**City of LeRoy MN – Council Meeting Minutes, October 4, 2021**

A regular meeting of the LeRoy City Council was called to order by Mayor Ed Koppen on Monday, October 4, 2021, 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, Maintenance Employee John Jones, and City Clerk Patty White. Council Member Daisie Fox was absent.
Also attending: Axel Gumbel, Brian Thiel, Deputy Sawyer Weiss, and Representative Patricia Mueller. All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

* Council reviewed the information included in the consent agenda. A question was posed about one of the past due water bills.
* Motion by Huntley, second by Shipman to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 4-0.

Police Report:

* Deputy Sawyer Weiss handed out the written police report. Deputy Weiss noted there were 50 total calls in September. Deputy Weiss reported the majority of deputies in the Sheriff’s department cover calls here in LeRoy. Deputy Weiss reported he has a good rapport and positive interactions with residents of the community.
* Koppen questioned the use and installation of traffic cameras. Deputy Weiss noted any traffic cameras installed along State Hwy 56 would have to be requested by and installed by MnDOT. White will check with MnDOT to see what it takes to get a traffic camera installed.
* Council also questioned Deputy Weiss about loud mufflers on vehicles. Deputy Weiss is aware of some of these vehicles. Council thanked Deputy Weiss for his report and time.

Public Input Time:

* Axel Gumbel reported the LeRoy Facebook page has surpassed 1,000 followers. He noted this has been a great tool for getting information out to the people. He also noted this page puts out a positive aspect for the community.
* Shipman reported the State Electrical Inspector has approved all the wiring for the LeRoy Veterans Memorial. It is hoped that 30 more plaques will be installed yet this week.

Standing Committee Reports:

* Payne reported the financials for Wildwood Grove are positive. He noted WWG is addressing issues with a shortage of employees. All the shifts have been covered by some employees having to work overtime. He noted the painting should be completed this week; the gutters will be installed when the painting is completed.
* It was reported that LeRoy City Lines is looking to liquidate the bus fleet. There had been some interest expressed from some local people; Gumbel reported he had received a call from another possible interested party. He will follow through with this. If none of these interested parties come to fruition, the buses may be taken to Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers. Koppen noted the city is holding the note for the bus purchases; he also noted the buses will probably not bring what is still owed to the city. Payne reported the EDA had approved to sell the buses, but the EDA would like guidance from the city. Koppen felt it best to sell all the buses and cut the losses. Motion by Huntley that the city council approves the LeRoy EDA approach for selling the buses. Second by Payne. On a roll call of votes, all members voted aye.
* Koppen reported Prairie Visions met on Monday, September 27. They covered the summary of the annual bike ride and reviewed the outcome of the Parks & Trails dinner. Discussion about future plans for Prairie Visions was also reviewed. It was suggested by those present at the Prairie Visions meeting to just use the Shooting Star Trail for future bike rides instead of using the trail and various county blacktop roads.

State Highway 56 Project:

* The local business owners are invited to an open house on Thursday, October 7, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. This will be held at the LeRoy Community Center. White presented the waiver requests for four city properties. These properties include the LeRoy Community Center, City Hall property, LeRoy Emergency Services Building, and Well House property. Motion by Huntley, second by Shipman to approve signing these waiver requests. Motion carried 4-0.

Parks:

* Koppen reported he has talked to local residents about the parks and trying to get people more involved and interested in the parks. He noted it takes community involvement to have nice parks. Payne questioned about tree and brush trimming at North Baumbach Park. Jones noted the trees have been trimmed; the hedge will be trimmed as time allows. White suggested forming a committee to research park enhancements and improvements. This committee could include a council representative plus citizens interested in the parks. No action was taken on this suggestion.

Representative Patricia Mueller:

* Representative Mueller address the council. She noted she wanted to come back to another LeRoy city council meeting to keep abreast of city issues. She noted the legislature will go back into session in January, 2022. She has been working with school superintendents in her district to work on apprenticeships for high school students. She has also been addressing the work force shortages. She will be meeting with Mower County officials in October to address different options for incarcerating low-level offenders. She reported Mower County is still looking at how to spend the County ARPA funds. They are considering investing in broadband in the unserved or underserved areas of the county.
* Representative Mueller thanked the mayor and council members for their service. The council thanked Representative Mueller for her service, too. Koppen noted Representative Mueller has attended two LeRoy city council meetings when other representatives or senators have only made one trip annually to LeRoy. Koppen noted Representative Mueller is incredible visible and accessible to the constituents of District 27B. Payne questioned about the joint snow removal agreements between cities and MnDOT. Representative Mueller will forward this information in an email to city hall.

ARPA Funds:

* Jones reported he has talked to Duane Wheeler of Wheeler Electric to get information about generators for the three lift stations and well house. He has not received any information yet.

2022 Proposed Budget & Levy:

* Council reviewed the proposed levy showing the council approved increase in the preliminary levy. Koppen reiterated to council the statement that White made at the September council meeting that council should have a good reason to increase the levy. Koppen reviewed fund balances from previous years; this information was gleaned from previous city audit reports.
* Payne noted he does not like the statements made by Koppen that increases in taxes or the levy are due to the operations at Wildwood Grove. Shipman reminded council that up to $150,000 per year has been spent the past three years on street maintenance.
* Koppen further reviewed operating income and losses over the past years for Wildwood Grove. Payne noted that it should be on record where funds have been used for Wildwood Grove. He also noted that funds from this year’s operating income have been used for much needed building improvements at Wildwood Grove. Payne noted the city cannot increase taxes for sole purpose for Wildwood Grove.

Regional Transportation Management Organization Funding Request:

* White had contacted area city clerks to inquire what their respective cities had done with this request. Some had not seen the presentation yet; others were waiting to see how this will come to fruition before committing any funds to this. Council took no action on this request.

Council Member Resignation:

* Koppen read the letter of resignation from Daisie Fox. Motion by Shipman, second by Huntley to pass Resolution 2021-09, a resolution accepting this resignation, with regret, and declaring a vacancy on the council. Motion carried 4-0.
* Huntley suggested advertising in the Mower County Independent and on Facebook for interested people to submit a letter of interest to City Hall by Monday, October 25, 2021, to fill the balance of Fox’s term until the next general election. Council will review any letters of interest at the November council meeting. Brian Thiel offered to fill this seat until the next regular election. Council thanked Mr. Thiel for his offer, but council felt it prudent to allow other residents the opportunity to submit a letter of interest.

Land Use Permits:

* There were no land use permits for council review.

Communications File:

* Koppen reported he had received a personal visit from Jay Hardecopf. Mr. Hardecopf now works quite a distance from LeRoy; he offered to Koppen that he may be interested in selling the property he owns to the city. Council reviewed Mower County GIS maps showing these parcels. Koppen questioned Mr. Hardecopf if he had a price in mind for these parcels. Mr. Hardecopf felt they should be worth at least what Mower County has them assessed at. Motion by Huntley to proceed with the purchase of these three parcels as noted on Mower County records at the price of what Mower County has these parcels assessed at. Second by Shipman. On a roll call of votes, all members voted aye. Koppen will make contact with Mr. Hardecopf to present this proposal.

Strong & John Streets:

* It was noted that John Street is the east/west street between north East County Road and north Strong Street. John Street is not centered within the city right-of-way. It was noted the south end of Strong Street is also not centered within the city right-of-way. Koppen noted he had talked to Maintenance Employee Nick Sweeney about these issues. Sweeney felt the maintenance employees can do this work with city equipment. Koppen noted this work could be done with minimal cost involved; it would entail grading and crushed rock. Jones noted that to do this correctly the city should have this surveyed. Koppen noted a survey would not be necessary. Koppen also noted trees could be planted along these boulevards to better show the streets. It was the consensus of the council to proceed.

Public Hearing Request-Past Due Water Bill Assessments:

* White noted there is one severely past due water/sewer bill left from a rental property. White reminded council that city ordinance states that the landlord shall be responsible for the water/sewer bill if a tenant leaves with an unpaid bill. White has sent the bill to the owner of record for many months with no response. Council consensus to proceed with sending the notice of intent to assess this bill.

Security Cameras Update:

* Jones noted Sweeney has checked into trail cameras, but this type of camera does not seem the best way to proceed. White had contacted Mike from On-Site Computers to get his recommendations. She has not heard from him yet.
* Motion by Payne that the trees and shrubs around the mausoleum get cleared and trimmed by the November, 2021, city council meeting. Second by Shipman. Motion carried 4-0.

Service Award Recognition:

* Koppen recognized Axel & Jennifer for the Off 90 program they were a part of. Koppen noted Mr. & Mrs. Gumbel bring a positive attitude to the community.
* Koppen recognized Representative Patricia Mueller for going above and beyond her duties, to make these visits to LeRoy, and to listen to the people.
* Koppen recognized City Clerk Patty White for working on her birthday. He also thanked her and the maintenance department employees for the jobs they do. Koppen reported to council the statement he made to the maintenance department employees. He noted that previous maintenance employees were allowed to hire short-term help when needed. Council consensus to follow Koppen’s recommendation to allow the present maintenance employees to hire short-term help as needed.

Nuisance Properties:

* The letters that were sent out have been picked up. The letters gave 90 days to address the stated issues.

North Speed Limit Sign:

* The sign has been returned. It needs to be reinstalled and programed.

Other:

* Huntley felt the council should offer a fall cleanup day. Residents could use this opportunity to clear their property of potential nuisance issues. Motion by Huntley to hold a fall cleanup day on Saturday, October 16, 2021, from 8:00 AM until 10:00 AM in the area north of the fire hall. Second by Payne. Motion carried 4-0.

Being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Shipman, second by Huntley at 8:20 PM.

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 Ed Koppen, Mayor

Attest:

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 Patty A. White, City Clerk-Treasurer