COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF LUVERNE

September 26, 2022

The City of Luverne Council met in regular session on September 26, 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

Elliott Jones, Councilman

Eddie Billings, Councilman

Margie Gomillion, Clerk

William Neal, Building Inspector

Mike Jones, Attorney

Visitors:

Steve Defee

Brock Flynn

David Hughes

Mayor Beasley called the meeting to order. The mayor called on Kip Smith to lead the pledge of allegiance to the flag and Steve Defee to say a prayer.

The mayor called for the approval of the minutes of September 12, 2022. Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Councilman Jones seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Mayor Beasley called for any unfinished/old business. Mr. Jones stated one of the properties given to him by Mr. Neal to write located at 96 E. 6th Street has been unsuccessful by two attempts to serve by certified mail in Dothan, Alabama. I can have someone to go and hand deliver it, but before I incurred that expense I wanted to get the council’s approval. After some discussion, the mayor asked the council to let him contact the owner to see if she would like to donate the property to the city before any more action is taken. Mr. Jones stated the rest of the properties have either been addressed or is being addressed.

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

Mayor Beasley called on recreation. Councilman Billings stated the park committee is still working on coming up with guidelines for the park. I would like to thank the clerk’s office for getting me a lot of useful information.

Mr. Steve Defee stated everything was good at the airport.

The mayor stated everything was well at the library.

Mayor Beasley stated everyone has a copy of Mr. Neal’s report. Mr. Neal discussed there being a lot of development and renovations in several locations.

Councilwoman Smyth reported at the CMO training last week with the League of Municipalities they brought up a medical cannabis approval or rejection from the towns and cities throughout the state. This isn’t anything for us to take up tonight but to consider either the acceptance or rejection of having the cultivation, transportation or processing of medical grade cannabis in our town vicinity.

The mayor called on Mr. Davis Hughes, Administrator of Crenshaw County Hospital, to give an update on the hospital. Mr. Hughes stated he would like to start coming to the meetings to give a general update because this is a big business in your town. Mr. Hughes stated we have went to the county commission and are asking them for some help because we’ve had a couple of hard months. We are struggling to make payroll but we are starting to pick up a little bit now but not where we want to be. This business is tough right now. Everybody is struggling right now if you’ve seen the news. Mr. Hughes discussed areas they are struggling in with expenses and things they are trying to do to increase revenue. We are trying to address the short term to get us to the long run. Mr. Hughes stated we are asking the city if there is anything you can do to help out. The hospital will be more than happy to give the city as much information as needed for that. The mayor asked in lean times like this is there anywhere in the operations or employment you can make cuts to work with us. We have already donated over $340,000 in utilities and we are a small city. Mr. Hughes discussed angles they are looking at to reduce the payroll and grow revenue verses cutting people. Councilman Jones stated he has spoken to Mr. Hughes several times about this and spoken to some of the budget committee members. I have budgeted a line for CCH utility forgiveness in the amount of $145,000 which is about the average of the last 12 months of utilities. We discussed letting them have a utility forgiveness on the bill for 12 months. So at the 13 month they would have a 2.8% addition to their bill for 35 months and a 2% addition for the 36th month that would recoup the tax payer’s dollars back a 100%. This way we could recoup it and also help out our hospital. We have it in the budget and the budget is balanced. Councilman Smith discussed possible legal documentation between the hospital and the city for this. The mayor thanked Mr. Hughes for his presentation. Mayor Beasley stated we will discuss it and get back with you. Mr. Jones stated if you adopt the budget this will be part of it.

Mayor Beasley presented an event request from Alexis L. Hill for the H. Brothers 2nd Annual car show at the old armory for November 12, 2022. Councilman Jones made a motion to approve H. Brothers 2nd Annual car show at the old armory for November 12, 2022 Councilwoman Dawson seconded the motion and all was in favor.

The mayor presented an event request from Kathy Smyth on behalf of the City of Luverne, Chamber of Commerce for the Friendliest City Festival at Douglas Park for October 29, 2022. Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the Friendliest City Festival at Douglas Park for October 29, 2022 Councilman Jones seconded the motion and the vote is as follows:

Yea: Betty Dawson Abstained: Kathy Smyth

Kip Smith

Elliot Jones

Eddie Billings

The motion carried.

Mayor Beasley stated Steve Defee’s appointment for the Airport Authority will expire. Councilman Smith made a motion to re-appoint Steve Defee to the Airport Authority. Councilman Jones seconded the motion and all was in favor.

The mayor stated that the next agenda item is the Mayor Pro-tem appointment. Councilman Billings made a motion to appoint Councilman Elliott Jones as Mayor Pro-tem to become effective at the first meeting in October. Councilwoman Dawson seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Yea: Betty Dawson Abstained: Elliott Jones

Kip Smith

Kathy Smyth

Eddie Billings

The motion carried.

Councilman Jones reported the Water Board voted to approve and recommend the Jackson Thornton plan of action be adopted with an amendment on the sewer side instead of going from 3,000 gallons to 1,500 gallons go from 3,000 gallons to 1,000 gallons because we only bill in thousands of gallons. If this is adopted tonight I have an amended water board budget I will bring back before the end of the calendar year once we get this in place for them to adopt. At the end of the three years, they have already agreed to come back and do another study to see where we are at. AMEA will pay for that again at that time at no cost to us. Councilman Smith stated we will be at zero again in three years and still have no money. The water and sewer department is starving to death and need equipment. Councilman Jones stated in the amended budget we have addressed that. One thing we talked about with the amended budget in place is to look at a bond to get all the equipment in that we need. In the amended budget there is monies to service a bond to do that. Attorney Jones stated that part of what they figured to get us to zero was capital outlays every year for each department. So those capital outlays were figured in to what they came up with to get you to zero. There are a million dollars for the three departments every year figured in there for capital outlays. Once you get to zero your right but figured in that is a million dollars a year of capital outlay. Councilman Jones discussed he has already spoken with a bondsman. After further discussion, Councilman Jones made a motion to adopt the Jackson Thornton recommendation with the changes the Water Board requested. Councilwoman Dawson seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Mayor Beasley called for the approval of all the 2022-23 budgets. We have a recommendation from the Electric Board and Water Board to approve the budgets. After some discussion, Councilman Billings made a motion to adopt all the 2022-23 budgets as presented. Councilman Jones seconded the motion and all was in favor.

Attorney Jones stated those recommendations will require an ordinance to change those rates. It will not become effective until you adopt the ordinance and it runs in the paper.

Councilwoman Dawson stated our team is working to get the marker approved for the Crenshaw County Training School.

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

Meeting was adjourned.