

August 27, 2024 ~ REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Ladd Village Board met in regular session on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, in the Ladd Village Hall at 121 N. Main Avenue. Village President Frank Cattani called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

Roll Call: Present: Trustees Dave Margherio, Jan Martin, Dan Nelson, Brad Nicholson, Andy Ruggerio, Molly Thrasher (6)

In attendance: Village Clerk Rhonda Bezely, Superintendent Doug Englehaupt, Engineer Adam Ossola, Atty. Pat Barry, and Police Chief Jacob Frund

Ruggerio motioned/Margherio second to accept the August 13, 2024, regular meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Nicholson motioned/Martin second to authorize payment of the bills for \$149,970.57

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Thrasher motioned/Nicholson second to accept the Treasurer's Report for July 2024.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Correspondence: A note of thanks from the landowners north of Ladd was placed on the table for the trustees to read.

Public Comment: Mike Meuser requested a stop sign in the East and West Directions at the corner of Western Avenue and West Cleveland Street. The issue of people speeding has not been resolved. The council would like to move forward with stop signs as requested. This will be placed on the next agenda and Atty. Barry will have an ordinance to pass.

Committee Reports: Margherio and Nelson looked at the tree reported at 103 S. Selby Ave. with large dead limbs in it. They feel that the person who reported the dead limbs does not have the right to report them, it should be the homeowner where the tree is located. Bezely explained why this person called and his concerns. He owns the duplex across from the tree and does not want these limbs to fall and hit his tenant's vehicles. It was determined that public works should remove the dead branches that are a safety concern.

Engineer's Report: Ossola gave project updates. He brought review plans for the Community Center renovation to the Clerk's Office. He is 90% done before bids can be obtained. He would like the council to look them over and provide comments. SRTS 2021 we are still waiting for flashing beacons that will go on East Cleveland Street. SRTS 2023 they are planning on starting surveying work next week. No easements are anticipated. Cattani discussed SRTS 2021 complaints from residents. There are 3 grass complaints from residents and 1 driveway where the cold patch was put in. The grass needs to be addressed and the cold patch needs to be fixed it looks rough. Ossola will speak with Gensini Excavating. Nelson asked if Mrs. Lorenzi's problem had been resolved. D&M was going to reseed and fertilize this area to attempt to bring it back to its original condition.

Superintendent's Report: Old Business: Manhole Replacement: Englehaupt addressed the council on the manhole replacement at the north end of Central Avenue right by the railroad tracks. He called 3 contractors and 1 was swamped but stated that they are familiar with this area and only do the job time and material, 1 did not respond yet, and 1 provided a bid of \$4,800.00 (manhole & materials and reuse the existing frame that is there + labor (\$3,000.00 per day), Englehaupt requested approval to hire Starline Construction for the replacement for a minimum of \$7,800.00. Englehaupt told all 3 that the ground in this area was not good. Englehaupt gave additional details to all 3 companies he called.

Ruggerio asked Englehaupt if he and his guys could do this work and Englehaupt stated no, they do not have the equipment to be able to do this. Nelson asked if the new manhole would hold up or if would it settle over time. Englehaupt stated yes.

Martin motion/Thrasher second to Hire Starline Construction to Replace the Manhole on the North End of Central Avenue for \$4,800.00 + Labor of \$3,000.00 a day.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Fair Solar Credit Englehaupt explained that the Village's Fair Solar Credit went from approximately 1 in 2023 to .50 in 2024. People are not getting credited for what they expected. We have an upcoming meeting with North Central Bank's executive because they do not feel that their credits are accurate from the Village of Ladd. Englehaupt then spoke to Jonathan Wygant from IMEA today, he provides us with our Fair Solar Credit every year. The board approves this annually. Jonathan explained that the Fair Solar Credit he computes for the Village of Ladd is a minimum, and can be increased by the council. Jonathan suggested that Atty. Barry, our IMEA representative, contact Chatham, IL to discuss this. Englehaupt told the council that Ameren is giving the same fair solar credit as they are charging their customers. For example, if a kWh is .15 cents, the Fair Solar Credit is .15 cents. This is going to change in January 2025. They will be going to a Fair Solar Credit which will be less than what they bill per kWh i.e. electric cost is .15 per kWh and their Fair Solar Credit might be .10 per kWh. They do not give back the cost of infrastructure – i.e. poles, personnel, work trucks, etc. If the Village of Ladd is interested in giving back a higher Fair Solar Credit Englehaupt would encourage hiring a rate engineer to look this over before the Village increases our Fair Solar Credit. Englehaupt feels that we should consider bringing Verbal Blakey back sometime in the next couple of years to do another review which would include calculating Fair Solar Credit. Atty. Barry asked the number of solar customers we have. 5 with a 6<sup>th</sup> one coming soon. A rate engineer would be a lot of money to spend to appease 6 solar customers when the IMEA does this calculation for us as part of our membership. Hydrants: Cattani asked Englehaupt if he has looked at replacing any hydrants this year. Englehaupt stated no. Cattani thought there were 4 more to replace. Englehaupt stated they are going to flush them in the fall and he will bring Cattani up to speed after that.

Police Chief: Chief Frund told the council that we have had a couple of issues where residents are stealing power. Tickets were issued for \$500.00. Frund has lots of violations out with fines to get things cleaned up in the Village. Bureau County is swamped. 2 of their officers are working in Ladd also even though they are mandated a lot at Bureau County. Frund asked the council to thank them if they saw them. Sometimes there are only a couple of officers on duty for the entire county. We are fortunate to have such dedicated part-time officers in Ladd. The 2 tickets may need to go to collections if they do not pay. One is a rental but this person is charged personally – this should not be the landlord's responsibility. Utilities should be disconnected until all fines and fees are paid. Nicholson asked if Frund could arrest him. Frund stated that with the SAFE-T Act, this is not an option. Discussion ensued. Englehaupt stated theft of service has only happened 4 times in his 30+ years at the Village and 3 of the incidents were this month.

Building Inspector: Not in attendance.

Village Attorney: IBEW Contract.

Old Business: Ladd Cemetery Association Dissolving: Cattani stated that he spoke with Samantha Sarosinski about shadowing Paul Biccocchi for the Village to possibly take over the Ladd Cemetery. Biccocchi told Cattani that he found out that if the Village takes it over then the perpetual fund can have a percentage of the money taken out for use at the cemetery. Sarosinski will present what she learns after meeting with Paul and seeing what this job will entail. We will likely need to place Sarosinski on IMRF, due to likely exceeding 1,000 hours yearly between working for the Clerk's Office, the Police Department, and the Cemetery. We will place this on the next agenda for discussion.

New Business: Discuss Salaries for Elected Officials and Appointed Officials for May 2025 through April 2029:

Atty. Barry told the council these salaries remain per ordinance unless a change is requested by the council. Changes to elected officials' salaries by statute must be 180 before the election. That is why this is on the agenda. The Clerk provided information on the current salaries for all elected and appointed officials. Discussion ensued regarding other clerk salaries in nearby towns. Bezely stated that she is asking the council for a 4% raise for the Clerk's position which is what other employees have received. This increase parallels with other departments yet, it is less than what the union employees are projected to receive. She feels the Clerk's job has a plethora of duties that change moment to moment on any given day. There are many requirements and responsibilities that take a lot of detail, organization, knowledge, and time. Bezely works 37.50 hours a week plus any additional meetings she attends whether they are council or economic development or for Village festivities planning. She stated that she currently has 153 hours she has worked over and above her salary. She appreciated the council's understanding and thanked them for the salary increase whether she is the next clerk or someone else is elected.

Ruggerio motion/Martin second to Increase the Village Clerk's Salary by 4% beginning 5/1/2025 and an additional 4% each May 1<sup>st</sup> every year after this.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Margherio motion/Nicholson second to Increase the Village President's monthly salary to \$500.00 per month beginning May 1, 2025, and continuing thereafter.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Atty. Barry will bring the Ordinance to be passed to the next meeting.

New Business: Garbage Rates: On October 1, 2024 garbage charges from Republic Services will increase from \$19.00 to \$19.95. Bezely did a spreadsheet showing different options for the council to consider. Discussion ensued. There is a CD in the Garbage Fund for \$284,192.92. This along with property taxes we take in can help cover any loss for the year if the council wants to gradually increase rates for the residents in Ladd. Discussion ensued with the council, President, and Attorney.

Margherio motion/Nicholson second to Increase Garbage Rates to \$13.00 as of October 1, 2024. This will be revisited in August of 2025.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

New Business: Donation to Ax Church: Ax Church has been coming to Ladd to help with many projects during Hope Week since 2018. We gave a \$500 donation in 2022. They donate all supplies and do all kinds of maintenance for the Village properties. The council would like to make a yearly donation from now on to say thanks for their help!

Thrasher motion/Nicholson second to Donate \$500.00 to Ax Church for their Continued Volunteerism in the Village of Ladd.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Announcements: Solar Farm Update: Cattani stated that he and Ruggerio have spent approximately 5 hours at the Bureau County Courthouse for the hearings on the proposed solar farms north of Ladd. There has been no resolution currently. They meet again on September 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. They feel it is important that Ladd attend. Senator Sue Rezin sent a letter of her support for Ladd to object to this variation. Property Tax Money: Martin asked if we have received the 1<sup>st</sup> installment of property tax money yet. Bezely stated nothing has been received yet. The Consolidated Election: Seats available in the Village of Ladd are Village President, Village Clerk, and Village Trustees (3); packets are available in the Clerk's Office. LCC Landscaping: Bezely asked 4 ladies in town with beautiful flowers if when they thin their perennials, they would consider planting them at the Community Center to bring color to the landscape. Bezely stated either the south or west side would be great. If they are unable to plant them Bezely will help or do it. Liquor License: Bezely mentioned being called about a possible change in a Liquor License currently issued possibly being taken over by a new owner. Bezely told the owner

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that they are not transferrable but they can submit a new application and pay the fee and then the new people can move into this license. Trick or Treat Hours: Bezely mentioned next month's agenda will have setting Trick or Treat hours for 2024. Committee Chair Thrasher has the Parade and the party scheduled for Sunday, October 27, 2024, as of now.

Martin motioned/Ruggerio second to move out of regular session into executive session Section 2 (c) Collective Negotiating Matters Between Public Employers and Their Employees or Representatives at 7:44 pm.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Returned to regular session at 8:12 pm.

Roll call was taken.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Also present were President Cattani, Atty. Pat Barry, and Clerk Bezely

Cattani requested a motion to approve, not release, the executive session minutes provided to the council members from 8-13-2024.

Thrasher motioned/Nicholson second to Approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes from 8-13-2024.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Thrasher asked how the meeting went at Tee Group. Bezely stated that John Buckner called and thanked the Village Council members for attending. There are concerns about how little equipment was running and how run down the place looked.

Nelson motioned/Nicholson second to adjourn.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Rhonda Bezely, Village Clerk