

**Mount Vernon  
City Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
September 23, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Norris at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Mayor Norris, Councilmembers Cheney, Combs, Fiedler, Lindquist, McMullen, Ragan, and Urban.

Staff Present: Police Chief Bergsma, Fire Chief Hari, Finance Director Huschka, Information Services Manager Kleppe, City Attorney Rogerson, Special Projects Administrator Stendal.

Citizens Present: 125

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of September 9, 2009 Regular Council Meeting Minutes. Councilmember Urban asked that a spelling correction be made to the minutes correcting the spelling of Glenn Beck's name.

**Councilmember Lindquist moved to approve the September 9, 2009 Regular Council Meeting Minutes with the mentioned spelling corrections. Motion seconded by Councilmember Fiedler. Motion carried 7-0.**

- B. Approval of September 23, 2009 Claims numbered 112764-112948 in the amount of \$1,250,430.29.

**Councilmember Urban moved to approve the September 23, 2009 claims numbered 112764-112948 in the amount of \$1,250,430.29. Motion seconded by Councilmember Lindquist. Motion carried 7-0.**

- C. Special Award: Mr. Ken McCullough presented Police Chief Bergsma with special recognition from the Kiwanis Club of Mount Vernon. Chief Bergsma received this recognition for his outstanding community service. Mount Vernon School District and City of Mount Vernon Park's Department added their recognition to the Kiwanis'.

**REPORTS**

- A. Finance Committee: see Committee agenda and minutes for details.

- B. Community Comments:

- Scott Correa asked why the jail isn't being built at the airport. He questions the decision to build a new jail in the downtown area.

Mayor Norris called Mount Vernon residents who wished to speak on the Glenn Beck event:

- Brian Hill stated that he had research on Glenn Beck that calls into question his character and questions Mayor Norris' decision to give a key. Mr. Hill asked why other

previous Mount Vernon residents and performers like actor Jim Kaveizel or singer Cheryl Bentyne from "Manhattan Transfer" do not get keys to the City.

- Rhonda McDonald stated that she believes that she is in the middle ground regarding the Glenn Beck controversy yet feels Mr. Beck does not deserve the key to the City.
- Celia Chandler said that she felt that while it is the Mayor's right to make that decision who to give the key to the City to, it should be someone who inspires dignity and inspires positive human solutions.
- Phillip Holder spoke about the question of endorsing "shock jock" personalities. Mr. Holder asked that all Councilmembers please support a change in policy that would give Council the right to make guidance decisions regarding the type of people who will receive commendations by the City. He also presented a list of names of more than 16,000 Washington State residents that call for Council to overrule Mayor Norris' decision to give the key to the City to Glenn Beck. The petition was accepted into record.
- Don Gordon believes that Mount Vernon is able to accept divergent views and should welcome well known entertainers to Mount Vernon.
- Tim Bridges asked that Councilmembers think about what an award like this should represent. He also asked what contribution Mr. Beck has made to society. It is Mr. Bridges opinion that Glenn Beck is the sum of his opinions and this seems to be what the City is honoring. It was his opinion that if the City Council does not act, by default the City will have endorsed Mr. Beck's opinions.
- Damien Lasard said that when she started hearing about the City honoring Glenn Beck she did not know who Glenn Beck was so she looked him up on the internet and said she doesn't believe that he is a nice person. She has called each Councilmember to share her conclusion.
- Anna Oommen, read an excerpt from a poem and expressed her belief that the Mayor does not have the authority to direct the profits from the Glenn Beck Event to be shared with the Lincoln Theater as City funds were used to pay for insurance which then gives the Council the power to decide how the funds will be dispensed.

Ms. Oommen exceeded her 2 minutes and a recess was called at 7:44 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 7:47 p.m.

City Attorney Rogerson stated that Washington State law requires that groups or persons do not interrupt the orderly conduct of City Council. An interruption allows Council to remove such a person. Citizens are allowed to speak in front of Council; it is not a guaranteed right.

- Alice Holtrop said that she is happy there are people who support Mayor Norris and his decision to honor Glenn Beck.
- Stoney Bird said that he had read that access to the event by media is being restricted and stated that he felt Mayor Norris was abusing the constitution by denying freedom of press.
- Andrew Oommen said that he felt that honoring Glenn Beck is not a positive event within the City.
- Marc Oommen said that he believes honoring Glenn Beck has tarnished the City's reputation by aligning the City with a person who devalues people of diversity.

- Ismael Lopez said he was confused as to why a person like Glenn Beck would be honored by the City of Mount Vernon. He further questioned why Mr. Beck is being honored when Mayor Norris doesn't take the time to meet the annual Farm Workers March.
- Connie Munsey asked why everyone was very upset about an entertainer getting acknowledged. She urged citizens to focus on more important issues.
- Louise Culp asked if there was any reason given as to why Glenn Beck was receiving the key to the City. She further pondered Mayor Norris' political career and stated that she will want to move.
- Tammy Penneke was called but did not appear.

Mayor Norris then asked if there were any people who wished to speak that were not residents of Mount Vernon.

- Jerome Edge recounted a conversation that he had with Mayor Norris. When he had asked the Mayor about a potential boycott of Mount Vernon stores, Mayor Norris responded, "It is stupid to act upon one elected officials actions and boycott a whole city." Mr. Edge said that he did not support the decision to honor Glenn Beck and stated that he is ashamed to be a Skagit County resident.
- Jim Lyon expressed his opinion that Mr. Beck is correct in his assessment of the national elected officials. It was Mr. Lyon's opinion that people who were opposed to honoring Mr. Beck were Marxists.
- Rich Austin said that Glenn Beck does not represent the values that he has tried to teach his children and called on the City Council to recant the invitation and withhold the key to the city.
- Cathy Pfahl stated that as an educator she has tried to teach her students what an elected official should be and how they should act regarding citizen's opinions and Mayor Norris' actions would not be used as an example of good statesmanship. In her opinion while Mayor Norris may offer the key to the City to Glenn Beck it does not equal a key to her home.
- Caroline Gastellum said that she shops in Mount Vernon and supports the businesses in Mount Vernon. She said that she feels that Mount Vernon represents a place that is open, friendly and trusting and meets challenges by pulling together. This is a desirable place to be, but to offer the keys to the City to a person who is rude and crude in an effort to obtain notoriety is a slap in the face to those who don't endorse those attributes.
- Laura Burt-Thorpe accused the wearers of the "Hate is not a Mount Vernon Value" to have been hateful.
- Patty Santangelo said that she is a proponent of reduced consumerism and it was her opinion that Glenn Beck belittles that perspective.
- Chris Burks expressed his lack of support of the Glenn Beck recognition. Asked for Council to make a statement disassociating the City from Mr. Beck's views.

Mayor Norris called a 10 minutes recess at 8:13 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:28 p.m.

C. Councilmember Comments:

- Councilmember Ragan spoke against presenting the key to the City to Glenn Beck and said he felt that an ordinance needs to be adopted that will prevent a future event like this.

**Councilmember Ragan moved to suspend the traditional process for placing an item on the agenda. Motion seconded by Councilmember Urban. Motion carried 4-3. (Councilmembers Lindquist, Combs and Cheney opposed).**

Councilmember Cheney felt that he should have had more advance notice on this action. Mayor Norris assured Council that his staff had not received any agenda item requests for the meeting that would have taken place on September 16, 2009, which was why the meeting was cancelled. Councilmember Combs expressed her reluctance to vote on something that was not previously presented.

**Councilmember Ragan moved to amend the current agenda and add Item E, "Resolution Regarding Glenn Beck". Motion seconded by Councilmember McMullen. Motion carried 4-3. (Councilmembers Lindquist, Combs and Cheney opposed).**

D. Mayor's Report:

- Mayor Norris informed Council that there will be a request for out of state travel for Esco Bell to travel for flood control management training at the next meeting.
- Mayor Norris wanted to clarify what the press attendance at the Glenn Beck event would be. He said that five members of the press will be allowed to attend since the facility will not accommodate any more attendees. The final selection has not been made.

E. Committee Agenda:

- Councilmember Lindquist asked that a discussion of Neighborhood Resource Officers be placed on a Public Safety Committee agenda.
- Councilmember McMullen asked that an ordinance be discussed that would require Council approval prior to dispensation of any future keys to the City.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Interlocal Agreement – City of Burlington: Mr. Kleppe presented Council with information on a proposed interlocal agreement with the City of Burlington for fiber optic management services. This is a \$15,000 per year contract.

**Councilmember Ragan moved to authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the City of Burlington for fiber optic management and services. Motion seconded by Councilmember Cheney. Motion carried 7-0.**

- B. Licensing Agreement: Mr. Kleppe provided Council with information on a requested agreement with WCI to allow access to fiber optic infrastructure to be able to provide data and voice services to customers.

**Councilmember Fiedler moved to authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with WCI to provide data and voice services on the fiber network, subject to final document approval by the City Attorney. Motion seconded by Councilmember Cheney. Motion carried 7-0.**

- C. Contract for Field Usage: Mr. Otos presented Council with a request for a renewal of the Mount Vernon Youth Soccer Association for field usage. This is a 10 year contract and assigns times for field usage for the Association.

**Councilmember Cheney moved to authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the Mount Vernon Youth Soccer Association for field usage. Motion seconded by Councilmember Urban. Motion carried 7-0.**

- D. Out of State Travel Request: Chief Bergsma asked for Council approval for an out of state travel request for the Police Chief, Ken Bergsma, to travel to Santa Cruz, CA, on November 3-5, 2009 to observe a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Program which focuses on reducing juvenile admissions without jeopardizing community safety. Travel expense will be covered by a grant.

**Councilmember Combs moved to approve out of state travel for Chief Bergsma to travel to Santa Cruz, CA November 3-5, 2009. Motion seconded by Councilmember Lindquist. Motion carried 7-0.**

- E. Glenn Beck Day: Councilmember Ragan submitted a request for Council to consider a resolution that states that "the Mount Vernon City Council is in no way sponsoring the Mayor's event on September 26, 2009 and is not connected to the Glenn Beck event in any manner." Mayor Norris indicated that this just codifies what he has stated at previous meetings. Councilmember Combs asked if the format of the document that Councilmember Ragan distributed was correct. City Attorney Rogerson indicated that he would finalize the form if it was approved by Council.

**Councilmember Ragan moved to approve Resolution 796 disassociating City Council from the Glenn Beck event. Motion seconded by Councilmember Fiedler. Motion carried 7-0.**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

---

Rebecca J. Wade, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

---

Alicia D. Huschka, Finance Director

APPROVE:

---

Bud Norris, Mayor