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NORTH LAS VEGAS resident Mike Winnie, above, questions NLV Councilwoman Paula Brown at a town board meeting at the North Las Vegas Library. At right, Brown talks to the residents.



Critics disrupt public hearing by troubled councilwoman

By **Andy Holtmann**
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NORTH LAS VEGAS — Councilwoman Paula Brown is finding it difficult these days to make public appearances without running into critics of her chemical companies who are calling for her to resign.

The critics showed up Tuesday night at the North Las Vegas Library, as Brown tried to lead a forum about community issues.

Brown and her husband, Jim, are under investigation by Metro Police in connection with their companies, J.B. Chemical and L.K. Supply. Police are investigating whether chemicals that could be used in manufacturing methamphetamine were sold illegally.

No charges have been lodged

against the Browns. Police have executed search warrants on their businesses, home and bank accounts.

The Browns have admitted to working with the federal Drug Enforcement Agency, but have denied any illegal activities. Paula Brown says she will not resign her seat on the City Council because she has done nothing wrong.

Her decision to stick it out on the council is creating scenes at public appearances. Tuesday night, several citizens wanted to divert attention away from the public issues and onto the issue of Brown's worthiness as a councilwoman in light of the investigation.

"I'd like to see some honesty," Leonard Heaton said. "If you're going to convince me that you are a good councilwoman then stop lying to us."

Brown responded that she can't discuss the investigation or any role she may have in it because of legal stipulations.

Mark Winnie criticized Brown for maintaining that she and her husband did nothing wrong.

A woman who refused to be identified said she didn't care about Brown's personal life and that the audience should get on with the issues.

"I didn't come here for a night of Paula-bashing," she said.

Mark Kinkaid, who was helping Brown with the meeting, blasted those attacking Brown.

"Paula is the best thing this city has seen in a long time," he said. "It really sickens me to hear these attacks on her."

Brown's personal situation did not entirely divert the purpose of the evening, which was to hear from constituents.

Winnie said he was upset at what he called a lack of police officers on the street. He said while the city does hire new officers, most of them get promoted quickly, leaving few actually on the street for enforcement.

"Each night at around midnight, there are around 40 police cars sitting in the police station parking lot," he said. "Why not put these officers on the street and in the neighborhoods where they belong?"

His said his information came from inside the department and that council members get distorted facts.

"Would you care to share the names of those you talk to on the inside so

that we can get our facts straight?" Brown said.

Winnie responded by asking her to give the audience the names of "those who you sold drugs to on the street."

Resident Frank Azbell also spoke on the police issue.

"I voted for more police, but we're not seeing them," he said. "We have the highest paid department with the slowest response time."

At the end of the night, Brown said the forum was worthwhile despite the attacks on her.

"It is my job as an elected official to be in touch with the people," she said. "This was a public forum tonight and those people had every right to say what they felt, but there is a criminal investigation and I cannot comment on the case."