

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE LA SALLE CITY COUNCIL

April 15, 2024

A regular meeting of the La Salle City Council of La Salle, Illinois was held, Monday, April 15, 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 – Mayor Grove, Aldermen Thompson, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon, Crane

Excused Absence – Alderman Bacidore

Others Present: Deputy Clerk Brent Bader, Finance Director John Duncan, Economic Development Director Curt Bedei, Director of Public Works Kevin Fay, City Building Inspector Andy Bacidore, Fire Chief Jerry Janick, City Attorney James McPhedran, Police Chief Mike Smudzinski, City Treasurer Virginia Kochanowski

A quorum was present.

COMMENTS

Brianne Hicks started out the comment portion of the meeting by mentioning a discussion she had with Alderman Crane in regard to community cleanup day. Alderman Crane that he had no further information yet because they will be discussing it tonight with the council. She does have some ideas and focus areas that she would like to share once the city has a better idea of a cleanup day plan. She did ask what some of the summer workers focus areas were. She also asked if the city does enforce if someone is not cleaning up their own garbage on their property. She was referring to a fence line where she has picked up garbage multiple times. Crane said that he has had multiple calls in the past for garbage on property. He does refer these calls to the building inspector. He will then contact them or cite them, and it usually gets taken care of. Hicks asked if it does continue to happen, what would happen. Crane stated that the fine would then go up.

Denna Hicks spoke next and shared her concern of when the agenda topics get discussed with alderman. She believes that there must be meetings outside of the council meeting because things seem to get mentioned and then passed quickly. She asked who the public can get information on bids and projects that are discussed and voted on. She

would like to know how she could get the information for these items before it gets to the voting process.

Hicks also asked about the background and certifications of city employees, particularly in the water department. She also asked for more specifics in regard to water testing and the process once a test comes back with some issues. She also asked if Brent was the only one to contact with these questions.

Crystal Loughran asked the council about the local grocery store and if the city could give the public an update on IV Food Center's progress for reopening.

Resident Marty Schneider said he's been following recent meetings and feel nothing has changed. He said the Council is letting Mayor Grove dictate how the meetings are run and feels issues with the water have been covered up. He criticized the Council for not getting constituents good information about recent water issues, saying there is rust in the drinking water. He also said that Jamie Hicks should not be barred from attending City Council meetings. He said it shows how much power Mayor Grove has. He said he considers Finance Director John Duncan a friend and has no issue about his complaint against Jamie Hicks. Schneider said more people have been complaining to Mayor Grove than ever before but problems are being hidden. He said "tyrants" like Mayor Grove and Inga Carus have run the town into the ground and he will make sure Mayor Grove, Alderman Bacidore and Alderman Herndon will not be in their seats after the election. Finance Director John Duncan let Mr. Schneider know his time was up. Mr. Schneider said he hoped it was not too late to "save this town." Mayor Grove reminded Mr. Schneider his time was up.

Angel Farmer said she visited Rotary Park and noticed the baby changers have been made safe and the "danger zones" around the park have been roped off. She said never heard back from Mayor Grove when she first reported it which is why she discussed it at a Council meeting. She was contacted by a La Salle resident who said they are afraid to approach the Council regarding issues. Ms. Farmer said she understood as they could be called obsessive or looking for fame or face arrest. She showed people a picture of a person she identified as a Michael Kiser. She said Mr. Kiser gives her a "slew of unwanted attention." She then listed off things she said he's lied about and crimes she said he's committed. She said her actions have gotten his attention and she has other things she could be doing getting less attention. Ms. Farmer said Mayor Grove and Finance Director filed an emergency workplace restraining order against Jamie Hicks for Mr. Duncan's safety. She said this comes after attempting to have Mr. Hicks arrested for various allegations. She reiterated comments at prior meetings regarding what she described as discrepancies in the reports. She said Mr. Duncan tried to be an enforcer when Mr. Hicks was escorted from a meeting earlier this year. She asked why the City needed Chicago attorneys for this issue. She also said Superintendent Kevin Fay's statements differ and asked if he was afraid he'd lose his job for not going along. She said police resources are being wasted on this issue. She said people are afraid to criticize the Mayor for fear of how they'll be treated. She said Mayor Grove previously "hijacked" public comment times.

She told him he will not be Mayor for much longer. She gave the rest of her time for silence “for all persons abused or negatively impacted by the tyrannically behaviors of former Mayor Jeff Grove.

PROCLAMATION

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Thompson to proclaim April 14th through April 20th, 2024 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Crane to approve the Minutes of the Regular City Council meeting held April 1, 2024. Each and every alderman has a copy.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PETITIONS:

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve the request from Tammy Humpage of LaSalle-Peru to Peoria St. Jude Run to hold a Tag Day Collection on Saturday, July 20th at the intersection of 11th and Bucklin streets.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to approve the request from Machele Senica for curb cuts at 205 Roosevelt Road and 1604 Creve Coeur Streets.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to approve and place on file the Building Inspector’s Report for March 2024 showing total fees collected of \$6,120 with total value of construction of \$23,890,783.00.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Alderman Herndon and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve and place on file the Monthly Police Income report for March 2024 showing total fees collected of \$7,415.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to approve and place on file Illinois Department of Revenue report showing sales tax collected for January 2024 of \$82,712.44 and Home Rule Sales Tax of \$71,675.77 for a total of \$154,388.21.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee regarding investment/membership in North Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation (NCIEDC) for \$12,492.00.

ROLL CALL

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

NAY: NONE **Absent:** Alderman Bacidore **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Mayor Jeff Grove gave a warning to Angel Farmer acknowledging that the meeting is in progress and is not currently open for discussion.

Alderman Ptak mentioned that the Finance Committee voted to table the recommendations regarding selection of fiber service provider. They hope to be able to finalize an agreement in two weeks.

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee to approve the grant request from Christie Pasioka of Starved Rock Rentals for a Redevelopment Incentive grant totaling \$2,668 for premises located at 552 1st St.

ROLL CALL

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

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Bacidore **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

OLD BUSINESS

Moved by Alderman Crane and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to authorize pay request #13 for Vissering Construction Company totaling \$166,311.80 for work completed to date on Water Treatment Plant Improvements 2022.

ROLL CALL

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

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Bacidore **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Chris Perra, TEST, Inc. provided an update on Infrastructure Improvements to Water Distribution System. He stated that there was an IEPA inspection done at the end of last year. Two matters came up due to that inspection and it then allowed for a letter to be sent out from the IEPA. He continued by stating that two items were in violation with one being secondary containment for the chemical tanks. He stated that this is one item that all his groups are getting letters for. Perra said that the IEPA looks for different things every year and this is one thing that they are enforcing this year. He stated that the tanks have already been replaced and is no longer an issue. He said that the other item is in regard to having backup generator for the city's water supply. This is another item that all his supplies are getting hit with this year also. Perra stated that the IEPA was audited by the USEPA and they are now making all supplies have backup generators. Perra did find out that the city had already applied for grants a year ago for generators, but it never did get approved. He said that the well field, pump station, and one pump station at the water plant. Kevin Fay agreed that the lead time to purchase such a generator is 50 to 60 weeks. The EPA does recognize that. This is a concern that many towns are having, LaSalle is not the only one.

Alderman Lavieri stated a concern with having a backup generator out in the wellfield when it has had issues in the past with getting out there due to flooding. Kevin Fay stated that the city will be putting a transfer switch at the old pump station, and they could trailer it down there if needed. Perra did mention that the city is going for a deep well by the water plant.

Perra will be signing the NOV and sending it off to the EPA. They will in return send another letter stating that the city is in a CCA and the mayor will sign that and agree to do what the EPA stated. Perra did state that he is proposing to have a contract with a company that has portable generation that can bring the power to the city. The city will start to put the transfer switches in all locations, even though that lead time is out there for those supplies too.

Alderman Ptak asked Chris Perra to give a little background on his years and qualifications in the water department. Perra stated that his company, TEST, Inc., was started back in 1987 by his father. He has been doing this job professionally, full time for over 30 years with the highest certification level of class A and Class 1, for water and wastewater certifications. TEST, Inc does operate around 200 facilities, some large like LaSalle and some smaller. Perra does have over 50 people across the state of Illinois that work for TEST, Inc. He encourages everyone to share his personal phone number in case anyone has questions or concerns. Perra also said that a few that have contacted him or the office has requested a sample kit which they will send out for lab testing.

Alderman Crane asked if Perra could update the council on the quality of water with the new filter. Perra said that the new filter is putting out really good quality water. He said that he is at the plant reviewing data several times a week and everything is

satisfactory. Perra stated that the information has been recently uploaded to the city website. The water department is continuously checking samples and uploading the information to the city website to be as transparent as possible to the public.

Alderman Lavieri asked about the changes to the EPA's requirements with PFOSS. Perra stated that the city does plan on moving to the deeper well and the city is wanting an aquifer at the 3000 to 4000 foot level is the same aquifer that the city of Peru has, and they have no detectable levels in Peru.

Alderman Jeppson mentioned that he had sat in a meeting with Men's Softball and Little League and they all were in agreement to put up a second net above the current net would solve some current safety concerns.

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to approve the work by JB Contracting for \$4,500 to install a field net at Hegeler Park.

ROLL CALL

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

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Bacidore **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Alderman Herndon did suggest if the netting could be a different color. Mayor Grove did state that they could suggest that to the league. Mayor also stated they do not intend for any gaps to overlap this year. This will help with the concern of safety for the boys on the little league field. The men's league did also ask for netting to go from the announcer's booth to the tennis courts. Alderman Jeppson did believe this netting to be included in the original bid that was mentioned before.

Mayor Grove gave an update to the public and the city council in regard to IV Food Center. He mentioned that two months ago when he spoke with the new owners, they thought in about three weeks they would be able get things going. Mayor Grove encouraged them to take their time to reopen. He did say that the new owners have been running into a few more issues with infrastructure and HVAC. Mayor Grove did say that he would follow up to hopefully have another update next meeting.

Mayor Grove mentioned that the city has offered in the past to do some walkthroughs of the water treatment and wastewater facilities. He stated that this is still an option if anyone is interested. Director of Public Works Kevin Fay can be contacted via phone or email which can be found on the city website. Mayor also suggested contacting Julie and she would be able to help arrange this. Mayor Grove mentioned that it was offered to some in the past and they had declined for some reason. Mayor Grove that he appreciated being able to get the tours when he was first elected alderman.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Of Public Works Kevin Fay mentioned that he had included two bids in the package, Mayou Roofing and Five Star Roofing. Five Start Roofing came with some different options in regard to a warranty, 10-year, 15 year, and 20 years. Fay mentioned that the roof has been patched four different times. Director Fay recommended a 15-year warranty, possibly a 10-year warranty. This bid did include a material that would be able to be patched if need be. Fay mentioned that it difficult to chase around a leak on such a big roof.

Alderman Crane asked if both contractors would be able to start immediately. Fay mentioned that both would be able to. Alderman Thompson asked if the city had this in their appropriations for the year. Duncan stated that the city did not have their annual appropriations meeting but will soon and have to work that into the appropriations for the budget for next year.

Alderman Jeppson pointed out that the price was valid till 4/20/24 and it is currently 4/15/24. Alderman Ptak recommended that the city should go with the Metal One Fiber Coat. Alderman Ptak asked Alderman Crane his opinion of this. He was in agreement of the 20-year Fiber Coating.

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Thompson to approve the recommendation for resurfacing work to be completed on the Public Works Garage Roof.

ROLL CALL

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

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Bacidore **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Alderman Ptak did want to address how a bid works in regard to bids and approval of projects. Ptak mentioned that a department head will bring up a project or work that may be needed and the department head will come up with that specs that may be needed for the job. The department head would then go out to contractors to collect a couple different bids. After he receives a few bids, he analyzes each and brings a recommendation to the council. The council receives the bids in their meeting packet that they are allowed to review also. The bids are not shared before the council votes on them.

Alderman Crane asked to add a discussion in regard to a Community Clean-up event. Mayor Grove mentioned that Crane did reach out to Linda, Parks and Rec, in regard to the litter at the Carus Fence line. Linda does have this as a job for the summer employees to do.

Alderman Crane mentioned that garbage is the number one complaint that he has received. He receives many calls in regard to the alley between 901 Grant and Crosat St. He did have a resident share some information with him about what Ottawa plans to

do for their cleanup on Earth Day. He said that he heard that 100 people plan on showing up to Ottawa's clean-up day. He also reached out to LBA who does their own cleanup downtown three times a year. Crane wondered if they would be willing to collaborate with the city for another cleanup day. He also had reached out to Ax Church who have Hope Week in June. Alderman Crane reached out to the Mayor for his feedback for a city cleanup day. Mayor was in total favor of it. He said that the city could provide the trash bags and then Public Works employees could pick them up. Alderman Crane wanted to discuss the possibility with the city council members tonight and also possibly select a date, so they will be able to get a date out to others. He suggested that once the date was set, volunteers could meet at the big shelter by Volunteer Field and the Pool. Crane suggested the city providing gloves, trash bags, and drinking water for the day. He also suggested of the city populating a list from calls or other known trouble spots. If residents know of a troubled area, they could call their alderman or Brent Bader.

Alderman Lavieri mentioned that back in '95 he had initiated a cleanup with Rotary, from 5th St to the Canal. This cleanup has not been done in a while. Lavieri also suggested having the city provide mesh vest for safety also. Lavieri will try to mention to Rotary. Alderman Jeppson mentioned The Perfectly Flawed Foundation does do an annual cleanup down at the canal. Jeppson thought that Crane's idea could be viewed more of as a residential cleanup but still make it a whole city effort.

Alderman Reynolds mentioned that LBA sounded very excited about getting involved in this way with the city. Reynolds also suggested maybe splitting the clean-up to the different wards.

Alderman Lavieri asked if it would be possible to get a few more trash containers downtown. Alderman Crane mentioned that the city does have containers on 1st and some on 2nd but maybe the city could put some on the side streets also.

Alderman Reynolds mentioned that LBA does get together periodically and especially around the time when Jazz and Blue Fest is in the downtown.

Alderman Crane did suggest scattering the clean-up events throughout the year when others may not be having theirs. It was also suggested that the city puts together a little sign-up tool for volunteers to use to sign up. Mayor Grove asked if Alderman Crane if they planned on tabling this discussion for another two weeks. Alderman Crane agreed and also asked everyone to reach out with a date that may work best for them, and they can all discuss some possibilities.

Kevin Fay began discussion regarding concrete work to be completed on the east and west sides of the Public Works Garage. Fay mentioned that there is currently gravel on the east side of the building. Fay would like to see concrete to where the fence steps back and the back westside there was an old shipping dock. This would then potentially surround the building with concrete on both sides.

Fay did get a couple bids for this work. There was a bid for \$29,500.00 but this was for the labor of installing. Fay figured the price for concrete to be about \$44,000 on top of the \$29,500. This would be the bid that Fay would recommend to the council. He also mentioned that the city would be providing a core out, which will be removing of all the gravel.

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve the recommendation regarding concrete work by Ruppert Concrete at the Public Works Building. The bid would be for \$29,500 for labor and \$44,000 for the concrete totaling \$73,500.

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

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Bacidore **Abstain:** None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Alderman Lavieri wanted to mention to public that the city has grown out of their current public works building downtown LaSalle. He mentioned that the city bought an older building that is requiring some work, instead of building a brand-new building. Alderman Crane stated that some of these public work projects were appropriated for under last year's budget.

Alderman Ptak mentioned that he had his water meters replaced this morning and wanted to acknowledge a few of the city workers. He said that Mike and Tim did a phenomenal job replacing these meters. He said they were very prompt, efficient, and professional. Alderman Crane agreed also.

Kevin Fay mentioned that he believes that the the currently have replaced 1700 meters so far. Finance Director John Duncan thanked and congratulated the city council for making the decision to increase the work force to do the work internally rather than subcontracting this out. Duncan stated that these current employees are learning the city's infrastructure and will be integrated into the workforce, with potential retirements in the future. Mayor Grove mentioned that when these employees are trading out meters, they are also checking out the lead lines too.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept, pay, and file the bills from April 1, 2024: Total Submitted: \$1,050,363.24 (Total Payroll \$222,407.97, Bills to be Paid \$608,515.21, Total Bills Paid \$219,440.06). Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL

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

NAY: None **Absent:** Alderman Bacidore **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

7:30

pm

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

Amy Quinn, City Clerk