**City of LeRoy MN – Council Meeting Minutes, March 7, 2022**

A regular meeting of the LeRoy City Council was called to order by Mayor Ed Koppen on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 6:30 PM at the LeRoy Community Center with the following members present: Mayor Ed Koppen, Council Members Ashley Huntley, Harold Shipman, Gerald Payne (by phone), Brian Thiel, Maintenance Employee Nick Sweeney, and City Clerk Patty White.   
Also attending: Axel Gumbel, John & Sharon Grass, John & Leslie Kerr, Alice Kempe, June Torrison, Cole & Kristen Wilcox, Caleb Hovde, Tim Freerksen, Jan Whisler, Sergeant Tom Brogan, and Robert Keith. All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

* Council reviewed the items included in the consent agenda. Motion by Huntley, second by Shipman to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

Police Report:

* Sergeant Tom Brogan introduced himself to council. He reported he will be the person to attend the monthly council meetings and to give the police report. Sergeant Brogan reported Mower County deputies had 170 patrol hours in the LeRoy area in February. These hours covered a wide variety of calls.
* Sergeant Brogan reported that multiple officers provide coverage here in LeRoy at different times of each day. Council noted appreciation for the variety of hours of coverage; council did note it is nice to have a deputy around when school is dismissed each day. Sergeant Brogan was thanked for his report.

Public Input Time:

* No one present had anything to bring during public input time.

Standing Committee Reports:

* Huntley reported the new refurbished ambulance is back in service.
* Shipman reported the Prairie Visions bike ride will be held on June 11, 2022. The ride will begin and end at Todd Park in Austin.

State Highway 56 Project:

* White reported the project may be delayed one year with construction being completed in 2024. This has not been confirmed yet.

Parks:

* Huntley reported she had asked Axel Gumbel to post some information about the parks on the City Facebook page. The post included the opportunity for interested people to volunteer to serve on a committee to address amenities at both city parks. No one volunteered to serve on a committee.
* Huntley also asked Mr. Gumbel, with his membership with the LeRoy Lions, to reach out to the Lions to see if any of them would be willing to coordinate with a committee to possibly use some of their ideas to incorporate them into either or both city parks.
* It was the consensus of the council to remove this item from the monthly council agenda.

City Position-Maintenance Department:

* Huntley reported one interview was conducted for the maintenance department position. Payne noted this was an excellent interview; he recommended Cole Wilcox for the maintenance department position.
* Health insurance benefits were discussed. White updated council on what the present personnel policy states for insurance benefits. Payne noted the city would not get a quality employee with requiring the employee to pay 100% of family benefits. Huntley questioned if changing the policy would affect any other employees with their benefits. Council discussed the percentage the city should pay for family benefits and the percentage the employee should pay for family benefits. Huntley questioned if the council would be comfortable with the city paying 70% of the family benefits. Council leaned towards the city paying 75% of the family benefits with the employee paying 25% of the family benefits. Thiel read portions of the present personnel policy.
* Motion by Huntley to offer Cole Wilcox the Maintenance Worker 1 position at $17.78 per hour with the city paying 100% of single health insurance, the city paying 75% of family health insurance, and the employee paying 25% of family health insurance. Second by Payne. The motion carried 5-0. Mr. Wilcox was in attendance and accepted this offer. A review will be conducted within six months after Mr. Wilcox begins work with the city.

LeRoy Fire Department:

* Fire Chief Caleb Hovde reported the fire department is working on written standard operating procedures (SOP). The department has discussed holding a Johnny Jones Memorial Kick Ball Tournament during Summer Fest.
* Tim Freerksen, a member of the LeRoy Fire Department and the MN/IA Fire Assn. reported the MN/IA Fire Assn. approved increasing fire member pay for fires and training from $10 per hour to $15 per hour. Mr. Freerksen questioned the council if they would be willing to increase the city pay to match the MN/IA Fire Assn. pay. Motion by Huntley, second by Thiel to increase firefighter pay from $10 per hour to $15 per hour. Motion carried 5-0.
* Chief Hovde reported that Dennis Harvey and his family own the original hose cart the LeRoy Fire Department purchased in 1896. The Harvey family had this hose cart restored to museum quality and have offered to either donate or loan this hose cart to the city. Mr. Harvey noted his family would want the hose cart on display and not just put away in a building.
* Koppen questioned how ownership would be classified; he also questioned which entity would be responsible for insuring this hose cart. John Kerr, speaking on behalf of the LeRoy Area Historical Society, noted Koppen’s questions are questions the members of the LAHS also have posed. He noted there are many unanswered questions at this point in time. Possible locations for this were discussed. The cart could be displayed in the green space next to city hall by the fire bell, or the cart could be displayed at the LAHS museum site. This could offer a draw for people to check out the museum site.
* It was the consensus of the council to cooperate with the LAHS and the LeRoy Fire Department on this venture; the groups involved will need to know who will retain ownership and how insurance will be handled. Council will continue to review this as more information is received.

Housing Tax Abatement Public Hearing:

* Koppen read the due call for the public hearing and opened the hearing at 7:00 PM. No one in attendance had any comments about the requested tax abatement for the new house construction at 109 Freund Boulevard.
* Council reviewed the request for tax abatement from Robert & Susan Keith for the new construction they have proposed on Lot 3, River’s Edge Addition. The total estimated abatement amount is on $250,000 of estimated property value.
* Motion by Shipman, second by Huntley to pass Resolution 2022-04, a Resolution Approving Tax Abatement for Certain Property Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 469.1813. Motion carried 5-0. Being no further business to come before the public hearing, the hearing was closed at 7:02 PM.

Boundary Line Issue-Encroachment Agreement:

* Council reviewed an email from Patrick & Shawn Sween, the members of PSS Properties, LLC. PSS Properties owns the property located at 224 East Read Street. There is a barn located near this property that is actually located on city property. Mr. & Mrs. Sween are asking the city to consider putting an encroachment agreement in place so that the barn is allowed to stay and be maintained by the property owner, but if the barn ever needs to be removed or replaced, the property owner wouldn’t be able to rebuild back onto the land that is owned by the city there. Council reviewed the reasons this would be beneficial to the city.
* Motion by Thiel to accept this easement request. Second by Huntley. Motion carried 5-0.

Land Use Permits:

* Council reviewed one land use permit:

1. Lot 3, River’s Edge Addition, 109 Freund Blvd, Robert & Susan Keith-build home

* Motion by Huntley, second by Shipman to approve said permit. Motion carried 5-0.

Communications File:

* Council reviewed a letter from Mediacom pertaining to rates. A thank you from the family of Fern Dohlman was read. The open book meeting for Mower County will be held April 9, 2022, through June 7, 2022, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.
* Council discussed offering a city-wide cleanup again this spring. White will check with the appliance recycler that has been used in the past to see if he is still offering this service. Council members noted many people appreciate this. Motion by Huntley, second by Payne to hold the city-wide cleanup on Saturday, May 14, 2022. Motion carried 5-0.

Street Project for 2022:

* Sweeney had met with Colton from Heartland Asphalt. Council reviewed the proposal from Heartland Asphalt. The proposal included one block on Everett Street between Lowell Street and Cabot Street; one block on Cabot Street between Broadway Street and Everett Street, and two blocks on Read Street between Broadway Street and West County Road. It was noted this proposal does not include any repairs on South Mather Street near LeRoy Lumber. Sweeney noted this estimate is a rough estimate; a more accurate estimate will be received when Colton returns to review these areas and the area by LeRoy Lumber.
* Motion by Huntley to have Sweeney move forward with these projects plus any other projects that should get completed. Second by Payne. Motion carried 5-0.
* Koppen also questioned about the potholes around town. Sweeney reported one pallet of pothole patch was ordered today; he still has a partial pallet left from last year.

Strong & John Street-Right of Way Infringement:

* This work will be completed when the weather allows.

Water Main-West County Road:

* Sweeney reported this main has been repaired four times since Sweeney began working for the city. The total length of this main is approximately 1,600 feet; this is a four inch main. Council discussed if this main should be replaced. If the main is replaced should the street remain gravel, or should the street be upgraded with curb and gutter and blacktop. Koppen questioned if the sewer main should also be replaced at the same time the water main would be replaced. Sweeney noted the city engineer would need to be consulted on this. It was the consensus of the council to have Sweeney consult with the city engineer and request a preliminary report.

Security Cameras Update:

* Thiel presented information from Sensera Surveillance Systems. These are motion activated video cameras; the activity would be stored in the camera. This is a fully integrated, but pricey, system. These cameras could be mounted on light poles or buildings with electricity. Thiel had listed the benefits of a local surveillance system along with the risks of a local surveillance system.
* Initial setup would cost $3,057 plus a Cloud service package for $528 plus a cell phone plan for $1,600 for a total estimated cost of $5,185 per camera. Succeeding year’s annual costs for each camera system would be estimated at $2,128. Huntley felt this a lot of money to spend on cameras. Koppen questioned what it would cost to hire a security firm to install cameras with monitoring capabilities. This idea will be researched. Thiel was thanked for this information.

Service Award Recognition:

* Thiel recognized Tom Bye for the snow removal he provides for his neighborhood sidewalks.

Nuisance Properties:

* Some activity on the Jay Hardecopf properties was noted. The two Alexander Lucas properties need additional attention. These will be monitored as the weather gets nicer.

North Speed Limit Sign:

* Sweeney reported the sign has been installed. Thiel needs to program the sign. The marquee sign at the community center was also discussed. Sweeney reported he had worked with the cables running to the sign, but it seems an internal cable needs to be replaced.

ARPA Funds:

* There was nothing to report on these funds.

EDA & WWG Report:

* Koppen noted he reviewed information from 2017 and financial reports for WWG plus the WWG, Inc. articles of incorporation and bylaws. He stated he doesn’t know if the EDA is in compliance with anything pertaining to WWG, Inc. It was questioned if the bylaws of WWG, Inc. have been changed. White noted they have not been changed or revised. Koppen felt it best to go back to the base and do a full review. Thiel suggested having the city attorney do this review. Koppen noted there is such a blurring of the lines. Payne noted the EDA is the acting board of WWG; this had been approved by motion at a previous meeting. Payne would like to forget the back history that Koppen is bringing up and move forward. Payne noted the city attorney should be contacted to review this with the notation that the EDA is to be the managing board of WWG; what is the best way to make this correct. White was directed to contact the city attorney for a review of this information; she is also to provide copies of the WWG, Inc. paperwork to the council.
* Koppen again questioned how you can have an entity without a comptroller in place; he noted the amount of money that flows through WWG. Payne noted the EDA will continue to review items on a monthly basis plus again at year end. Shipman reported he is not in favor of hiring a comptroller. He noted the EDA is working through this; these changes need to have some time to happen. Shipman noted to move forward to keep things going; the EDA is taking small steps to get things better.

Being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Shipman, second by Huntley at 7:55 PM.

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Ed Koppen, Mayor

Attest:

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Patty A. White, City Clerk-Treasurer