**City of LeRoy MN – Council Meeting Minutes, December 5, 2022**

A regular meeting of the LeRoy City Council was called to order by Mayor Ed Koppen on Monday, December 5, 2022, at 6:30 PM at the LeRoy Community Center with the following members present: Mayor Ed Koppen, Council Members Harold Shipman, Brian Thiel, Gerald Payne, Ashley Huntley (arrived at 6:32 PM), Maintenance Employee Nick Sweeney, and City Clerk Patty White.
Also attending: Dave Johnson, Cole & Kristin Wilcox, Ron Purkapile, Axel Gumbel, Ashley Roney, Glenn Young, Deb Reburn, and Deputy Tim Donovan. All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Truth in Taxation Hearing:

* Koppen reviewed the property tax notices and the percent change from each taxing entity. He noted the city did not increase their levy for 2023.
* Glenn Young questioned why his tax bill increased by $192. It was noted Mower County had raised property valuations. Mr. Young noted his valuation had also increased. Those present were told the city council cannot do anything with the property valuations; these need to be addressed with the county during the open book meeting process.
* Dave Johnson questioned where the additional tax dollars are going. Koppen and White explained that some property valuations had increased, some property valuations had decreased, so the city is not receiving any additional tax dollars other than what the city levies for.
* Being no further discussion for the truth in taxation hearing, the hearing was closed at 6:41 PM.

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:

* Deputy Donovan gave an oral police report. He explained the coverage Mower County provides according to the contract the city has with Mower County. From November 1 through December 4, there were 50 calls for service; he noted these were regular calls and nothing out of the ordinary. Glenn Young gave a short summary of the police contract through the years. Council thanked Mr. Young and Deputy Donovan for their reports.

Standing Committee Reports:

* Huntley reported the LeRoy Area Ambulance Service board will be increasing the per-capita rate for the City of LeRoy to $20 per person. This will go into effect in 2024. Payne commended the ambulance crew for the excellent service they provide. Huntley also reported the annual cookie walk was well attended; many cookies were donated. Huntley noted the ambulance service has responded to 209 calls so far in 2022. Thiel reported on his attendance at a SEMLM ambulance meeting; he reported the LeRoy Area Ambulance Service is well-known and well-respected. An EMT class will be held in Spring Valley beginning in January.
* White noted the council needs to designate the polling place in the city each year. She noted there are no elections scheduled for 2023. Motion by Thiel, second by Payne to pass Resolution 2022-10, a resolution designating the annual polling place. Motion carried 5-0.

State Highway 56 Project:

* Ashley Roney questioned about a letter she had received pertaining to temporary easements.

Proposed 2023 Budget & Levy:

* Council reviewed the proposed 2023 budget and levy. Motion by Huntley, second by Shipman to approve the 2023 budget as presented. Motion carried 5-0.
* Motion by Thiel, second by Huntley to pass Resolution 2022-11, a resolution approving the 2023 levy at $575,000. Motion carried 5-0.

Speed Signs:

* Sweeney noted the signs have arrived. Sweeney reported he wants to get the signs set up and programmed prior to the installation of these. Council noted they would like to see the signs installed prior to January 1, 2023.

2023 Liquor Licenses:

* Motion by Huntley, second by Shipman to approve the 2023 liquor licenses as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

2023 Pay Package:

* White noted a 3% pay increase to all employees was factored into the proposed 2023 budget. Motion by Shipman, second by Payne to approve the 2023 pay package. Motion carried 5-0.

Land Use Permits:

* Council reviewed one land use permit.
1. Lots 1 & 2, Block 1, Caswell & Lewis, 615 N East County Road, Chris Dahl-build addition to house, add decks
* Motion by Thiel, second by Huntley to approve said permit. Motion carried 5-0.

Communications File:

* There was nothing to review in the communications file.

Street Project for 2022-Sanitary Sewer Review:

* Sweeney had talked to Empire Pipe. The Empire Pipe representative told Sweeney to make sure that any quotes for sanitary sewer lining must include end seals. Sweeney is still waiting to hear from Insituform. Thiel questioned if the process for sanitary sewer lining is the same between different companies or if there is another process to consider. Sweeney noted it is a comparable process between companies. It was thought the City of Stacyville had recently had some sanitary sewer lining completed. Sweeney will check with them.

Well House Controls:

* Sweeney reported NES is supposed to be coming on Thursday, December 8, to install more items; the installation will depend if these items have been programmed yet.

Community Center Kitchen Proposal:

* Payne reported a grant application has been submitted for $25,000. Koppen noted he was under the assumption, from discussion at an earlier council meeting, that LED lighting would be installed, a farmhouse sink would be installed, and electrical outlets would be upgraded. Sweeney questioned about a different stove. Payne noted a different stove is included in the grant application. Koppen noted the need for a stove that can work when power is out. No improvements will be completed until it is known if the grant will be awarded and following the busy time for rentals at the center.

Community Center Utility Room:

* Improvements to the steps and hatch door will be reviewed when the maintenance department has time to look into this.

Service Award Recognition:

* Koppen recognized Prairie Visions for all they do to promote the four cities (Adams, LeRoy, Taopi, Rose Creek) that comprise Prairie Visions. He noted the importance of maintaining this organization. Thiel was commended for getting a website set up for Prairie Visions and taking this organization into the 21st century. White was also commended for her assistance with getting notices about Prairie Visions meetings and events out to the local elected officials.
* Koppen also recognized the LeRoy Volunteer Fire Department members and the members of the LeRoy Area Ambulance Service for all they do for the LeRoy community.
* Koppen would like to see the negative signs displayed in different places here in LeRoy taken down and promote the positivity and good-will that is truly evident during the holiday season.
* Payne recognized White for her work at and during the General Election for making sure the election was conducted fairly and seamlessly. Payne also recognized the group that put together the benefit for the Magnus Rudlong family.

Nuisance Properties-Reconsideration:

* Motion by Thiel to rescind the motion from the September 7, 2021, council meeting which read, “Motion by Payne to send out these four letters to the owners of record at 221 East Main Street, 213 Henry Street, 304 East Main Street, and 124 East Main Street, with each council member signing each letter.” Second by Huntley. On a roll call of votes, all council members voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.
* Council would like to have the steps to address nuisance properties from the city attorney, so this process can begin after the first of January, 2023. Thiel noted the council will need to look at all classifications of nuisances to proceed in the proper way.

Strong & John Street-Right of Way Infringement:

* Koppen noted that the council probably should not close or vacate John Street. Some discussion centered on previous conversation about the Highway 56 project and the changes that will be made during construction to the East Y.

ARPA Funds-Mower County Mini-Grant Program:

* Council reviewed the information received from Mower County. Council also discussed possible uses for these funds including further upgrades at the well house and generators. Motion by Payne, second by Thiel to accept these funds. Motion carried 5-0.

EDA & WWG Report:

* Payne reported Slifka has submitted the grant application for the Community Center kitchen; she had also submitted grant applications to both Mower County and the LeRoy Community Foundation for funds for the picnic shelter that is being constructed at the Wind Tower Park.
* At the time the EDA met, WWG had two vacancies. Since then the occupancy numbers have changed. The EDA did receive the proposed budget for 2023 for WWG. This budget needs to be more fully reviewed prior to adoption by the EDA board.
* Koppen read an excerpt from the November 7, 2022, council meeting minutes that addressed the financial stability of WWG. Koppen noted there is not a person that reviews the WWG financials to make sure they are accurate. He felt the need to create a chief financial officer position; this person would have a business background and would be a stipend position through the city. This position would be in place for the council; the person to do this would not necessarily be an elected official. It was questioned what type of power this person would have. Koppen noted he had talked to Thiel about this. This would be done in cooperation with the city council and EDA; this position could get set up and functioning and be maintained when council members change. Thiel questioned if there would be a five to ten year outlook pertaining to long-range planning.
* Shipman noted WWG continues to receive letters from the IRS. Payne noted WWG has been cash-flowing in 2022. WWG still had to pay penalties and interest from issues dating back to 2018.
* Huntley noted the council is not trying to micro manage WWG. Payne is concerned with not wanting to see an exodus of employees and staff with the formation of this position. Huntley also expressed concern with the increase in the amount of the line of credit. She questioned why the increase was needed; she questioned if something else is going on. Huntley stressed the council and EDA need to be united with WWG and its operations. Payne felt the council is questioning the current EDA board and WWG staff with the operations at WWG.
* Koppen reiterated he would like see Thiel take the lead on this position. Payne and Shipman expressed concern with having an elected official involved with this position; they both felt this person should be completely separate from the council to address any conflict of interest.
* Thiel noted he would only set up the parameters of this position; he noted goals would need to be set along with break-even points, and where occupancy needs to be based on expenses. Payne and Shipman felt there should be a joint meeting with the EDA and city council to further discuss this. Thiel felt to get the right financial reports, the financial reports need to be reviewed to know that the information is correct.
* Payne agreed with having this person/position, but he noted being careful to not step on people’s toes; he hoped this would clear up some of the negativity. He suggested setting guidelines and have this as a collaborative idea as to what all this position will entail.
* Koppen reiterated this chief financial officer position to be someone to overlook/oversee.
* It was noted that two EDA board members will be going off the EDA at the end of December. White was directed to place an ad in the Mower County Independent for letters of interest for these positions.

It was noted the first Monday in January (January 2) is a legal holiday. It was the consensus of the council to hold the January meeting on Monday, January 9, 2023. Koppen thanked the council for their time and cooperation this past year. Being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Payne, second by Shipman at 8:00 PM.

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 Ed Koppen, Mayor

Attest:

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 Patty A. White, City Clerk-Treasurer