volunteers and donations. She said they put it out on the city web site. One thing they are talking about is having a pumpkin carving contest. They can carve them at home and bring them. She said Solid Rock Bible Church asked if they could be a part of our Halloween. They want to put two (2) hay wagons on the road back and forth. They are going to have a Harvest Festival. She said she was hoping the Fire Department will pitch in and do something this year.

Council Member Steele said the budget has \$2,000 from the General Fund and \$2,000

from the Water Fund. She said for each holiday they have set \$1,000 for each event. She said they want donation to be used first then if they need to use the other money then they can. If it's not needed then it can go back into the budget and used for something else. She said on the big events that's where we need sponsors.

Councilman Parnell said from what Council Member Steele is saying she wants us to be responsible and account for every penny they get. He said they were a lot of outside communities. He thinks it is saying to the other communities that we are not just a little town to ourselves.

Mayor Stokes said if they are interested in being on the committee to get donations she would put their name down.

#### **7. Citizen Presentation and Public Input for Future Agenda Items.**

**This is an opportunity for citizens to address the Council on any matter that is not posted on this agenda. The Council is not permitted to take action on, or discuss any presentations made to the Council at this time concerning any item not listed on this agenda.**

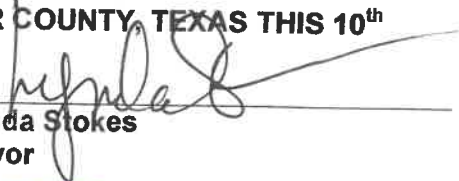
Barbara Parker said her comment is really a complaint. She said she is tired of picking up the Azle News and all she sees is trash about Reno and Reno City Council. She said she thought it was disgusting that a person would write only the trash that happens here. She said they do so many good things that you never hear about. We have the Food Pantry, they have this and that. She said it just trash and she resents it.

Grandville Martin said he would like to commend the Council, Mayor and Staff for doing a good job bringing these numbers around. You all put it right out and actually discussed it and the Mayor not taking a negative response about the credit card. He said it's about discussion and having respect for each other and patience. You all have done a good job. He said he thinks they are on the right track logging in what they are buying in detail. He thought it would be good to have a raffle. People will buy money on raffle tickets.

#### **8. Adjourn**

Motion made by Council Member Black to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hunter, motion carried 4-0.

**APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF RENO, PARKER COUNTY, TEXAS THIS 10<sup>th</sup> DAY OF October, 2016.**

  
Lynda Stokes  
Mayor



ATTEST:



Ramah Burns  
City Secretary