

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE LA SALLE CITY COUNCIL

September 2, 2025

**A regular meeting of the La Salle City Council of La Salle, Illinois, was held
Tuesday, September 2, 2025, 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.

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jeff Grove, Aldermen Demes, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, and Crane

Excused Absence: Aldermen Thompson and Herndon

Others Present: Deputy Clerk Brent Bader, Finance Director John Duncan (left at 7:16), Economic Development Director Curt Bedei, City Engineer Brian Brown, Police Chief Mike Smudzinski, Fire Chief Jerry Janick, and City Attorney James McPhedran

A quorum was present.

COMMENTS

Mayor Grove opened the floor for public comment, allowing residents to share their thoughts, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. He indicated Council members would not respond to residents during the public comment period as it was the residents' time; however, questions would be answered throughout the course of the meeting as appropriate. He invited residents to contact city officials outside of the meeting hours to obtain answers to questions they have.

Vietnam combat veteran Dale Butkovitz of 338 Tonti Street introduced himself. Mayor Grove thanked him for his service. He spoke regarding holes in his alley which he is hoping could be repaired.

Mayor Grove indicated a work order would be prepared and the issue would be resolved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Demes to accept and place on

file minutes of the Regular City Council meeting held August 18, 2025. Each and every alderman has a copy.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PETITIONS

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to approve the Request from Abby Schenck of La Salle Elementary School District to hold a Tag Day Collection on Friday, September 12, 2025, and Saturday, September 13, 2025, at the intersection of Eleventh and Bucklin Streets and related matters.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to approve the Request from Ameren Illinois to break ground at 248 La Salle Road to retire gas service and related matters.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

Moved by Alderman Demes and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to approve the Request from Stratus Networks to break ground in City right of way on the southside of Second Street, between Gooding and Marquette Streets, to install fiber optics network for 613 Third Street and related matters.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

Mayor Grove asked City Engineer Brown about Stratus Networks. Brown responded they are a small fiber installation provider.

Moved by Alderman Crane and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to approve the Request from Ronald and Tracy Malcolm for a variance and waiver from the requirement of providing a sewer ejector pump pursuant to Ordinance 2157 for premises being constructed at Lot 28 of Vermilionvue Subdivision commonly known as 149 Cavalier Court and related matters.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Demes, Ptak, Reynolds, Jeppson, Crane, and Mayor Grove

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** Lavieri

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-1

Attorney McPhedran asked that the record reflect that the City Engineer has complied with the Ordinance in that regard that allows these types of exceptions and there will be an

ordinance on the agenda later on consistent with this request. That ordinance also calls for a signed agreement to abide by these requirements.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS

COMMUNICATIONS

BIDS

APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

STANDING COMMITTEES

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee to accept and place on file the Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Audit and related matters.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane, and Demes

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-0

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

OLD BUSINESS

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to authorize payment of Pay Request #6 for Municipal Well & Pump totaling \$255,195.62 for work completed to date on 2024 Water System Improvements/Deep Well Drilling project and related matters.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane, Demes, and Ptak

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-0

Mayor Grove announced that the drilling team is entering phase 2 of the project, having reached 1,000 feet. City Engineer Brown indicated the expected finished depth would be 2,500-3,000 feet.

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Demes to authorize payment of Pay Request #2 for Universal Asphalt & Excavating totaling \$266,155.20 for work completed to date on 2025 Road Improvements – MFT project and related matters.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane, Demes, Ptak, and Reynolds

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-0

Attorney McPhedran indicated a supermajority of six aldermen would be required to pass the following action regarding the storm sewer lining on Eighth Street.

Moved by Alderman Demes and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to authorize the hiring of Hoerr Construction to line storm sewer on Eighth Street between Marquette and Joliet Streets at a cost of \$31,488 and related matters. Discussion followed.

City Engineer Brown described the condition of the storm sewer as being from the 1971 aluminized sewer project storm where major replacements have been done elsewhere in the City. This section was not televised, and they were not aware this section was failing.

Brown continued stating Pipelining sent costs of \$32,000 for a ten-foot patch and \$53,000 for the full length. The cost from Hoerr Construction was \$31,488 to do the entire stretch. There are funds budgeted for sewer linings, but in an emergency quote situation approval of a supermajority would be appropriate.

Mayor Grove asked if the City had used Hoerr previously and Brown indicated Hoerr did all the televising and big lining project.

Alderman Lavieri questioned the difference in the distances contained in the bids. Brown stated he wheeled off the distance and got approximately 327.5 feet, but Hoerr gave a per foot price so the unit price per foot would hold rather than the total cost. This means total cost would be closer to \$45,428, based on \$138.50 per foot. Brown indicated once the sewer is lined and repaired, the City will remove the sidewalk above the void, fill the void, and replace the sidewalk.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Jeppson, Crane, Demes, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, and Mayor Grove

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0-0

Brown indicated he had contacted Hoerr this morning to ascertain the timeframe for completion and was told two weeks.

City Engineer Brown discussed Pay Request #26 for Vissering Construction, explaining it was a change order extending the work for the Route 6 bridge over the Little Vermilion so it would not be necessary to procure a new contractor. The permit was received Friday and Brown anticipates the work will proceed quickly. The majority of the change order is for the material costs: insulation, hangers, and four sticks of duct to liner pipe. Mayor Grove asked about the timing of the project and Brown advised him that the lift was not available until early next week; however, they might be able to start the project using a boom and a man cage to start work on the ends and prepping for the center portion of the project.

Alderman Reynolds asked if the City had done something on this project before. Brown explained that previously there was approval for hauling the sewage from the lift station to the plant. This proposal is for the actual material for the contractor to put back up, not for day-to-day expenses.

Moved by Alderman Crane and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to authorize payment of Pay Request #26 for Vissering Construction Company totaling \$48,355.95 for work completed to date on Aerobic Digester Conversion project and related matters.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Crane, Demes, Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, and Mayor Grove

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0-0

Alderman Demes explained his concerns regarding properties with overgrown grass and weeds and the current fine structure. His proposal would be to increase fines to act as a stronger deterrent to violating the nuisance ordinances.

Moved by Alderman Demes and seconded by Alderman Reynolds that fines for violating the nuisance ordinance with overgrown grass and weeds be a minimum of \$200 for the first offense and \$500 maximum for the second offense.

Attorney McPhedran explained that the current ordinance has a range of fines to allow for fines appropriate to the offense. He referenced Section 91.0. He pointed out that each day the violation exists can bring additional fines, so the current ordinance has teeth in it already.

Additional discussion occurred regarding notice to the property owner with a period of time in which to fix the violation before implementation of fines. In addition to the fines, owners are charged \$90 for City workers to cut the grass.

Alderman Ptak asked for Police Chief Mike Smudzinski's opinion on this matter. Police Chief Smudzinski explained many non-compliant owners do not have the means to pay the fines. The Chief has a system in place for covering the wards with Building Inspector Dennis Hocking. The Chief estimated at least 100 fines assessed this season. He will be discussing enforcement with the incoming police chief as a priority. Warnings for long grass are not given since the issue is obvious.

Alderman Crane interjected that he walks his ward regularly, taking note of properties with long grass. He immediately notifies Hocking of any violations, and they are dealt with.

Alderman Jeppson indicated he was not in favor of raising the minimum fine to \$200 because so many property owners are elderly and there are weather-related variables. He suggested revoking rental licenses of habitual offenders who rent out their property.

Attorney McPhedran pointed out that under the current ordinance there is discretion as to the amount of the fine. This new proposal would eliminate that discretion. The advantage of a range is that it allows for case-by-case management.

Mayor Grove pointed out the goal of this system of fines is not to make money.

Attorney McPhedran indicated if this motion passes, an ordinance would be prepared for the next meeting and at that time a final vote would be taken, so it is important to cover all the bases now prior to drafting the ordinance.

Alderman Ptak indicated he is in favor of the current system where the Chief and Hocking have the discretion to work productively with the property owners with the violations knowing the dynamics of each situation.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Demes and Reynolds

NAYS: Aldermen Ptak, Lavieri, Jeppson, and Crane **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION FAILED: 2-4-0

Alderman Demes explained his concerns over a short-term rental in his ward masquerading as an Airbnb with at least nine people living in it for more than 30 days.

Mayor Grove pointed out that the City has an agreement with Airbnb for remittance of fees earned for rentals within the City.

Moved by Alderman Demes that the City begin the process of identifying all short-term rentals within the City for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with local ordinances. Discussion followed.

Mayor Grove pointed out that property owners are unlikely to be enthusiastic about registering as short-term rentals if that includes additional costs to them. They are more likely to wait to be caught. He also mentioned the revenue from Airbnbs is currently solid and jeopardizing that would be unwise.

Economic Development Director Curt Bedei reminded the Council that while the City has an agreement with Airbnb, it does not with other third-party institutions.

Attorney McPhedran stated that Alderman Demes' concerns regarding compliance with both the short-term rental ordinance and the residential rental ordinance are legitimate. He further explained that the property Demes is focused on would no longer be categorized as a short-term rental because it is now being rented out for more than 30 days, so that property should already be compliant with the residential ordinance. If they were compliant the City would know, if not, they could be cited for failing to register and fined accordingly. So if they are already non-compliant, they can already be pursued, and an inspection of the premises can be made. So someone in a short-term rental disguising themselves as residential rental are already considered residential rental and must comply with that ordinance.

McPhedran further explained that for properties that are in fact short-term rentals there are provisions not only for payment of a 5% fine, but if they fail to comply voluntarily as the ordinance requires all landlords to do, there are provisions for 12% interest and an addition penalty.

McPhedran emphasized the importance of following up with Vrbo and other third-party rental vendors to identify properties with short-term rentals and give the landlords an opportunity to comply before going after them. Paying 5% to become compliant is better incentive than waiting for the additional 12% interest fine.

Bedei indicated there has been an initial approach made to identifying short-term rentals for purposes of enacting compliance.

Mayor Grove stated his opinion that ratings are important to Airbnb owners so there is a high probability of them maintaining their properties nicely.

Following discussion, Alderman Demes' motion was restated and seconded by Alderman Reynolds that the City begin the process of identifying all short-term rentals within the City for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with local ordinances.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Ptak, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane, and Demes

NAYS: Mayor Grove **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-1-0

Alderman Lavieri's aye vote was provisional pending the specific language in the final ordinance. Mayor Grove's nay vote indicated his opinion that this is unnecessary. Alderman Jeppson stated he estimates there are between 20 and 30 short-term rentals in La Salle that appear in an online search and every one of those property owners takes good care of their property because they are motivated to rent it out. The rentals attract tourists to the community and Jeppson is reluctant to make it more difficult for them to operate.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Grove reminded everyone that BBQ & Blues and Jazz N' the Street are upcoming September 12 and 139, respectively.

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

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to authorize Ordinance 2157 for premises being constructed at Lot 28 in Vermilionvue Subdivision, commonly known as 149 Cavalier Court, La Salle, Illinois, and related matters.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Reynolds, Jeppson, Crane, Demes, and Ptak

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** Lavieri

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0-1

The proposed Ordinance amending the La Salle City Code, including amending Ordinance Numbers 1957 and 1796 regarding the International Building Code and related matters will be reviewed at a later date.

The proposed Ordinance further regulating Responsible Bidder Requirements on Public Works Projects and related matters will be reviewed at a later date.

Mayor Grove indicated there had been a car show downtown the previous Saturday, August 30. It was a successful event with perfect weather.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Grove stated there was no need for an executive session.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept, pay, and file the bills. Total Submitted: \$763,679.71 (Total Payroll \$233,414.62, Bills to be Paid \$322,405.70, Total Bills Paid \$207,859.39).

ROLL CALL

AYES: Aldermen Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane, Demes, Ptak, and Reynolds

NAYS: NONE **Absent:** NONE **Abstain:** NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-0

Mayor Grove mentioned there is pending activity and legislation on regulation of scooters.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

ADJOURNED 7:26 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Bishop". The signature is written in a cursive, fluid style.

Liz Bishop, City Clerk