**City of LeRoy MN – Council Meeting Minutes, March 1, 2021**

A regular meeting of the LeRoy City Council was called to order by Mayor Ed Koppen on Monday, March 1, 2021, at 6:30 PM at the LeRoy Community Center with the following members present: Mayor Ed Koppen, Council Members Ashley Huntley, Harold Shipman, Daisie Fox, Gerald Payne (by telephone), Maintenance Employee John Jones, and City Clerk Patty White.
Also attending: Axel Gumbel, Cassidy Milks, T.J. Johnson, and Deputy Sawyer Weiss. All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

* Fox questioned about the cost for publishing the city council meeting minutes. Payne also thought the price was quite high; he suggested forgoing publishing the minutes until a definite price is in place. It has cost $709.50 for publishing the January and February council meeting minutes; council was under the understanding the minutes would cost around $1,000 to publish them for the entire year. It was the consensus of the council to refrain from publishing the minutes until a set figure is found or a notation will be made directing people to the city website to read the approved meeting minutes.
* Fox questioned about the amount paid to Jones, Haugh & Smith for engineering costs for the Highway 56 project. White noted these engineering fees are for the replacement of the water and sanitary sewer mains under Main Street. The total fees already paid will be compiled and presented to council.
* Council also discussed payroll being paid to Rhonda Barnes. Payne reported Ms. Barnes is training the new library director; this training time should be winding down.
* Shipman noted he would like to see one water service shut off. Jones reported he will try to clean out the shut-off pipe for this service; if this isn’t successful the curb box will be dug up, when the weather is fit, and replaced. At this time the shut-off pipe will have a locking cap placed on it.
* Motion by Huntley, second by Shipman to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

Police Report:

* Deputy Weiss reviewed the monthly police report. He noted there were 41 total calls in February. Council thanked Deputy Weiss for his time and report.

Public Input Time:

* T.J. Johnson presented the Lime Springs, Iowa, chicken ordinance. Council also reviewed ordinance information provided by Clerk White from the chicken discussion last summer plus additional city information on chickens.
* Shipman noted most people could have chickens, and the surrounding neighbors would not even know about them. There is always a percentage of people that would have chickens and not properly take care of them or the coops. The question again arose as to who will enforce a chicken ordinance. Fox questioned where a loose chicken would be kept; who would care for it and feed it? Payne felt allowing chickens would open another can of worms with another ordinance the city is not able to enforce. Payne noted that if people want farm animals, they should live in the country.
* Huntley noted that a few people have chickens in town now. She questioned how the city is supposed to enforce this.
* Koppen suggested repealing the ordinance and revisit this discussion in another year. Fox suggested putting something on the city Facebook page to get people’s opinions. Koppen felt this should come to a vote at the meeting this evening. Jones noted he does not plan on doing ‘chicken patrol.’ Fox questioned if people would then want to have ducks or geese.
* Mr. Johnson noted that he would have three chickens; he would not keep the birds over the winter. Mr. Johnson noted his chickens would be more like pets.
* Koppen noted he has been against some ordinances, but he noted that sometimes a city needs ordinances to bring in new people.
* Motion by Payne to keep the ordinance that is in place and enforce what the city currently has. Second by Fox. On a roll call of votes, Payne, Fox, Shipman, and Huntley voted aye. Koppen cast a nay vote. The motion carried 4-1. Mr. Johnson was thanked for his time and research on this matter.

Standing Committee Reports:

* Shipman reported LeRoy City Lines restarted commuter service to Rochester today. The EDA continues to monitor the operations at Wildwood Grove.
* Shipman reported Prairie Visions did not meet in February.
* Huntley reported the LeRoy Ambulance Board meets tomorrow; she will provide run numbers to council at the April council meeting.
* Fox reported that information will be posted on the city Facebook page and in the Mower County Independent about the Service Recognition. She also felt the council could recognize city employees or other residents for the good things they’ve done. Gumbel noted the council could do something like the school board does in recognizing those for doing good works. Council recognized Rhonda Barnes for helping to make a smooth transition at the library; council recognized Deputy Weiss for his service and excellent reports; council thanked and gave a virtual pat on the back to John Jones and Nick Sweeney for the excellent snow removal.

LeRoy Fire Department-Pay for Calls:

* White reported the MN/IA Fire Association met and discussed pay for firefighters responding to Mayo 1 landing calls. The Fire Association agreed that responders should be paid for these calls. Motion by Shipman, second by Huntley to pay firefighters for Mayo 1 landing calls beginning with calls from December, 2020, forward. Motion carried 5-0.

LeRoy Fire Relief-Retirement Program:

* White reported the Fire Relief Association’s main purpose is to provide a retirement benefit to eligible firefighters. Fully vested firefighters are currently paid $900 per year of service into a lump-sum benefit program. Currently White and Fire Relief Treasurer Jason Soltau take care of most of this paperwork along with accountants Smith Schafer that have to audit the funds. PERA administers a Statewide Volunteer Firefighter (SVF) Retirement Plan for volunteer firefighters who provide service to a municipal fire department. Fire departments and their sponsoring municipalities can join the SVF plan at any time with their individual accounts becoming effective January 1 of the following year.
* Motion by Shipman, second by Fox to request a Cost Analysis of Retirement Coverage in the Lump-Sum Division of the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan. Motion carried 5-0.

Contracted Lawn Mowing for 2021 Season:

* Council was reminded that mowing for the two city parks and city cemetery are contracted out. Council could choose to put the mowing out for bid, or they could choose to work with the person that did the mowing last year.
* It was the consensus of the council to continue with the same firm unless his prices have changed by a large degree.

Tattoo & Body Piercing Ordinance:

* Council reviewed the city ordinance that addresses tattoo and body piercing. Council was told that a local resident is considering opening a tattoo and body piercing shop here in LeRoy.
* Motion by Shipman to repeal Chapter 112 of the LeRoy Code of Ordinances and follow state statute. Second by Payne. On a roll call of votes, all members voted aye. The motion carried 5-0.

Land Use Permits:

* There were no land use permits for council review.

Communications File:

* Council reviewed thank you cards from LeRoy Evangelical Lutheran Church and First Presbyterian Church for the foggers and solution they each received.
* Council was reminded of the Open Book meetings for Mower County that will be held from April 9 through June 7.
* Council reviewed the library board meeting minutes.
* Koppen reported he had received an email from State Senator Gene Dornink; Senator Dornink was reaching out to introduce himself. White sent replies from the Mayor’s Office to Senator Dornink and State Representative Patricia Mueller congratulating each of them on their election and inviting each of them to a city council meeting. Koppen noted he wanted to let both Senator Dornink and Representative Mueller know the importance of LGA and the need to maintain or increase the amount of LGA appropriated to cities.
* The north speed limit sign was discussed. White reported Brian Thiel is working on this sign. She will make contact with Mr. Thiel to find out progress on this sign.

Estimate for Videotaping Sanitary Sewer on Lowell Street:

* Jones reported he had an estimate from Empire Pipe to videotape this for $1700. It was the consensus of the council to get this videotaped.

Estimate for Sewer Camera:

* Jones had two estimates for a sewer camera. The quote from Flexible Pipe was approximately $9,000; the quote from Utility Logic was approximately $9,600. Jones also had quotes for a locater. The quote from Flexible Pipe was for $3,800; the quote from Utility Logic was for $4,300. Jones reported the cost for a larger camera to video the mains would be much higher priced.
* Jones questioned council why the city would want a camera; he reported most plumbers have these cameras now. Jones reminded council the cameras don’t work under water and wouldn’t be used very often. He noted a locater would be much more beneficial in locating water and sewer service lines. Jones will gather more information and present it at the April council meeting.

Public Buildings:

* Koppen reported he is waiting for Kurt Bill to look at the upper floor at the LeRoy Community Center. There are areas of bubbling and cracking on the floor covering.

Nuisance Properties:

* Koppen noted he could think of three properties that need to be addressed when warmer weather arrives. He noted the property at 304 East Main Street and two properties on West Read Street need attention. Council also noted the property located at 440 West Main Street also needs to be cleaned up.

Other Items:

* Fox questioned about the status of the Chromebooks. She also questioned if the ordinances could be loaded on these units. She also questioned if council members could be assigned their own personal city email address. White reported she is waiting for the Meeting Owl to be returned from being programmed; she will then question about the Chromebooks.
* It was questioned if city council meeting minutes could be put on the city Facebook page. Gumbel noted he could set that up with a link. Fox also questioned about the status of the new city website. White reported she has the information for web forwarding on her desk; this would forward anyone typing in the old city website address (visitleroy.com) to the new city website (leroymn.com).

Being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Huntley, second by Fox at 8:11 PM.

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 Ed Koppen, Mayor

Attest:

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 Patty A. White, City Clerk-Treasurer