COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF LUVERNE

January 23, 2023

The City of Luverne Council met in regular session on January 23, 2023 at 5:30 p.m., in the City Hall Building. The following members were present:

Mayor Pro-tem Elliott Jones

Betty Dawson, Councilwoman

Kip Smith, Councilman

Kathy Smyth, Councilwoman

Eddie Billings, Councilman

Mike Jones, Attorney

Margie Gomillion, Clerk

Mike Johnson, Chief

Absent:

Mayor Ed Beasley

Visitors:

Scott Pierce Steve Defee Kirk Alsbrooks

Jeff Strowd Christopher White

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

The mayor pro-tem called for the approval of the minutes of January 9, 2023. Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro-tem stated under unfinished/old business Mr. Scott Pierce with Frazer Lanier is here tonight to give us a little information about Ordinance 23-01 approval of General Obligation Warrants, Series 2023 and to answer any questions. Mr. Pierce stated the bond issue will close on Thursday. It is a $2,665,000 bond issue for 10 years. The interest rate is under 4%. The payment with this and the 2019 bond issue will be under $400,000. David Ringelstein is the bond attorney who sent the documents for the ordinance. It is basically a standard general obligation bond ordinance that says you are borrowing the money and you are going to pay it back. It was moved by Councilmember Kip Smith that all rules and regulations which, unless suspended, would prevent the immediate consideration and adoption of the said Ordinance No. 23-01 be suspended and that unanimous consent to the immediate consideration and adoption of the said ordinance be given. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Kathy Smyth and on roll call was unanimously adopted, those answering aye being:

Ayes: Betty Dawson

Kip Smith

Kathy Smyth

Elliott Jones

Edward W. Billings, Jr.

Nays: None

The Mayor Pro Tempore declared the motion unanimously carried.

After the said Ordinance No. 23-01 had been discussed and considered in full by the Council, it was moved by Councilmember Edward Billings that the said ordinance be now placed upon its final passage and adopted. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Kip Smith. The question being put as to the adoption of the said motion and the final passage of the said ordinance, the roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Betty Dawson

Kip Smith

Kathy Smyth

Elliott Jones

Edward W. Billings, Jr.

Nays: None

The Mayor Pro Tempore declared the motion unanimously carried and the said Ordinance No. 23-01 passed and adopted as introduced. (See attached). Councilman Smith stated he spoke with the mayor today and wanted it in the minutes that he was not 100% backing the $2,600,000 but the council had already approved it.

The mayor pro-tem called for the administrative report. Routine work was performed. Mayor pro-tem stated the clerk passed out paperwork to everyone showing that through ADECA we are receiving $500,000 for the water & sewer improvements for Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company, $400,000 to replace the existing sewer collection main with new 8-inch PVC sewer mains and street paving on Jeffcoat Street and $1,579,751.88 from ATRIP-II for intersection improvements on US-331 (SR-9) at Glenwood Road and Mt. Ida Road intersections.

Mayor Pro-tem called everyone’s attention to the chief’s report. Since the last meeting, the police department had 158 calls for service, not including building checks. The department made 27 traffic stops, wrote 17 citations and gave 10 warnings. The department made 4 misdemeanor and 1 felony arrests. There was 7 animal control calls since the last meeting. We had an incident at the home basketball game on January 20, 2023 at the Luverne High School gym. This incident involved several students, fans and parents from Luverne and Highland schools. There were several minor injury’s including one officer. This resulted in several arrest and more to come. This incident is still under investigation.

The mayor pro-tem called on Councilman Billings for a report for the park. Councilman Billings stated registration begins tonight and will have one more registration on the 28th. There will be no late registration, so if you know anyone who is involved and would like to play tell them they need to get to the park and sign up.

Mr. Steve Defee stated there are no updates for the airport at this time just waiting on the survey.

Mayor pro-tem called on Councilman Smith to report on the fire/rescue. Councilman Smith stated as you all know we laid Troop to rest this past Friday and that was a hard thing. I’ve been trying to do some of the work he did but he did a lot for the Fire Department and the city. We had an 18 wheeler detach from its trailer at the north red light today.

The mayor pro-tem stated the mayor is out recovering from a procedure. We will all keep him in our prayers.

Mayor pro-tem stated under new business there is a vacancy in the Board of Housing Commissioners to fill the remainder of William Neal’s term through 03-19-23. Councilman Smith nominated Mack Williams for the Board of Housing Commissioners appointment to fill the remainder of William Neal’s seat. Councilwoman Smyth seconded the motion. Councilman Smith made a motion to close nominations. Councilwoman Smyth seconded the motion. Councilman Smith made a motion to appoint Mack Williams to the Board of Housing Commissioners to serve the remainder of William Neal’s term. Councilwoman Smyth seconded the motion. All was in favor of appointing Mack Williams to the Board of Housing Commissioners.

The mayor pro-tem stated he had a retired Veteran to stop by my office this morning. He mentioned one of the clasp on the flag at Douglas Park had broken and the chief fixed it. He also mentioned that the flag was not the correct size for the flagpole. He wanted to know if we could get a proper size flag for that flagpole. I have priced the flags that are 5x8 and I have found one on Amazon for about $40.00. The council was in agreement to purchase the flag to replace the one at Douglas Park.

Mayor pro-tem discussed a request for an event to be held on the Airport Road at the Tom Harbin Center from Mr. Steve Defee to have the annual Swamp Supper Men’s Ministry. The Swamp Supper Men’s Ministry will be held on February 25, 2023 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. After some discussion, Councilman Billings made a motion to approve the Swamp Supper Men’s Ministry to be held on February 25, 2023 on the Airport Road. Councilman Smith seconded the motion and all was in favor.

Councilwoman Dawson stated there were a total of five pints donated in the blood drive. I received a letter thanking us for our help. We will do it again probably around the last of the year. Councilwoman Dawson reported she noticed a street sign was down on Rutledge Street where you turn at Dawson Street. Mr. Defee stated he would look into it. Councilwoman Dawson discussed some streets that need water pipes replaced and paving.

Councilman Smith stated I think we need to look at doing a resolution for William Neal to honor him for the hard work he did for the city through the building inspection, Fire Department and Police Department. He was a man behind the scenes that deserves to be put up on that pedestal. I think it would be an honor to the family to have something from the city recognizing him for his hard work. Also, I have talked to the mayor a little but it’s been a little while about also with losing Mr. Neal we are going to need to look at finding someone to do the building inspecting work. I would like the mayor here when we discuss it, but I think we need to look at finding a city manager who can also interpret these building codes. We have got to look at something temporarily. Councilwoman Smyth stated she had an experience this week where there is a builder that has been contracted to build a house here in town. They can’t get started because we don’t have a city inspector to come out. They are going to the clerk’s office and asking about these things. We don’t have an answer for it right yet but that’s housing in Luverne that we need badly. There is some urgency behind this whether we get someone to contract temporarily or maybe there is another answer. The council discussed maybe getting someone from Troy or Greenville to see if they have somebody that could help us on a part-time basis until we can do something.

Councilwoman Smyth stated at the last meeting we briefly discussed the tank maintenance plan. Councilwoman Smyth asked if it would be ok if we set that presentation for the next council meeting which is February 13th and invite the Water Board members so we can get all the same information at the same time. The council was in agreement.

Councilman Billings stated CCA had their deer hunt this weekend. I had the privilege of guiding several different hunters through town and eating lunch with several of them. They all commented complementary on our town. Councilman Billings stated that was a great thing for you guys sitting back there. You are the ones who keep this place looking great, working and function great. I want to thank you for that. Everyone I talked to thought we had a great small town. Everything looked good and ran good. The police were visible. Thank you very much. Attorney Jones stated he would like to add that there were a couple that were in their mid-70’s and they drove down here from Wisconsin. They were here over the weekend. They have already called back this morning to come back next year. They said the town and the people couldn’t have been nicer and that it was just the greatest place. They couldn’t have been more complementary of Luverne and the people here.

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

Meeting was adjourned.