

La Cygne discusses one-cent sales tax

BY BRIAN KING
LINN COUNTY NEWS

The La Cygne City Council held its regular meeting March 4. Mayor Debra Wilson began with the mayor's comments. The city is accepting applications for lifeguards for the 2026 summer pool season. Applications can be found online and are available for pickup at City Hall. A town hall meeting is set to discuss, with the public, the upcoming 1 percent sales tax question. The meeting will be April 1 at the library from 5-7 p.m. Advertising for this meeting has been issued on Facebook. Clerk Jodi Wade asked the council to allow the City Hall doors to be closed to the public March 10-11 for staff to complete training on the new utility software. That was approved unanimously.

During public comment, Ben Shipley of 23052 W. 391st St. addressed the council in regard to his new home being built at that address. The house should be finished by April. Shipley asked the council to be added to the natural gas line. Mayor Wilson reminded the council that the previous year's council had set up a policy only a few months ago to no longer accept new taps on that line. It was brought up and discussed that one person who was already into the process before that policy was approved by the council, was grandfathered in and that would be the final tap allowed under the new policy.

The three council members present were Robert Sullivan, Kent Wade and Oscar Marino who are new to the council, and we're not members of the previous year's council that set the policy. Shipley asked if he may return to the next meeting when the other two members Ed Smith and Jerome Mitzner, who were absent, and were members of the previous year's council, were likely to be in attendance.

Wilson stated that he was welcome to come back and present his request again. However, the policy to not allow anymore taps was brought up with concerns by utilities officer Dan Nasalroad and the policy was set by the council for a reason. Therefore, there is no guarantee to Shipley for a different answer.

Chief Mathies presented a picture of the Semiquincentennial badges, purchased by the individual officers, to be worn in recognition of the United States 250th birthday. Officer Higgins was hired as a full-time police officer; he has been serving as a part-time officer. Higgins will attend academy March 30-July 10. Chief Mathies also presented the council with

two quotes for a remanufactured engine for the 2016 Dodge Ram. The original quote from New Century Dodge (Paola), as previously discussed at the last meeting in the amount of \$10,643, and a second quote from Superior Auto (Paola) in the amount of \$7,785.91. Mathies said that the local shops he had contacted were no longer performing heavy work, and an engine swap would fall under that category.

Mathies recommended the Superior Auto quote. After discussion, the council approved a motion to accept the Superior Auto quote in the amount of \$7,785.91. It was approved 2-1, with the lone vote of no coming from council member Kent Wade. Mathies also stated that Superior Auto quoted the front-end work needed on the Ram at \$750.

Mathies also presented the council with a purchase order for a Narc Ranger Spectrometer. Mathies demonstrated how this device worked and explained the need for the purchase. This device is capable of identifying substances in liquid and pills without those substances needing to be removed from their containers. This is a safety hazard faced by police currently, which exposes the officer doing the testing to the drug itself with the current testing method. With this device, the drug stays contained. It also prints out and emails the results.

"This device is battery operated and extremely mobile," Mathies said. This device was used in an ongoing case and proved helpful in identifying substances within liquids that may have otherwise gone undetected with the current testing equipment. The money for the purchase would come from a 2025 grant from First Option Bank and would be at no cost to the city. The council unanimously approved purchase order number PD2603 in the amount of \$5,250.

Dan Nasalroad, Public Works Officer, fielded a question from Council Member Kent Wade about the pooling of rainwater in front of the city library. Nasalroad stated that he was not present at the meeting when this was discussed and was unaware it was an issue needing attention at this time. He stated he would look into what could be done there and also at the pooling issue in front of the Funeral Home.

Wilson reiterated that the council has been working on identifying problems with roads that need attention, and addressing these issues now would be beneficial to the public going into the storm water/street improvement tax question for the November ballot.

City Clerk Jodi Wade

gave her report. She was asked about the progress with the removal of the old Wagon Wheel restaurant building. She stated she had submitted the code section for building removal to the insurance company and has yet to hear back. The awning of the building was discussed as a safety issue. The owners will be contacted in regard to making the awning safe. As for the Chronicles Cemetery software, Wade stated that it should be online by Memorial Day. However, the physical signage at the cemetery may take a little longer.

Wade presented the council with a total of the write-offs for bad debt discussed in a previous meeting. The total for bad debt write-off was \$2,896. The council approved unanimously to allow Wade to write off the final amount of \$2,896.80 of bad debt.

Concerning the city's facilities improvements, the final three concept drawings with costs were delivered. The council discussed liking the two building concepts to give more room for growth and to separate the police station from City Hall. However, council member Robert Sullivan said, "it all depends on where the money falls." Wade is looking into possible additional grant funding. Wilson proposed to postpone the discussion until a full council was present.

Sealed bids for the sewer lift station will be received and publicly opened March 11 at 2 p.m. In regard to the water plant improvement analysis, Wade is working with Ben Coltrane (Midwest Engineering Group) on the USDA pre-application for consideration for grant/loan funding for phase three of the water plant improvement project. Concerning the storm water/street improvement master plan, Wade was informed that the sales tax ballot question must be received by Sep. 2026 in order to be printed on the Nov. 2026 ballot. Wilson expressed the need to get the question finalized at the next council meeting.

The council broke for executive session to discuss the acquisition of land. No action was taken. A motion was made to proceed with the purchase of property at 104 Market St. in the amount of \$35,000. This motion was approved unanimously. The land is for future use of the water plant.

Prescott hears from Kansas Municipal Energy Agency

BY ANNE JACKSON

The March 9, 2026, meeting of Prescott City Council opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Once the minutes and bills had been taken care of, Mayor Jesse Spears asked Kathy Wood to come forward to receive a plaque thanking her for 12 years of service to the city as City Clerk.

Next, Spears asked John Maloney to come forward to receive a plaque thanking him for his years on city council.

Karen Springer gave the food pantry report; 72 dozen eggs were donated by two families and three families donated 75 pounds of food. The chili and soup supper on March 7 was a great success. Everyone was very generous and many thanks to all who helped out and, or, came to participate; 122 people were served and a total of \$1,921 dollars was raised to benefit the pantry.

Tyson McGuire and Tom Saitta came from Kansas Municipal Energy Agency (KMEA) to give a presentation on what they do for Prescott City and what they could do in the future. Highlights of the presentation were that since Prescott is a member of KMEA, Prescott benefits with cheaper costs for electricity than regular market prices, and only paying the costs of KMEA services, such as linemen, construction, planning or accounting. Helping members save money helps KMEA, since "they" are "us," so they think Prescott should do the paperwork involved in asking for a federal grant to rebuild the electrical infrastructure. A grant would cover the cost of a whole load of thirty power poles, not just the two that Prescott tried to ask for a couple years ago, but never received. They have been successful so far at helping smaller cities, in particular, get federal grants and also grants from the state of Kansas that help pay for the percentage that the federal government frequently requires for a city to contribute as their share of costs.

Council member Rolland Grigsby asked if they did any underground installations, since he knows that in Louisburg all the new subdivisions are putting in underground utilities. McGuire said they have only done two, partly because the cost is two, or even three times as much, and while underground does

protect from bad weather of all sorts, if you have a problem, it isn't easy to find. The cost of trimming trees to protect overhead lines from breakage can be written into the request for grant money. Grigsby also asked what might happen if a Prescott citizen installed solar panels on their roof. Saitta said normally solar panels are installed to cover only the needs of the household, not extra, but if one generated power to put back into the system, the extra would be used up within the city and not need to be credited further away.

The council thanked the men for coming.

In old business, Spears reported it was an all-day job, but the trees at the Bloomfield house were trimmed and hauled off on February 16. When it dries up some more, the trees on the east side of the house may need a trim also.

There was indeed a small leak in the fire hydrant near Fornelli's home. Spears told the men to go ahead and replace the whole thing since the repair parts plus shipping would have been close to the same cost. Council member Ron Roberts said his memory is that that decision did not need council vote, since the mayor has access to discretionary funds to pay for small projects of less than \$1,000. He doesn't need council approval.

The bucket truck will need repairs. The inspection discovered frayed cables for the controls for the bucket that will need to be repaired by certified people. Spears will talk to Todd Mead about it.

For new business, either it's time to order fish to restock the lake, or, some parents have reported parts of the playground are rusting out. The discussion on this included

there is a small amount of money in the budget that can only be used for parks and recreation. However, Ginny Clarke did some quick research on T-Mobile grants and discovered she may be able to submit one for the April - June slot. The council decided to wait and see if they might get some funding from them and meanwhile, some council members will have a look at the playground equipment and see if they think it will be cost effective to make repairs, or if replacements are in order.

The city had a major leak by the highway on Friday, March 6, but it was fixed without trouble.

City Clerk Lisa Goodall presented the council with the current city insurance costs. Clarke said the library would do as they did last year and pay the extra to make sure the contents of the library would be replaced if the whole building got destroyed. Goodall then said she wasn't sure what to do with a long outstanding check to KMEA. A motion was made, and passed that she wait another week to see if it arrived in the mail at KMEA, then if it didn't, she could pay the \$30 cancellation fee and send a new check. She also wanted to know about buying cleaning supplies for city hall. She has a card for Dollar General. Is she supposed to use that? And if so, might she transfer it to Mound City instead of Pleasanton, since she lives in Mound City. She was told certainly the city will pay for cleaning city restrooms and a motion was made and passed that she change the card to Mound City. A last question was about the city always having a citywide garage sale. Should a date be put on the calendar? The answer was, "Yes, we will continue that custom on April 25."

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