COUNCIL MEETING

CITY OF LUVERNE

May 8, 2023

The City of Luverne Council met in regular session on May 8 2023 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

Mike Johnson, Chief

Margie Gomillion, Clerk

Visitors:

Steve Defee Billy Crumpton Anita West

Jeff Strowd Chad Sutton Sommer Cornelius

Terrence Smith Michael Kilpatrick Ellen Cornelius

Michelle Sutton

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

The mayor called for the approval of the minutes of April 24, 2023. Councilman Jones made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Councilwoman Dawson seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

Mayor Beasley called on Councilman Jones to present the AMEA scholarships to the high school students. The mayor stated we have a good crowd here tonight and glad you could be here. Congratulations to the recipients. Councilman Jones stated it is an honor to be able to stand here tonight to award these scholarships on behalf of AMEA, City of Luverne, Mayor and Council, and the Luverne Electric Board. I would like to stress there were 138 applications and only 29% were funded. The 29% was not agreed upon simply by academic excellence, but also because of your strong character, integrity and work ethic. Academic excellence will open doors for you, but character, integrity and work ethic is what makes you successful in life. Councilman Jones presented the AMEA Scholarships to Terrence DeAndre Smith, Luverne High School and Sommer Elisabeth Cornelius, Crenshaw Christian Academy. Councilman Jones stated he also wanted to recognize two students who were not able to be here tonight due to circumstances beyond their control. Micaiah Grace June, Luverne High School and Mackenzie Renea Daniel, Luverne High School.

The mayor called on Chad Sutton to do his presentation for the LBW CDL training course. Mr. Sutton stated he is the director of the Workforce Development at LBW. A year ago this past February the federal requirements for CDL changed. It is now a competency based credential. The training is in two parts. It’s called the Entry Level Driver Training. The federal government requires you to go through a theory part which is a course we offer online through the community college system. Once the theory is complete the students will then get a learners permit from an ALEA office. Then they are ready for the hands on training. I employ two different trainers who were former law enforcement officers who do the hands on range road theory. This portion is scheduled for a week but typically takes four days. Our pass rated is 99.8%. Participants will schedule the CDL exam with an ALEA office after the training is complete. We train individuals in their vehicles. LBW doesn’t have a vehicle. It’s been very successful and we just want to offer it to the City of Luverne and Crenshaw County. There is zero cost to this. The community college system received a grant from the state for several years. So they reimburse me for my expenses and it cost our tax payers nothing to go through this training.

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

The mayor called on Councilman Billings for a recreation report. Councilman Billings stated we are in the last two weeks of the season. The selection of all stars will be this week. Everything has been working smooth at the park. We are probably averaging about $1,000 concession each night. It has been very clean every time I’ve been out there. If you get a chance tell David and Merrill they have done a really good job.

Mayor Beasley stated he spoke with Mrs. Kathyrn this week. They are doing really well with the summer reading program. They are also doing some arts and crafts.

The mayor called on Councilman Smith to report on fire/rescue. Councilman Smith reported this Wednesday morning the fire department will start their annual service of vehicles at Hudson’s. The last we heard on the new fire truck will possibly be December.

Mayor Beasley called on Councilwoman Smyth to report on Economic Development. Councilwoman Smyth stated the AMEA grant has been submitted and indications are that payment will be forthcoming in the next week or so.

The mayor asked the clerk to read the chief’s report. Since the last meeting, the police department had 164 calls for service not including building checks. The department has made 31 traffic stops, has written 30 citations and gave 1 warning. The department made 3 misdemeanor and 2 felony arrests. There has been 4 animal control calls since the last meeting.

Mayor Beasley called on Steve Defee to report on the airport. The mayor stated the chief has information for Mr. Defee. The chief stated he spoke with Debra Crowell about the property at the airport and she is not in a position to do anything because no one actually owns it yet. No one is executor of that estate. I told her that if they didn’t clean the property up the city would put a lien on the property. Mr. Defee stated the Airport Board is meeting tomorrow night and he would discuss the property. The fuel is $6.60 a gallon.

The mayor stated we have a pile of cardboard going into dumpsters. That amounts to us paying Coffee County landfill tonnage for the cardboard we are hauling off. If we could do a little better job gathering the cardboard we could be selling it to make money instead of paying the landfill to dispose of it for us. Last week I got up with Mr. Crumpton because it was more than I could handle in the back of my pickup truck. He sent a ton and half truck out to pick up the cardboard. Everybody has Amazon boxes in their yard and a lot is going into solid waste. We provide a cardboard trailer for the citizens behind city hall, but they are still putting it in the hobo. If the council will provide me with a truck or a gas allowance I will keep picking the cardboard up. We got a new truck last year from an ADEM grant for our efforts to recycle cardboard. This year we are getting a fork lift from an ADEM grant. Councilman Smith suggested putting another cardboard trailer out and put a notice on the utility bill stating where they are located and ask the citizens to please use them and not put the cardboard in the dumpsters. Mr. Defee stated the grant for this year has already been closed out as far as the pickup issue, but maybe something additional that could be rewrote. I can reach out to our contact with ADEM. Councilman Billings stated he thought picking up the cardboard is a good idea, but I think it needs to be more comprehensive. People aren’t going to come to the middle of town to bring the boxes. I think we should look at doing more of a comprehensive thing if we are going to get a truck to pick it up. Put a publicity thing on not only utility bills, but social media and things along that line and say separate your cardboard boxes and on this day it will be picked up.

Mayor Beasley called on Anita West with the Luverne Senior Center to speak. Mrs. West discussed the center having a bank account with Truist Bank for the daily donation money that is deposited once a month. Truist Bank closed, so I closed out March and went to First Citizens Bank to open an account with the April Deposit. I was told I had to come to the city council meeting and get permission to use the city’s tax number to open the account. Councilman Smith made a motion to approve Anita West to open an account at First Citizens Bank for the Luverne Senior Center donations using the City of Luverne tax number. Councilwoman Dawson seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously approved. Mrs. West thanked the council for always supporting the program. We still have 68 meals coming in every day. If you know of anyone in need tell them to come by or call. We have a new vendor coming in July 1st that delivers food. I would like to invite you to May Day on May 25th at the Ag Center that is a county wide event partnered with the Crenshaw County Extension. We had this program last year and you supported us with a donation from each councilmember and mayor. We ask for your help again this year. After we finished the whole group last year we polled them. The whole entire county wanted to go back with us hosting it at the Ag Center instead of going to Troy. That means we get all the revenue for all the people coming in. We use a local restaurant to cater the meals. We try to keep all the monies we pay out for the prizes and stuff local to keep the money in the City of Luverne. Brantley and Dozier Center will participate. The last thing I have is Mary Dixon has been working with me on the Senior Citizen Program for six years now. Her term on the Senior Citizen Program which is a federal program that we participated in will end July 1st. I would like to ask the council to hire Mrs. Dixon for 20 hours a week at minimum wage. Councilman Jones has already put it in our budget. After some discussion, Councilman Jones made a motion to allow Anita West to hire Mary Dixon at $7.25 an hour for approximately 20 hours a week effective when the contract runs out. Councilman Billings seconded the motion and all was in favor.

Councilman Smith made a motion to prepare a resolution to present to the Crenshaw Christian Academy Softball team for being State Runner up. Councilman Jones second the motion and the vote was unanimously approved.

The chief stated there is some equipment and vehicles for the street and police department that need to be declared surplus. Councilman Jones made a motion to declare surplus all equipment and vehicles that need to be sold that is recommended by the chief. Councilman Billings seconded the motion and all was in favor.

Councilman Smith asked the chief if we set a day for the July 4th fireworks. The chief stated the clerk received an email from Casey Chambley to have the event on Saturday, July 1st.

Councilman Billings stated two of the girls on the Crenshaw Christian Academy softball team are playing in the all-star game. Abby Henderson who signed a full ride with Coastal Carolina and Tanna Singleton who is going to Auburn to be a Veterinarian.

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

Meeting was adjourned.