

APPROVED MAY 20 MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2024

VILLAGE OF LYONS

212 Water St

PO Box 175

Lyons, MI 48851

The meeting was called to order by President Joe Farrington at 6:00pm

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call:

Joe Farrington-P, Jon Houserman-P, Max Darling-P, Erin Randall-P, Bernard Russell-P, Jennifer Spearling-AB

Formation of the roll was taken, and a quorum declared:

Staff Attending: Lyndon Randall-P, Cody Averill-P, Laura Schoenmehl-P, Jennifer Sims-P

Approval of Agenda: Max made a motion to approve the Agenda, seconded by Trustee Houserman. **Motion carried by voice vote, as presented.**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Farrington noted that we still have a vacancy for Councilperson. He said he appreciated the participation of the public in attendance for adhering to their civic duty and showing interest in our community.

Council governance: President Farrington went over the laws and practices that govern Council Meetings and Council Members: The Council governance is not to be conducted subject to feelings, bias or backroom/ friendship deals.

Public Comment: He reiterated the three (3) minute limit for each person wanting to make a public comment, which does not allow for repeated airing of opinions during the meeting or open discussion or debate among public attendees. He affirmed the Council's desire to address public concerns or questions, whether in the meeting or by written correspondence, including email, but the Council will adhere to orderly Public Comment policy as discussed. He said it was good to receive a note of thanks from a resident for street patching done by DPW staff.

MIOSHA compliance: President Farrington mentioned that MIOSHA compliance has been fully met for the Village of Lyons, so we're pleased with compliant status at this time.

Kayak Launch: Council/Committee members had a productive meeting with the people hired to install the kayak launch and learned a lot about the installation process, wear and tear of the dock, and responsible/sustainable care. There are repairs and pressure washing to be done, but scheduled to be installed by next Council Meeting in June.

Vandalism: There was vandalism in the Village this past Tuesday with an investigation being conducted. President Farrington reported on the damage and violence that he hopes will be dealt with and prosecuted to the full extent to curtail such behavior in the future.

Speeding problem: President Farrington also addressed the speeding problem in the Village and safety concern it poses for residents. He mentioned speed tables can be an effective deterrent because damage to vehicles that attempt to speed through the bumps. Also provides safety at crosswalks. Speed tables under consideration.

Vacant Lots: President Farrington noted that real estate has gone very high, including rental properties, that has led to the increase of vacant lots where 40+ year old trailers are parked that can bring up to \$1,000/month to lot owners. In some places there are age restrictions on trailer units placed in the community. He said we need to be ready to address vacant property issues and other alternatives with regard to inflation and rising housing costs.

Eagle Scouts: There are a few Eagle Scouts that want to do community service, such as scraping and painting the comfort station and/or upgrading the playground equipment on the island with cleaning and paint. President Farrington mentioned their projects might be tied in with a fun contest through the library that will foster ownership and responsibility in the Scouts.

Vacancy for Trustee: Rich Spaans mentioned he's been a resident of Lyons all his life, with a family history in Lyons extending to his great grandparents. Trustee Houserman made a motion for Rich Spaans to be nominated to fill the vacant Trustee position on a temporary basis until November elections, seconded by Trustee Darling. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Public Comment: Resident said something needs to be done about speeding on Irish Street; mentioned disrespect of young people speeding, using obscene gestures and profanity. Resident recommended solar caution lights to slow down residents. Resident also noted there is a loud motorcycle in town without baffles (muffler). President Farrington

responded that he wants contact with authorities in an effort to get increased prosecution to discourage disrespectful youth from illegal behavior.

Approval of Previous Month's Regular Meeting Minutes April 15, 2024: Trustee Houserman made a motion to approve the previous month's minutes as presented, seconded by Trustee Randall. **Motion carried by voice vote, as presented.**

Approval of Current Month's Accounts Payable (\$60,619.52)

Trustee Houserman mentioned bond payment of \$24,000 that increased Accounts Payable for the month. Trustee Houserman made a motion to approve, seconded by Trustee Russell. **Motion carried by voice vote, as presented.**

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Trustee Houserman said the Revenue & Expenditure Report shows the budget looks good going into the second month (April) of new Fiscal Year, with a few minor adjustments still to be made. The Comparative Balance Sheet shows ARPA funds for \$134,806.60 moved from General Fund for Tabor Street Project, as well as a half million in grant funds. Trustee Houserman made a motion to approve Revenue & Expenditure Report and Comparative Balance Sheet for April, seconded by Trustee Russell. **Motion carried by voice vote, as presented.**

DPW Report

Superintendent Randall reported the following since the last meeting: More flushing of hydrants and more service line breaks that are now repaired; mowing and cleaning up downtown, bark in place and cleanup for Memorial Day; couple trips on the Island to remove downed trees and branches from wind storm; needed repairs to the Scader water system because of two broken wires in the conduit. They ran 2nd pair of wires in case older ones fail—20 years old but not much use, so hopefully will continue working; everything up and running at this time. Couple trees down at Elizabeth St—one damaged the guardrail at the bridge that Road Commission will help repair. Need to trim more trees on Elizabeth Street. Trustee Spaans mentioned it would be good to trim more trees at the bridge.

Superintendent Randall mentioned he has experienced the same problem as others with speeders coming through his yard and other residents' property on Riverside. He spoke with Sergeant from Sheriff's Department who mentioned a speed trailer, working towards getting flashing speed signs. Superintendent Randall addressed the vandalism problem with another Sergeant who said the Sheriff's Department will try to get patrol in Lyons during the early morning hours of 3:00—4:00 a.m. when recent vandalism incident occurred. Video caught a white Blazer with black rack that they're actively seeking.

The siren is up and wired. It has a manual switch, but will be activated from central dispatch for tornado warnings starting April. They test first Saturday of the month at noon.

In response to Trustee Houserman's question about stump grinding previously provided by Rick White, Superintendent Randall said he's been in touch with Rick White and he's still on agenda to grind stumps.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Streets/Water/Sewer

- Chairman Darling mentioned more hot patching planned within two weeks. Deer with broken neck had to be removed from the end of the bridge.
- Said his property was among those vandalized; also noted how fast cars are traveling through the Village—even school buses going too fast and not stopping at stop signs.
- New water meters are in process of installation.
- Trustee Houserman mentioned Treasurer, Jennifer Sims, is getting ready to send out Summer Tax Bills. Treasurer Sims discovered some payment plans that were developed previously because of errors with meter reads. Trustee Houserman said we should have no more payment plans as a regular practice unless approved by Council ahead of time. There will be no more unapproved payment plans going forward.
- South Higbee Street vacation: A property owner next to the very south end of Higbee Street (where it dead ends before the Grand River) had requested the Village vacate its additional (street to river) property right-of-way there, and had provided a resolution of intent for that purpose. A public hearing notice had been

formally posted for the Village Council's March 18, 2024 regular meeting. However, at that meeting, the matter was "tabled" to allow adequate time to obtain more information.

Members of the Streets, Water/Sewer & Fire Committee subsequently reviewed various relevant information and then discussed the matter with the Village's attorney. Based upon legal concerns expressed by the Village attorney, and based upon other additional Committee concerns, it was determined that the owner's request would not be in the best interest of the Village for the health, safety and well-being of the majority of its residents. Therefore, no action is being recommended on the vacation request and this matter is considered closed.

Finance & Grants Committee

- Trustee Randall met with Ryan Wilson of Ionia County Economic Alliance through Michigan State Housing Authority about grants. If this grant becomes available in the future, we need to be shovel ready. Plan to apply for a grant for the Historical Society building roof, and currently waiting on letters of support.
- Trustee Houserman mentioned that we have a Public Rate Study meeting scheduled for 9:00am Tuesday morning with MRWA, May 21, 2024. He noted it has been a little over two years since the last study, and with inflation, a new rate study is in order.

Ordinance Committee

- President Farrington said we have a vacancy currently for Ordinance Chairperson. He reported several violation letters have been sent out with lawful protocol in place. He strongly emphasized that the Village of Lyons does not seek to generate revenue on fines for Ordinance violations. The Council's goal is to induce residents to comply with ordinances in place for the wellbeing of the Village and avoid having to pay fines.
- Trustee Randall said AP Lawncare LLC has been contracted and will charge a minimum of \$150.00 for maintenance of residents' yards. Trustee Houserman noted that if a fine doesn't get paid, it becomes a special assessment on the Summer Tax Bill. If left unpaid, fines will then be sent to the Ionia County Assessor for collection.

Personnel Committee

- Trustee Houserman completed a compensation survey with benefits included. He was motivated by the fact that there have been no pay adjustments for two (2) years at the Village. He prepared and submitted an Employee Compensation Survey of Neighboring Villages to determine if any adjustments are needed to fairly compensate and retain good employees at the Village of Lyons. He found Lyons is more comparable with Pewamo, Muir, Westphalia and Maple Rapids rather than Fowler and Saranac. Included in the survey was population, taxable values of property, millage, employee hours, wages and benefits. He noted staffing and pay rates are somewhat similar among villages (see attached Employee Compensation Survey of Neighboring Villages).
- The Personnel Committee met on May 8th to review the results of the Employee Compensation Survey that compared Lyons employee wage and fringe benefit levels with four neighboring, similarly sized Villages as mentioned above. Trustee Houserman went over expectations for office staff to be able to qualify for pay advances based on continued successful job performance. Based on rates of neighboring villages, the Personnel Committee recommended a wage increase of \$1.00/hour at each step level of the A3 and A4 pay range for DPW staff, effective immediately as detailed in the attached Memorandum from Personnel Chairperson Jennifer Spearling, dated May 20, 2024. On behalf of Chairperson Spearling, Trustee Houserman made a motion to approve the Personnel Committee Compensation Survey and recommendations as presented, seconded by Trustee Darling. Trustee Randall abstained. **Motion carried by voice vote, as presented.**

Parks & Recreation Committee

- Chairman Russell, Chairman Farrington, Chairperson Spearling and two DPW workers met with Jeff Helms from Camps Day Cruise last Wednesday for the purpose of getting the Kayak Launch back in. They discussed alternative sites, including the Tabor Street boat launch, which is not deep enough, and west of the north fish deck (north end of Devore Island) also not deep enough and too swift. In an effort to keep the Kayak Launch on the island, they agreed the existing Kayak Launch needs to be power washed and reinstalled. Jeff would like to see a buffer zone on the west side of the river, such as rocks, strategically placed to slow down the current

by the boat launch. Chairman Farrington mentioned recommendations by Jeff Helms to prevent damage to Kayak Launch when the river is low and importance of proper maintenance overall. Trustee Russell motioned to allow repairs to Kayak Launch up to \$3,000.00, seconded by Trustee Houserman. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

DDA Committee

- Committee was supposed to meet this Monday, but because of the Memorial holiday, the next meeting might be called in the month of June rather than wait until regular meeting scheduled for July.

Events Committee

- Chairperson Sherrie Mason said Island Fest planning is going well, scheduled August 1—3, with several volunteers. The horseshoe pits are getting repaired with volunteer help. She mentioned they're planning to have Cornhole Tournaments and a Petting Zoo through local 4H for their community service. They have sent information to Trustee Spearling for the Newsletter introducing Chairperson Mason and announcing the Island Fest activities. They're looking for vendors for the island. Everything will be on the island except street dance on Saturday and the Car Show August 1st. Sponsor letters are going out by end of next week. They have already received \$350.00 in donations just for the car show.

Council Comments

- Trustee Houserman said Vanessa Mitchner was approved by Council to upgrade the Village website and is doing a great job getting it up to date, with Meeting Minutes included and other information that has been lacking previously. We have the basics coming together and can work on design elements later.
- Trustee Houserman said the Village was mentioned in a New York Newspaper for the flood of 1887, caused by an ice dam that toppled buildings. Trustee Spearling found the sketched antique publication in a back room of the Village office. Trustee Houserman would like to have the publication at the museum for preservation and observation, especially since already noted in Historical book at the museum.
- Trustee Darling said he wants to thank the new office staff for their work and extra hours to bring things up to date in the Village office, and also thank Trustee Spearling, who works countless dedicated hours in the office while raising her family. He also thanked the newest member to the Council, Rich Spaans, for joining the team and helping out.
- Trustee Houserman mentioned Tabor Street Project scheduled to begin end of July.

Correspondence

- Attorney Letter regarding Chrysler Building and Village Response: Trustee Houserman explained the letter received from the attorney of A.J. Brown/Weaver Jack Corporation requesting the Village of Lyons remove all charges for 2023 tax year water/sewer fees for his client. A response letter from the Village was sent to Attorney Rodney J. Leon, PLC on May 8, 2024 informing him that the charges on the property owner's tax rolls included all amounts for 2020 through and including 2023 Summer Tax Bills, with the specific 2023 water and sewer special assessments (\$3,612.68) and (\$1,457.30) being a part of the overall \$35,090.87 total service charge listed. Therefore Weaver Jack Corporation/A.J. Brown has been fully compensated for all amounts applicable from the Village. (see attached copies of letters).
- Discussion of Chrysler building initiated by Trustee Spaans and what might be done with it. Trustee Houserman said it might be good to have something residential that would benefit the community if funds became available (113 acres).

New Business – None.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Trustee Russell, seconded by Trustee Randall to adjourn meeting at 7:23pm. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Respectfully submitted by Laura Schoenmehl, Village Clerk