

**CITY OF HARPER, KANSAS
COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026 6:30 P.M.
CITY HALL – 201 W. MAIN ST.
KENNETH LEU, MAYOR**

Council met in regular session with Mayor Leu in chair. Councilmembers present were Eric Barker, Jeff Capps, Patrick Kerschen, Elliott Irvin, Doug Murphy and Brande Voge.

Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the May 11, 2026 Council Meeting.

Minutes of the May 18, 2026 Special Council Meeting #1.

Minutes of the May 18, 2026 Special Council Meeting #2.

Appropriation Ordinance No. 20260526

Municipal Court Publication Report

Motion by Eric Barker second by Brande Voge to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 6- 0.

Public Comment: Pam Gerber, representing Harper County CORE Communities, introduced Janet Ardery, the organization's new community liaison. Mrs. Gerber invited Council to attend the graduation ceremony for the current CORE Communities class on June 1, 2026. She provided an overview of the organization's year-round program, including its Phase I curriculum and Phase II support services designed to assist participants in achieving long-term financial stability. Statistical information regarding the program's impact and outcomes was also provided. Efforts were underway by Mrs. Ardery to reestablish a GED program in Harper County.

Department Reports:

Police: Sgt. Walter reported the department responded to various calls for service during the reporting period, including welfare checks, a trespass complaint, juvenile-related matters, theft, and several felony investigations. The department also assisted the Harper Fire Department at a structure fire in Attica. Additionally, the police department hosted a bicycle safety course on May 23, 2026, with twelve students participating and receiving complimentary bicycle helmets.

Fire: Mayor Leu commended the responding fire departments, including the Harper Fire Department, for their efforts in containing a structure fire in downtown Attica to two buildings and preventing further damage to surrounding properties.

Chief Flores reported that, in addition to the structure fire in Attica, the department had responded to a grass fire and a wheat field fire during the reporting period. He also reported obtaining the required three written quotes for the purchase of ten sets of bunker gear and stated that the quotes would be reviewed with fire department command staff at their next regular meeting prior to proceeding with the purchase.

Public Works: The Street Department placed fresh material on 6th Street, prepared the City Park for the school's end-of-year picnic, and installed flags for Memorial Day. Street Crewman Teeter noted that obtaining bucket truck repair quotes was delayed due to the truck being needed for flag installation and subsequently being taken to a hydraulic technician for evaluation.

Sexton Ryberg reported focusing on cemetery preparations for Memorial Day. The Water/Wastewater Department responded to multiple sewer cleanouts near 16th and Oak Street, completed preparations for the pool opening, coordinated repairs to the water treatment plant mechanical room air conditioning unit, repaired a water leak at 13th and Oak Street, and assisted with cemetery preparations for Memorial Day.

Council Action/Deliberations:

Mayor Leu recognized multiple employees for their years of dedicated service to the City of Harper. Recognized employees included Stan Ryberg, Cemetery Sexton, for 25 years of service; Randy Miller, Street Foreman, for 20

years of service; and Brent Teeter, Street Maintenance II, and Brandon Zibell, Water/Wastewater Maintenance, for 5 years of service each.

Mayor Leu opened the sole bid received for construction of the City Shop from Commerce Construction in the amount of \$1,019,965. The bid was referred to the review committee for evaluation. It was noted that the bid amount remained significantly above the project's budget.

Council reviewed the proposed Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) for the Harper Fire Department. Following discussion, Council directed that the SOGs be amended to align the appointment of fire department command staff with the provisions of the City Code.

Motion by Doug Murphy second by Eric Barker to adopt the Harper Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines, dated May 21, 2026 as presented / amended. Motion carried 6- 0.

Water/Wastewater Foreman Snodgrass updated Council on recurring sewer backups affecting a residence in the 200 block of West 16th Street. He reported that City crews had responded multiple times in recent weeks to clear obstructions from the sewer main and had removed significant amounts of sand and debris. Due to concerns regarding the condition of the sewer main, Mayer Specialty was engaged to televise the line. The inspection identified a section of deteriorated clay pipe upstream of the residence's service connection but did not reveal evidence of a collapse.

Snodgrass explained that repairs to the sewer main could be completed either through excavation or by installing a liner. Due to the depth of the line and the extent of excavation that would be required, staff recommended a trenchless repair. Mayer Specialty submitted a proposal to sleeve the affected section of sewer main for \$14,521.50. He further noted that if backups continued following the repair, the issue would likely be isolated to the private service line.

Motion by Eli Irvin second by Pat Kerschen to approve the hiring of Mayer Specialty Services to line the existing sanitary sewer from Manhole D7 to Manhole D6, for a cost not to exceed \$14,521.50 to be paid from the Sewer Reserve Fund. Motion carried 6- 0.

Street Foreman Miller updated Council on the status of the City's 420F Caterpillar backhoe. He reported that an engine failure damaged the #4-cylinder bearing, connecting rod, and crankshaft, with estimated repair costs of approximately \$36,000. Miller noted that the 2014 backhoe, purchased used by the City in 2019, remained in otherwise good condition and that the repair would effectively provide a new engine in equipment already familiar to staff. He further advised that replacement with a comparable used machine would likely exceed \$100,000 and could present additional maintenance concerns.

Admin. Cooperrider reported that the Equipment Reserve Fund currently contained approximately \$46,000 designated for future backhoe replacement. She noted that the reserve had also been utilized for the purchase of new 800 MHz radios for the Police Department, with reimbursement planned over a five-year period. If the engine repair is approved, the replacement reserve would be reduced to approximately \$10,000 and the replacement schedule for the backhoe would effectively restart.

Motion by Doug Murphy second by Jeff Capps to approve the repair of the 420F Caterpillar backhoe by Foley Equipment, a cost not to exceed \$36,396.35, to be paid out of the Equipment Reserve Fund. Motion carried 6- 0.

Motion by Eric Barker second by Brande Vogele to adopt Ordinance No. G-450 an ordinance relating to and fixing the charges to be paid to the City of Harper for water service, amending section 48-158 of the City Code of the City of Harper, Kansas, and repealing Ordinance No. G-437 of the City of Harper, Kansas. Yay – Barker, Capps, Kerschen, Irvin, Murphy, Vogele; Nay – 0; Motion carried 6 – 0.

Motion by Brande Vogele to adopt Ordinance No. G-451 an ordinance relating to and fixing the sewage service charges to be paid to the City of Harper for sewer service for recreation vehicles (RV), amending section 48-418(3) of the City Code of the City of Harper, Kansas, and repealing section 1 subsection (3) of Ordinance No. G-430 of the City of Harper, Kansas. Motion failed due to lack of a second.

Motion by Brande Vogele second by Pat Kerschen to adopt Ordinance No. G-451 an ordinance relating to and fixing the sewage service charges to be paid to the City of Harper for sewer service, amending section 48-418 of the Code of the City of Harper and amending Ordinance No. G-430 of the City of Harper, Kansas. Yay – Vogele, Murphy, Irvin, Kerschen, Capps, Barker. Nay – 0; Motion carried 6 – 0.

Council considered a recommendation by the Planning Commission to amend the zoning regulations to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) in Residential zoning Districts.

Motion by Eli Irvin second by Doug Murphy to adopt Ordinance No. G-452 an ordinance related to zoning regulations of the City of Harper, Kansas, and accessory dwelling units, amending Section 50-5 Definitions, Section 50-381(a) Use Regulations (R-1 Single-Family Dwelling District), Section 50-409(a) Use Regulations (R-2 Two-Family Dwelling District), and Section 50-913 Additional Height, Area and Use Regulations of the City of Harper, Kansas. Yay – Kerschen, Irvin, Murphy, Vogele, Barker, Capps; Nay – 0; Motion carried 6 – 0.

Motion by Doug Murphy second by Eric Barker to adopt Resolution No. 950-26 a resolution authorizing the public officer of the City of Harper to abate the conditions causing a health nuisance as defined in Chapter 28 Article 2 of the Code of the City of Harper, Kansas, on the property known as 909 Walnut St. Harper, Kansas. Motion carried 6 – 0.

Motion by Pat Kerschen second by Eli Irvin to adopt Resolution No. 951-26 a resolution authorizing the public officer of the City of Harper to abate the conditions causing a health nuisance as defined in Chapter 28 Article 2 of the Code of the City of Harper, Kansas, on the property known as 1222 Oak St. Harper, Kansas. Motion carried 6 – 0.

Motion by Brande Vogele second by Eric Barker to recess into executive session pursuant to the K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1) exception in order to discuss matters of non-elected personnel for the purpose of considering the hiring process of certain candidates for Chief of Police position, the open meeting to resume in the city council chambers at 8:10 p.m. with Admin. Cooperrider being invited in. Motion carried 5 – 1, with Councilman Irvin voting no.

8:10 p.m. Out of executive session.

Motion by Brande Vogele second by Doug Murphy to recess back into executive session pursuant to the K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1) exception in order to discuss matters of non-elected personnel for the purpose of considering the hiring process of certain candidates for Chief of Police position, the open meeting to resume in the city council chambers at 8:20 p.m. with Admin. Cooperrider being invited in. Motion carried 5 – 1, with Councilman Irvin voting no.

8:20 p.m. Out of executive session. Mayor Leu announced no official action was taken while in executive session.

Committee Reports:

Councilman Kerschen reported that the Finance Committee would be scheduling a meeting to begin work on the 2027 budget.

Councilman Capps reported receiving concerns regarding the condition of 6th Street and discussed efforts undertaken to address the issue. Staff reviewed applicable ordinances, policies, and best practices intended to ensure compliance with City requirements and reduce potential liability exposure.

Admin. Report: Admin. Cooperrider reported that several zoning permits had been processed, lifeguard orientation had been completed, financial reports had been prepared for use during the 2027 budget process, and online banking services had been established for the Harper Recreation Commission. She also attended the State of Kansas Department of Administration's annual budget workshop. While no significant changes to the budget process were reported, emphasis was placed on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as it relates to government websites. The City has until April 26, 2028, to bring all website content into compliance with federal accessibility requirements. Discussion included potential approaches to achieving compliance and managing future website content. Admin. Cooperrider also reported that the Harper County Clerk had provided the ad valorem tax exemption list for staff review in advance of the estimated valuation process.

Admin. Cooperrider further reported that Diamond S Fencing, previously awarded demolition contracts for 1912 Pine Street and 604 Oak Street, had not yet provided the required certificate of insurance and, therefore, had not been issued a Notice to Proceed.

Motion by Doug Murphy second by Pat Kerschen to rescind the award to Diamond S Fencing, and to award the demolition of 1912 Pine St. to Barker Sand and Gravel for a cost not to exceed \$21,000. Motion carried 6 – 0.

Due to the cost difference, the demolition for 604 Oak St. would be delayed and alternatives considered.

Motion by Brande Vogeles second by Eric Barker to adjourn. Motion carried 6- 0.

Tiffany M. Cooperrider CMC, CPM
City Administrator/Clerk