

**CITY OF HARPER, KANSAS
COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026 6:30 P.M.
CITY HALL – 201 W. MAIN ST.
ERIC LATTA, MAYOR**

Council met in regular session with Mayor Latta in chair.

Eric Barker *absent*
Jeff Capps *present*

Pat Kerschen *present*
Kenneth Leu *present*

Doug Murphy *present*
Brandee Voegelé *present*

Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the February 23, 2026 Council Meeting.

Appropriation Ordinance No. 20260309

Order of Violation – 1522 Washington St. Chapter 22 Article 2 Section 22-82

Motion by Pat Kerschen second by Doug Murphy to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 5- 0.

Public Comment: None

Department Reports:

Police: Chief Burns reported on the activity for the department the previous two weeks, including two open doors, two agency assists, one traffic control, four speak to officer requests, a domestic violence call, a reckless driver, three suspicious activity responses, two EMS assists, two dogs-at-large, one improper dumping, two lock outs, one disturbance, one warrant arrest, one theft and one juvenile complaint.

Fire:

Public Works: The leak detection pit at the water treatment plant has not received any additional water, staff would monitor a little longer to be certain. If all is good, then the resin replacement quote would be brought back at the next meeting. The new valve on the 8” main on Ash St. north of the railroad tracks was successfully installed in the public right-of-way.

Mayor Latta opened the public hearing for the structure at 704 Oak St. for appearance and cause shown why the structure located on the property should not be condemned and ordered repaired or demolished as an unsafe or dangerous structure at 6:36 p.m.

Jeff Jacobs, owner, and Iris Faucett, party of interest, were in attendance to speak on the matter. Mr. Jacobs did not feel there were any issues with the property. Mayor Latta read through most of the items listed by the building inspector that caused the property to be considered for condemnation. Mr. Jacobs noted his work on the roof, but explained that he didn’t have the financial means to do much more than he had. The lack of connection to the public water supply was discussed. Mr. Jacobs stated the he refused to provide his full social security number on the application and that he did not feel he was obligated to do so in order to be serviced with the municipal water supply. Mrs. Faucett spoke up in support of Mr. Jacobs, describing some of the work that had been completed. She recognized there was more to be done but said he was trying. Mr. Jacobs did not have regular employment and lived off of his social security benefits. Mrs. Faucett explained that Mr. Jacobs worked for her from time to time, but mostly they traded rather than the exchange of money. After further discussion, and Mr. Jacobs’ unwillingness to provide the required documentation to have water service turned on in his name, Mrs. Faucett, who has an active account in good standing with the City, agreed to have the water service at 704 Oak St. put in her name. She added that she would need a little bit of time to come up with the money for the deposit.

Close of public portion of the Hearing. 7:09 p.m.

Council agreed to allow until April 13, 2026 for the water service to be connected to the public water supply system. If satisfied, Mr. Jacobs would until May 11, 2026 to have the following structure repairs made: roof repaired to the building inspector’s approval, accumulation of trash and debris removed from the premises, and the flue/vent and wood stoves would be made to meet the NFPA and building codes.

Motion by Doug Murphy second by Ken Leu to adopt Resolution No. 947-26 a resolution finding that the structure located on Lots 01, 02 and 03 in Block 11 of the original addition to the City of Harper, Harper County, Kansas,

commonly known and referred to as 704 Oak St. Harper, Kansas, is unsafe or dangerous and directing that the structure be repaired and the premises made safe and secure. Motion carried 5- 0.

Raul Mancilla, owner of 303 W. Main St. and 605 E. Main St. was in attendance to update council on his progress of repairs. Due to some weather constraints, he requested another 90 days to complete.

Motion by Ken Leu second by Pat Kerschen to provide an extension to June 8, 2026 to complete necessary repairs make the properties safe and secure. Motion carried 5- 0.

Marie Starks was in attendance for an update on 606 Washington St. She said she had a potential buyer, but was also considering making the necessary repairs herself.

Council to consider an ordinance amending certain sections of the City Code that would make property owners found to be in violation of building codes responsible for the costs of the inspection.

Motion by Ken Leu second by Jeff Capps to adopt Ordinance No. G-449 an ordinance relating to inspection of building and structures, and premises; amending section 10-223 and section 22-53 of the City Code of the City of Harper, Kansas. Yay – Capps, Leu, Murphy, Kerschen, Vogele; Ney – 0. Motion carried 5- 0.

Committee Reports: Councilman Kerschen informed the governing body that the finance committee would be performing a quarterly review at the end of March to help address the standard deficiency most small organizations get for not having enough staff for adequate checks and balances. Councilman Murphy asked if there was progress on the fire department policies. Admin. Cooperrider informed him nothing had been submitted to date.

Old Business: Council discussed the results of the sales tax election for the downtown revitalization project. The vote did not receive majority approval. Without the sales tax to secure the local match required to apply for the CDBG Large Facilities Grant, the project could not continue. Council discussed what the other options were. It was still possible to pursue the daycare option, however, a private individual was opening up a daycare in town and it may not be appropriate to compete with their efforts. There was also the option to do nothing. Admin. Cooperrider shared guidance the City had received from attorney Alen Glendenning several years prior when dealing with another dangerous structure. There was no law that required a city to go bankrupt. The dangerous structure laws existed to allow a governing body to take action against a privately-owned building that was deemed dangerous if the governing body deemed it appropriate for the greater good. It was up to the governing body to determine if it appropriate to take action, or if they do nothing. If the buildings collapse into a pile of rubble, it is still the owner's responsibility to clean it up. If the adjacent buildings were damaged because of a collapse that was a matter between the property owners. If there was debris on the public right-of-way then it would be in the interest of the City to clean up the right-of-way. There was discussion of possible putting up a fence to detour pedestrians outside the area of danger to the right-of-way. It was the consensus of Council to do nothing at the current time. It was asked if the City went forward with condemnation proceedings, but did not cause the buildings to be razed, if there was any associated liability. Admin. Cooperrider said she would research that question and provide an answer at the next meeting.

Councilwoman Vogele noted a rumor that had been started that she had coordinated a picture promoting the "Vote Yes" campaign for the sales tax in front of the high school. She clarified that she was not even in the state when that occurred and had no idea about the situation until a picture had been posted on social media and shared with her.

It was announced that the dangerous structure at 703 W. 11th St. was removed and the site made safe.

The proposed city shop was discussed. The anticipated price had been reduced by approximately \$50,000 for a new build due to the need to reduce the shop area to 5,000 sq. ft. to eliminate the requirement of a fire suppression system. However, the contractor had not included the price for signage. The concern administration expressed was that the RFP clearly stated the bid was to be all inclusive and in compliance with 2021 IBC Codes. That had not been the case. With the necessary changes, it might be prudent for the City to rebid setting forth a specific design, with the reduced size. However, to save on engineering design as an upfront cost to the City, Council would need to be open to a few change orders if city staff overlooked something, building design was not something any existing staff person was well-versed in. Council determined it would be appropriate to rebid for consistent and fair bidding processes. Staff will work with Building Official Mark Manville on developing the most thorough design possible for

the RFP. Staff was also going to get an estimate from an engineer for drainage work necessary to consider an alternative shop location. Councilman Leu requested the estimate come from the engineering firm that did the last street project, he felt they handled the drainage portion well.

Sgt. Walter provided an update on the Oak St. apartments, providing a list of what had been completed and what still remained to be fixed.

New Business: Admin. Cooperrider introduced a request from an RV park owner for Council's consideration to adjust water/sewer rates for RV Parks. Council requested research be completed to see how alternative structures might impact annual revenues for water and sewer.

Admin. Report: Admin. staff had begun collecting Easter egg donations from individuals and businesses around the community. The auditors from Lindburg, Vogel, Pierce, Faris had been on site the previous week to begin work on the 2025 financial statements. The Harper County Board of Commissioners had allocated \$25,000 to the Fire Department from the PILOT money received from the wind farms which will be used towards the bond payment for the fire engine. The 2025 water use report was completed and submitted to KDHE. Admin. Cooperrider would be attending the Regional Convening on Data Centers and Economic Infrastructure in Wichita, and Deputy Clerk Befort would be attending the spring City Clerk and Municipal Finance Officer conference.

Notices/Communications: none

Motion by Brande Vogeles second by Jeff Capps to adjourn. Motion carried 5 - 0.

Tiffany M. Cooperrider CMC, CPM
City Administrator/Clerk