COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF LUVERNE

June 13, 2022

The City of Luverne Council met in regular session on June 13, 2022 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

Eddie Billings, Councilman

Mike Jones, Attorney

William Neal, Building Inspector

Lee Simmons, Park Director

Margie Gomillion, Clerk

Absent:

Elliott Jones, Councilman

Visitors:

Jeff Strowd Robyn Snellgrove Steve Defee

Merrill Sport

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

The mayor called for the approval of the minutes of May 9, 2022. Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Mayor Beasley stated under unfinished and old business we have some unfinished business concerning the Crenshaw County Lake. The mayor stated he has talked with Jonathan Brown and Mr. Jones has also spoken with him. We got word today they are going to drain the lake in October and restock. We need to discuss if the city wants to get out of the county lake business or not. Mayor Beasley stated from his understanding from Mr. Brown with the new tax the governor has proposed for park improvements in the State of Alabama they would be able to take the lake back over. The state is willing to take it back. It will probably take about two months to drain it and another month to fill it back up before they restock it. The mayor asked the council to think about it. When Lee Simmons gets to the meeting I will get him to comment and see where the council wants to go with this.

The mayor stated Councilwoman Smyth brought some information from Troy Hudson on a sidewalk project. Councilwoman Smyth stated recently there was a meeting with the Department of Transportation (DOT). Their representatives came and discussed the different projects around town. This is a TAP grant that has been in the DOT hopper for two years and was not funded. The original grant that’s been in for two years was for sidewalks on First Avenue. We discussed what might be an alternative to a better project if we are going to apply for grant funds again. We talked about sidewalks along Glenwood Road from U.S. Hwy 331 to LBWCC. They thought this would be a better project. Of course they can’t guarantee that will be funded either, but perhaps would be a better project. It is a 20% match for the city. This project is approximately a half mile longer than the First Ave project for about $50,000 more. Mr. Hudson just needs approval to submit the application if the council is in agreement. Councilman Billings stated there is a lot of foot traffic on the Glenwood Road. Councilman Billings stated he would be in favor if we can find the funding to match our percentage and asked if any of it could be done in-kind. Councilwoman Smith stated there can be no in-kind. It is cash match only. The mayor stated he thought it would be a good idea to look at the money before we give Mr. Hudson a go ahead. Councilwoman Smyth stated the deadline is at the end of the month. The mayor asked Councilwoman Smyth to let Mr. Hudson know we will discuss this at the next council meeting. Councilwoman Dawson asked how the audit with Jackson Thornton is coming along. The clerk stated we have given them 90-95% of everything they wanted and Brock is getting the remainder of it to them this week.

Mayor Beasley called on the city clerk for the administrative report. Routine work was performed.

The mayor called everyone’s attention to the chief’s report. Since the last meeting, the police department had 265 calls for service not including building checks. The department made over 41 traffic stops, wrote 32 citations and gave 9 warnings. The department made 10 misdemeanor and 2 felony arrest. There were 10 animal control calls since the last meeting. Several of the complaints have been animals that people have moved away and left.

Mayor Beasley called on Lee Simmons to discuss the county pond. Mr. Simmons stated Mr. Brown called him this afternoon and stated they are going to close the lake in October. They will drain the pond and I’m not sure how long it will take to restock. They haven’t given me a time for what all they are going to do. I know they are going to work on the drain pipe. In my opinion, for the seven years that the city has ran the lake I think the city has actually went in the hole with it. You have a couple of months out of the year with a good season. I know we like to keep it open for people to have something to do but I think it’s just a burden to the city because we are paying employees at the lake, our guys have to go and I have to go. We have to keep it up and 90% of our repairs come from the lake. It’s nothing the guys are doing its just rough down there. When they give us a date we will shut down until they tell us to open it back up. Mr. Simmons stated from his understanding they are trying to get everything where you pay online. The state will reimburse us for the upkeep if we decide to keep it. The mayor stated if we are interested in keeping it up we could submit a bid to the State of Alabama and they will decide whether we would get reimbursed for upkeep or if they would hire an outside entity to come in to do the mowing, picking up, etc. Councilwoman Dawson stated she thought the lake would do better if it was marketed. After further discussion, Councilman Billings made a motion for the State to take over the county pond effective September 30, 2022. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and all was in favor.

The mayor stated we were able to get the fireworks with the help of the Town of Brantley and the county commission with Mr. Neal putting it together. Mr. Simmons stated Pepsi is doing a banner for the fireworks and it will be put at the road at Turner Park. Mr. Simmons reported the 6U is runner up in the district tournament and will advance to the state tournament in Eufaula on June 24th. We will host the boys 8U, 10U and 12U starting Thursday afternoon with 16 team’s total. The girls start Thursday night in Troy. Councilman Billings stated Lee catches a lot of calls about broken toilet seats, toilet paper, trash and things are under his control but beyond his control. I would like to commend him for the work he does for the park. I appreciate the fact anytime there has been an issue you have been right on top of it. I appreciate the fact you’ve made it run pretty smoothly out there this year and keeping it looking as good as it can possibly look for the age that it is.

Mayor Beasley called on Steve Defee to report on the airport. Mr. Defee stated we just got in a new shipment last week of 4,000 gallons of 100 low led aviation gas. The price went up considerably. We will make $4,000 off of it. Still won’t be enough to buy another load should the price continue to increase. It has been a real boost for our airport because I get calls every day about it. They won’t stop here if we don’t have gas which also helps with the paint company. Councilwoman Smyth stated there is an open house at the airport in Greenville tomorrow from 4:30-6:00 p.m., for the community to come out to learn a little bit more about their airport and grant funding. Mr. Defee stated we’ve hashed out some grants before with the state but they want us to generate a little bit more revenue with it before they do anything. The fence issue is still the biggest eyesore when you drive up. The last grant that was proposed was around $30,000 to redo the fence all the way across the front with a sliding gate that has a keyless entry.

The mayor stated he spoke with Mrs. Kathyrn at the library and everything is going well. The summer reading program has really kicked into high gear with a lot of kids.

Mayor Beasley stated everyone has a copy of Mr. Neal’s report. Councilman Smith reported we are looking at possibly taking one truck out of service for probably half a day to have new tires mounted. Mr. Neal stated he is sending out letters and getting some responses from people about cleaning up yards and following up on complaints.

The mayor stated under new business there are some problems with drainage issues on Hawkins Avenue and Woodford Avenue. People are throwing out trash and it’s getting in our sewer lines and drainage ditches. Mayor Beasley stated he didn’t know what to do other than maybe make our community aware.

The mayor presented the request from Beth Rogers on behalf of the Living Water Coffee House/3 in 1 for the 3 in 1 Summer Ride at Turner Park on August 13, 2022. Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the 3 in 1 Summer Ride at Turner Park on August 13, 2022. Councilwoman Smyth seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Councilman Billings stated he has some business that has just came up for the Park and Rec that he needed some guidance on. There are two vendors in town that want to bring a trailer out to the park during the district tournament and sell their products. They’ve had some folks around the county that have asked them to do that. They are willing to pay us a fee but didn’t state what the fee is and willing to pay us a percentage. I don’t think it’s a bad idea but we start playing Thursday. I don’t know if we have time to get all of that solved. I’d much rather say no and get us on something stable before going forward if we wanted to do that along those lines but whatever the council feels is in the best interest. After further discussion, Councilman Smith made a motion to not do it this year to have time to set forth and get the Parks and Rec Advisory Committee to come up with a policy and implement it next year. Councilwoman Dawson seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Councilman Smith stated the houses we are having trouble with that we have sent letter after letter to just go ahead, clean it up and assess the property taxes. Mr. Jones stated Mr. Neal needed to get with him to see exactly what notices we need to give. The mayor stated Mr. Neal will work with Mr. Jones on a case by case basis.

Councilwoman Smyth stated we are still having trouble with an 18 wheeler that’s parking on Jeffcoat Street. It was blocking school buses from time to time and blocking other driveways. Mr. Neal stated that is a police department issue. There is a parking ordinance. Also, there is a curbing issue in front of Dot Sport’s house where they put in their own curb and there shouldn’t be a curb. Councilwoman Smyth stated Brock Flynn discussed it with her. Mr. Jones stated Brock spoke with him about this and I told him what to do which was to tell them to move the curb. Councilwoman Smyth stated they had that conversation verbally but didn’t know if we need to follow up with anything in writing. Mr. Jones stated to tell Mr. Flynn to get with him. Councilwoman Smyth stated also there is a question about everywhere I went today I saw signs about being closed for Juneteenth. Is that something we want to consider for a city holiday for Juneteenth? It is Federal with the post office, the bank and the county is closed for Juneteenth. After further discussion, Councilwoman Smyth made a motion for Juneteenth Holiday to be observed by the City of Luverne this year and will be done on a year by year basis. Councilman Billings seconded the motion and all was in favor.

Councilman Billings made a motion to go into executive session for the discussion of consideration for real estate. Councilwoman Dawson seconded the motion and all was in favor. The council went into executive session at 6:25 p.m. Councilman Billings made a motion to come out of executive session. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved. The council came out of executive session at 6:49 p.m.

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

Meeting was adjourned.