CITY OF LA HARPE

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 12, 2025

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT

Angela Barker Mayor, Ella Mae Crowell

Sharlyn Thompson City Clerk, Michelle Altis

Cynthia Carr City Fire Chief, Marc Waggoner

Ron Knavel (Arrived @ 7:03) City Water Rep, Roy Caler

**Call to order**

 Mayor Crowell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance with 4 members present.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Crowell requested the lift stations and sewer rates be tabled to the March meeting. Cynthia Carr made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Angela Barker seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Approval of Minutes**

 Angela Barker made the motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on January 8, 2025 and the special meeting January 29, 2025 as presented. Cynthia Carr seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

**CITIZENS CALL FOR BUSINESS**

1. La Harpe citizen, Harry Lee, talked about effective city government stating he has interest in La Harpe for the past 75 years. At times the city council has been effective and other times less effective. Back in the mid 50’s a representative from Klien Tool came to the city and wanted to build their plant here, but the mayor at that time was not interested. Then in the mid to late 60’s the US Department of Agriculture presented they would like to build low income/senior apartment living in La Harpe but the city government was not interested. USDA now have those living arrangements in Moran, Iola and Bronson, Harry stated: Not a good decision made. Harry referred to La Harpe as a “Food Desert”, meaning the city doesn’t have groceries. Harry mentioned; at one time, back in the 50’s, La Harpe had two stores, but people did not support them, they drove a few extra miles to save a few cents. Overall, Harry stated; When people don’t support local businesses in La Harpe, they tend to lose them. For La Harpe to prosper, three things need to happen; 1) stable tax base- when rate payers decrease, those here the rate increases. 2) reliable and affordable utilities-the more people you have buying, the smaller the costs will be, the fewer you have, the bigger the costs will be. 3) good reputation- Harry shared a post from the city’s Facebook page regarding the decision to abandon a service with a business in town, shared that a few people were questioning the change and communicating with one another. Harry stated, I can’t see this is helping the city by abandoning a business that has been in town for 125 years.
2. Derrick and Jennifer Foster stated they are going to build a home in La Harpe and requested permission to stay in a camper as they were building. After some discussion, Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to have Fred write up a contract giving the Foster’s 18 months to stay in the camper while building. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Kennel Fees – No action taken

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Employee handbook changes – Michelle update the health insurance changes and stated Fred suggested a motion be made to accept those changes. Cynthia Carr made a motion to approve the updated changes. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
2. KRWA Voting Delegates – The council agreed to have Sharlyn Thompson and Angela Barker as the delegates for La Harpe.
3. KMEA Board of Directors – The council agreed to have Sharlyn Thompson and Ron Knavel as the board of directors for La Harpe.
4. AMS Collection Services for court – Michelle shared an agreement with AMS, a collection agency that Fred and the judge wanted me to look into, Humboldt uses this service and is very pleased and it does not cost the city any money. Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to go with AMS and sign the agreement. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 4-0.
5. LACO Proposal – Mayor Crowell stated; the road out front is bubbling up because of the two drain pipes we have coming off of city hall and to stop it from getting any worse we need to re-route our guttering system. Cynthia Carr stated, we normally get 3 bids, why just this one, does anyone else do this. Mayor Crowell stated she couldn’t find anyone else. Angela Barker stated the bid is cheaper than repairing the road and made the motion to accept LACO’s bid in the amount of $1,670.00 and take out of the street fund to pay. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 3-1 with Cynthia Carr opposing.
6. Gym Floors – Vicky Moss with Thrive was present to share a new grant, the Lowes Building Grant is a no match grant and after talking with Michelle and the mayor it seems the gym floor needs some attention. To submit the grant, I will need a cost estimate, which was given to me this evening and the importance of the safety of this project, which I have typed up a narrative stating the number of loose tiles and how the area is used by the public on a daily basis. Vicky mentioned, if awarded, the project would need to be completed by November 14, 2025.

Marcia Davis shared that the Kansas Department of Commerce has a grant available for small communities of 5,000 or less, the grant is for up to $10,000.00 with a 10% match and is due by February 28, 2025. Mayor Crowell stated she would like to see city hall more ADA compliant. We have people in wheelchairs and those that use walkers visiting quite often and I would like to see a push button door opening for the front door and the entrance in the gym. Sharlyn Thompson mentioned a ramp outside by the handicap parking. Cynthia Carr questioned if our restrooms were ADA compliant. Marcia asked if we had pricing on these projects, the mayor said she will make a few phone calls and get back with her.

**REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS**

1. Fred Works, City Attorney – Absent from meeting.
2. Roy Caler, Water Representative – Nothing to report.
3. Penny Miller, Code/Animal Control –Shared her monthly reports with the mayor.
4. Marc Waggoner, Fire Chief- Shared the fire department minutes: The La Harpe Volunteer Fire Department met for the monthly meeting. Present: Josh Sparks, Marc Waggoner Sr., Kiefer Endicott, Matthew Waggoner, Dennis Sidebottom, Trevor Stover, Pamela Waggoner and Meghan Sparks. Absent were Bill Gay, Ronald Splector and Justin Pritchard. Started meeting, had a Humboldt fireman come down and talk to the guys about his experience of fatal fires to help them cope with the fire on January 27th, which we found the body of the homeowner, which has affected all of us. Then ended meeting. Marc requested the city allow the fire department to donate $200.00 to Ramona Jeffers to help her out. Michelle shared the final bill to the Jeffers home and asked the council what they wanted to do with it. Cynthia Carr made the motion to forgive the $479.47 utility bill for Gale Jeffers. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 4-0. Cynthia Carr made the motion to donate $500.00 to Ramona Jeffers. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 4-0. Michelle stated the donation will be made under the city and the fire department.
5. Maintenance Department - The workorders were shared.
6. Michelle Altis, City Clerk – Michelle told the council she is looking for a new computer for the assistant clerk/treasurer and is hoping to have something next month.

**DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS –**

 Nothing was discussed.

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

**APPROVAL OF BILLS**

Cynthia Carr asked about the heating at city hall noticing the Kansas Gas bill was high, is the heat monitored and unused rooms shut off to help keep costs down. She questioned if the thermostats were accessible to all. Michelle stated there is a thermostat in the museum that controls the northside offices, one in the police department that controls that room and the fitness center, and then another thermostat in the front office that controls that area. The gym has two thermostats and we try to keep the gym doors closed along with other doors to keep the heat contained. Each thermostat has a locking cover that is only accessed by a use of a key. Michelle stated she will check all thermostats tomorrow to make sure they aren’t turned up to high.

Sharlyn Thompson made a motion to approve bills as presented. Angela Barker seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

 Angela Barker made the motion to adjourn. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 4-0. Adjourned at 7:48 pm.

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City ClerkMayor