

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

OF THE LA SALLE CITY COUNCIL

January 22, 2024

A regular meeting of the La Salle City Council of La Salle, Illinois was held, Monday, January 22, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Jeff Grove with proper notices being duly and continuously posted.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present - Aldermen Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

Absent – Alderman Thompson, Alderman Herndon

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to allow Alderman Herndon to attend meeting remotely via phone call.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson, Alderman Herndon **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0

Alderman Herndon joined the meeting remotely via phone call.

ROLL CALL

Present - Aldermen Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

Excused Absence – Alderman Thompson

A quorum was present.

Others Present: Deputy City Clerk Brent Bader, Finance Director John Duncan, City Attorney Jim McPhedran, Director of Public Works Kevin Fay, Police Chief Mike Smudzinski, Building Inspector Andy Bacidore, Fire Chief Jerry Janick

COMMENTS

Mayor Grove asked Alderman Herndon to update the public and the council on his health and the reason for his absences the last few meetings. Herndon mentioned being sick since December 9th. He was taken by ambulance to Ottawa hospital. He had a kidney malfunction, leading to a left leg infection. He was in Ottawa Hospital from December 9th

until January 12th. He is now currently at Ottawa Pavillion bounce back unit where he is currently recovering from two surgeries on his left foot and leg. He hopes to be back to meetings in about 3-4 weeks.

Mayor Grove started the public comment section reminding all that it is just public comment allowing for any resident to make a comment for the full five minutes. Mayor does not intend to interrupt with rebuttals or answers to their comments. Mayor Grove also reminded all that they are welcome to stop by the City Hall to talk to the mayor in person or after the meeting. He also suggested calling or emailing him if they want also.

Resident Dawn Hicks stated that the air monitors are working well, and she had no concerns in that matter tonight. She did ask for the city's help to come up with a plan on a way to connect the disabled and elderly that may need it during these last couple winter storms with their sidewalks and driveways. She felt that the city could help out with connecting those in need with others that may be looking for a side job. She also felt that this could help by lower accidents or ambulances rides. She was asking for some brainstorming ideas from the council to help those in need.

Alderman Crane agrees that this would be something great to try to figure out for those residents, but he is unsure as to how to do such a thing. Alderman Crane does believe that many need to look out and help each other's neighbors out.

Alderman Reynolds suggested that Dawn Hicks may want to chair such a committee and he feels that our area has many people that volunteer and would be able to put together such a committee. Alderman Reynolds mentioned that he would speak with Hicks more after the meeting in regard to this.

Resident Jamie Hicks, fourth ward, asked if the aldermen had received the packet with the Carus Chemical permit and the letter in regard to how they are not sharing information. He mentioned that the letter mentioned that Carus was a High-Risk Level 4 Facility for Chemical Facility and Anti-Terrorism standards. He feels that should be alarming to all. Hicks asked Attorney McPhedran to over what Carus believes, if he did not receive this packet, because this is what Carus wants the city to agree with. Attorney McPhedran and Deputy Bader mentioned that the city has a special counsel now for just FOIAs.

Hicks mentioned that Carus is to be checking every truck that comes into their factory and checking IDs. He also mentioned that they are supposed to be set up like a nuclear plant with guards and fences. Carus however leaves their gates wide open and should not be a facility inspected by the city, but by Homeland Security. He also mentioned how the fire department should inspect facilities that handle hazardous chemicals using the authority provided under Section 312. He stated that "part of the onsite inspections, facilities are required to provide location of information of all hazardous chemicals presented at the facility. Fire Departments are encouraged to use this authority under the chemical risk and they are to use this authority under the chemical risk at each facility in order to appropriately respond to those at risk. As noted, it is crucially important that the first responders make full use of the chemical hazard information when appropriately

trained to minimize the risks to firefighters, medics, hazmat teams and people responding to the emergency. Notification to the public – It is to hold public meetings to discuss the emergency plan with the community to discuss an emergency plan with the community, educate the public about chemical risk, and share the information on what is to be done during emergency, evacuation, and shelter in place.”

Duncan informed Hicks that he was at his five minutes. Hicks asked the council for one more minute.

Moved by Alderman Ptak and Alderman Jeppson to grant Jamie Hicks one more minute to speak.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Hicks continued “to ensure that the public understands what to do when they receive this information. Participate in the planning process and promote participation in emergency exercises. Addressing the language and culture issues in our town to the vulnerable and sensitive and low-income members of the community to assist them effective in participating in local planning meetings, understanding the risk issues and what to do when an accident occurs.” Hicks stated that this paperwork is from the EPA dated 2017. He stated that he is realizing that a lot has not been happening and Carus has been getting away with a lot. He asked the council what laws that the city does follow. He feels that every law that he has mentioned the last year has been ignored.

Hicks told Alderman Herndon that he is glad to hear that he is doing better.

Resident Lisa Dyas, fourth ward, mentioned that she spoke with someone last meeting about her driveway curbing and footing needing to be replaced because it was already crumbling. Brian Brown did take a look at it along with 1409. They are both on his list for repairs to happen in the spring.

Marty Schneider first spoke in regard to the water treatment plant that is undergoing maintenance. Schneider read from the annual drinking quality report that “immune compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplant, people with HIV, or other immune system disorders, some elderly and infants can particularly be at risk from infections, these people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. If present, elevated levels of lead, which there are, can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and plumbing.”

Schnieder does not recall receiving any letters or notices when the levels were high and before the city started doing the maintenance. He would like to know why no one was notified.

Alderman Lavieri mentioned that the city has been working on this. He also mentioned that the whole state has to identify lead lines and work on replacing them. There was a

debate on what the homeowner owns, and Lavieri stated that the homeowners own from the main to the house.

Alderman Crane stated that the resident owns the service line, but it says that the city has to provide a shutdown. The purpose of the buffalo box is to prevent from having to dig it up at the main to shut it down. He also said how technically, it's kind of like an unwritten rule that the City fixes from the buffalo box back because it's just better off that way, due to the fact that the city might not have to dig up the road. He mentioned how it may cause more money and more damage. Crane stated that going from the buffalo box in is 100% the homeowner, but the way the ordinance reads from the main to the meter is owned by the resident and that is the same for the sewer too.

Schneider continued by stating that the same contaminants that are in our drinking water come from the Carus plant and their discharge. He said that when he looked at the city's inventory report, the city had every excuse on here, except Carus. Some of the reasons that were listed he said were discharge from drilling waste, discharge from metal refineries, erosion of natural deposits, runoff from fertilizer, leaching septic tanks. But he said that nothing was listed from the chemical plant that is destroying our area.

Schneider continued by saying that Carus has become the center for resource extraction. He said that "Carus is digging and destroying the city of LaSalle thanks to Mayor Grove for allowing it. Starved Rock is being stripped for silica to use in gas and oil wells for LNG exports." He continued stating that "Starved Rock is the most popular tourist destination in the state with over 2 million visitors a year. He also said that much of the sand is being mined from the surrounding area and shipped to the oil wells in North Dakota." Schnieder said that "millions have been donated to local organizations to ensures zoning changes and local politicians such as Mayor Grove, look the other way." He said, "heavy metals in the LaSalle water treatment plant, that is at the center of upcoming hearing, are the same metals that were found on the residents' soil, furnace filters and discharge pipe that comes out of the Carus factory that empties into the Vermillion River."

Schneider shared the annual report with the council. He showed what the annual report should look like vs what it did look like in 2022. He is concerned because when he viewed the Carus permit and their discharge, he noticed that both their permit and the City of LaSalle's were empty and not filled out for 2022.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to approve the Minutes of the Regular City Council meeting held January 8, 2024. Each and every alderman has a copy.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to go out of order to approve the Zoning Board of Appeals request.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to accept the recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding request of David A. Raccuglia, as Trustee under a Trust Agreement, for variances regarding a reduction in lot size at premises commonly known as 901 First Street.

City Attorney James McPhedran mentioned that there were no objections made at the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing. The premises are presently known as 901 but will be 901 and 907 when lots are split with an additional ordinance, which will be approved at next meeting for the two-lot subdivision. The developer, Mr. Raccuglia and his trust, agreed that they would not be using the premises for R-4 multiple family dwellings.

Alderman Lavieri asked if it was two lots at one time. Attorney Nick Balestri was present and stated that it is believed that it was once two lots at one time. He was unable to track down the records at the County office, but it is believed that it is two parcels. Balestri and Developer Raccuglia discussed his future plans and felt that it would be best if the buildings would be two separate buildings. Attorney Balestri mentioned commercial spaces on both lower-level buildings and a single family residential on the upper floor on the building to the east.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Mayor Grove stated that he was excited to see progress on East First Street and thanked Balestri and Verucchi for their investment downtown.

DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PETITIONS:

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to approve the request from LaSalle Little League to hold a Tag Day Collection on Friday, May 3, 2024 and Saturday, May 4, 2024 at the intersection of 11th and Bucklin Streets as well as Raccuglia Drive and Airport Road, and LaSalle businesses.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve the request from Knights of Columbus to hold a Tag Day Collection of Friday, September 20, 2024; Saturday, September 21, 2024; and Sunday, September 22, 2024 at the LaSalle business and at the intersection of 11th and Bucklin streets on Saturday, September 21, 2024.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve the request for a 2024 Raffle License from the LaSalle Excellence Foundation, 2024 Raffle License from the Voluntary Action Center – Meals on Wheels, and 2024 Raffle License from Starved Rock Runners, LTD.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS

Moved by Alderman Bacidore and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to accept, approve, and place on file the Building Inspector's Report for December 2023 showing total fees collected of \$3,074.34 with total value of construction of \$433,697.00. Each and every alderman has a copy.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept, approve, and place on file the Illinois Department of Revenue report showing sales tax collected for October 2023 of \$130,272.51 and Home Rule Sales Tax of \$99,437.07 for a total of \$229,709.58. Each and every alderman has a copy.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

BIDS

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Ptak to accept the bid award for City Masonry Restoration and Exterior Lighting Upgrades.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane, Bacidore

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Mayor Grove mentioned that this was a continuation of restoration of the City Hall that started last year. This bid award will allow for tuckpointing and exterior lighting. Finance Director John Duncan that the city will be using ARPA funds from COVID relief that the city received \$1.2 million. The roof construction was a little over \$400,000 and this will be the balance from those funds.

APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

Moved by Alderman Crane and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept the appointment of John Duncan IV to the Fire Pension Board for a term of two years.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane, Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept the appointment of Jerry Janick to the Fire Pension Board for a term of three years.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane, Bacidore, Ptak

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds, both with regret, to accept the resignation of Sergeant Thomas Belski of the LaSalle Police Department.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Jeppson, Herndon, Crane, Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Herndon **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Police Chief Mike Smudzinski mentioned that Sergeant Belski had 20 years only with the department, along with 8-10 years with the Bureau County Sheriff Department. He will be working at the Menta School. Smudzinski said that Belski was a great code enforcement officer.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee regarding the purchase of a 2023 RAM 1500 Classic for \$39,017.00 for the police department.

Alderman Ptak mentioned that this purchase will be coming out of the drug fund from the Police Department. The city will be utilizing the current replacement truck by sending it to the streets department.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Herndon, Crane, Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Alderman Bacidore asked to table the request from the Streets, Alleys, and Traffic Committee regarding traffic control signals at the intersection 24th and Chartres streets

including, but not limited to, consideration of whether to change the nature of traffic control signals from directional control to blinking red lights.

OLD BUSINESS

City Engineer Brian Brown introduced Michael Slagel, President of Vissering, to update the Council in regard to the water plant project.

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to allow Michael Slagel, from Vissering, to address the council and give an update on the Water plant project.

Slagel first stated that he had took over for Greg Wiesbrock who has recently retired from Vissering Construction. Slagel had also brought along one of the project managers, Breanna, tonight that has been working on the plant project. He discussed how they are currently doing all the upgrades to the north filter. The completion date for the first filter will be in February. Mayor Grove asked if this would clear up the water once the first filter's work is complete. Slagel was unable to speak for the water quality but based on how poor of condition the filter was at the beginning of the project, it should improve.

Mayor Grove stated that he will take some responsibility for how bad the filter did get but asked Slagel for some guidance in regard to some sort of maintenance program so this wear on the filter does not happen again. Slagel mentioned that the manufacturers do give guidelines for backwash procedures and maintenance.

Brown did ask Slagel to discuss a few of the delays they had with this project. Slagel mentioned that the filters were in really bad shape when Vissering was scheduled to take them down. The city did ask to do some pre-soak and filter work done prior to taking the first filter down. During this project, they did find out that they were missing some hatches and a few other parts that needed to be ordered. The crew did not stop working during this time, however. They did continue with sandblasting and painting. Alderman Crane asked if the Vissering team was working only 40-hour weeks. Slagel stated that the team has worked a couple Saturdays.

Alderman Crane did ask if there was a filter Maintenance plan that went with the Water Tower maintenance plan that the city recently agreed to. The Operator at the time of the agreement did not feel that it was necessary to add these filters to be part of the water tower maintenance plan because these repairs were already scheduled. Crane asked when the city renews the contract for the water tower maintenance, if the city should now add those filters to the plan. Mayor Grove felt that the city could keep the filter maintenance within the city.

City Attorney Jim McPhedran updated the council in regard to the stipulation that has been entered into by the EPA, the Attorney General, the city, in regard to the wastewater treatment plant issue that has been requested for a public hearing. The

Public Hearing will be held February 29th, 2024 at the LaSalle County Downtown Courthouse, Court Room 206, at 10am. This is open to the public.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Crane would like to address some city owned properties within this new year. Crane would like to find a way to liquidate these properties. Mayor Grove that Building Inspector Andy Bacidore has mentioned this same thing. Mayor Grove mentioned that they will get a list together and have the council members look to decide if there are any that the city can or should keep and then put the rest out to auction with a sealed bid.

DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve a resolution authorizing curb cut of up to 60 feet on Eighth Street (Tieman 801 Joliet St). Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Crane, Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Ptak to approve an ordinance authorizing variance concerning premises at 901 First Street (Raccuglia) within the City of LaSalle (to be known as 901 and 907 when subdivided). Each and every alderman has copy.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Bacidore, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

COMMENTS

Mayor Grove wanted to thank the public works and other city staff for all their hard work with the last snowstorm.

Mayor Grove also mentioned that the city will have other groups coming in to discuss their options for the city too in regard to fiber and other city agreements. Mayor mentioned that the city currently has an agreement with Comcast which allows for discounts with utilities. Mayor Grove plans on hearing from multiple carriers in the future. Deputy Clerk Brent Bader mentioned that he has reached out to Oglesby, Ottawa and Mendota for their current agreements with Surf Internet.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept, pay, and file the bills from January 8, 2024: Total Submitted: \$661,812.61 (Total Payroll \$284,576.10, Bills to be Paid \$198,704.94, Total Bills Paid \$178,531.57). Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL

AYE: Aldermen Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane, Bacidore

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Thompson **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Crane to adjourn the meeting.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

ADJOURNED

7:21

pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Quinn, City Clerk