**City of LeRoy MN – Council Meeting Minutes, April 3, 2023**

A regular meeting of the LeRoy City Council was called to order by Mayor Ed Koppen on Monday, April 4, 2023, at 6:30 PM at the LeRoy Community Center with the following members present: Mayor Ed Koppen, Council Members Gerald Payne, Brian Thiel, Harold Shipman, Ashley Huntley (arrived at 6:39 PM), Maintenance Employee Nick Sweeney, and City Clerk Patty White.
Also attending: Axel Gumbel, Deb Reburn, Cole Wilcox, Gaye Stockdale, Brian Johnson, Sergeant Tim Donovan. All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

* Thiel noted in the minutes of the March council meeting that the letter that was to be sent to ISD #499 was to have requested attendance at this meeting, but the copy of the letter that was sent out demanded attendance at this meeting. Thiel called on Koppen for this wording. Koppen apologized for this wording. Being no further questions about the items included in the consent agenda, the consent agenda was approved on a motion by Shipman, second by Thiel. Motion carried 4-0.

Police Report:

* Sergeant Tim Donovan presented the police report. He reported there were 43 calls in March. Sergeant Donovan noted the dog situation discussed at the March meeting is being monitored. Council thanked Sergeant Donovan for this report.

Public Input Time:

* Gaye Stockdale, on behalf of United Lutheran Church of Chester, Iowa, noted she was one of the four remaining members of the church. The church has been closed. These people donated the remaining funds from the church to different non-profit organizations. The LeRoy Fire Department received a $2,000 donation; the LeRoy Area Ambulance Service received a $1,000 donation. Thiel also noted $1,000 was given to the LeRoy Area Food Shelf. Motion by Payne, second by Shipman to accept these donations with many thanks. Motion carried 4-0.
* Deb Reburn reported she has worked in the Community Center kitchen for many functions over many years. She realizes there may be other foundational issues in the Community Center, but she hopes the upgrades/renovations to the kitchen are completed. Thiel would like to see updates to the Community Center to also include lighting and electrical upgrades.
* Thiel would like to see professional advisors added to the agenda. He would like to see these types of people on some type of pay as you go basis/retainer like what the city attorney is, and to see this item as a continuing item on the agenda.
* Payne questioned if these items will be added to the agenda tonight for further discussion. Payne felt hurt when he had requested the Community Center Kitchen Proposal to be tabled until the April council meeting since he was out of town for the March council meeting and then found out that this item was removed from the agenda until after the Hwy 56 project is completed. Payne noted he has not heard from anyone that is against this project. Koppen noted he has heard from many people that are not in favor of any changes to the kitchen. Payne felt that unless people come to a meeting or send a letter with comments, these verbal comments are not valid. Thiel noted he would like to see this project done as a whole project, not as a piece-meal project. Koppen questioned if there are infinite funds within the LeRoy Community Foundation; he also questioned if this grant of $50,000 will deplete the funds the LeRoy Community Foundation has available for other projects. He noted his understanding these funds are to be used for the benefit of the community. Payne commented these funds to upgrade the kitchen would further enhance the Community Center. Deb Reburn, as a member of the LeRoy Community Foundation, noted that $50,000 is as high as the Foundation will allocate funds for a project. She noted these funds were allocated for the Community Center kitchen remodel as was presented to the LeRoy Community Foundation board. Payne noted new flooring, wall coverings, new sinks, new stove, new refrigerator, new freezer, and new cabinets are slated to be installed. Thiel noted the current stove does not require any electronics; this could be used for heating, if necessary, during a long power outage. Payne noted the proposed new stove could also be used for this purpose, if needed. Shipman noted he did not realize the front of the building in the small meeting room was in as poor of shape as it is. Shipman noted it doesn’t make sense to let the building fall apart while redoing other parts of the building. Payne agreed with this, but he doesn’t want to see this entire project stop until after the Hwy 56 project is completed. Koppen noted the general population is very happy with the kitchen; Koppen again questioned where the storm shelter is at for this building. Koppen also noted the east half of the Community Center is a cinder-block building. He felt it wiser to address the storm shelter aspect instead of making improvements to the kitchen. He noted people cannot stay at the Fire Hall or Maintenance Shop in case of a large scale emergency. Payne questioned who these people are that spoke to Koppen; he would like their names. Much bantering and words were exchanged between Koppen and Payne. Motion by Huntley to bring this item back to the May meeting with the complete plans for the kitchen that Payne has along with Thiel’s suggestions about lighting and electrical upgrades. Payne questioned why this can’t move forward when no taxpayer funds will be used for this project, and the funds have been allocated by the LeRoy Community Foundation. Thiel seconded the motion. On a roll call of votes, all council members voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.
* Thiel made the recommendation that the council should secure, in advance, an individual or individuals that could provide knowledgeable assistance to the city council on matters that pertain to available commercial properties, potential land developments, and potential land redevelopments. Motion by Thiel that the city council shall name a member or members of the council to search for a ‘commercial’ real estate broker or other professional with recent experience in negotiations on commercial properties in this region to be an advisor to the city; this person (people) would then bring to the council a proposed agreement of a firm/broker/person to provide services subject to the approval of the city council. Payne felt this is very important with things that are currently happening or things that could be happening in the future. Payne seconded the motion. On a roll call of votes, Huntley, Shipman, Payne, and Thiel voted aye. Koppen cast a nay vote. The motion carried 4-1.

Standing Committee Reports:

* Shipman reported on the most recent Prairie Visions meeting. He noted the Shooting Star Bike Ride will be happening in June; this could very possibly be the last bike ride sponsored by Prairie Visions. He noted the Wapsi group from Riceville is quite interested in taking the bike ride over.
* Huntley reported the LeRoy Area Ambulance Service has been busy, but they have always been able to take their calls. The second rig has been sent out for refurbishment. She noted the service can always use more EMTs, but the First Responders help cover calls and weekend on-call rotation.

State Highway 56 Project:

* Brian Johnson, city engineer, gave an update on the State Hwy 56 project. He reviewed the proposed cost share of the project. According to MnDOT figures, the city’s cost share would be $4,095,120. This amount does not include engineering fees the city has already paid for or the funds expended by the city for acquisition of the temporary easements.
* Mr. Johnson reviewed the proposed street lights. The proposed lights would be the standard Cobra LED luminaries; it was discussed what items would need to be added to the poles to include flag holders and hangers for the Christmas decorations.
* Mr. Johnson discussed the proposed extension of water main 500’ east of Ada Street. Council discussed this proposal; council noted it may not be feasible to do this extension.
* Mr. Johnson noted that both the water main and the sanitary sewer main will be PVC. He noted PVC has been proven over the years. Tracer wires will be installed to help with locating the mains.
* MnDOT plans to combine the east section and the west section and do this construction at the same time. The downtown section will be the last section completed. MnDOT is willing to stub in a storm sewer pipe to the right of way on South Mather Street at no cost to the city. The detours were also discussed. Mr. Johnson questioned about the ‘no parking’ signs on Main Street. It was noted these signs could have different wording on them to address ‘no parking’ due to snow removal.
* Mr. Johnson questioned if the council was planning on assessing any portion of this project. He noted their firm would usually send out the preliminary letters to those being assessed. Council discussed bonding and how these bonds would be paid. Mr. Johnson was thanked for his time in presenting this information and for all his work on the Hwy 56 project.
* White presented information on a reimbursement resolution that would allow the city to recoup the costs they have expended prior to bonding for this project. Motion by Payne, second by Huntley to pass Resolution 2023-01, a resolution establishing procedures relating to compliance with reimbursement bond regulations under the Internal Revenue Code. Motion carried 5-0.
* Koppen apologized for the word ‘demand’ used in the letter sent to the Board Chair, Superintendent, and Principal of ISD #499. Koppen noted that when the school purchased the former Jacobson Apartment property, it was the general public’s thought that this land was to be used for a parking lot to alleviate parking on Main Street, but nothing has happened with this lot. Koppen questioned Deb Reburn, school board chair, if the school is going to turn this into a parking lot, or what is the school’s plans for this property. Ms. Reburn reported the initial plans would have given room for the school run daycare, a one-way traffic lane for pickup/drop-off of students in private vehicles, plus room for the school buses. Ms. Reburn noted this project is in the school’s plans, but the school does not have the amount of money needed for this at this point in time. It was noted there will be a cut-out put in front of the main entrance of the school for pick-up and drop-off of students. Ms. Reburn noted the administration has asked faculty and staff to not park in front of the building during school hours to help alleviate the parking issues. Water and sewer was also discussed to this bare lot. It was questioned if these will be necessary, or if they should be removed during the Hwy 56 project. Ms. Reburn noted the only conversation for this property was to be used as a parking lot. It was noted a curb cut will not be placed along this property, since the school will need to make application to MnDOT when they decide to do something with this lot. Council thanked Ms. Reburn for her time and information.

Land Use Permits:

* Council reviewed one land use permit.
1. Lot 7, Block 1, River’s Edge Addition, 117 Miller Court, Taylor Meyer-build home
* Motion by Huntley, second by Thiel to approve said permit. Motion carried 5-0.
* It was noted that Mr. Meyer has requested tax abatement on this new construction. Motion by Shipman, second by Payne to call for a public hearing to address this tax abatement request on May 1, 2023, at 7:00 PM during the regular May city council meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

Communications File:

* Council reviewed the invitation to the LMC Annual Conference to be held in Duluth.
* Thiel reported on the SEMLM meeting held last week in Chatfield. The group present voted in favor of supporting a regional transportation authority; they are trying to tie all transportation together. If funds are awarded for this, the City of Chatfield will become the fiscal agent.
* Mike Bubany of David Drown Associates gave a presentation at the SEMLM meeting on housing tax abatement and TIF for housing. Koppen encouraged the council to review this information. Payne felt Mr. Bubany would be the type of person to have on retainer to help guide the city through housing development and other endeavors.

Possible Street Project for 2023:

* Council reviewed the proposal from Heartland Asphalt for the two blocks of West Lowell Street between Broadway Street and County 14. The proposal was in the amount of $85,755. Koppen questioned if there were any other areas in town that should be cut out and patched. Sweeney noted there are areas, but he questioned where do you start and stop.
* Motion by Shipman, second by Payne to approve this proposal from Heartland Asphalt in the amount of $85,755. Motion carried 5-0.

Update on Street Project from 2022:

* Sweeney reported Heartland Asphalt should be here in LeRoy in early May to complete the project from 2022 and do the new project for 2023.

Parks & Recreation:

* Payne questioned if the tennis/pickleball courts would be repainted this year. Sweeney reported that is his plan. Options for painting were discussed.

Service Award Recognition:

* Koppen recognized the LeRoy Community Theater for their excellent dinner theater production. He noted these performances were very well received.

Vacant Properties:

* Council reviewed the letters that were sent out to the owners of record of the properties located at 221 East Main Street, 213 East Henry Street, and 210 East Frederick Street. Response was received from Alexander Lucas, the owner of record for the Main Street and Henry Street properties. Payne questioned what the next step is for the Frederick Street house. Thiel noted that according to the city attorney, council doesn’t have much they can do without some type of legal documentation that shows the house is unlivable. White was directed to make contact with Mr. Lucas to see if a meeting can be set up with him to further discuss his two properties.

Strong & John Street-Right of Way Infringement-Traffic Flow:

* Sweeney has talked to the city engineer about getting this surveyed.

ARPA Funds:

* There was nothing new to discuss pertaining to the ARPA funds.

EDA & WWG Report:

* Shipman reported the roof at WWG is in very poor repair; the shingles are beyond their useful life. Three different bids have been received for the roof. The EDA will be meeting in special session to address the roof issues and review the three bids received.
* Thiel questioned about funding for this project. Shipman noted the EDA nor WWG has the funds for this. It was felt the EDA will need to come back to the council to request funds.

Being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Huntley, second by Payne at 8:58 PM.

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 Ed Koppen, Mayor

Attest:

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 Patty A. White, City Clerk-Treasurer