CITY OF LA HARPE

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT

Danny Ware Jr Mayor, Ella Mae Crowell

Sharlyn Thompson City Clerk, Michelle Altis

Cynthia Carr Police Chief, Joe Stotler

Ron Knavel Water Rep, Roy Caler

Angela Barker Code & Animal Control, Penny Miller

City Maintenance, Larry Laird

Fire Chief, Marc Waggoner

**Call to order**

Mayor Crowell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance with 5 members present.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Crowell added 406 S. McKinley under Joe and the fire department moved to the executive session. Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Cynthia Carr seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**Approval of Minutes**

Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on August 14, 2024, and the special meeting on August 22, 2024. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE HEARING**

Mayor Crowell opened the revenue neutral rate hearing for public comments; Kelcie Lampe stated she wasn’t familiar with the RNR and had a few questions. Mayor Crowell stated the increase of the mill levy is due to our sewer project and water tower maintenance that is needed. Kelcie asked if it could be lowered next year and will this increase cover those costs. Danny Ware Jr stated, we haven’t raised the mill levy in 5+ years, costs are going up and unfortunately, we still have the same amount of infrastructure but fewer citizens, that make it hard to keep up while trying to keep costs down. Kelcie asked about the quest for raising the city sales tax by 2%. Danny Ware Jr stated, the sales tax is going on the ballot, it’s up to the citizens but the sales tax goes towards the special highway fund to help in maintaining the streets. He stated, last year the street project was supposed to cost $80,000.00 but ended up being $125,000.00 because of costs. Mayor Crowell stated, COVID hammered everyone and the really cold spell in the weather shot our electric bill up to almost $35,000.00, which the city had to pay and did so without passing the extra cost to our citizens. Mayor Crowell stated, this council is looking into and going after any grants possible to help keep costs down, we are just trying to keep up. Mayor Crowell requested a motion to allow her to sign resolution #2024-5. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to give the mayor authority to sign the resolution. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Mayor Crowell performed the required roll call for the RNR: Danny Ware Jr – Yes, Cynthia Carr – Yes, Sharlyn Thompson – Yes, Ron Knavel – Yes and Angela Barker – Yes. Mayor Crowell closed the RNR hearing.

**2025 BUDGET HEARING**

Mayor Crowell opened the 2025 budget hearing for public comments, no comments were made. Mayor Crowell requested a motion to approve budget. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to approve the 2025 budget as presented. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Mayor Crowell closed the 2025 budget hearing.

**CITIZENS CALL FOR BUSINESS**

1. Kayla Knavel asked the council if there was a way the council meetings could be live streamed. Michelle Altis stated we are working on that, either looking into a You Tube channel or Facebook live, it is in the works and part of a communication grant the city was awarded.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Street Signs – Police Chief, Joe Stotler, stated we have a lot of signs that need to be replaced and raised to the legal height. He shared a quote in the amount of $3,765.90. Mayor Crowell asked if there were any stop signs that could be removed, Joe suggested removing the stop signs at 4th and McKinley and move the stop signs that are place at the corner of 5th and Washington, right now they have to stop at 5th and I am suggesting they stop at Washington. Joe shared some very faded signs that need replaced and stated, if I write a citation in these areas they could easily be dismissed because of the visibility of the sign. Mayor Crowell recommended getting the stop signs and posts now and then look at the others after the city has received money from the county. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to purchase the stop signs and posts for $986.52. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to remove the stop signs at 4th and McKinley and switch the stops signs at 5th & Washington around so that Washington traffic will have to stop. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Advantage Computer Contract - JCS – Michelle stated, the invoice we received last month was for the utility side of our software and this is for the court side. Cynthia Carr made the motion to approve and pay the invoice out of law, animal control and code. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
2. New Ordinance book – Joe stated that Fred, Penny, Michelle and myself are supposed to get together with Fred to go over the ordinance book which we have not been able to do. With Fred having the original ordinance book it’s hard to look things up because not everything is online. The ordinance book was supposed to be ready in October but I think we will probably be looking at the beginning of next year. Michelle stated, everyone has a copy of our incentive ordinance, it needs cleaned up and added to the new ordinance book. Mayor Crowell suggested the council look it over and note any changes you think we might need, if you want to get together in a workshop we can do so.
3. Dump Truck – Larry stated he looked everywhere for someone that could fix the dump truck and no one was interested other than Austin Sigg. The power boost to the brakes is out and Austin stated he would come to our shop and fix it for $1,000.00; $500.00 for parts and $500.00 labor. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to fix the truck and not exceed $1,200.00 and the funds will come out of electric, water and sewer. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS**

1. Fred Works, City Attorney – Absent from meeting
2. Roy Caler, Water Representative – Nothing to report.
3. Joe Stotler, Police Chief – Shared his monthly time cards and report. Joe stated, last month there were 67 dogs not registered with the city, since the letters went out 43 have been tagged, 4 are no longer in town, a few others have received a notice to appear in court. On the code side of things there are 5 cases already scheduled to appear, 29 total code letters have been sent in August, 3-4 cases of inoperable vehicles. Myself, Larry and Penny have been doing a lot of mowing, it’s a full-time job by itself. Cynthia Carr asked about the 11 acres the city had to mow. Joe stated a request was made and approved to vacate streets and alleys on that property but was unaware of his intentions, he was growing that to attract deer so that he could bow hunt, which he can’t do in the city and since those 11 acres are in city limits and the original motion in vacating streets was made on the stipulation that the property was in code compliance which was not, that’s why we mowed it. Joe also mentioned the city now owns 406 S. McKinley, the mayor suggested the city tear down the trailer and clean the property up then we could look at sitting it out for bids for people to build on.
4. Penny Miller, Code/Animal Control –Shared her monthly reports. Penny stated we have 3 new homes coming in and we are doing our best to keep up.
5. Marc Waggoner, Fire Chief- Shared the fire meeting minutes; The La Harpe Volunteer Fire Department met for the monthly meeting. Present: Josh Sparks, Marc Waggoner Sr., Ronald Splector, Kiefer Endicott, Matthew Waggoner, Dennis Sidebottom, Bill Gay, and Meghan Sparks. Absent were Pamela Waggoner and Justin Pritchard. La Harpe firefighters had their meeting, took out the trucks and did water exercises with pumper and ladder unit then returned to station and adjourned meeting. Michelle asked Marc if there as a different way we could handle the burn permits. She stated she is getting a few complaints that people can burn because they didn’t receive their permit. Sharlyn Thompson suggested the city employees start looking at the burn piles, just make sure they are in compliance and then sign off on them and get Marc a copy. Marc said that would work as well, just remember no shingles or tires can be burned. Mayor Crowell suggested Michelle email Marc and her with those copies. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to allow city employees to approve burning permits and copies be sent to the mayor and fire chief. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
6. Maintenance Department - The workorders were shared.
7. Michelle Altis, City Clerk – Nothing to report.

**DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS –**

Danny Ware Jr asked about court and 50 cases on the docket, would court be done in time for council. Mayor Crowell stated our new court time is now at 2:00pm starting October 9th.

Mayor Crowell requested a motion to go into an executive session on non-elected personnel for 30 minutes. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to go into an executive session on non-elected personnel for 30 minutes. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to extend the executive session another 15 minutes. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**TREASURER’S REPORT –** File for audit.

**APPROVAL OF BILLS**

Sharlyn Thompson made a motion to approve bills as presented. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Danny Ware Jr made the motion to adjourn. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 4-0. Adjourned at 8:35 pm.

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City ClerkMayor