

-City of Liebenthal Council Minutes-

The Governing Body of the City of Liebenthal met in public hearing in the city building at 6:08 p.m. on July 14, 2025. Presiding was Mayor Darrell Warner, council members present were Barb Matal, Renee Legleiter, Stephanie Schmidt-Koerner, Bill Stark, Kathy Herrman, Clerk Beverly Stark, Water/Wastewater Operator (in Training) Darrell Matal, Jacobs representatives Shashi Kambhampati and Rajan Vasudevan, Beth Warren from KS Municipal Utilities, and Reuben Martin of Midwest Assistance Program, and Rush County Sheriff Mark Knowles. Residents present: Rhonda Matal, Jim Huenergarde, Mike Gross, Ben Rogers, Randy Conrad, Sharon Boese, and Galen Boese. Kelly Koerner arrived at 6:45.

Beth Warren introduced the Jacobs representatives and the Reverse Osmosis (RO) replacement project stating that the pre-application has been submitted for funding from the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for \$215,000 through the KS Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Shashi Kambhampati presented the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) which compared four solutions for replacing the RO units currently in use. The replacement of city RO units with new RO units was deemed to be the least expensive and most efficient method to meet state water quality requirements. The pre-application has been approved for 100% loan forgiveness. Further work will be completed to finalize this application with the addition of water meter replacement. Beth Warren, and the Jacobs representatives left the meeting at 7:09. After some discussion the city will move forward with engaging Jacobs to do the design in the Automated Meter Reading (AMR) project for use in the final application for SRF from KDHE.

The minutes of the meeting held June 9, 2025 were read. Renee Legleiter moved to approve the minutes as read, Kathy Herrman seconded, the vote was unanimous, motion passed.

Sheriff Mark Knowles presented "Identity Theft" booklets to all in attendance. The clerk has extra copies in the city office for anyone interested, and the public can obtain a copy at the Sheriff Department. The Sheriff department has had a "heavy" presence on Highway 183 recently attempting to slow speeders. He also described the new "Smart Trailer" or a mobile radar trailer the department is implementing soon. The Sheriff Department explained the Sheriff App which provides notifications of upcoming events.

Mayor Darrell Warner opened a discussion of the proposed 1.5% sales tax by explaining that our current water rates have not been increased in 13 years although city expenses to produce water have risen in some cases 300% and replacement RO units have increased 200%. The current water rates will cover our expenses in 2025 but will fail to do so in 2026. The 1.5% sales tax is an option to offset costs to residents by bringing in additional funds from non-residential consumers. Reuben Martin (MAP) listed the three options for a city to raise money to pay for expenses is increasing property taxes, raising city utility rates, and having a retail sales tax. Mr. Martin said the sales tax is a way to raise necessary funding from non-residential sources. To be clear, this tax will also impact residents buying food from restaurants or bars, a person buying a house in Liebenthal will pay taxes on the sale, buying a car from a resident in Liebenthal, paying for house repairs (materials are not included in this tax), all goods ordered on-line and delivered to Liebenthal, anyone buying fireworks, etc. It was noted that in previous city meeting minutes the clerk reported that this would be added to businesses within the city limits. To clarify: if the 1.5% sales tax is approved by residential vote in November 2025, the businesses within city limits will add 1.5% to the total of a sale, just as is already done with KS state tax of 6.5% for a total tax of 8.0% within city limits. (The clerk notes here that a 1.5% sales tax will result in the city receiving 15 cents on each \$10 purchase. Clarification can be found in state publication KS-1510 "KS State Sales Tax and Compensating Use Tax). Jim Huenergarde asked how much revenue can be raised with the proposed sales tax, the mayor said this is not known unless city businesses elect to give us their earnings information. A lengthy discussion followed with many matters not relating to the proposed sales tax and included water tower maintenance, hydrant flushing, sewer line flushing, untagged cars within the city limits, RO unit replacements done in 2012, and other subjects.

Clerk's Announcements: The city accountant has produced a proposed 2026 annual budget. Bev Stark asked the council to vote on the proposed increase to the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) citing a deadline of July 20, 2025. The clerk read the notice of increased revenue neutral rate (RNR) intent. Bill Stark moved to approve the action of increasing the RNR, Stephanie Schmidt-Koerner seconded, the vote tally was as follows: Kathy Herrman, Stephanie Schmidt-Koerner, Barb Matal, Renee Legleiter, Bill Stark and Darrell Warner voted to approve the increased RNR for 2026. There were no dissenting votes.

Old Business: The color chosen for the water tower is "Pond." The property located at 201 Main St. has been mown taking 10 hours to complete. Other properties needing mowing were discussed.

New Business: Proposed budgets were given to all council members. The council will table discussion of the budget to the August meeting to allow time for review. Bill Stark suggested that the council needs to discuss the budget with the city accountant, and asked the clerk to schedule a meeting with the accountant sometime before the next regular meeting, noting the need to discuss the city's next steps to procure an engineering team for the second portion of the SRF application. Reuben Martin noted that a "special meeting" must be called, as opposed to a work session.

City Utilities and Maintenance Updates: Kelly Koerner reported that the spraying and mowing have been completed to date, although the sewer pond may need to be sprayed again. Rhonda Matal met with KDHE representative Darrell Shippy for the 2-year inspection on July 2. The chlorine residuals are within acceptable levels. The water hydrants were flushed July 6.

Calendar / City Events: No pending events.

Approval and Payment of Bills: Stephanie Schmidt-Koerner moved to approve the bills as presented, Kathy Herrman seconded, the vote was unanimous, motion carried. The next meeting is August 11, 2025, at 6 p.m. in the city building. Renee Legleiter moved to adjourn the meeting, Barb Matal seconded, vote unanimous, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Mayor Darrell Warner

City Clerk Beverly Stark

RUSH COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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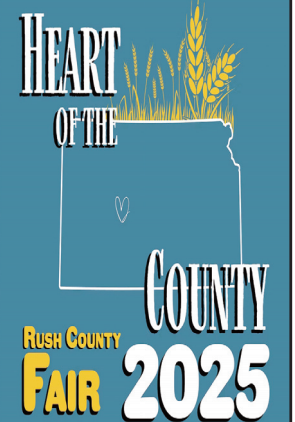
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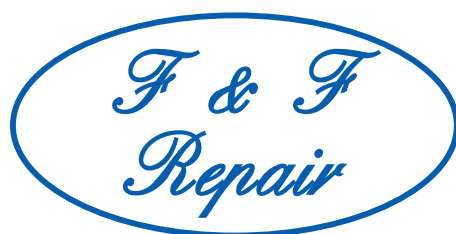
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