

January 14, 2025 ~ REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Ladd Village Board met in regular session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, 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 Jan Martin, Dan Nelson, Brad Nicholson, Andy Ruggerio, and Molly Thrasher (5)

Absent: Trustee Dave Margherio

In attendance: Village Clerk Rhonda Bezely, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Julie Koch, Police Chief Jacob Frund, Attorney Pat Barry, Engineer Adam Ossola

Martin motioned/Thrasher second to accept the December 26, 2024, regular meeting minutes as presented.

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

Absent: Margherio

Nelson motioned/Nicholson second to authorize payment of the bills of \$75,836.42

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

Absent: Margherio

Correspondence: Thank you notes from Illinois Valley Center for Independent Living and Greg Colmone Trivia Night were read.

Public Comment: None

Police Chief: Chief Frund attended a meeting today at BUCOM. They are replacing some outdated software that is not keeping up with security or state requirements. This new software is going to cost a considerable amount of money to implement. There will not be an increase in our annual fees to belong to BUCOM. They are asking all departments that belong to BUCOM to consider a donation to defray some of this cost for the new software. This request will be placed on the next agenda. If the Village went to a different dispatch, it would cost upwards of \$7,000.00 annually. We currently pay \$500.00 annually. Frund states that the new software is a very nice system. As he learns more about this new software he will see if other fees the Village pays could be eliminated due to all that this new software provides.

Committee Reports: Ruggerio asked if the Village would be getting the new Air Force Flag to be put up in the spring. Bezely told the council that when she ordered last year, she got 2 sets of Military flags so we have 1 more Air Force flag that is the old design. Bezely will be sure and order the new design to be put up in 2026. Ruggerio requested an ordinance be written to ensure residents remove their garbage and recycling carts from the roadways in a timely fashion. Ruggerio's concern is the new carts being hit by snowplows. Ruggerio also mentioned that a couple of residents have mattresses out that are not bagged or wrapped. Deputy Clerk Koch stated that if Ruggerio provides the addresses of these mattresses, she will call the residents and inform them they must be wrapped. After discussion, it was decided that the Clerk's office would include a note on bright-colored paper with the next utility bill, asking residents to remove the new garbage and recycling carts to prevent damage. The Clerk's office will also place this notice at the bottom of the bills, on Facebook, on the website, and make posters to display around the Village.

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Engineer's Report: Ossola updated the council on the SRTS 2023 Project plans stating that all plans and cost information went to IDOT for approval. The Main Avenue Sidewalk project has a draft set of plans put together along with an updated cost estimate for the council to look over and make any changes deemed necessary. After that, the plans will need to go to IDOT for their permit review.

Superintendent's Report: Not in attendance

Building Inspector: Not in attendance

New Business: Accept Trustee Dave Margherio's Resignation: President Cattani told the council that Dave Margherio provided a letter of resignation on 12/30/2024 due to health concerns. Cattani could not say enough about the appreciation the Village has for the years of service and dedication Margherio has put in as a councilman. He added that he would like the council to accept his resignation with regret. Thrasher motioned/Nicholson second to Accept with Regret Dave Margherio's Resignation for Trustee in the Village of Ladd.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggiero, Thrasher, President - Motion carried

Absent: Margherio

New Business: Appoint Bernard "Bernie" Victor to Open Trustee Position: President Cattani stated that Bernard "Bernie" Victor has agreed to finish out the term vacated by Margherio. Victor will be on the ballot at the Consolidated Election on April 1, 2025, for Trustee.

Nelson motioned/Ruggiero second to Appoint Bernard "Bernie" Victor to the Open Trustee Position as of 1/14/2025

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggiero, Thrasher, Cattani - Motion carried

The Oath of Office was Administered by Atty. Pat Barry to Trustee Bernie Victor and Victor accepted by reciting the oath of office and signing the oath.

New Business: Renew Itron Maintenance Agreement for 4-1-2025 through 3-31-2026: Bezely told the council that this is how we read our meters. She stated that we can't operate without this maintenance agreement.

Martin motioned/Nelson second to Renew the Itron Maintenance Agreement 4-1-2025 through 3-31-2026 for \$2,373.45.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggiero, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

New Business: Layer 3 Switch for Added Cybersecurity for Clerk's Office: Mark Karlosky, IT provided a quote for a Ubiquity Layer 3 Switch for \$1,231.89. This includes a 1-year mfg. warranty. Labor to install will be an additional \$279.00. Karlosky stated this would take all security cameras in the Village and move them from the existing network. This will provide added security for the Clerk's office and Police Department. Bezely stated that the Clerk's office will no longer make any changes to residents' accounts, or employees' payroll without them physically coming into the Clerk's office to request any changes. This will help keep all data secure. Discussion ensued. Bezely stated Cybersecurity Training was provided to all employees recently but she will inquire with our insurance company to see if they can provide added cybersecurity training to help keep the Village of Ladd as secure as possible.

Nicholson motioned/Nelson second to Accept the Quote for a Ubiquity Layer 3 Switch to Segment Security Cameras to Improve Security not to exceed \$1,510.89 unless there is an unforeseen circumstance.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggiero, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

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Village Attorney: New Business: Ordinance for Part-time Police Wage Increase: Atty. Barry prepared Ordinance #1179 for the increased wages for part-time police officers. Last meeting the council agreed to raise part-time police officers to \$26.50 per hour beginning with the December 23, 2024 payroll. Nicholson motioned/Martin second to Pass Ordinance #1179 An Ordinance Amending the Wage Rate of Part-Time Police Officers in the Village of Ladd, Bureau County, Illinois.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher, Victor, Cattani - Motion carried

New Business: IMEA Contract: Atty. Barry reminded the council that the IMEA needs a decision by April 1st from their existing members to extend the current contract to 2055. The IMEA is going to send someone down to address the council and explain everything in detail. Clarification is needed as to why they need a 20-year extension of the contract when it is only 2025 and our current existing contract with the IMEA does not end until 2035. Atty. Barry will contact the IMEA to arrange a meeting next month or so.

New Business: Approve Liquor License Ladd Fire Department: The Ladd Fire Department is having its annual smoker on February 15th from 6 pm to midnight at the Fire Station. A Special Event Liquor License is requested.

Nelson motioned/Thrasher second to Approve the Special Event Liquor License for the Ladd Fire Department's Annual Smoker on February 15th.

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

New Business: SRTS 2023 Discuss 732 E. Cleveland St. Parking Situation: At the informational meeting that was held to discuss any complaints or concerns with the Safe Routes to School 2023 Project, Rick Smith voiced his concerns. Smith had concerns about his garage location and how adding a sidewalk through his property would render his driveway unusable due to the proximity of the garage to the sidewalk. It was stated that the Village would include a concrete parking pad to the west of his garage with a depth that would allow for parking completely off the new sidewalk to this project. Smith spoke with his wife and she does not think this will look nice as the area stated would be in their front yard. She and Rick asked if this parking pad could be placed off the alley which would be behind their existing garage. After discussion, it was decided that this would not be able to be part of the SRTS 2023 project because it would be in the alley. President Cattani will speak with the Smiths about the cost distribution to pay for the pad behind the garage after a firm bid is obtained. He will let the council know his response.

Announcements: President Cattani spoke to the council about a call he received from a landowner wanting to annex his property into the Village limits. Discussion ensued. The landowner will work with our attorney to discuss this and get this moving forward. **Annual Rate Increase:** Bezely informed the council that water rates were increased by 3.5% and sewer rates increased by 7% annually by ordinance starting with the January usage billing. This will increase bills \$3.52 monthly and \$42.24 annually. **Lot at 124 N. Hennepin Ave in Ladd:** Nicholson brought up the cost the Village pays to cut the grass at this property for a year. He stated this costs the Village approximately \$1,500.00 a year just to keep the grass mowed. Nicholson stated that we have been paying for grass cutting for approximately the last 4 years. He is asking if there is someone who comes to the Village with a signed contract to build a house on this lot can we sell it to them for \$1.00? We would be better off selling this lot to them for \$1.00 than to keep it and continue cutting the grass. Atty. Barry will investigate how to sell municipal property. There are certain publication requirements we must meet. Atty. Barry asked about splitting the property between the 2 neighbors. We have had 2 people want to buy it to put up a garage but our municipal code does not allow an ancillary structure without a residential structure on the lot first. **2025 Changes in Municipal Laws:** Atty. Barry explained that beginning in 2026, Governor Pritzker will abolish the 1% grocery tax. They are now allowing municipalities to tax groceries up to 1% beginning 1/1/2026 so you will not lose any revenue. We have some time but Atty.

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Barry wants the council to consider enacting this tax. Atty. Barry stated that we can now impose a sales tax. It used to be only Home Rule Municipalities could do this but now Non-Home Rule Municipalities can impose a sales tax. The Governor and Legislature are allowing smaller towns to impose a State Sales Tax in .25 cent increments up to 1% starting in July 2025. Atty. Barry stated this needs to be in place by April 1, 2025. Atty. Barry will remind the council at the next meeting so that we don't miss out on whether they would like to impose this tax. Atty. Barry stated that several municipalities are imposing this tax. Martin asked if there was an update on **10/33 Ambulance** it was mentioned that Spring Valley has not accepted the new per capita rate of \$36 per capita yet.

Thrasher motioned/Nicholson second that we adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Rhonda Bezely, Village Clerk