

## La Rue Village Council Meeting February 6, 2023

The La Rue Village Council met in regular session on February 6, 2023 in the Village Council Room. Present were Mayor Dustin Ford, Clerk Mary Price, Tyler Howell, and Council Members: David Stallsmith, John Howard, John Boyd, Lance Roberts, and Connie Kendall.

**Guests present:** Richard Holcomb, Oscar Holcomb, Judy Cobb, Mary Snyder, Ray Grogan, Craig Mescher, Josh from the fire department, and Amy Kerr.

**Opening:** Mayor Ford opened the meeting with a pledge to the American flag.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the last regular meeting were read and approved with a motion by John Howard and a second by David Stallsmith, motion passed.

**The financial report** was presented and a motion was made Connie Kendal to approve the bills with a second by John Howard motion passed.

**Mayor** – X

**BPA** – Tyler Howell reported that a fire occurred this past month uptown and the hydrant that was reportedly not working in the area is in actual working condition. The county has reported that the lift station on Market Street needs a pump replaced. A valve that should have been installed when the pump station was designed needs to be installed in order to complete the pump replacement so it could be a costly expense around \$30,000. Plans are still being drawn up for the project and information being gathered for the total cost.

**Maintenance** – Tyler Howell reported that the Village needs to come up with a way to clean the curbs along streets like St Rt 95.

**Park** – X

**Sheriff** – Council decided to not sign the Sheriffs contract for 2023 with the increased deputy price.

**Zoning** – X

**Tree Commission** – X

**Budget** – X

**Street and Alley** – Tyler Howell reported that the stop sign on the intersection of Vine Street and High Street needs a sign on the back side when it flips in the wind. Council all agreed to have another sign added to the back side of the current stop sign that is hanging by the flashing light.

**Fire & Safety** – Lance Roberts presented a spreadsheet with the runs for 2022 and financials.

**Buildings & Grounds** – X

**Regional Planning** – X

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

Craig Mescher brought the plans for the water treatment project and invoices for the engineering services totaling \$75,000. The BPA currently has \$189,000 that was received from the County Commissioners to cover the engineering costs. The additional money leftover could be used to cover filters if the Board would like to proceed that direction. Additionally, a recommendation

was made to let the County know soon if the Village is not going to be using the OPWC money that was marked for the project.

Mr. Mescher reported that he will be sending a letter that he will need a Council member that has been on the longest to sign that states no storm drainage improvements have been completed along St Rt 37. The Village should know if funding has been awarded for St Rt 37 project sometime in April. This time next year the project will be going out for bid for construction to be completed in 2024.

Richard Holcomb asked about the hay fields at the water plant and sewer plant and it was reported that they will be bid out March of 2024.

**Clean up letters that need to be sent to:**

79 E Market Street – Trash bags piling up beside the property

41 S Front Street – Property/yard needs cleaned up

Judy Cobb was present and wanted to know what the Village is going to do with the building beside her pizza shop that burnt. Judy Cobb stated that her insurance company is not allowing her to open until the building is torn down so they can see the south wall. Mrs. Cobb expressed her concern because she doesn't feel like this situation should have ever happened. Council discussed the situation and explained that the property is not the Village's so they will look into everything they can do but its privately owned so it will take time. Mayor Ford brought up that the Village may be able to use the landbank money that was marked for the old hardware store and switch the project over to tear down the burnt building instead. The main issue is that nothing will be quick because there is a process that has to be completed so it will take time. John Howard brought up the idea of the Village using the ARPA money to tear down the property. However, it will take time as well because the Village would have to get permission from the owners of the properties. Council all agreed they would like to pursue moving forward with the option of tearing it down using the ARPA money. A motion was made by John Howard to explore the option of getting permission from the property owners and then tear down the building using ARPA funds with a second by John Boyd, motion passed. The Village's solicitor would have to contact both owners to try and get the deeds signed over to the Village before anything can be completed with demolition. The Village will have to get an asbestos survey completed because it will significantly increase the cost if asbestos is detected. Tyler Howell will get ahold of Evie at Regional Planning to get some contacts for the asbestos inspection and construction quote.

Ray Grogan was present to discuss properties in town and he reported that his office has pulled every property that has been referred for delinquent taxes in the Village and the prosecutor's office has acted on over half of those properties. For example, James Monk property will be coming up for sheriff's sale for the second round here very soon. During covid there was a 2-year period that everything was at a standstill. Discussion was held about the burnt building and the property at 25 High Street is owned by Lawrence Hendricks and has pending case from the bank on foreclosure. The taxes are delinquent around \$19,000 and the prosecutor's office is unable to file anything because of the pending bank foreclosure that has been lingering for lengthy period of time. The property at 285 High Street was discussed and what authority the Village has for the cleanup. The beginning of January the owner (Don Fielder) signed the property over to the renter (Cody Lowe). The prosecutor's office will continue to see what their office can do with regards with the taxes. John Boyd brought up a concern with the amount of

tires that have been stacked up behind the Red Roof Auto building so Connie Kendall suggested a letter be sent to Jimmy Doss.

Council discussed that the Oorang Bang may need to move the location due to the dangerous building uptown.

A public meeting was held for the application received from the County Auditor for farmland in agriculture district. Motion was made by John Howard to approve Jeff Wall's application with a second by Lance Roberts. motion passed.

**Resolution 2023-3** was read to grant the mayor authorization to approve funds for emergency and additional repairs up to \$5,000. A motion was made by John Howard to suspend the rules with a second by David Stallsmith, motion passed. A motion was made by Lance Roberts to approve the resolution as written with a second by David Stallmsith, motion passed with 4 eyes and 2 nays.

A motion was made by John Howard to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters with a second David Stallsmith, motion passed @8.58pm.

Motion to leave is executive session @9:10pm was made by John Howard and a second by David Stallsmith, motion passed.

A motion was made by John Howard that based on a satisfactory review that Tyler Howell is receive a pay increase of 3% with a second by Connie Kendall, motion passed.

A motion to adjourn by Connie Kendall and a second by John Howard motion passed. Next meeting will be March 6, 2023 at 7:00pm.

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Mayor

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Fiscal Officer