**City of LeRoy MN – Council Meeting Minutes, July 10, 2023**

A regular meeting of the LeRoy City Council was called to order by Mayor Ed Koppen on Monday, July 10, 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, Maintenance Employee Nick Sweeney, and City Clerk Patty White.
Also attending: Axel Gumbel, Jim Gronwoldt, Randy Hansen, Steve & Sue Speer, Steve Klostermann, Jason Boynton, Dave Johnson, and Garry & Cindy Losee. Mayor Koppen offered a moment of silence in memory of Kathy Farlinger. All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

* Council reviewed the items included in the consent agenda. Payne questioned what had happened at the east lift station. Sweeney explained what had happened and reviewed the cost of repairs. Motion by Thiel, second by Shipman to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

Police Report:

* There was no police report due to the absence of a deputy.

Public Input Time:

* Randy Hansen noted he was in attendance to support the council in their efforts to clean up the town. Koppen reported the council has a work session scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, 2023, at 6:30 PM with the city attorney to address nuisance properties. Steve Klostermann expressed his concern with the state of the property at 208 West Read Street; his concerns were with the number of dogs being housed at this property, with the refrigerator on the front porch, with the old toilet that was in the boulevard for many weeks last summer, and the general appearance of this property. He noted he reviewed the city ordinances prior to his moving into town many years ago to know what was expected of him as a city resident. Huntley questioned council how many funds does the council want to expend with the attorney addressing these nuisance properties. Payne noted other residents should not have to live next to these types of conditions.

Standing Committee Reports:

* Huntley reported the LeRoy Area Ambulance Service has been responding to numerous calls; the service stays busy.
* Shipman noted that Prairie Visions did not meet.

State Highway 56 Project:

* White reported MnDOT is planning another open house to give an update on the construction schedule and detour routes. This open house is scheduled for Tuesday, August 8, 2023.

2022 Audit Report:

* Jason Boynton of Smith Schafer introduced himself and presented the 2022 audit report. The city was given an unmodified clean opinion for 2022. He noted there were no exceptions with Minnesota legal compliance.
* Thiel questioned if there were any surprises encountered in the course of the audit work. Mr. Boynton reported there were no surprises; he also noted the auditors received information from Wildwood Grove in a more timely fashion. Payne questioned Mr. Boynton, if in comparing other cities, if anything with the LeRoy audit stands out. Payne questioned if the city should consider increasing water and/or sewer rates. Mr. Boynton noted he is a proponent of increasing utility rates on an annual basis. Mr. Boynton also noted that the cost of the Hwy 56 project may cause a strain on city funds in being able to do other projects. He noted other cities use a combination of building up reserves and bonding for large projects. Mr. Boynton was thanked for his time and presentation.
* Motion by Payne, second by Huntley to approve and accept the 2022 audit. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Hearing for Alley Vacation Petition:

* Koppen read the due call for this hearing, “Notice is hereby giventhat a hearing will be held before the City Council of LeRoy on the 10th day of July, 2023, in the LeRoy Community Center located at 204 West Main Street at 7:00 PM to consider a proposed vacation of the alley east of South Everett Street and south of East Read Street legally described as:

*That alley located in Block 30 in the plat of the Original Village (now City) of LeRoy with abutting lot numbers being Lots 2 through 9 on the north side of said alley and lot numbers being 10 through 13 on the south side of said alley,”* and opened the hearing at 7:04 PM.

* Cindy Losee questioned if there was any change to this proposed vacation compared to what was originally proposed. It was noted that nothing had changed from the original petition. Being no further comment from those present, the hearing was closed at 7:06 PM.
* Motion by Shipman to pass Resolution 2023-04, a Resolution Vacating the Alley East of South Everett Street and South of East Read Street upon Petition of a Majority of Abutting Landowners. Second by Payne. The motion carried 5-0.

Summer Fest-Street Closure Request:

* Jim Gronwoldt met with council to request the closure of the one block of South Broadway between Main Street and the South Business Alley from Thursday evening, July 13, through Sunday evening, July 16, for Summer Fest festivities. Mr. Gronwoldt reported he has talked with the affected business owners; these owners were okay with this closure.
* Motion by Shipman, second by Huntley to allow this street closure. Motion carried 5-0.

Resolution in Memory of Kathy Farlinger:

* Koppen read a proposed resolution to be given to the family of Kathy Farlinger. Koppen noted that not many elected officials from LeRoy have left an impact in the southeast Minnesota region as Kathy did.
* Motion by Huntley, second by Thiel to pass Resolution 2023-05, a Resolution Honoring the Memory of Kathy Farlinger. Motion carried 5-0.

Land Use Permits:

* Council reviewed two land use permits.
1. Lot 3 & E ½ Lot 4, Block 8, Original Village, 112 E Luella, Chad Penning-enlarge patio and add concrete apron on garage
2. Lot 1 & Lot 2 Exc W 70’, Block 9, Caswell & Lewis, 715 N Everett, Steve Winter-pour concrete patio
* Council questioned the length of the concrete apron proposed on Permit #1. Koppen noted that any underground utilities are not to be built over; the utility companies retain utility easements to be able to work on their utility lines. Sweeney reported he has measured this area and talked to the contractor. The concrete apron cannot be 20’ long; it can only be 17’. This is due to the alley right of way and the gas lines that run in this area.
* Motion by Payne, second by Thiel to approve both land use permits with the change to 17’ on Permit #1. Motion carried 5-0.

Communications File:

* Council read the thank you from the family of Kathy Farlinger for the memorial lantern that was given.
* Koppen read the thank you letter from Trinity Evans for the Pangborn Scholarship she received.

Community Center Kitchen Project:

* Payne reported White typed the application, and submitted it to the Minnesota Department of Health with the $400 application fee.

Community Center Small Room Floor:

* Payne noted the south two feet of the meeting room floor is soft; it seems this is rotting.
* Koppen felt it best to wait to address this floor issue until the Hwy 56 project is underway to see if there are any other issues with the water/sewer service lines to the building. Shipman felt that some blacktop may have to be torn out to address this correctly. Koppen also suggested that at the time of this repair, that it may be the right time to install an outside staircase to the basement to allow easier access to a storm shelter. Council will continue to monitor this.

Service Award Recognition:

* Huntley recognized a group of seven 15-year olds that were looking for a service project to do. They chose, on their own, to clean headstones at the cemetery. They did a fine job.
* Shipman commended Sweeney and Wilcox for the daily care of the hanging flower baskets along Main Street. It was noted the flowers are very beautiful.
* Payne thanked Sweeney for reaching out over a week in advance to see what Payne needed to set up for the free watermelon following the Summer Fest parade.

Vacant Properties:

* Payne reported he would like to ride around town with the city attorney to view these vacant/nuisance properties when she comes to town for the work session. Payne felt it best that the city attorney is contacted to make sure at least one council member rides with her. White suggested leaving this up to the city attorney. Payne retorted that the city attorney is hired by the city; the city council should be able to make these requests. Council noted they want to see what can be done legally and the steps to get these properties either cleaned up or torn down. Payne commented about all the nuisance letters he has signed and nothing has been improved. He also noted that other communities get things done. White suggested implementing the administrative fine ordinance that was put in place under Jennifer Gumbel’s term as mayor. An administrative fine board would need to be put in place to use this ordinance. No action was taken on this suggestion. Payne commented that nothing has been done with cleanup in the years since White has been city clerk.
* Motion by Thiel that contact is made with the city attorney noting the number of properties council is concerned about and question her if she would like a council member(s) and/or the city clerk to ride with her to view these properties, and for the attorney to be ready with all the steps that need to be taken to proceed with cleanup and/or demolition of these properties. Second by Payne. On a roll call of votes Thiel, Payne, Shipman, and Huntley voted aye. Koppen cast a nay vote. The motion carried 4-1.

Strong & John Street-Right of Way:

* This will be kept on the agenda and monitored following the Hwy 56 project.

ARPA Funds:

* There was nothing to report on the ARPA funds.

EDA & WWG Report:

* Payne reported the EDA will be serving free watermelon following the Summer Fest parade at Wildwood Grove. He reported the watermelons have been ordered from Main Street Market Place.
* Payne reported WWG had a good month in May. He reported at the present time there are only two of the two bedroom apartments vacant.

Other:

* Council reviewed the updated balances in the city reserve accounts.
* Council also reviewed the Key Performance Indicator worksheet. It was noted the sewer expenses were high due to the lift station repairs.
* White reported the Culpepper & Merriweather Circus will be coming to LeRoy on Monday, August 7, 2023, for two performances at 5:00 PM and 7:30 PM. Due to the circus being here on a regular council meeting night, council consensus to hold the August meeting of the city council on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at 6:30 PM.

Being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Shipman, second by Huntley at 7:44 PM.

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 Edwin Koppen, Mayor

Attest:

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 Patty A. White, City Clerk-Treasurer