COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF LUVERNE

March 22, 2021

The City of Luverne Council met in regular session on March 22, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., in the City Hall Building. The following members were present:

Mayor Ed Beasley

Betty Dawson, Councilwoman

Kip Smith, Councilman

Kathy Smyth, Councilwoman

Elliott Jones, Councilman

Eddie Billings, Councilman

Mike Jones, Attorney – by phone conference

Michelle Royals, Engineer

Margie Gomillion, Clerk

William Neal, Building Inspector

Mike Johnson, Chief

Christy Johnson, Editor

Visitors:

Wayne Carter Ryan McGhee

Demarcus Searight Deneshia Mency

Carlton Carmichael

Mayor Beasley called the meeting to order. The mayor called on Eddie Billings to lead the pledge of allegiance to the flag and Kathy Smyth to say a prayer.

The mayor called for the approval of the minutes of March 8, 2021. Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Councilman Jones seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Mayor Beasley stated everyone has a copy of Engineer Royals’ departmental reports. Ms. Royals stated everything was in her report.

Councilman Jones stated he spoke with a resident on Reid Loop that is complaining about the security light being too bright that was recently installed at her neighbors’ residence. The electric department made adjustments to the angle of the light when the resident originally complained. Councilman Jones asked Attorney Jones if the city should remove the light after already offering the service to them. Attorney Jones stated that he has spoken to the resident, Mrs. Eileen Lee; the Engineer; the Mayor; and the Electric Department supervisor about the issue. Attorney Jones stated that he understands the city offers three different types of security lights. The one that was put in at this particular location is the brightest and not used as much in residential areas but probably more because the cost is higher than other security lights. Mrs. Lee has expressed multiple reasons for complaining about the light. The last of which is because her husband suffers from Alzheimer’s and has some problems because of the brightness of the light. Attorney Jones told her he would bring her concerns to the council so they could discuss it. Councilman Jones stated that Mr. Burgans has a pole barn with equipment and wants something bright for security purposes. Councilman Jones stated he rode through the area a few nights ago and verified that the lights are not shining directly toward the house. Therefore, he sees no reason to get involved. The council was in agreement to take no action.

The mayor called on the city clerk for the administrative report. Routine work was performed.

Mayor Beasley stated everyone had a copy of the chief’s report. Since the last meeting, the police department had 277 calls of service including building checks. The department made over 73 traffic stops, wrote 27 citations and over 46 warnings. The department made 4 misdemeanor and 1 felony arrests. There were 2 animal control calls since the last council meeting. The chief reported the two new cars have been delivered and one was parked outside City Hall earlier for the council to look at but has already moved on now. The Police Department is very grateful and thanked the council.

The mayor stated he spoke with Mrs. Kathryn at the library this week about a project. There has been a $10,000 donation to the library from the Jackson family in honor of Jack & Bobbie Jackson. Those funds will be used to build a butterfly garden between the library and the EMA office, repaint a mural inside the library, and place a picture of Jack & Bobbie Jackson in the library.

Mayor Beasley stated everyone has a copy of Mr. Neal’s report. Mr. Neal stated he will advise the council at the next council meeting about the status of the engine that did not pass the annual pump test. Jack’s is scheduled for a health inspection on April 9th. This is not an opening date but a building inspection to start occupancy. The mayor asked Mr. Neal to thank them for putting the gravel and slag down to keep the mud out of Mrs. King’s driveway and also for moving the equipment. Councilwoman Smyth stated she would like to thank Mr. Neal for his action on the Petrey Highway situation.

The mayor stated he and Judge Tate met with Mayor Sullivan this morning in Brantley about a possible grant through the State of Alabama but will have a report on that at the next meeting. We have a meeting with Mr. Barfoot in the near future. This Thursday at 2:00 p.m., Barry Moore will be at First Citizens Bank and the mayor encouraged all the council to attend if possible.

Mayor Beasley presented the request from Chad Turner on behalf of the Crenshaw County Rec Club for the Annual Crawfish Tournament at the Crenshaw County Recreational Club on April 24, 2021. Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the Annual Crawfish Tournament at the Crenshaw County Recreational Club on April 24, 2021. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Next, the mayor presented the request from Dennis Bega on behalf of The Squared Circle Pizzeria for a Family Fun Day/Easter Egg Hunt at Turner Park on April 3, 2021. Councilman Smith made a motion to approve the Family Fun Day/Easter Egg Hunt at Turner Park on April 3, 2021. Councilman Billings seconded the motion and all was in favor.

Mayor Beasley presented the request from Sherry Prevett on behalf of 13 on Fifth Antiques & Collectibles for the Annual Spring Fling to be held on 5th Street on April 3, 2021. After some discussion, Councilwoman Smyth made a motion to approve the 5th Annual Spring Fling event. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and all was in favor.

The mayor stated everyone has a copy of the bids for the sale of used surplus equipment that was opened Tuesday, March 16, 2021. The highest bidders were as follows:

* 2003 Chevrolet Silverador 1500 W Nolan Beasley $1,483.00
* 1999 Dodge Ram 1500 Andy Tomlin $ 875.00
* Kubota 21 HP 60” Zero Turn Andy Tomlin $ 830.00
* Bobcat 37HP 61” Zero Turn Paul Baker $2,001.00

After some discussion, Councilman Jones made a motion to accept the highest bid on all four surplus property equipment. Councilman Billings seconded the motion and all was in favor.

Engineer Royals stated she was planning to list the surplus garbage truck and digger/derrick truck on GovDeals this week.

Mayor Beasley called on Mr. Wayne Carter to discuss his complaint about the traffic from Luverne School on First Avenue and 6th Street. Mr. Carter thanked the council for allowing him speak today. Mr. Carter discussed speaking with Chief Johnson about the traffic and writing him several letters. Mr. Carter stated he is not concerned with the normal school traffic but there are 6 to 10 cars and trucks that race their engines with loud mufflers leaving the school at all hours during school time and after school. Mr. Carter discussed the latest incident on March 9th at approximately 2:30 p.m. involving two vehicles drag racing from the four way stop at the school to the speed bump on W 6th Street. Mr. Carter stated he is asking the mayor and council to see that the law is enforced around the school for the noise and the speeding. The chief stated he keeps an officer at the school when he can but can’t keep someone there all day. The chief stated that based on the video that was pulled from the school, Mr. Carter was correct about the racing that he reported. However, both students were called in along with their parents and the action has been taken care of. The chief stated everything that has been brought to his attention that they have been fortunate enough to be present for has been handled. The mayor stated that there needs to be better communication. We need to enforce the law to the best of our ability. Two police officers cannot be everywhere but we could spend a little more time there just before school starts and do a drive thru on an unmarked car around 10:30 a.m. when the students are released to go to LBW. Chief Johnson stated they have put an unmarked at the armory but he is not there every day. Chief Johnson introduced Officer Carmichael stating that he is the officer who works the school. Officer Carmichael stated he has spoken to all the kids that Mr. Carter is referring to. There are two students who have been written tickets for loud pipes at least twice. Officer Carmichael stated he has reduced the noise and radios significantly and confirms that he cannot even hear it when he is directing traffic in the mornings. Officer Carmichael stated the two students racing were contacted along with their parents and confirmed that one of the students’ mother took his vehicle from him but is not sure what the other parent did. The mayor stated we are fortunate to have a friendly little city where 90 percent of the citizens follow the law. We don’t understand how blessed we are until you move off to another city. The mayor stated he would love to see us do a little better on our communications on that hot spot at Luverne High School and would be glad to sit down to talk with either party to see if we can curb this situation.

The mayor then moved on to the discussion of the speed bump on South Woodford Avenue. Councilwoman Dawson stated she would like to thank Chief Johnson for putting the traffic control device on South Woodford Avenue. Councilwoman Dawson stated she asked Mr. Demarcus Searight and Deneshia Mency to attend because they submitted the petition requesting the speed bump to help with problems with speeding and racing. Mr. Searight discussed cars speeding through his neighborhood all day, every day and racing at night approximately 10:00 p.m. and later. Ms. Mency stated cars, people, dogs and children’s toys have been hit. Mr. Searight stated they have a two year old and a seven year old who like to play outside. The chief stated that Councilwoman Dawson’s request for the speed control device was his first notification of the issue but that he would have an officer patrol the area more. Councilwoman Dawson thought a speed bump would be ideal. Mr. Searight has children and we don’t want anyone else’s child to get hit. Councilman Jones recommended Councilwoman Dawson to get with the engineer and chief of police to come up with a solution of how they want to handle it and report back to the council. The council was in agreement.

Councilwoman Dawson stated Ryan McGhee had brought a paper to her with issues regarding placement of a trailer on the dead end of Joseph Avenue. Mr. McGhee stated his family has three lots on Joseph Ave totaling more than 1 acre. Mr. McGhee stated that he is aware that someone else previously moved a trailer onto another lot without finding out the proper procedures and would like to know the correct process. Mr. McGhee was directed to contact the City Clerk for zoning laws.

Editor, Christy Johnson, asked for a status update of the park board. Councilman Billings stated we are in the process of establishing an advisory committee. Attorney Jones sent a letter to use as a template and letters were sent to the previous park board members asking them if they would continue to serve. They should receive the letters today or tomorrow. The mayor stated once the advisory board process is complete, the board will make an assessment of how the park and recreation department is operating. The board will then bring their information they gather to the city council and it will be up to the city council to decide how to proceed.

Councilman Billings stated he would like to congratulate the AMEA academic scholarship recipients from our area: Will Davis, Lillian Marchand, Madison Reynolds and Daniel Tranum. I am proud for them. Also, there is hope for the people racing through Woodford. I myself have been pulled over by Mr. Jimmy Dawson when I was growing up for racing my motorcycle through there and he spoke to my father. A 6:00 a.m. community service project on a Saturday morning after a Friday night football game will make you rethink priorities like that.

Councilman Billings made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Jones seconded the motion.

Meeting was adjourned.