

CITY OF STARBASE
City Commission Special Meeting
MINUTES

Date: Friday, June 19, 2026

Time: 7:00 p.m. – 7:28 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. Commissioner Jordan Buss was also present in the meeting room. City Administrator Cayetana Polanco and City Data Governance & Project Manager Keila Tuttle were also in attendance. Commissioner Lois Wallace was absent.

Two (2) of three (3) Commissioners were present in person, 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. 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 Data Governance & Project Manager Keila Tuttle confirmed that no speakers had submitted cards. The public comment period was closed.

D. 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 three items:

Item D.1 – Minutes of the June 3, 2026 City Commission Special Meeting

City Administrator Polanco noted that the minutes of the June 3, 2026 City Commission Special Meeting were attached for review. Approval confirms that the record of actions taken at that meeting is true and correct.

Item D.2 – Resolution No. 2026-19: Radio Communications MOU with SpaceX

City Administrator Polanco presented Resolution No. 2026-19, approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Starbase and Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX) regarding radio communications services. She explained that radio communications are essential for City public safety operations, and that SpaceX owns and operates the only land mobile radio system within and around the City limits. The proposed MOU would allow the City to share use of that existing system. Because SpaceX is the sole owner and operator of radio infrastructure in the City's service area, the resolution recognizes the arrangement as a sole-source procurement not requiring a competitive bidding process. The resolution authorizes the City Administrator to negotiate and execute the MOU, subject to approval by the City Attorney. The City Administrator noted that the final MOU document was still being finalized and would not be included in the meeting packet.

Mayor Peden noted that constructing independent radio communications infrastructure would be prohibitively expensive for the City and expressed support for the arrangement.

Item D.3 – Ordinance No. 2026-18: Records Management Officer Designation Amendment

City Administrator Polanco presented Ordinance No. 2026-18, which amends Ordinance No. 2025-05-30-F05-OR to redesignate the Records Management Officer (RMO) position. The original ordinance named the City Clerk as the RMO. This amendment transfers the designation to the Data Governance and Project Manager, whose duties make that position well-suited to oversee the City's records program. The ordinance also provides that the RMO responsibilities may be extended to records of the Starbase Economic Development Corporation, should the EDC request it, enabling consistent records management across both organizations.

Mayor Peden stated that consistent records management is prudent and responsible. No further questions or comments were offered by the Commission.

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

Second: Mayor Peden

Vote: 2–0. Motion passed unanimously.

E. REGULAR SESSION

Item E.1 – Ordinance No. 2026-17: Rezoning – Mixed Use to Heavy Industrial District

City Administrator Polanco presented Ordinance No. 2026-17, which amends the Official Zoning Map of the City of Starbase by changing the zoning classification of approximately 33.93 acres of property generally located west of Kingstone Avenue on State Highway 4 from the Mixed Use District to the Heavy Industrial District. The property is legally described as 33.93 acres out of a 38.81-acre tract, out of Share 3, San Martin Grant, City of Starbase, Cameron County, Texas, Tract III in Warranty Deed recorded in Document No. 2021-14444, Official Records of Cameron County.

City Administrator Polanco noted that the subject property is currently zoned Mixed Use, which permits a blend of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. The applicant has requested rezoning to the Heavy Industrial District to accommodate uses consistent with the industrial character of the surrounding area. The Heavy Industrial District is intended for manufacturing,

processing, storage, and other intensive industrial operations. A public hearing on this item was held at the May 28, 2026 City Commission meeting, at which public comments were received. With the required public notice posted and the public hearing completed, the Commission was now in a position to take action.

Mayor Peden noted that based on his knowledge of the area, he was not aware of any residential or incompatible uses in or adjacent to the subject property that would be negatively affected by a Heavy Industrial designation. He confirmed that the property has highway frontage on State Highway 4. Commissioner Buss offered no further questions or comments.

Motion: Commissioner Buss moved to approve Ordinance No. 2026-17 amending the Official Zoning Map of the City of Starbase, Texas by changing the zoning classification of approximately 33.93 acres of property generally located west of Kingstone Avenue on State Highway 4 from the Mixed Use District to the Heavy Industrial District.

Second: Mayor Peden

Vote: 2-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Item E.2 – Ordinance No. 2026-19: Establishing a Police Reserve Force

City Administrator Polanco presented Ordinance No. 2026-19, which establishes a Police Reserve Force for the City of Starbase pursuant to Texas Local Government Code Section 341.012. She provided the following summary of the ordinance's key provisions:

- **Size:** The reserve force is limited to a maximum of 20 members. This number reflects the City's TCOLE business plan application and budget projections, and may be adjusted in the future.
- **Appointment:** Reserve officers are appointed by the Police Chief following Commission approval of the ordinance. The Chief may remove reserve officers at any time.
- **Nature of Service:** Reserve service does not constitute guaranteed employment and carries no civil service protections.
- **Qualifications:** Each reserve officer must hold and maintain a current TCOLE peace officer license and meet all applicable state training standards.
- **Duties:** Reserve officers work under the direction of the Police Chief, act as peace officers only while on official duty, and may carry a weapon only when authorized and on duty.
- **Compensation:** Reserve officers serve as volunteers without pay unless the Commission determines otherwise.

City Administrator Polanco noted that TCOLE had specifically requested the City adopt this ordinance as part of the accreditation process. She acknowledged that reserve programs can be operationally complex and that much of the program's development will be shaped by the incoming Police Chief. She cited the South Padre Island Police Department's reserve program, led by Chief Claudine O'Carroll, as a potential model given its successful handling of seasonal demand.

Mayor Peden explained the intended operational model: the City plans to staff the Police Department at a minimal level sufficient for routine day-to-day coverage, and the reserve force

would allow the City to call in additional officers on an as-needed basis during special events, high-profile visits, or other situations that would otherwise strain regular staffing. He also suggested that the Commission may wish to consider in the future whether the City would sponsor reserve candidates in obtaining their TCOLE accreditation.

Commissioner Buss asked about the time commitment and training duration required for reserve officer candidates. City Administrator Polanco confirmed that TCOLE certification is mandatory and that the timeline varies depending on each candidate's current stage in the training process. She noted the City does not currently have any qualified reserve candidates identified, though some patrol officer candidates from the prior chief search had shown promise in terms of attitude and may be considered.

Motion: Commissioner Buss moved to approve Ordinance No. 2026-19 establishing a Police Reserve Force for the City of Starbase pursuant to Texas Local Government Code Section 341.012, including qualifications, training standards, size limitations, and appointment procedures.

Second: Mayor Peden

Vote: 2-0. Motion passed unanimously.

F. COMMISSION / CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

Item F.1 – Items of Community Interest

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

- City Administrator Polanco announced the City's upcoming July 4th celebration to be held at Boca Chica Beach, a collaboration between the City and SpaceX. The event is expected to draw a large crowd; approximately 5,000 people attended last year's event. Planned enhancements based on lessons learned include additional portable restrooms, food trucks, a stage with live music, and SpaceX CyberTruck activations distributing merchandise. Fireworks were selected as the primary entertainment. City Administrator Polanco noted that the beach entrance will be graded on July 3rd to improve accessibility.
- Mayor Peden wished a Happy Juneteenth to those in attendance and expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming July 4th event, noting that beach cleaning efforts and entrance improvements should enhance the experience for attendees.

Item F.2 – City Administrator's Report

a. Financial and Budget Update

City Administrator Polanco reported that the City is in the middle of a significant transition in its finance processes, software, and team. Doug Martello, President of ZacTax, the City's finance services contractor, is leading efforts to build automation across the finance stack and develop live data dashboards to enable faster, real-time decision-making. The first dashboards are expected to be ready in July, coinciding with the start of budget deliberations.

The City Administrator outlined the following budget schedule:

- July Commission Meeting: Presentation of the preliminary budget for Commission feedback, including a preliminary tax rate estimate based on figures received from Cameron County. The City Administrator noted this schedule may be adjusted if a special meeting is held for Police Chief hiring. The county's final certified tax roll is expected in the last week of July.
- August Commission Meeting: Presentation of the final tax rate; posting of all required public notices and the proposed budget.
- September Commission Meeting: Public hearings on the tax rate and budget; action to adopt both.

Mayor Peden clarified that the county provides an appraisal of properties within the City, and the City then sets a tax rate based on that appraisal to fund City operations.

City Administrator Polanco noted that two bond notes are coming due: the first on June 29, 2026, and the second in September 2026. The City is processing the first payment. The overall cash position is healthy; however, several significant Police Department purchases are expected, requiring close budget monitoring. She expressed more concern about the months following fiscal year-end in October — specifically the gap between October and February, when the City expects to receive the bulk of its property tax revenue — than about closing out the current fiscal year. Commissioner Buss noted that the Police Department budget is approximately \$1.1 million and asked whether the City expected to close the year short; City Administrator Polanco estimated the deficit would be approximately \$100,000, though she noted the budget projection work is ongoing.

b. Building Permit Report – May 2026

City Administrator Polanco reported that construction activity is slowing as anticipated. Both commercial and residential inspections declined sharply in May, consistent with the completion of many active projects. Residential permits issued increased, reflecting projects coming online. No new commercial permits were issued in May. New applications have also declined, and the City expects this lower trend to continue through the summer before picking up in the fall.

c. Police Department Update

City Administrator Polanco reported the following:

- Chief Recruitment: Two in-person interviews were held during the week of the meeting, with additional candidates moving through the pipeline. The City Administrator expressed confidence that the current recruitment approach will result in a selection, and indicated a decision may be made as early as that weekend, potentially followed by an executive session to bring final candidates before the Commission.
- TCOLE: The updated business plan has been submitted and reviewed. Feedback was positive. TCOLE's only outstanding question concerned the reserve force and whether the budget supports part-time officer pay in the next year — an issue addressed by Ordinance No. 2026-19 and confirmed in the budget.
- Facility: The Police Department facility is nearly ready. The City Administrator invited Commissioners to visit separately during the latter part of the following week to avoid triggering a quorum.
- Major Upcoming Expenditures: Three significant purchases are being tracked — radios, cameras, and Tasers. Cameras and Tasers are expected to be procured through Axon. The

City Administrator emphasized that the SpaceX radio infrastructure sharing arrangement (addressed in Agenda Item D.2) represents an enormous cost savings, as independent radio infrastructure would have been unaffordable for the City.

- Policies: Draft Lexipol policies are complete and ready for review by the incoming Chief and City Attorney.

d. Boca Chica Beach Update

City Administrator Polanco provided the following updates:

- Dune Restoration Feasibility Study: The survey team completed the dune survey and completed approximately half of the wade survey before being interrupted by weather. The team is scheduled to resume the wade and hydrographic survey on June 27, with a preliminary data review meeting planned for June 30.
- Beach Cleaning: Gulf Coast Contractors, led by Charlie Crockett, launched beach cleaning operations during the week of the meeting, working through rain. In the first three days of operations, the crew removed approximately six truckloads of material from the beach entrance extending to the Mexican border. The City Administrator noted that Gulf Coast is documenting all work with metrics and photos, which will be included in future administrator reports and shared on social media. A full first pass of the beach is expected to take two to three weeks.
- Sea Turtle Rescue: City Administrator Polanco reported a notable sea turtle rescue involving Sea Turtle, Inc. A large loggerhead turtle — described as being the size of the bed of a Cybertruck — became trapped in the jetty rocks. Sea Turtle, Inc. mobilized a team including medical personnel and a specialized structure to safely retrieve the animal, which was transported to the Sea Turtle, Inc. facility. The turtle, now named Arlen, laid approximately 600 eggs that night and was released the following day in good health. The eggs are now in a federally protected corral. Mayor Peden noted this is the first loggerhead turtle ever documented at this location. The story will be shared on the City's social media channels.

e. Library Update

City Administrator Polanco reported the following progress on the Starbase Library:

- Two part-time librarians have been hired.
- Security contracts for software, hardware, and book ordering have been finalized.
- Approximately 300 book donations have been processed, with an additional 300 donations in progress.
- Eight new community volunteers have been onboarded.

Commissioner Buss noted the upcoming July 4th celebration and requested that City communications encourage attendees to respect sea turtle nesting markers on the beach, refrain from accessing the dunes, and carry out any trash they bring. City Administrator Polanco confirmed these messages would be incorporated into event communications.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Description	Vote
D	Consent Agenda: Minutes of June 3, 2026 meeting; Resolution No. 2026-19 (SpaceX radio MOU); Ordinance No. 2026-18 (RMO designation amendment)	2-0 Unanimous
E.1	Ordinance No. 2026-17: Rezoning – approximately 33.93 acres from Mixed Use to Heavy Industrial District (west of Kingstone Ave. on SH 4)	2-0 Unanimous
E.2	Ordinance No. 2026-19: Establishing a Police Reserve Force pursuant to Texas Local Government Code § 341.012	2-0 Unanimous

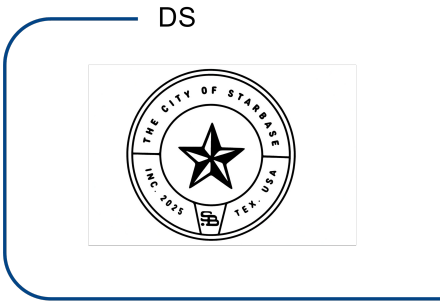
G. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mayor Peden moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Buss. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed by:

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Gretchen Norton, City Clerk
City of Starbase



Approved by the City Commission on: July 14, 2026 _____