

## FEBRUARY 25, 2025 ~ REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Ladd Village Board met in regular session on Tuesday, February 25, 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, Molly Thrasher, and Bernie Victor (6)

**In attendance:** Clerk Rhonda Bezely, Deputy Clerk & Treasurer Julie Koch, Engineer Adam Ossola, Superintendent Doug Englehaupt, Atty. Colin Barry, and Samantha Sarosinski

Victor questioned why the minutes didn't reflect Ordinance #1181 if the council was to pass this ordinance tonight. Atty. Barry explained that this agreement is between Ameren and the Village as IMEA members, for Ameren who handles the transmission up to a certain point until Ladd takes over from the IMEA's generating station, which is out of state. This is negotiated between the IMEA and Ameren.

Victor motioned/Nicholson seconded to accept the February 11, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented.

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

Nelson motioned/Martin seconded to authorize payment of the bills for \$163,966.30

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

Thrasher motioned/Ruggerio second to accept the Treasurer's Report for January 2025.

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

**Correspondence:** None

**Public Comment:** None

**Committee Reports:** None

**Engineer's Report: New Business: Pass Agreement with IDOT for Safe Routes to School Project 2023:** Engineer Ossola explained that the Safe Routes to School plans are all good to go, and there will be an April 25, 2025 bid letting in Springfield. IDOT will let us know who the low bidder was. This will be advertised in IDOT's bulletin on March 21<sup>st</sup>. The Village must pass an agreement with IDOT for Safe Routes to School Project 2023 to keep this project moving forward. There is a Resolution that authorizes the Village President to sign this agreement. The resolution also shows that although there is no match by the Village, the estimate came in \$25,000.00 higher than the \$250,000.00 grant, so this \$25,000.00 will be the Village's responsibility.

Martin motioned/Ruggerio seconded to Pass the Agreement with IDOT for Safe Routes to School Project 2023.

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

Present: Victor

**Superintendent's Report:** Nothing to report – council members welcomed back Englehaupt.

**Police Chief:** Chief Frund updated the council on the camera grant. Frund also told the council the Taser grant is complete, but no Tasers have been received as of yet. Frund told the council that Sarosinski is doing a Traffic Garden as part of the Safe Routes to School, which explains the proper routes to bike to school or walk to school through the construction of a model that demonstrates this. The police department applied for the traffic grant again, where we are reimbursed our officer's wages if we comply with the rules of the grant. This year, a Lidar is part of the grant. This laser radar system shoots out a laser and directs the radar on the vehicle coming right at you. Trustee Ruggerio talked to Frund about the furniture store's broken window, which could be dangerous. Frund asked Atty. Barry to send a letter to the owner. Ruggerio also pointed out that the Stop Work Order is no longer in the front window of the Main Avenue building. Chief Frund will repost this sign. Cattani told the council that he intends to address the situation with the 109 N. Main Avenue building on the March 25, 2025 agenda.

**Building Inspector:** Not in Attendance

**Village Attorney:** Atty. Colin Barry researched the area sales tax rates in communities around us. Barry told the council that Bureau County has a 1% sales tax. A page also shows a breakdown of all the local areas around Ladd and what they charge.

**Old Business: Ladd Cemetery becoming part of the Village of Ladd:** Samantha Sarosinski spoke with Paul Biccoci about the hours required to maintain the cemetery. Paul stated this is all subject to the number of deaths. He told Sarosinski approximately 3-4 hours per funeral. Biccoci is not pushing for the Village to take over the cemetery; he wants to have a plan for someone to take over the graveyard when he can no longer do it. Cattani estimates it takes less than 50 hours annually to care for the Ladd Cemetery. Cattani also stated that if the Village of Ladd takes the cemetery over, there will be less required paperwork. Trustee Nicholson read from a document he obtained from Google. That stated if there is no board, the responsibility for the management and upkeep falls to the county or township where the cemetery is located. Trustee Victor asked Cattani if there would be special meetings to determine all the incidentals of the Village taking over. Victor questioned what our formality is in this type of situation. He wondered if there would be special meetings to iron everything out or if they would discuss things tonight. Cattani indicated the discussion was taking place now. He asked Sarosinski to contact Biccoci about the village's position on the cemetery. Cattani asked the board if they would step up and assume this responsibility or abandon it. The resounding response was that the board felt it was the right thing to do. The Village currently plows the cemetery. Victor stated there are many questions to decide on and feels we can place this on upcoming meeting agendas until all the details have been worked out.

Victor Motioned/Ruggerio Seconded to Add Various Agenda Items Regarding the Village taking over the Ladd Cemetery Association not before May 1, 2025.

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

Victor explained that many decisions needed to be made. The first agenda item is to establish the remaining items we need to do to assume the responsibilities of the Ladd Cemetery, not before May 1, 2025. We won't take ownership until the next fiscal year, which begins May 1, 2025. Cattani stated, let's see about getting a committee responsible for cemetery duties. Trustee Martin volunteered, and Victor accepted the committee appointment along with Sarosinski. Someone is going to see if Rich Corsolini might also agree to be on the committee. These agenda items include: will we be

paying Paul Biccoci for all he does, and Samantha for shadowing Paul, along with additional questions that arise.

**New Business: Hear Tri-Cities Clean Energy Presentation:** Susan Russo, Hewly & Tom Prucher attended tonight's meeting to provide information they have learned regarding IMEA's request to sign a contract for an additional 20 years, which would bind their members until 2055. Of the IMEA's 32 members, St. Charles, Naperville, Winetka, Peru, Cairro, Fairfield, and Ladd have not signed the renewal contract. The Cities of St. Charles and Naperville have taken a stand that they will not be pressured into deciding by April 30, 2025, when the existing contract does not end until 2035. They will consider all information and determine the best direction to move into. They feel that they are making a decision now, when the future of electricity in the next 10 years is unknown. Hewly quoted a business owner from St. Charles who stated at a council meeting in St. Charles in February 2024. He asked what was wrong with the IMEA contract. #1 - It is a long-lived, single source contract with no competitive bidding for possible lower rates. There is no competitive bidding for alternate energy sources. #2 – This is a cost-plus contract, and the members have a minimal influence on the small percentage of the costs. #3 - The single source has a serious conflict of interest because it must support three coal facilities with an ownership interest while trying to provide us with low prices. #4 - Wind and Solar energy are currently half the cost of coal-fired energy today, and the cost of wind and solar is decreasing. They discussed the accurate timelines facing members. We cannot leave our contract before September 2035. We can go in September 2035 if we notify the IMEA in September 2030. The request for commitment to extend to 2055 by April 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, is simply a request. All members have the power to reject and deny, we will not stop getting power from IMEA by voting no. Tom Prucher went over some financial numbers for the council. Discussion ensued. He mentioned the pollution rankings of the coal-fired plants reporting Prairie State is ranked the #1 CO2 polluter in Illinois and the #7 largest polluter of CO2 in the United States. Tom also gave many examples of how things were 30 years ago in 1995. Stating how large cell phones were “the size of a shoe box”, the internet was dial-up, everyone had cable TV. Who would have predicted the iPhone, a computer in every pocket. Amazon shopping and the closing of shopping centers nationwide. Streaming movies in their own home. Just what do you think electricity will be like in 30 years? When explaining the 20-year early renewal of the IMEA contract to residents, not one person has considered it a good idea. Due to economic pressures, regulatory challenges, technological advances, and shifting public sentiment, coal technology is on a trajectory towards obsolescence. By 2035 its energy role will likely diminish drastically, if not entirely disappear. Discussion ensued. After all three representatives of Tri-Cities Clean Energy spoke, the Village council had questions for these representatives. We thanked them for the information and their time. A handout with 10 critical questions was left to the board members to answer before making their decision on this contract extension. They just asked that we investigate other options before deciding. They will be emailing the names of contacts they mentioned in their presentation so the Village can contact them with questions. Council members asked questions of the Tri-Cities Clean Energy representatives. Susan brought up many other statistics.

**New Business: CD Renewals Audit, IMRF, Garbage, & Social Security Funds:** Treasurer Koch explained the rates and renewal timelines for each fund and reported all information researched to make a good decision to reinvest these CDs.

Victor motioned/Nicholson seconded to Renew the Audit CD and add \$10,000.00 to it for 9 months @ 4.11% APY, Renew the IMRF, Garbage & Social Security CD's for 9 months @ 4.11% APY.

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

**New Business: Audit FY25 by Hopkins & Associates:** A letter from Hopkins & Associates explaining the FY25 Audit was provided to the board. This letter outlines the audit scope & objectives along with procedures and compliance. The price quoted was the same as 2024. Nicholson motioned/Thrasher seconded to Go Forward with Hopkins & Associates for FY25 Audit.

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

**New Business: Baseball Diamond Fields:** Steve Bosi addressed the council regarding the condition of the baseball fields. He told the council we no longer have Ladd Baseball or Ladd Softball. They have both merged with Spring Valley. Bosi provided a timeline explaining what has occurred over the last 5 years. Ladd School now has school baseball and softball, and they use the fields. Spring Valley has all games scheduled in Spring Valley, leaving our fields unused. Bosi has been hearing from travel teams wanting to use our fields. They are willing to pay a fee to use our diamonds. Bosi feels they will be full of weeds if we never use our fields. The Ladd Sports committee requests to remove the grass on the infield on the small diamond to let various age groups use the field. There will be volunteers to help remove the grass, and a volunteer will do topography on the diamond. We will need to get the dirt to put in place of the grass. Bosi feels confident he will get travel baseball teams to play in Ladd. He already has two 8-team tournaments using our fields, paying \$500.00. Many people will be in Ladd for this tournament and utilizing our businesses for food, gas, drinks, etc. Thrasher stated that the concession stand needs some maintenance done. Nicholson asked what they would like to see from the Village of Ladd towards getting the fields in shape. Bosi stated they would like the Village to give \$5,000.00 to Ladd Sports to fix the fields. Then, the committee will continue fundraising to add to the account balance. Nicholson motioned/Martin seconded to donate \$5,000.00 to Ladd Sports to help get the Baseball fields in the Condition they need to be in to have teams play.

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

**New Business: Adopt Wholesale Connection Agreement:** Atty. Colin Barry stated that this Agreement has nothing to do with extending the IMEA contract renewal for 20 years. Atty. Barry stated this agreement is between Ladd, the IMEA, and Ameren Power Company for wholesale power and distribution.

Victor motioned/Martin Seconded to Pass Ordinance #1181 An Ordinance of the Village of Ladd, Approving and Adopting the Wholesale Connection Agreement by and Between the Village of Ladd, Bureau County, Illinois, The Illinois Municipal Electric Agency, and Ameren Services Company on Behalf of and As Designated Agent for Ameren Illinois Company.

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

Nays: Nelson

**Announcements:** **Electronics Recycling** is scheduled for Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4:30-6:30 pm, and Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8:00 – 10:00 am or until the 20-yard dumpster is filled. **Fiber-Optic Broadband**, we are looking into Fiber-Optic Broadband and are currently working with 2-3 companies to get the Village residents and businesses another option for internet and possibly phone. More information will be forthcoming. The Village could waive pole attachment fees to get Frontier here quicker. The Village secured the \$650,000.00 **Housing Rehabilitation Grant**. Applications will be taken on Monday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6 pm at a Public Meeting in the Village Hall. The Clerk's office contacted all people that

have inquired about this grant. They explained to everyone what they needed to bring to this meeting. Ten 80% median income residents chosen will receive \$60,000.00 for house improvements. Only 10 applications will be selected based on a scoring system. Four alternates will also be chosen in case income levels change or other factors of their eligibility change. If all 10 applications don't need all \$60,000.00 of the money, then other qualifying applicants could get some help based on the amount of money left of the \$650,000.00 grant. Discussion ensued. **Hero Banners:** So far, we have 24 orders for banners.

Martin motioned/Nicholson second to adjourn.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried  
The meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Rhonda Bezely, Village Clerk