CITY OF LA HARPE

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MAY 10, 2023

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT

Austin Lee Mayor, Ella Mae Crowell

Danny Ware Jr City Clerk, Michelle Altis

Cynthia Carr City Code/animal Control, Penny Miller

Sharlyn Thompson Police Chief, Joe Stotler

Ron Kavel Fire Chief, Marc Waggoner

Water Rep, Roy Caler

City Attorney, Fred Works

City Maintenance, Gentry Dougherty

**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**

Danny Ware Jr requested the tax abatement be added under lots on Washington. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**Approval of Minutes**

Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on April 12, 2023, and the special meeting on April 5, 2023 as presented. Danny Ware Jr seconded. Motion carried 4-1. Ron Knavel opposed because he missed last month’s meeting.

**CITIZENS CALL FOR BUSINESS**

1. Angela Barker asked where the council was on her variance request for filling her swimming pool. Mayor Crowell stated, the issue has not been addressed yet.
2. Harry Lee – addressed the council with an incident that happened at the park. Harry shared some history of the park and wanted to explain how things got the way they are today. The ball diamond use to be a track for the high school, with city approval we put up poles for ball diamond. He stated the park improvements have come from the community, not the city. The bleachers and fence were gifted to the city, the shelter house was built by the La Harpe Lions Club, the center of the park has a nice pole with cameras just need electric to run the cameras. Harry stated, Pride installed the pole and electric for the cameras. Many families come to enjoy the park; Harry stated. There was also a group of volunteers that installed the playground equipment and citizens have tried to maintain what was there. The public built the concession stand, Pride members doing restoration work to keep the park up. Ed Hoover mowed the park for a number of years and picked up trash throughout the park until his health started to decline. Harry shared a number of photos from the community doing/working on restoration of the park and facilities, one of them being 2 local residents painting the fence around the park. Another added feature, brought to the park by the community, is the zipline. With the help of others, the zipline was constructed and built by Ridge Barney which helped him earn a badge in eagle scouts. Harry stressed; none of these facilities were prompted by the city saying, “we need this”, the park is a great park because the community has pitched in to help the city. Then restoration started of the sand volleyball court which has been there a number of years. Harry stated, with permission of the governing body, La Harpe Pride set about to restore the volleyball court. Raymond Maloney came down with a track hoe, for it to be useable we dug down and placed a drain and barrier, now when it rains the water won’t sit in a pool, it will drain efficiently. Part of our plan was to get the lights put up, Harry stated he reached out to the Pride members last Wednesday for help to dig the trench for the electricity. Jason Lee, Joyce Lee and myself were all that showed up, and I did not do a locate because I didn’t feel the need to do so. Harry stated, he has done locates in the pass and knew, pretty much, where everything was. Our plan was to dig the trench with the trencher but there were to many bigger rocks, so we closed most of it and placed cones where needed. Harry stated, Pride has installed cement piers to put the lights on, I had to ask the city to help and was told this isn’t the city project. It really bothered me with the attitude, that spirit of cooperation and trying to help get things done doesn’t seem to be there. Harry expressed concerns and asked the council if the city wanted Pride to turn over the remaining materials and have the city finish it. Mayor Crowell stated the city has always been willing to help, the only reason we didn’t help this time was because there was no locate done nor was the city notified of when you would be getting started. She expressed, the crew has been busy with water leaks, fixing electric poles and whatever else needs to be done that they just can’t stop everything they are doing to go help in the park without some sort of notice. Harry stated, this Pride project was for the benefit of the city, the point here, it concerns me with decades of support between the community and the city and now it seems the city doesn’t want to help. Mayor Crowell reminded Harry that the city has dug holes and even offered to get the wire at a discounted price but nothing was ever submitted to the city on what was needed and how much. City attorney, Fred Works mentioned, it puts the city at risk to dig without a locate. Mayor Crowell pointed out, the city’s insurance agent was in the audience and he would probably agree that digging without a locate puts the city at risk. Council member, Sharlyn Thompson, stated; I am a Pride member and I think we all need to work together and the city should have been notified. City clerk, Michelle Altis, asked who is going to get the park back in shape and will it be done before La Harpe Days. Harry stated the pipe is not done but there is not a locate in place. Mayor Crowell stated, David Lee did a locate and it was marked on Monday, the city has not had trouble helping out before but we can’t ask our crew to go against the law and dig with no locate. Harry gave a list of items that needed to be done; pipe which I have, need electric wire, backfill the area and smooth it out, a control box which I also have, this would complete the underground work and then need poles and lights. Mayor Crowell suggested the city contact Harry after they dig the trench so he can put the rest of the pipe in and asked Harry if he was okay with that. Harry responded, that will be fine. Ron Knavel suggested the city needs to help him. Cynthia Carr suggested we start communicating better, this could have all been avoided. Mayor Crowell stated, we will get a work order up and notify you on a date and time that works.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Sunshine Jones variance request – Tabled until the June meeting.
2. Property Tax Sale – A list of addresses was provided to the council, Mayor Crowell asked if there were any interest on any of these properties. She stated, I know we want to pursue the one at 811 S. Washington, are there any others. Austin Lee suggested 1012 S. Washington, since it’s across the street from the other 2 lots the city owns. Michelle stated that 406 S. McKinley had 3 lots that but up against the 2 lots the city already owns. Mayor Crowell suggested they sit a price. Cynthia Carr made the motion to allocate the $5,220.00 we just received. Danny ware Jr seconded and suggested the mayor attend the sale on June 8th. Motion carried 5-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Sewer Snake – Mayor Crowell expressed concerns, stating over the last 2 or 3 months we have spent almost $600.00 in callouts to snake out the sewer and we can buy our own for a little over $500.00. Danny ware Jr suggested a diaphragm before buying a snake, he expressed concerns about someone getting hurt if they don’t know how to use them. Gentry Dougherty stated he had used the snake machines before and we also had a sewer backup at the park. Harry Lee offered his expandable diaphragm if the city wanted to try it out. Danny Ware Jr made a motion for the city to buy a wet vac for water clean ups and 100’ hose. Austin Lee seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
2. Office Printer – Michelle shared pricing for a back and white printer from copy products; $1,295.00 and one from Modern Copy; $1,216.00. Michelle suggested staying with modern copy because of the service we receive. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to get the new printer from Modern copy. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
3. Street Whistles – Michelle stated that Dereck was needing six 12”X30’ whistles for about $645.60 each. Ron Knavel made the motion to get the whistles needed. Cynthia Carr seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
4. PSI – Loren Korte presented the city with a check, the check from EMC dividend program, in the amount of $5,220.30. He stated this check is 25% of last year’s premium.
5. Highway water leak – Mayor Crowell explained what the crew had to do to stop the water from leaking, they had to cap the line. Everyone has water but what that did was get rid of the loop, so when one of those homes have a water leak, we have no way of isolating it to shut off just that house, we will have to shut them all down. Mayor Crowell recommending contracting this job out since the work will be going under the highway. Danny Ware Jr suggested a vac truck to dig out so that we can get the line through the sleeve. Mayor Crowell explained, under the highway is a sleeve that protects the water line and we are needing new pipe to go through that sleeve to fix this leak the right way. Danny Ware Jr suggested Keith Babcock and Gentry Dougherty recommended Dwayne Jarred. Mayor Crowell suggested we get a bid from both and a time frame on when they can start and bring it back in June.
6. KDHE Grant Application – Mayor Crowell stated that KDHE has funds to help with our sewer project, I just need a motion to move forward with the application and have Taylor from SEKRPC do the application before June 30th. Austin Lee made the motion to do everything needed to get it submitted before the deadline. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
7. Lots on Washington – Danny Ware Jr stated that Harry Lee wants to build 4 homes there but the powerline easement is in the way. Danny suggested the city could move the line with the contingency that progress on the homes is started within a year and if not, then Harry will have to reimburse the city. Mayor Crowell stated there is also a sewer main that lays through there as well. Gentry mentioned that line goes from Clayton Carr’s shop on the highway down to the phone company on 6th street. Danny Ware Jr stated he told Harry he would bring it up, and so I have.
8. Tax Abatement – Danny Ware Jr was wondering if the abatement was good for anyone. Michelle stated it is good for any homeowner that qualifies, I would have to look at it covering a developer. I’ll check it out and let you know.
9. Park – was covered earlier in the meeting.
10. Appointments – Mayor Crowell suggested the following appointments: City clerk, Michelle Altis; City Treasurer, Audra Riggins; City Attorney, Fred Works; Municipal Judge, Patty Boyd; Fire Chief, Marc Waggoner; Police Chief, Joe Stotler, Code Enforcement/Animal Control, Penny Miller; Banks – Piqua, Landmark National, Emprise &Community National Bank; official newspaper, Iola Register. Ron Knavel made the motion to accept all appointments. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS**

1. Fred Works, City Attorney – Nothing to report. Will visit with council in the executive session.
2. Roy Caler, Water Representative – Nothing to report
3. Joe Stotler, Police Chief – Shared his monthly time cards and report. He also requested a new computer stating the one he has now is a 2016 model that was given to the city from dispatch. He shared a quote from Advantage Computer in the amount of $1,550.00 for setup and transfer of files. He also mentioned the city has been paying Huber & Associates $800.00 a year to use Interpol, after some phone conversations, he was able to get that fee waived every year going forward. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to get a new computer for Joe for $1,550.00. Austin Lee seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
4. Penny Miller, Code/Animal Control – Shared her monthly reports. Penny shared a resolution to condemn a property on Harrison. Austin Lee made the motion to adopt resolution #2023-4. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 5-0. The kennel license will be visited with in executive session.
5. Marc Waggoner, Fire Chief- Shared the meeting minutes: The LaHarpe Volunteer Fire Department met for the monthly meeting. Present: Matthew Waggoner, Mehan Sparks, Josh Sparks, Mar Waggoner Sr., Bill Gay & Ronald Splector. Had meeting. Took out 359 rural unit tanker and 351 city unit pumper, flushed out two whistles at 202 E. 4th then returned units back to fire station and adjourned meeting. Marc mention that Gentry Dougherty joined the fire department. Marc also asked the council about 10-foot fire rings, stating he think they are way to big. After discussion, the council would like to review the ordinance covering fire pits and burning at the June meeting. Marc also stated, the hydrant at the park will be fixed Saturday and La Harpe Days has asked us to be in the parade and we are also going to bring our water tanker so we can spray the kids without interfering with citizens water pressure.
6. Maintenance Department –The workorders and Dereck’s progress report were shared.
7. Michelle Altis, City Clerk – Michelle shared with the council a policy on our shut offs, stating we had a few issues last month of some being shut off and then calling to make a payment and when I try to collect the reconnect fee, they said they weren’t shut off, which they were. This policy allows me to add a penalty of $50.00 for each meter service that is shut off. If they come in and pay it on the 25th, they will still have to pay the $50.00 per meter even if they weren’t shut off, If they don’t have the penalty money then it will be added to their utility account and will have to pay it next month. If they get shut off, utilities will not be turned on until the past due bill and the penalty per meter is paid in full.

**DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS –**

Mayor Crowell requested an executive session for attorney/client for 30 minutes. Danny Ware Jr made the motion to go into an executive session for attorney/client for 30 minutes with Penny Miller invited. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

After returning to regular session, Michelle stated the tax abatement can be submitted by the land owner but after it’s sold, it goes to the property owner but the 10-year abatement does not restart with new owner.

Mayor Crowell reminded the council to come up with a decision on hoofed animals for next month’s meeting. Council would like to look at the animal ordinance.

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

**APPROVAL OF BILLS**

Danny Ware Jr made a motion to approve bills as presented. Austin Lee seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Danny Ware Jr made the motion to adjourn. Austin Lee seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Adjourned at 10:00 pm.

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City ClerkMayor