

**CITY OF STARBASE**  
**City Commission Special Meeting**  
**MINUTES**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 28, 2026  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m. – 7:59 p.m.  
**Location:** 48491 State Highway 4, Starbase, Texas 78521

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM DETERMINATION**

The special meeting of the City Commission of the City of Starbase was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Bobby Peden. Also present were Commissioner Jordan Buss and Commissioner Lois Wallace. City Administrator Cayetana Polanco and City Clerk Gretchen Norton were also in attendance.

Three (3) of three (3) Commissioners were present, constituting a quorum.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Peden led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ALL AGENDA ITEMS**

Mayor Peden opened the floor for public comment on all agenda items (excluding the public hearing scheduled later in the meeting). Citizens wishing to speak were required to have submitted a speaker card to the City Clerk at least five (5) minutes before the start of the meeting. Comments were limited to two (2) minutes per individual.

City Clerk Gretchen Norton confirmed that no speakers had submitted cards. The public comment period was closed.

**D. SWEARING-IN CEREMONY**

**Item D.1 – Oaths of Office, Statements of Officers, and Certificates of Election**

Mayor Peden noted that candidates for Mayor and City Commissioner ran unopposed in the 2026 General Election. On March 18, 2026, the City Commission adopted an ordinance dispensing with the necessity of holding that election and declared the following individuals duly elected: Robert Peden as Mayor, Jordan Buss as Commissioner, and Lois Wallace as Commissioner.

Mayor Peden stated that the Commission would administer the Oaths of Office and Statements of Officers, and deliver Certificates of Election as recommended by the City Clerk.

**Motion:** Commissioner Wallace moved to approve the administration of the Oaths of Office, Statements of Officers, and delivery of the Certificates of Election.

**Second:** Commissioner Buss

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

City Clerk Gretchen Norton administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Bobby Peden, Commissioner Jordan Buss, and Commissioner Lois Wallace in succession. Each official read and signed their Statement of Officers and received their Certificate of Election. Mayor Peden thanked the officials for their continued service.

### **Item D.2 – Appointment of Mayor Pro Tem (Resolution No. 2026-14)**

Mayor Peden explained that pursuant to Ordinance No. 2026-12, the City Commission seeks to elect one Commissioner to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore for a one-year term. The Mayor Pro Tem will perform the Mayor’s duties if the Mayor is unable to act and will be designated as the emergency interim successor under the Texas Government Code.

**Motion:** Commissioner Wallace nominated Commissioner Jordan Buss and moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-14 appointing Jordan Buss to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore for a term of one year, or until another is appointed, and designating the Mayor Pro Tem as the emergency interim successor.

**Second:** Commissioner Buss

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Peden noted that Commissioner Buss had performed well in the role during the prior year. Commissioner Buss was thanked for his continued service.

### **E. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Peden introduced the Consent Agenda, noting that it includes routine, non-controversial matters that may be approved in a single motion. City Administrator Cayetana Polanco presented the following items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of the April 20, 2026 City Commission meeting.
- Resolution designating the time and place for City Commission meetings; designating the new temporary City Hall at 48491 State Highway 4 as the location for posting meeting notices; updating the City bulletin board locations; providing for notices to be posted on the City’s website; repealing Resolution No. 2025-10-15-D04-RE and Resolution No. 2025-05-30-F03-RE; and providing an effective date.
- Resolution adopting the City holiday schedule for the period of June 1, 2026 through May 31, 2027.
- Contract with Mark 43 for law enforcement records management and related services.
- Bylaws of the Starbase Economic Development Corporation (previously adopted by the EDC Board on May 16, 2026, subject to City Commission approval).

- Engagement of Spencer Fane LLP as legal counsel to the Starbase Economic Development Corporation (previously approved by the EDC Board on May 16, 2026, subject to City Commission approval).
- Agreement with ZacTax for financial services to the City of Starbase.

The City Administrator confirmed that all relevant attachments were included in the Commission's meeting packets. Mayor Peden noted that the new temporary City Hall location is where the Commission is currently meeting and confirmed the designation is temporary pending construction of a permanent facility.

No Commissioner requested that any item be pulled from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion.

**Motion:** Commissioner Wallace moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**Second:** Commissioner Buss

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

## **F. REGULAR SESSION – PUBLIC HEARING**

### **Item F.1 – Public Hearing: Amendment to the Official Zoning Map**

Mayor Peden opened a public hearing on a request for an amendment to the Official Zoning Map by changing the district boundary. Mayor Peden stated that speakers were limited to three (3) minutes each and opened the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

City Clerk Gretchen Norton confirmed that no speakers had signed up. Mayor Peden noted for the record that the Commission had previously reviewed this matter and that the rules for the public hearing are consistent with prior practice. He encouraged any citizens wishing to speak on future zoning matters to submit a speaker request card no later than five (5) minutes before the start of the meeting.

The public hearing was closed at 7:13 p.m.

City Administrator Polanco advised the Commission that no action would be taken on the zoning matter at this meeting because the required public notice had been published less than thirty (30) days prior. No action was taken.

## **G. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Peden recessed the City Commission into Executive Session (closed meeting) at 7:15 p.m. pursuant to Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code to discuss the following:

- Section 551.074(a)(1): Deliberation regarding the appointment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee – specifically, the City Attorney.

The Executive Session was closed to the public.

## **H. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION**

Mayor Peden reconvened the City Commission into open session at 7:28 p.m. No action was announced as having been taken during Executive Session.

## **I. REGULAR SESSION**

### **Item I.1 – City Attorney Agreement – Spencer Fane, LLP**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. Spencer Fane LLP submitted an engagement letter dated May 22, 2026, to serve as City Attorney. Caleb Rush will serve as the designated City Attorney. The agreement incorporates the firm’s standard terms of engagement.

Representatives from Spencer Fane were in attendance and available for questions. No questions were posed by the Commission.

**Motion:** Commissioner Wallace moved to approve the agreement with Spencer Fane, LLP dated May 22, 2026 to provide City Attorney services and authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement and any necessary waiver on behalf of the City of Starbase.

**Second:** Commissioner Buss

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Item I.2 – EDC Executive Director – Max Levin**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. On May 16, 2026, the EDC Board of Directors adopted Resolution No. 2026-04 appointing Max Levin as Executive Director of the Starbase Economic Development Corporation. Mr. Levin is a City employee who will perform EDC functions. Staff requested City Commission approval of the contracting arrangement, with authority granted to the City Administrator to finalize contract details with the EDC.

Mayor Peden expressed support for Mr. Levin’s appointment, noting his qualifications and the EDC Board’s unanimous vote in his favor.

**Motion:** Commissioner Buss moved to approve the Starbase Economic Development Corporation contracting with Max Levin as Executive Director and authorize the City Administrator to enter into a contract with the EDC to determine contract details.

**Second:** Commissioner Wallace

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Item I.3 – Depository Banking Services Contract Award**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. The City issued a Request for Proposals for depository banking services. Two banks submitted responsive proposals: JP Morgan Chase and Lone Star National Bank. Upon initial scoring, the proposals were extremely close, differing by only two points. Staff proposed conducting final interviews and platform demonstrations with both banks to evaluate service capabilities before making a final award recommendation. Staff

requested that the Commission authorize the Mayor to award the contract to the most qualified respondent following those interviews.

Mayor Peden expressed confidence in the process and deferred to the City Administrator's recommendation given the staff's day-to-day engagement with the financial institutions.

**Motion:** Commissioner Wallace moved to authorize the Mayor to award the depository banking services contract to the most qualified respondent following interviews and platform demonstrations with JP Morgan Chase and Lone Star National Bank, and to direct the City Administrator to negotiate and execute the final contract documents on behalf of the City of Starbase.

**Second:** Commissioner Buss

**Vote:** 3-0. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item I.4 – Beach Cleaning Services Contract (RFP 2026-02)**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. The City issued RFP 2026-02 for professional beach cleaning services at Boca Chica Beach, which includes cleaning the full length of the beach and maintaining the beach entrance. Due to a communication error, the proposal deadline was extended to May 29, 2026, which falls the day after this meeting. Staff recommended authorizing the Mayor to review the proposals and award the contract to the most qualified proposer. The City Administrator noted that the RFP includes performance metrics to gather data on trash sources, including post-storm events and potential river input from the Rio Grande.

Mayor Peden and Commissioner Buss both noted their recent beach visits and shared observations that much of the debris appeared to originate from storm activity and ocean sources rather than from beachgoers. Commissioner Buss expressed enthusiasm for the contract and its potential impact. Mayor Peden emphasized the importance of minimizing the time between contract award and commencement of beach cleaning services.

**Motion:** Commissioner Buss moved to authorize the Mayor to award the beach cleaning services contract under RFP 2026-02 to the most qualified proposer offering the best overall value to the City of Starbase, and to direct the City Administrator to execute the contract and related documents on behalf of the City.

**Second:** Commissioner Wallace

**Vote:** 3-0. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item I.5 – Appointment to the Starbase Advisory Committee**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. The Starbase Advisory Committee consists of five members established by prior resolution. There is currently one vacancy on the Committee. Staff recommended appointing Bruce Applin to fill the vacancy for a two-year term.

Mayor Peden noted that Mr. Applin brings extensive qualifications and experience to the Committee, particularly in the area of public safety and security, which is an important priority for the City.

**Motion:** Commissioner Wallace moved to appoint Bruce Applin to the Starbase Advisory Committee for a two-year term.

**Second:** Commissioner Buss

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item I.6 – Resolution Authorizing Participation in LOGIC (Resolution No. 2026-17)**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. LOGIC (Local Government Investment Cooperative) is a cooperative investment pool created specifically for Texas cities, counties, and other local governments. It functions as a government money-market account, allowing the City to pool funds with other public entities in short-term, high-quality securities. LOGIC provides safety of principal, liquidity, and competitive returns in compliance with the City's Investment Policy and state law. Mika Owens from Hilltop Securities was available by phone to answer questions. Commissioner Wallace noted that the information provided in the meeting packet was helpful. No further questions were posed.

**Motion:** Commissioner Buss moved to approve the resolution authorizing participation in the Local Government Investment Cooperative (LOGIC); authorizing the execution of the Application for Participation and related documents; designating authorized representatives; and providing an effective date.

**Second:** Commissioner Wallace

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item I.7 – Resolution Authorizing Participation in TexSTAR (Resolution No. 2026-18)**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. TexSTAR (Texas Short Term Asset Reserve Program) is a cooperative investment pool for Texas local governments, similar in structure to LOGIC. It provides safety of principal, liquidity, and competitive returns in compliance with the City's Investment Policy. Mika Owens from Hilltop Securities was also available for questions on this item. The City Administrator noted that both LOGIC and TexSTAR were anticipated when the investment policy was drafted. Mayor Peden noted that given the City's lumpy, tax-dependent income cycle, it is prudent to have funds actively working. No questions were posed by the Commission.

**Motion:** Commissioner Wallace moved to approve the resolution authorizing participation in the Texas Short Term Asset Reserve Program (TexSTAR); approving the application for participation in the Cash Reserve Fund; designating authorized representatives; and providing an effective date.

**Second:** Commissioner Buss

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item I.8 – SpaceX Street Abandonment Petition (Ordinance No. 2026-13)**

City Administrator Polanco presented this item. On May 13, 2026, SpaceX submitted a petition to abandon and vacate portions of Saint Jude Street, Ohio Avenue, Memes Street, and Esperson Street. The petition states that these portions are no longer necessary for public use, have limited or no current public traffic, and that abandonment will serve the best interests of the City by allowing enhanced security and improved property utilization. The City Administrator noted that SpaceX currently maintains these streets as the owner of most of the adjacent real property, and that there is no current public need for them. Any future closure of access would require full compliance with applicable permits and City regulations. Ordinance No. 2026-13 was prepared to formally abandon and vacate the rights-of-way and authorize conveyance to the abutting property owners.

Mayor Peden noted that this type of process had been undertaken previously by both the City and the county. Commissioner Buss confirmed that similar street actions had been taken before and emphasized the importance of preserving emergency access. The City Administrator confirmed that no changes affecting emergency access are contemplated by the ordinance.

**Motion:** Commissioner Buss moved to approve the ordinance abandoning and vacating certain portions of Saint Jude Street, Ohio Avenue, Memes Street, and Esperson Street and authorize the Mayor to execute a deed or other documents conveying the rights-of-way to the abutting property owners.

**Second:** Commissioner Wallace

**Vote:** 3–0. Motion passed unanimously.

**J. COMMISSION / CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS**

**Item J.1 – Items of Community Interest**

Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.0415, the following items of community interest were shared:

- City Administrator Polanco wished a happy birthday to the City of Starbase, noting that the City’s first anniversary falls the following day, May 29, 2026.
- Commissioner Wallace expressed gratitude to the volunteers and staff of Sea Turtle Inc. for their continued presence and conservation efforts on Boca Chica Beach.
- City Administrator Polanco congratulated SpaceX on a recent successful launch.
- City Clerk Gretchen Norton wished a happy birthday to City employee Keila Tuttle.

**Item J.2 – City Administrator’s Report**

**a. Financial Statement Report – April 2026**

City Administrator Polanco reported that the City is in a healthy cash position with a current balance of approximately \$4.9 million. She noted two upcoming note payments: \$1.5 million due

in June and a second note payment due in September. The City is significantly under budget, in part due to ongoing law enforcement expenditures still in process. The City anticipates closing the fiscal year with a surplus.

#### **b. Building Permit Report – April 2026**

City Administrator Polanco reported that residential permitting and inspection volume remains the dominant activity. For April, 318 residential inspections were completed, of which 284 passed and 34 did not, for a pass rate of approximately 89%. For commercial inspections, 42 were completed. The overall commercial pass rate was approximately 70%, slightly below the typical rate of 85%; staff noted no specific issues of concern. The Administrator noted that inspection volumes are expected to continue to decline as activity in the pipeline decreases.

#### **c. Police Department Update**

City Administrator Polanco reported on the following Police Department activities:

- Active recruitment is the top priority. A revised job description was published following review of the prior applicant wave; a strong new wave of applicants is in early screening stages.
- TCOLE application: The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement recently changed its application process, and the City is being used as a model agency for the new process. The application has been submitted and is under review.
- Communications, radio systems, and the Mark 43 records management system are all moving forward. City employee Keila Tuttle is serving as project manager.
- Physical setup of the Police Department space is in progress at the Hub facility; setup is expected to be complete by the next Commission meeting on June 17.
- Equipment procurement for TCOLE accreditation is underway with GT Distributors.
- Lexipol policy development is ongoing.

The City Administrator stated the goal is to have the Police Department operational by July, pending selection of a Police Chief. Mayor Peden expressed the Commission's support for the process and the importance of selecting the right person to set the tone for the agency.

#### **d. Boca Chica Beach Update**

City Administrator Polanco reported that a Boca Chica Beach Dune Restoration Feasibility Study kickoff meeting was held on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, with stakeholders including representatives from the Texas General Land Office (GLO), Texas Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sea Turtle Inc., and TxDOT. The contracting firm, Halff, presented the project details and went through future mitigation options and timeline. The group conducted an on-site visit.

Additionally, a second GLO team visited on the day of the meeting to review the latest permitted areas and confirm compliance. The City Administrator noted that enforcement of parking regulations near the dunes is pending the arrival of the Police Department.

The City Administrator also reiterated the pending beach cleaning contract award, expressing hope that the next meeting would see a contract in place.

#### **e. 2027 Budget Calendar**

City Administrator Polanco presented the 2027 budget planning calendar. The City must adopt the budget by September 30, 2026; the fiscal year begins in November. The official appraisal tax values from Cameron County are expected on July 25, 2026, which will provide the final

revenue figure needed to finalize and hold public hearings on the proposed budget. The City Administrator expressed confidence in the timeline and noted the City is tracking well.

**Additional Discussion – Library Update**

At the request of Commissioner Buss, City Administrator Polanco and Commissioner Wallace provided an update on the Starbase Library. The City has transferred library funding in two installments: \$80,000 now with an additional installment in September. Commissioner Wallace reported that interviews for a part-time staff position are being held this week, supported by City funding. Volunteer efforts continue, and plans are underway to support a summer reading program even prior to the permanent facility being completed. The City Administrator noted that community projects, including the library, will be included as a budget line item for the next fiscal year.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN**


Item	Description	Vote
D.1	Administration of Oaths of Office, Statements of Officers, and Certificates of Election	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
D.2	Appointment of Jordan Buss as Mayor Pro Tempore (Resolution No. 2026-14)	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
E	Consent Agenda (Minutes, meeting location resolution, holiday schedule, Mark 43 contract, EDC bylaws, EDC legal counsel, ZacTax agreement)	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
F.1	Public Hearing on Zoning Map Amendment – No Action Taken (Notice insufficient)	<b>N/A</b>
I.1	Agreement with Spencer Fane, LLC for City Attorney services	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
I.2	EDC contracting with Max Levin as Executive Director	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
I.3	Authorization for Mayor to award depository banking contract following interviews	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
I.4	Authorization for Mayor to award beach cleaning contract under RFP 2026-02	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
I.5	Appointment of Bruce Applin to Starbase Advisory Committee	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
I.6	Resolution authorizing participation in LOGIC (Resolution No. 2026-17)	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
I.7	Resolution authorizing participation in TexSTAR (Resolution No. 2026-18)	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>

I.8	Ordinance abandoning and vacating street portions per SpaceX petition (Ordinance No. 2026-13)	<b>3-0 Unanimous</b>
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**K. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mayor Peden made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Buss. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed by:  
  
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Gretchen Norton, City Clerk  
City of Starbase

Approved by the City Commission on: June 3, 2026