CITY OF LA HARPE

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

APRIL 9, 2025

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT

Angela Barker Mayor, Ella Mae Crowell

Sharlyn Thompson City Clerk, Michelle Altis

Ron Knavel

**Call to order**

 Mayor Crowell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance with 3 members present. Cynthia Carr was absent.

**Approval of Agenda**

Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to approve the 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 March 12, 2025, and the special meetings on March 17th and March 20, 2025 as presented. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**CITIZENS CALL FOR BUSINESS**

1. Marcia Davis, Thrive, shared the information from community conversation gathering, she thanked Sharlyn Thompson and Cynthia Carr for attending it was a very good discussion. Some of the things that were brought up was this is a small town, people ride bikes, they have a great park, it is safe, it’s like living in the country but with a small-town vibe, people are friendly. There was discussion about homes, health and wellness trying to bring an advertisement sign to the highway, and the new library director. The civic engagement was communication, council involving community to get them into the know. Mayor Crowell stated we put out newsletters, we post on Facebook, we have share information on our TV and our website, don’t know how else to get them involved. Marcia Davis suggested maybe getting some involved to run for office. They also talked about the sewer rate and water tower Sharlyn Thompson mentioned two grants to help was the sewer project, Mayor Crowell stated it is supposed to start sometime this year. Marcia Davis stated there was concern about the rates going up, Harry Lee mentioned why we need to build more homes and grow the population to spread out those cost. Retention on employees was another issue, why are they not staying can we offer them incentives or contracts, those employees take their knowledge with them and that is not good for our city. Marcia mentioned two positions they would like to see is electrician hired and a police officer, Mayor Crowell stated the city can’t afford an electrician all employees need to do be able to do it all. Another topic of discussion was housing some are pleased with new being built but there are complaints of empty ones not upkept. It was also discussed there’s some concern about the speeding around the park; some suggested more stops signs others suggested maybe speed bumps to slow the traffic. There was discussion on the roads that are built below the ditches and street lights that are not working. Also showed concerns of the fox’s and the critters that are in town. Some suggested a list of empty lots are vacant homes for sale so that they can stop at city hall and pick up the list, Mayor Crowell stated we have a copy in the office of what the city a owns. Another concern was La Harpe did not have a voting site, citizens were complaining of having to go to the gas community center to vote. Mayor Crowell stated we did not get a say in that, Marcia Davis mentioned she spoke with the commissioners and they had told her there was not enough volunteers to have two voting sites open. And lastly businesses on main is a dream to bring back the downtown area. Once again Marcia Davis showed appreciation to Sharlyn Thompson and Cynthia Carr for attending the community conversation. Mayor Crowell asked Marcia about the grant on the floor if she found anything new. Marcia said she is still waiting to hear on the grant in may for the ADA changes as she will have to get with CDBG on the floor. Marcia stated she would look into that and get back with the mayor is soon as she could.
2. Citizen, Craig Trester was in attendance he asked the council about the roads, stating they are bad around his house and wondering why the city is not fixing them. Mayor Crowell stated main street is a county issue. Craig also asked about the ditches, are they the owner’s responsibility or the city. City Attorney, Fred Works stated the ditches are the landowner’s responsibility. Craig express concerns of why the city is sending certified code letters to deceased owners, it has to cost the city money. Mayor Crowell stated if the name is still on the land that’s who we have to send it to. Craig also asked about the lift stations, stating I’m aware that they are about 25 years old and need attention, why hasn’t the city put back money to take care of these problems. Mayor Crowell stated we do have two separate funds, one fund is for our lagoon that we will have to dredge and the other fund is just for our sewer project, both of those funds seem to be holding well, keep in mind; the last two years the sewer fund was in the hole and is now starting to look better and hold its own. City clerk Michelle Altis stated the mayor now has set up separate reserve funds, we have one for our electric we have two for our sewer, before we never had those funds and all money was tied in to one account. Fred mentioned you need reserves to setback for expenditures, but a small town doesn’t have a good tax base to keep those reserves when issues arise. Craig also asked about the water maps, stating employees are finding it hard to locate a few shut offs, how often are the maps updated, I also understand there’s a flash drive of the maps is that be an updated on a regular basis. Mayor Crowell stated they are updating the maps as they work on the area, yes, our maps are old but it costs money to replace those. Craig mentioned the phone number change, stating I understand why you did it but others don’t get it. I realized saving money is in the best interest of the community. Sharlyn Thompson stated I took an oath to take care of the city funds, Craig stated I understand that but some don’t. Craig also asked about the city equipment are the citizens allowed to use the city equipment, Mayor Crowell stated no, we do allow the use of our dump truck; the city employees will deliver it to an address on a Friday so that they can fill it with debris and the city staff picks it up on Monday and takes it to the landfill. Craig stated he was just wondering because someone seen the tractor at an employee’s house moving dirt. Craig mentioned he was reading last month’s minutes and city hall had new drains installed but the payment was taken out of the street fund wondering why we took it out the street fund and not the general fund, Mayor Crowell stated because it was interfering with our street work that we just had done.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Nothing to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Region H HMP Resolution – Ron Knavel made the motion to authorize the mayor to sign resolution number 2025-3. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
2. Sewer Rate Ordinance – Angela Barker made the motion to approve and adopt ordinance number 2501. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
3. PSI Insurance Renewal – Tabled until the April 21st special meeting.
4. 2024 Audit Representation Letter – Sharlyn Thompson made the motion authorizing the mayor to sign the 2024 audit letter. Angela Barker seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
5. IMAX Water Fittings – Mayor Crowell shared a quote from Core and Main to replace the two IMax couplings the city used to repair the water leak on the highway, stating the price is $391.80 apiece and the city needs to replace them, she requested authorization to purchase 2 IMAX water fittings. Ron Knavel made the motion to purchase 2 IMAX fittings. Sharlyn Thompson seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
6. KWO Agreement with SEKRPC – Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to accept the agreement and authorized the mayor to sign. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
7. BG Consultants Invoice – city clerk Michelle Altis shared an invoice stating it was the third payment on the design of the sewer project, and wanted to know which account they would like to pay it from. Mayor Crowell suggested the general fund and replace it at a later date. Sharlyn Thompson made the motion to pay the BG consultants invoice out of the general fund. Angela Barker seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
8. Assistant Clerk / Treasurer PC – Mayor Crowell shared two options that city Treasurer, Audra Riggins, had picked for a new computer. Fred suggested the city save some money and use the law computer. Mayor Crowell agreed to Fred’s suggestion and stated she would get with Audra about getting that computer setup.

**REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS**

1. Fred Works, City Attorney – Stated he had two letters to share with the mayor, which he would do after council, but had nothing else to report.
2. Roy Caler, Water Representative – Nothing to report.
3. Penny Miller, Code/Animal Control –monthly report submitted to 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., Matthew Waggoner, Dennis Sidebottom, Trevor Stover, Bill Gay, Pamela Waggoner, and Meghan Sparks. Absent were Kiefer Endicott, Ronald Splector and Justin Pritchard. Started meeting, discussing when to set the rest of the fire fighters trained on confined space or grain bin entrapment. Then went over procedures on trucks with new fireman Trevor, then ended meeting. Marc also stated they were busy helping with the Yates Center fire and will be flushing hydrants this weekend. Penny Miller stated she is working on a list of whistles to clean out. Ron Knavel asked about removing whistles from vacant lots so that the water can flow better in those areas. Mayor Crowell thought that was a great idea and get a list started on which ones the city will remove.
5. Maintenance Department - The workorders were shared. Mayor Crowell shared a letter from Larry Laird on a truck bed trailer the city has been using for scrap metal, he would like to see if the city would be interested in buying the trailer for $200. Ron Knavel made the motion to purchase the trailer for $200. Angela Barker seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
6. Michelle Altis, City Clerk – Requested the council’s permission to allow Keith to attend the electric distribution underground workshop in May. Angela barker made the motion to allow Keith to attend the class in May. Sharlyn Thompson seconded light and. Motion carried 3-0. Michelle shared a GIS mapping system of the city’s underground infrastructure and encouraged the council to sit in on a special meeting to learn more about it. With the GIS System we can locate shut offs that they have not been able to locate, have an up-to-date map on a daily basis all done electronically and the GIS System will also allow us to add our sewer lines as well. Michelle mentioned that her and Penny sit in on a call and was very impressed with the information shared, not only will the city have a constant update of water lines and sewer lines, this will be helpful to any new employees, council members, or mayors that come to town, we’ll also have the information all electronically vs. the paper map we have now that has been passed down by so many hands. After discussion the council seemed very interested in setting up a special meeting to learn more on the GIS System.

**DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS –**

 No discussion on agenda items was taken. Mayor Crowell requested a motion to go into executive session on non-elected personnel for 10 minutes with Penny Miller invited. Angela Barker made the motion to go into executive session on non-elected personnel for 10 minutes with Penny Miller invited. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

After returning to regular session Angela Barker made the motion to give Penny Miller a 50¢ an hour raise effective June 12 to 2025. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

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

**APPROVAL OF BILLS**

Sharlyn Thompson made a motion to approve bills as presented. Angela Barker seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

 Angela Barker made the motion to adjourn. Ron Knavel seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Adjourned at 8:06 pm.

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City ClerkMayor