

MARCH 25, 2025 ~ REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Ladd Village Board met in regular session on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, in the Ladd Village Hall at 121 N. Main Avenue. Village President Frank Cattani called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

Roll Call: Present: Trustees Jan Martin, Dan Nelson, Brad Nicholson, Molly Thrasher, and Bernie Victor (6)

Absent: Andy Ruggerio (1)

In attendance: Clerk Rhonda Bezely, Engineer Adam Ossola, Superintendent Doug Englehaupt, Police Chief Jacob Frund, Atty. Pat Barry

Nicholson motioned/Nelson seconded to accept the March 11, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

Nelson motioned/Thrasher seconded, to authorize payment of the bills of \$127,755.17.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

Martin motioned/Nelson seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report for February 2025.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

Correspondence: A thank-you card addressed to Andy Ruggerio was read from Mike Grivetti, thanking him for keeping the monument looking great.

Public Comment: None

New Business: Ameren: Representatives from Ameren, Brian Brackney and Ryan Rynkewicz, attended tonight's meeting at the request of the Village Council and President. The Village is a member of the IMEA and currently has a contract until 2035. The IMEA is requesting commitment to extend the IMEA Contract to 2055 by April 30, 2025. The Council is doing everything possible to gather information to make the best decision for the Village. Discussion ensued. The Village is unable to make any changes to power & distribution until the IMEA Contract expires in September 2035. Ameren representatives stated that if, after 2035, the Village doesn't feel it can continue to distribute power, then it is possible that Ameren might consider purchasing the Village's Distribution Center. It was determined that nothing can be changed until after 2035. Brian told the council that they were free to contact him with any questions in the future.

New Business: SURF Internet: Tom Lekan attended tonight's meeting and informed the Council that SURF would like to provide fiber-optic broadband to all Ladd residents at no cost to the Village of Ladd. SURF is currently working with the Federal government on the BEAD Plan and the State of Illinois on the Illinois Connection plan. They have grant money to spend on bringing fiber-optic broadband to selected rural communities, and Ladd is one of these communities. Discussion ensued. The

procedure for how SURF will bring in fiber was discussed in detail. Questions were answered in detail. The costs of the services were explained and seemed reasonable. The Village Council believes that all aspects of SURF coming to Ladd are positive, supporting economic development and potentially leading to residential expansion. They also offer phone service for an additional \$10 per month. Customer service representatives are all located in the United States. Tom said that the Village of Hennepin signed up two weeks ago, and construction is set to start next week. It will be completed by summer. SURF also has a significant interest in Community Support, for example, Hennepin is hosting a WWII airplane flyover, and SURF is covering the cost of fuel.

Nicholson motioned/Nelson seconded, to grant SURF internet to bring Fiber-Optic Service to the Village of Ladd residents and businesses.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

Committee Reports: Nelson reported on the tree at 202 S. Peru Ave. It has not budded out yet, and he is unable to tell if any part of the tree is dead since it all looks dead. We will put this back on the agenda in about three weeks, when the trees are budded out, to take another look.

Engineer's Report: Ossola reported on the **Main Avenue sidewalks**. They got a permit back from IDOT today as an informal approval. At the next meeting, we will pass a resolution and submit it to IDOT for final approval. Ossola also spoke about the Lead Line Inventory work and the replacement plan. We have until April 15th to report back to the IL EPA and update the replacement plan and an inventory. This will include the potholing work from 2024 on part of the service lines. Ossola reported that 72 have to be replaced for sure. One hundred eighty-five are unknown as to the kind of material they are. This will cost the Village either \$720,000.00 if we only have to replace the 72, or up to \$2.6 million if we have to replace all the rest, which are unknown. Englehaupt stated that the numbers are decreasing as potholing is completed, which means the cost should not be as high as Ossola projected. President Cattani got the report back from the asbestos testing at the Ladd Community Center. There is asbestos in the floor tile and some of the insulation on the pipes. There is no concern until construction moves forward. Any area of the floor or pipe insulation that needs to be removed or changed for renovations to the Village Clerk's Office must be remediated. Cattani was asked about the project's current status and stated that it is still on hold; however, we'll take this information into account when determining the cost of the renovation.

Superintendent's Report: New Business: Hoerr Construction Proposal: Englehaupt explained that the quote from Hoerr Construction is for the continuation of televising Ladd's sewers. It's an estimate of hours to perform our annual televising of the sewers.

Nelson motioned/Martin seconded, to accept the Hoerr Construction Proposal for Cleaning and Televising Ladd's Sanitary and Storm Sewers for \$23,977.50.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

Updated Electric Rate Study: Englehaupt also informed the Council that he had reached out to Verbal Blakey from BHMG to get a cost to obtain an updated Electric Rate Study, which would provide scenarios for the Council to use in deciding whether to sign the 20-year extension of the IMEA purchase power agreement. No quote has been received yet. Englehaupt explained that capital improvements are necessary, which would be added to the updated numbers to give the council a

better idea of many scenarios for the Village. Englehaupt relayed that a new electric substation is mandatory in the next 30 years. The extension of the IMEA contract is for 20 years, and we still have 10 years left on our current contract. Nelson added to the conversation that the last electric study contained many factors that are drastically changing, such as mandated renewable power, which is very expensive. He also stated that in 2021 AI -Artificial Intelligence, wasn't a factor in the study and now it is getting more and more huge which will suck up a lot of power. Englehaupt doesn't feel much will change from a Purchase Power Agreement standpoint. Discussion ensued between Englehaupt and the council members. The 2021 Cost of Service Study was reviewed for important dates and timelines for additional studies. It was noted that no substation was added to the 2021 Cost of Service Study. Englehaupt stated that our substation is 20 years old, with a life expectancy of 15 years. Englehaupt informed the Council that the Village must get engineering involved to begin building a new substation for Ladd's future. When would this start? You need to determine when Ladd will have the funds to complete this task. A new Electric Cost Study would get us this information. Englehaupt stated that he is simply trying to inform the Council of all relevant information so that they can make an informed decision on extending the IMEA Contract to 2055. Thrasher asked about the cost of this new rate study. Englehaupt stated that we had not yet received the quote. This will be shared as soon as we receive it from BHMg. Discussion continued. The option that Ladd would have if they chose not to sign the contract extension with the IMEA through 2055 is to have Ameren take them over. Barry reminded the council that there are two components to electric bills. The first is the energy, which is sourced from IMEA, and the cost is 30% lower than what Ameren charges. Ameren then charges transmission charges to get that energy to us. Our rates from IMEA are now lower than they were in 2014. The Ameren transmission amount continues to go up. Therefore, you don't see a difference. Victor asked who was directing the person to give us a quote for a cost of service study. Discussion ensued. In the past, insurance rates, labor costs, our contracted rates, and other relevant information would be required. Victor stated that the board should determine which projects should be included in this study. The board must come together to decide what should be included in this study. Currently, the Village is awaiting the price to conduct another Electric Cost of Service Study. A discussion ensued regarding the Power Cost Adjustment, its purpose, and the method used to determine it. Further discussion regarding the employment of linemen by the Village of Ladd. Atty. Barry spoke with the City of Peru, which employs several linemen, regarding their assistance to Ladd after Englehaupt retires. Englehaupt stated that the cost of a new substation and the cost of redoing the distribution center from 5KV to 15KV. It appears concerning that the Village would forecast such a substantial cost over time. A rate engineer would be needed to ensure that we raise rates sufficiently to cover the projected future costs. Englehaupt stated that, with the contract before the council, a 30-year purchase power projection, a mandatory substation, and the possibility of our one industrial customer changing, what impact will this have on the rates? Those are the concerns. Victor asked if the rate we get from BHMg is static. Atty. Barry stated, "No, the rate is not static; it does increase annually."

WWTP: The building that sits over the bar screen is failing. It's approximately 35 years old, and it was a prefab building. The cost to replace an 8x12 shed that could be moved on and off the screen would be approximately \$25,000.00. To replace the bar screen would cost \$650,000.00-700,000.00 at today's prices. It is a critical piece of equipment, and this shed sits over the top of it to protect it. Englehaupt considered trying to find someone to modify this shed, but it was designed very

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specifically. So, Englehaupt hunted down the company from which they had purchased the shed, and They were out of business. Englehaupt located the company that took them over in Tennessee, and they still had our drawings from 1989. So the quote for the new shed would be for the exact replacement. We will place this item on the agenda for the next meeting, scheduled for April 8, 2025. Doug will provide the quote.

Police Chief: Old Business: 109 N. Main Avenue Building: Chief Frund brought up that people are working at 109 N. Main Ave. Chief Frund asked the council how they would like to proceed with the situation regarding the renovations at 109 N Main Ave and the new owner. A stop-work order was issued twice, and it was removed twice. A third notice was posted, and the village received calls stating that they see lights on at night or that people are working there on weekends. Frund wants to know how the council wishes to proceed. Frund feels we must get inspectors to manage the Main Avenue businesses. We are seeing an increasing number of people we don't know purchasing the buildings, and our Village Code requires no plans, which is becoming increasingly concerning for the Village. We need to incorporate building codes into our Village Codes so that we can lawfully have a qualified company inspect these buildings as they progress through the renovation process. Atty. Barry stated that we would need to obtain permission from the building owner to enter the building, but if this is not possible, we would have to apply for an administrative search warrant based on our concerns. This can be pretty costly, involving both an attorney and an engineer. One of the more significant concerns is that the owner's original intention was to put apartments upstairs. The stop work order doesn't contain any fines. Atty. Barry spoke with Atty. Colin Barry about putting some code in place. Atty. Pat Barry asked if this code could be restricted just to Main Avenue and Atty. Colin Barry stated he felt it needs to be for the entire Village limits. We need to take the time to update the code. Atty. Barry noted that many towns have a licensed plumber, a licensed electrician, and a structural engineer who is required to sign off on. These costs would be outlined in the permit to be the responsibility of the owner. Frund asked the council what they think will occupy this building. A discussion on implementing a renter's agreement to help identify and address issues with problematic renters may be beneficial in situations where tenants are causing trouble. Discussion ensued. It was mentioned that moving forward with obtaining a search warrant and then inspecting this building could cost approximately \$3,000.00.

Building Inspector: Not in Attendance

Village Attorney: New Business - Pass Ordinance 1184: Attorney Pat Barry prepared the ordinances on Municipal Taxes.

Victor motioned/Nelson seconded, to pass Ordinance 1184, An Ordinance Implementing a non-home rule municipal retailers' occupation tax and a Non-Home Rule Municipal Service Occupation Tax Ordinance for the Village of Ladd, Bureau County, Illinois.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor, President Cattani - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

New Business: Pass Ordinance 1185: Attorney Pat Barry prepared the ordinance on the grocery tax. Nicholson motioned/Martin seconded, to pass Ordinance 1185, An Ordinance Implementing a municipal grocery retailers' occupation tax and a Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax for the Village of Ladd, Bureau County, Illinois.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor, President Cattani - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

New Business: Fair Solar Credit: Victor asked if we could table this decision until the next meeting to investigate how this number is determined. Thrasher mentioned Helen Koch is upset, and Englehaupt stated that North Central Bank is very unhappy about the Fair Solar Credit for Ladd. Englehaupt noted that he was told that on January 1, 2025, Ameren would adopt a format that the Municipalities use. Ameren is supposed to be reducing its fair solar credit. They will no longer charge \$0.14 per kW and provide a \$0.14/kW Fair Solar Credit. Englehaupt tries to speak to customers before their solar array goes up because some of the companies selling solar aren't entirely honest about the rate of the Village's Fair Solar Credit.

New Business: CD Renewal MFT Fund: Cattani reminded the Council that the Village will not undertake an MFT project until 2026 and recommended adding \$50,000.00 to the CD balance and investing for 9 months at a 4.11% APY.

Martin motioned/Thrasher seconded, to add \$50,000.00 to the existing Motor Fuel CD and Invest \$132,127.42 for 9 months at 4.11% APY.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

New Business: Donation to IVAR: President Cattani explained to the Council that the Village of Ladd did not sign up when Bureau County Animal Control added a very costly annual fee to participate in this program. Therefore, they will not come to Ladd to help us when we have stray animals. Occasionally, the animals found do not belong to a resident of Ladd. Sammi has a great relationship with Chris Tomsha from IVAR, and she has helped us out a couple of times, which is very kind.

Thrasher motioned to donate \$100.00 to IVAR, but the motion was rescinded.

Nelson motioned/Thrasher seconded, to donate \$200.00 to IVAR.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

Attorney Barry requested a motion to move forward with SURF Internet in bringing Fiber-optic internet to our Village. That motion is recorded in the minutes under New Business: SURF Internet.

Englehaupt is concerned about these companies simply entering and occupying our right-of-way. Englehaupt stopped Comcast from going underground. Atty. Barry will implement an Ordinance that will not allow this.

Conexus is attempting to bring in cable, internet, and phone. Atty. Barry read a notice that was received, stating that Conexus has expanded its cable service area to include the Village of Ladd.

Announcements: Bezely Birthday Card - I would like to thank everyone for the kind words on my Birthday card. It meant a lot. **Kennedy Park Ball Diamonds:** Steve Bosi stopped by the Village to update the Council that he will be in charge of scheduling games and practices for the Kennedy Park ball diamonds. If someone calls the Village Clerk's Office, I will give them his cell phone number so he can speak with them. He has created a Google Doc to keep all this information straight. Having one person in charge of all scheduling will ensure consistency and efficiency. Matt McLaughlin has all his travel team's games & practices scheduled in Ladd. Spring Valley Softball has practices scheduled, but no games are scheduled as of yet. They stated that they cannot play in Ladd per their insurance. Amy Bosi has kindly agreed to run the concession stand. **Veteran's Banners:** The current number of Banners purchased as of today is 80. **Power Glitch:** A couple of weeks ago, we experienced

a brief power loss on two consecutive days. This was an Ameren issue, but Tee Group called the Village Clerk's Office and also spoke with President Cattani about the costs associated with this power glitch every time it occurs. Since the Village cannot control it because it is an Ameren issue, Cattani called Ameren and explained the situation, emphasizing that it cannot continue. They stated the issue was something in Cherry, IL. They appear to have corrected the problem.

Martin motioned/Nelson seconded to adjourn.

Ayes: Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Thrasher, Victor - Motion carried

Absent: Ruggerio

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Rhonda Bezely, Village Clerk