

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

A regular meeting of the LeRoy City Council was held on Monday, January 4, 2016, at 6:30 PM at the LeRoy Community Center with the following members present: Mayor Jennifer Gumbel, Council Members Kathleen Gottschalk, Ashley Huntley, Gene Miller, Jan Whisler, Maintenance Supervisor John Jones, and City Clerk Patty White. Others in attendance included Tim Freerksen, Ginger Holm, Scott Osmundson, Dave Perkins, Brian Thiel, Jay Hardecopf, and Mr. Hardecopf's friend. Mayor Gumbel called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Council reviewed the standing and appointed committee assignments. Appointments to the standing committees for the new year were made as follows:

Kathleen Gottschalk-Cemetery, Library Board, Prairie Visions Representative, Personnel Committee, Acting Mayor

Gene Miller-Public Buildings, Parks & Recreation, Tree Board, EDA

Ashley Huntley-Swimming Pool Representative, LeRoy Area Ambulance board member

Jan Whisler-Water & Sewer, Streets and Alleys, EDA

Jennifer Gumbel-Legal Affairs, Police Department, Personnel Committee

Motion by Miller, second by Huntley to approve the appointments to the standing committees and to name Mayor Gumbel, Councilor Gottschalk, and Clerk White as official signatories for the city checking account. Motion carried 5-0.

Appointments to the appointed committees for the new year were made as follows:

Fire Relief Assn. Board Representatives-Mayor Gumbel, Clerk White

City Attorney-Tom Baudler of Baudler, Maus & Forman, LLP

City Auditor-Smith-Schafer & Associates, LTD

Official City Newspaper-Mower County Independent

Official Depositories-First National Bank, LeRoy; First State Bank Minnesota, LeRoy

City Engineer-Jones, Haugh & Smith

LeRoy Tree Board-Councilor Miller, Jerry Barber, Clerk White

Library Board-Gladys Kasel, Barb Payne, Dianne Ahrens, Carrol Cartney, Jan Hanson, Pat Utz, Ben Reburn, Councilor Gottschalk

Fire Department Personnel Committee-Mayor Gumbel, Councilor Huntley, Tim Freerksen, Dan Feather, Clerk White, ex-officio

City Personnel Committee-Sharon Thiel, Rita Miller, Mayor Gumbel, Councilor Gottschalk, Clerk White, ex-officio

Administrative Fine Board-Gerald Payne, James Loven, Roger Dietrich, Shirley Whisler-alternate

LeRoy EDA-Jerry Barber, Jody Morrow, Craig Jacobson, Dave Perkins, Axel Gumbel, Councilor Miller, Councilor Whisler

Motion by Gottschalk, second by Miller to reappoint Craig Jacobson to another six-year term on the LeRoy EDA, to reappoint Gerald Payne to a six-year term on the administrative fine board, and to approve the appointments to the appointed committees. Motion carried 5-0.

Tim Freerksen presented the slate of officers for 2016 for the LeRoy Volunteer Fire Department. The officers include Fire Chief-Tim Freerksen; Assistant Chief-Dan Feather; Captain-Scott Osmundson; Lieutenant-Dave Farlinger; Fire Marshall/Emergency Management Director-John Jones; Training Officers-Caleb Hovde and Matt Main. Motion by Huntley, second by Gottschalk to approve the slate of officers for the LeRoy Volunteer Fire Department for 2016. Motion carried 5-0. Chief Freerksen noted the firefighters would like to add another night of training each month to their schedule. They currently have a monthly business meeting and training on the third Monday of each month. The additional night of training would help sharpen the firefighters' skills with more practice with the equipment. They have considered holding this training on the first Wednesday evening of each month. These additional training hours would cost an approximate \$6000 per year; this cost would be split between the MN/IA Fire Assn. board and the City of LeRoy. Chief Freerksen noted he has not talked to the MN/IA Fire Assn. board members yet. Council posed additional questions about the additional training and attendance at these

trainings. Chief Freerksen noted these trainings would be mandatory. Council questioned where these training funds would come from in the budget. Council will readdress this item at their February meeting after the MN/IA Fire Assn. has discussed this proposal. Chief Freerksen reported the Jr. Firefighter program is progressing slowly. A joint informational letter from the LeRoy Area Ambulance Service and LeRoy Volunteer Fire Department will be sent out to students and their parents/guardians in grades 10, 11, and 12.

Council reviewed the items included in the consent agenda. Motion by Whisler, second by Miller to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

During Public Input Time, (1) Brian Thiel updated council on a meeting called by Representative Greg Davids held in Spring Valley on rural broadband initiatives. Thiel expects to see wide bipartisan support at the legislature this year focusing on rural broadband initiatives. Thiel expressed hope that one of the city elected officials takes an interest in bringing broadband to the rural area; he noted the city as a whole has reliable service, but the rural area does not. (2) Thiel also questioned about snow removal. He noted you could see a notable difference in the plowing done on West Cabot Street compared to the other city streets. West Cabot Street is a county street and is plowed by county personnel. Jones reported the city has followed the policy of plowing after three inches of snow accumulation. He noted we didn't receive that amount until after the latest snowfall. Thiel questioned if the policy is something that should be reviewed. Council took no action on this suggestion. (3) Gumbel noted the passing of Roger Fister and that thoughts are with his family.

During Standing Committee Reports, (1) Gumbel reported the personnel committee has not met due to the holidays; they will be meeting in January to review the personnel reviews and to make recommendations to the council. (2) Gottschalk reported the library board had met and summarized this meeting.

Due to the absence of Deputy T.J. Lynch, there was no police report for review.

Jay Hardecopf was present to discuss the outcome of the court hearing held on December 28, 2015. Mr. Hardecopf questioned what the court hearing meant. Gumbel explained the city attorney had asked the judge to allow the city to raze the house noting the time that has elapsed from the time of the fire in November, 2012, until the present time, and for the time the house was left open to the elements. Mr. Hardecopf questioned if there is anything he can do in the next 72 hours to save the house from demolition. Gumbel noted that the Honorable Kevin Siefken has the findings of fact, conclusions of law, order for judgment, and judgment to review and sign if he sees in agreement to have the house razed. Upon his signature the judgment will be served on Mr. Hardecopf, and he will have 14 days to remove any personal property from the house. Mr. Hardecopf's friend stated that according to Minnesota State Statutes that an inside inspection needs to be done before a house can be razed. Gumbel noted if that is in statute, that they need to bring this information to the court. Mr. Hardecopf and his friend were thanked for their time. Miller noted a travel trailer has been moved on the commercial property that Mr. Hardecopf owns; Miller is concerned with the safety of this. Council also expressed concern how the order from the court, if it is signed, will be served if Mr. Hardecopf leaves the area to drive semi over the road. White was directed to check with the city attorney for direction on this.

There was nothing new to report on the water treatment facility, water tower, or backup well. Jones did note he did have trouble with a water tower sensor; it had malfunctioned and the water tower overflowed.

White reported she has not heard anything from Josh Whalen on his request for zoning ordinance authorization for his proposed gun-smithing business.

There was no one present from the LeRoy History Museum committee.

White had contacted On-Site Computers in Grand Meadow, an authorized Verizon retailer, about cell phone plans. The city could get a plan that includes 700 minutes and unlimited texts for \$25 per month plus taxes and fees. The city would also have to purchase a basic phone. Motion by Miller, second by Whisler to proceed with the purchase of city-owned cell phone and plan based on this information. Motion carried 5-0.

Council reviewed the 2016 Wage & Benefit Package information. White noted a 3% wage increase was figured into the 2016 budget. Miller would like to use this information and put it into a spreadsheet to have the full wage & benefits paid in 2015. Council will review this in February along with any personnel review information.

White requested to be allowed to attend the annual MCFOA conference March 15 through March 18 in St. Cloud. It was council consensus to allow attendance.

There were no land use permits for council review.

The Communications File was reviewed. Items included the charitable gambling reports from the LeRoy Community Foundation, the annual report from SELCO, and a letter from Mediacom relating to rate increases. Council also reviewed an invitation to a seminar, Rural by Design, to be held this Friday, January 8, 2016, at Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center near Lanesboro.

Council reviewed information on a program through Government Payment Service that would allow the city to accept payment of water/sewer bills by customers using a credit/debit card. The program would not cost the city anything; all fees for this service would be shouldered by the users. Council discussed this program and felt this is a service that should be offered to residents. Motion by Whisler, second by Huntley to enter into a participation agreement with Government Payment Services. Motion carried 5-0.

Council discussed additional renovations to be made to the LeRoy Community Center. The flooring and walls need attention. Gumbel would like to see costs for flooring and ideas for the walls. Council discussed if the lower banquet room should be re-carpeted or if the floor should be covered with a different type of flooring. Council discussed different options for flooring. Estimates will be gathered for flooring and wall coverings for council review.

There was nothing new to report on any of the on-going items.

Being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Huntley, second by Gottschalk at 7:46 PM.

Mayor Jennifer Gumbel

Attest:

Patty A. White, City Clerk-Treasurer