

## MARCH 11, 2025 ~ REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Ladd Village Board met in regular session on Tuesday, March 11, 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 Ruggiero, Molly Thrasher, and Bernie Victor (6)

In attendance: Clerk Rhonda Bezely, Deputy Clerk Julie Koch, Engineer Adam Ossola, Attys. Pat Barry & Colin Barry, and Superintendent Doug Englehaupt

Thrasher motioned/Victor seconded to accept the February 25, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented.

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

Nicholson motioned/Ruggiero seconded to authorize payment of the bills for \$56,243.41

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

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: None

Committee Reports: Thrasher informed the Council that the Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> from 10:30-11:30 am. The start is at War Memorial Park, and then will proceed to the businesses. Nelson reported that the sidewalk in front of the Veteran's Memorial Monument is rough. He stated the whole block needs replacement. Thrasher stated the sidewalks are treacherous during the Farmers Markets. Nelson recommended offering residents the purchase of sidewalk squares as a memorial where the loved ones' names are etched in the sidewalk. Cattani suggested waiting until the Main Avenue Sidewalk Project bids and/or the Safe Routes to School 2023 Project bids to ask the contractor awarded the concrete work if they would give us a price to replace the whole block on the east side of Route 89. At that time, we can decide whether to take it out of the general fund or how we would like to proceed.

Engineer's Report: **New Business: Discuss Bids for Water Tower Maintenance Bid:** Ossola reviewed the bids. This is a 5-year contract, with the North Tower painted in year 1 and both towers cleaned and inspected for the following 4 years. He went over the bids in detail. Central Tank Coatings bid for Option 1 showed five equal payments of \$29,000.00 for \$145,000.00. This is the option Chamlin Engineer, Don Bixby recommended.

Ruggiero motioned, and Nicholson seconded that we award Central Tank Coatings, Option 1, \$145,000.00 for five years maintenance on both water towers. .

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

Superintendent's Report: **New Business: Motor Fuel Tax Project for 2025:** Englehaupt told the board that last year's Motor Fuel Project was from 2023 and was postponed to 2024. Therefore, 2025 is our next year to do a Motor Fuel Project based on our past scheduling. Since we are doing MFT – STU funds project in 2026. Englehaupt asked the board if they would like to hold off until 2026 to do both projects together. The STU program is to replace broken curbing on East Cleveland Street and

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to chip seal E Cleveland Street. Cattani also added that if the Safe Routes to School 2023 project is bid in April, we could potentially replace some curb and gutter on East Cleveland when this project is done. That would help the Village get more curbing for our money. Englehaupt feels it would be okay to wait another year before we do our MFT program to try to coordinate some things.

Cattani thanked Doug and the guys for helping remove the sod out of the baseball diamond at Kennedy Park. Cattani stated removal was completed today and dirt is slated to be delivered on Thursday. Cattani told Englehaupt to load trucks ½ loads and dump them 10 feet apart, in case we get the rain they're talking about, then only a bobcat would be needed to knock down the dirt.

Police Chief: Not in attendance, Chief Frund is at training

Building Inspector: Not in attendance

Village Attorney: **Old Business: Municipal Taxes:** Atty. Colin Barry explained the Municipal taxes that can be implemented and how they affect the businesses, residents, etc. Discussion ensued. Nelson motioned/Martin seconded to implement Municipal Tax of 1% on Service & Sales and Municipal Tax of 1% on Groceries.

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

**Old Business: Ladd Cemetery:** Atty. Pat Barry said he has a lot of information from the Comptroller's office to help the village gather enough information to make this transition. One of the big questions is whether we accept care funds. This is to care for the cemetery perpetually. We must contact Paul Biccoci and ask if they receive care funds. This makes a difference in the amount of reporting that has to be done. Victor asked if we are entertaining changing anything? Everything will remain the same Atty. Barry stated. Victor feels the Village needs to request all the financial records from the last several years to see how things have ended year after year. Are they making a profit or losing money annually? The plots are priced at \$150.00 per plot. Cattani feels this needs to be raised. Paul can ONLY use the interest in the Perpetual Fund to maintain the cemetery. After much discussion, we decided to form a cemetery committee to discuss everything we needed answered before we took this over. Victor feels we need to state our intentions as to how we plan to proceed if the Village of Ladd takes this over. The questions was asked, Sammi is looking for a full-time job with benefits, who would handle the cemetery if she gets a job. Victor asked if we will utilize all the same services. If the Village of Ladd takes over, we must pay the prevailing wage. Atty. Barry stated that yes, the prevailing wage would be mandatory. Nelson said if we work off only the interest and don't use it all, we won't put the interest in with the principal. We would need to set that up to keep the interest separate. We will need to add the Cemetery to our insurance coverage. The Cemetery Committee needs to set up a meeting to get these questions stated and answers found through research or our attorney, and to ask Paul Biccoci. Cattani noted that they currently pay \$400 per cut and they cut the cemetery approximately 4 times a year. The committee will be Jan Martin, Bernie Victor, Rich Corsolini, if he is willing, Atty. Barry and Paul Biccoci. Victor reminded the board we made a motion to investigate various questions and concerns regarding taking over the cemetery association, but not before May 1<sup>st</sup>. If questions arise after we discuss and make decisions on multiple topics, would one of the committee members talk to the trustees individually to resolve any issues. Atty. Barry said that, yes, that would be allowed.

**New Business: Ameren Presentation re: Electric Distribution:** Tabled until next meeting on March 25, 2025. An Ameren Representative will attend the meeting for discussion.

Atty. Barry commented that the IMEA wants an answer by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Two meetings are left to consider this. Barry stated that if we do not sign by April 30<sup>th</sup>, we will be subject to whatever rates are available. They now have 26 of the 32 communities that re-signed. Atty. Barry said they will start negotiating for power purchase contracts based on that need beginning in 2035. Atty. Barry stated that his personal feeling is that the rates will increase but it's up to the council. Discussion ensued. There are two costs to our electricity: 1 is energy, and the other is transmission. The cost of energy has gone down 4% since 2014. The power plants will be paid off in 2035, dropping energy costs considerably even though it is a coal-fired power plant it runs at 95% efficiency. Englehaupt explained to the Council that the IMEA has excellent prices. We don't know what will happen in the next 30 years regarding our distribution system, our one industrial customer, and what happens if they leave Ladd. Every cost of service study we've done on our side of that meter, we won't find a cheaper game than IMEA. The question before you is whether you stay in the power distribution business or get out. Discussion ensued about the cost of all electric distribution costs. Those costs are increasing more and more each year. These costs far exceed the billing charges we collect. Our demand is down and our population has decreased, which is another factor. Ladd has a 5 KV power system which is considered a dinosaur. Englehaupt stated most communities in the IMEA have 15 KV systems. The substation was updated in 2000 approximately. The last time we looked into a new substation, it cost over 1 million dollars. This is something that isn't that far away. Englehaupt feels that the IMEA does a great job of providing us with the cheapest costs in the industry. The terrifying thing is signing a contract for the next 30 years, and we won't be around to see how this plays out. Englehaupt feels that it's wrong that we are being pressured into signing something since we're so small. The IMEA would not care if we did not sign this 20-year extension since we use 1/3 of 1% which is the approximate size of 1 company in Peru. Englehaupt states he would lean on IMEA to see if they would make an exception. Atty. Barry said they will not make an exception. Ladd will need to figure out what we will do in 2035 if we don't sign. If Ladd stays in the power distribution business, we need to sign with the IMEA. If we don't sign by April 30<sup>th</sup>, then after 2035 Ladd will pay a higher rate than communities that already re-signed with IMEA. Even if Ladd decided to no longer distribute power, we also use the bucket truck for Christmas lights and tree cutting. Many things must be discussed to make a good decision. Discussion with Englehaupt ensued. We need to get industry in town to help us. Englehaupt questioned if we should have Verbal Blakey do an updated rate study for Ladd and also do rates without any industrial customer in the equation. We want to get a cost to have Verbal hear what's going on in Ladd and see what she thinks the future looks like for the Village of Ladd. Cattani stated maybe we should ask Verbal to come talk to the council regarding an updated rate study, and also a survey without our 1 industrial customer. The council wants Doug and Rhonda to contact Verbal to explain our situation and see if she can offer any advice to Ladd about the IMEA decision as well as updating the rates as needed.

**New Business: 124 N. Hennepin Ave Sale of Lot:** We received one bid at 3:30 pm from Tim Bott. The sealed bid was opened and read. The bid amount was \$5,000.00 and there was a \$500.00 deposit in the form of a Cashier's Check. He wrote that he intends to build a house on the lot in the next 18

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months. The council accepted the bid. Julie will contact Todd of TNT not to cut this grass since it has been sold.

Nicholson motioned/Nelson seconded to Accept the Bid for \$5,000.00 for 124 N. Hennepin Ave.

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

**New Business: Pass Resolution for Convoy Against Cancer:** Phil Hocking is hosting a 2025 Convoy Against Cancer Big Truck Show again on Main Avenue. The Village of Ladd must pass a resolution.

Nelson motioned/Thrasher seconded to Pass Resolution #1182 Convoy Against Cancer Big Truck Show in the Village of Ladd and Temporary Closure of Route 89 on July 19, 2025.

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

**New Business: Approve Liquor License for Greg Colmone Trivia:** Doug Colmone is hosting another trivia to honor his brother Greg, who passed away tragically, by providing scholarships to local high school seniors.

Victor motioned/Nelson seconded approving a Liquor License for Greg Colmone Scholarship.

Trivia Night on September 6, 2025 at the Ladd Community Center.

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

**New Business: Donation Request – IL Valley Youth Football:** No action was taken

**New Business: Donation Request—Spring Valley Baseball League:** The board felt that the \$5,000.00 recently donated to Ladd Sports to prepare the fields for play was satisfactory.

**New Business: Donation Request—Project Success:** Martin told the Council that the need is high and that 400 families have signed up for Easter Meals. Approximately 66 people from Ladd (28 families) use the food pantry. In 2024, \$320.00 was donated for eight baskets at \$40 each.

Nicholson motioned/ to donate \$320.00 for 8 Easter Meal Baskets for 2025. Motion died for lack of a second.

**New Business: Discuss possible purchase of Ad for Bureau County Visitors Guide:** Bezely explained the ad sizes and costs. She also told the council that all activities that we listed on our page are included in the calendar section of the book. After discussion ensued. No action was taken.

**New Business: BC Zoning Request—Kenneth Helm:** The Council reviewed all the information on the zoning change from Manufacturing to Agricultural, which will likely lower his taxes.

Victor motioned/Nicholson seconded to Respond to Bureau County Zoning Board that the Village of Ladd has no objection for Kenneth Helm.

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

**New Business: BC Zoning Request – Ladd Elevator:** The Council reviewed all the information on the zoning request. They request the okay to put up a Grain Elevator in an agricultural district. In order to do this, they need a special use permit.

Martin motioned, and Thrasher seconded, to Respond to the Bureau County Zoning Board that Ladd has no objection to the Ladd Elevator Putting up This Grain Bin.

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

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**New Business: Pass Certificate of Authority by Vote:**

Thrasher motioned/Victor Seconded to Pass Certificate of Authority by Vote To Allow Frank Cattani, Village President, to Sign as Duly Authorized to Enter Into Contracts to Include Joint Participation Agreements on Behalf of the Village of Ladd with the State of Illinois CY2025/CY2026 Rock Salt Contract Joint Participation Agreement.

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

Bezely told the Council 154 ton of salt was ordered for next year per Englehaupt.

**Announcements: Veteran Banners:** We have now signed up 48 people for Veteran's banners.

**Housing Rehab Grants:** There was a huge turnout for the public hearing on the CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant. Applications were distributed and residents will return them to NCICG or they can take them to the clerk's office and someone will pick them up from NCICG. Bezely stated that the income eligibility is wrong on the application, it is from FY22, in case anyone asks a council member about this.

**Video Gaming Fees:** Letters and invoices for video gaming fees will be sent out at the end of March. Fees are due by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Bezely stated that invoices total \$8,500.00 for the Village's General Fund. Deputy Clerk, Koch announced that the **LP Cavs Travel Team** is donating a field drager to help keep the field in playing condition. **The IV Predators Travel Team** donated money for bases for the small diamond. Coaches Doug Barto and Dale Carls will be using the big diamond for Spring Valley Junior and Senior league this year, and Steve Bosi requested they provide 10 bags of field chalk to prep the fields, which has a \$150.00 value. They want to play in Ladd this year.

Nicholson motioned/Ruggerio seconded to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Rhonda Bezely, Village Clerk