

Village of Lodgepole

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2024 5:30 PM @ Panther Activity Center (PAC)

630 Orchard St., Lodgepole NE 69249

Notice of this meeting was given in advance by posting at the Village Office (PAC), Lodgepole Post Office, the Nancy Fawcett Memorial Library, and the Village website.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM. Present: RJ Savely, Chair; Gwen Devie, Vice-chair; Trustees Mark Bartling, Brenda Parsons; Jerry Ostdiek, Village attorney; Tanya Engel, Clerk/Treasurer.

Chair informed the public of the location of the posted Open Meetings Act and the Board's right to enter into closed session if deemed necessary for any item on the agenda per Section 84-1410 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes.

Chair commented about at-loose dog complaints and asked residents to send written complaints with photos or videos if possible to the Clerk. He reminded people to read the monthly newsletter. And stated that when the garbage truck is being run with two people, one is an unpaid volunteer.

Chair recommended Al Runge to fill the board vacancy. Vote called. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons. No: none. Ostdiek swore in Al Runge to the Village of Lodgepole board of trustees.

Community Comments: Dana Hill thanked RJ for his hard work on running the trash truck and thanked the community volunteers for their hard work. Cindy Bondegard asked if Bill Taylor was being paid, wondered if the trash truck could be run by just one paid person, and asked the Board to clarify if there were debit card issues. Steve Bell discussed his concerns with delinquent bills and wondered why the board isn't upholding ordinances regarding delinquent accounts.

Parsons moved to approve agenda except tabling conversation with Nate Fox to whenever he arrived at the meeting. Devie seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried.

Conversation with Adam Saenzpardo, manger of inside sales, Dutton Lainson, via conference call. He explained the original order of the electric meters in February 2023. The meters have a 3-year manufacturer's warranty. Dutton Lainson will accept a return of the electric meters less a 50% restocking fee. Dutton Lainson would only accept original taped, closed boxes. He explained the water meters. Village ordered 226 meter register ERTs. The ERTs are connected to the meters or pit lids. The Itron AMR can do a radio read of the meters. Preston Richards was not sure how many of each type of meter the Village has. Dutton Lainson will not accept a return of the water meter supplies. Devie moved to send the electric meters back. Runge seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried.

Conversation with Mike Trbovich, Miller & Associates, via conference call. Trbovich said NDEE had approved the water tank demolition. Miller & Associates recommends Isler Demolition. Miller & Associates will answer questions but the Village is responsible for contacting Isler to get paperwork and process started. The Village has one site visit left by Miller & Associates on the water tower contract. Trbovich estimated it would cost \$5,000-\$10,000 plus travel time to disconnect the old water tower, cap the line, and drain the tank. This would not include the cost of moving the hydrant or building a redundancy loop. The demolition information, specifications, and drawings are ready. The only time limit is it is unknown how long the USDA will hold the demolition money. The USDA money can also be used for disconnecting the old water tower. Ostdiek said a referendum that would require the board to keep the water tower could be part of the general election or as a special election. He did not know how it would cost to do either option. Devie discussed the \$12,000 annual maintenance cost and the \$11,000 annual insurance cost to keep the old water tower as well as her concerns about the Village's liability should they keep the old water tower standing but disconnected. Savely

mentioned the growth in communities west of Lodgepole and that he is hoping for spillover. He mentioned receiving four inquiries about lots for sale and that two lots have sold and one of the inquiries is going with a private party.

(Nate Fox discussion moved to when he arrived at meeting.)

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on May 28. No objections to the proposed amendments to the current zoning were given. The Commission recommended the board approve the zoning amendments. The Board will hold a hearing regarding the zoning amendments at the next meeting. Ost diek will prepare the appropriate ordinance.

No discussion on the PAC #12 contract was held as the contract has not expired. The salon contract expired in March 2023. If NPPD can separate the meters between the salon and the Morten building, then the contract will be adjusted and Brott will pay the utilities. Brott asked if the blow dryer and A/C unit could be put on separate circuits as they cannot be used at the same time. Parson recommended contacting Larry Rutt, L&L Services, to fix the situation. The Board did not change the salon's rent.

Bartling moved that "AN ORDINANCE OF THE VILLAGE OF LODGEPOLE, NEBRASKA TO AMEND THE NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR DELINQUENT ELECTRICAL AND WATER BILLS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES OR PARTS THEREOF; TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE MADE A PART OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF LODGEPOLE, AND THAT THE SECTIONS MAY BE RENUMBERED; TO PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THIS ORDINANCE AND THAT THAT ORDINANCE SHALL TAKE EFFECT AFTER PASSAGE, PUBLICATION, POSTING, AND PROCLAMATION AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED." be designated as Ordinance #273. Parsons seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. Bartling moved the statutory requirement of three readings be waived. Devie seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. Clerk read the ordinance. Bartling moved Ordinance #273 be passed. Devie seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. Chair Savely declared the ordinance passed and adopted. Bartling moved Ordinance #273 be published in the Sidney Sun Times. Parsons seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried.

Parsons moved that "AN ORDINANCE OF THE VILLAGE OF LODGEPOLE, NEBRASKA, TO PROVIDE FOR VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION WITHIN THE VILLAGE LIMITS PURSUANT TO THE VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION ACT PURSUANT TO NEB. REV. STAT. NE §19-5405, TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE." be designated as Ordinance #274. Devie seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. Parsons moved the statutory requirement of three readings be waived. Runge seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. Clerk read the ordinance. Parsons moved Ordinance #274 be passed. Devie seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. Chair Savely declared the ordinance passed and adopted. Parsons moved Ordinance #274 be published in the Sidney Sun Times. Runge seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried.

Nate Fox, Fox Insurance/LARM, recommended the Village discontinue the CNA surety bond as the Village already has a \$50,000 blanket bond for trustees and employees. Fox explained the coverage on Village properties and materials, the functional replacement coverage of the PAC and Community Hall, the liability coverage the Village has on all properties, and the cost savings of \$2,000 if the old water tower did not have replacement coverage. Parsons moved the Village accept the recommendations provided by Fox Insurance in their report except keeping coverage on the old water tower. Bartling seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the prioritization of projects and directed Clerk to pay all past-due taxes and set aside funds for the annual payments due in September and December. Discussion of the remaining ARPA funds was tabled until the July 2024 board meeting.

Parsons let the Board know that when the editorial draft of the recodification arrives from American Legal Publishing, the Board will only have 60 days to make changes.

Ostdiek will prepare a fee resolution for the July 2024 board meeting.

Devie motioned to add access for Tanya Engel to all Village of Lodgepole accounts held by PMA Financial Network, Edward Jones, LPL Financial, Union Bank and Trust, and all Adams Bank accounts, other than the Visions account, to which she may be lacking access. Bartling seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried.

The Clerk/Treasurer report was presented by Tanya Engel. The June 1 report of bad debt accounts to be added to the Key Dates document.

Savely moved to have the Board enter executive session for discussion and action regarding the utilities maintenance applicants. Bartling seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. The Board, Ostdiek, and Engel entered closed session at 8:55 p.m.

The Board, Ostdiek, and Engel left closed session at 9:45 p.m.

Parsons moved to offer Stephen Bell the utilities maintenance position starting at \$18 an hour with an increase to \$20 per hour after the first license (water operator or CDL) was achieved and \$22 per hour after the second license (water operator or CDL) was achieved. Bartling seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried. Bell accepted the verbal offer. Ostdiek to format a formal offer letter to be sent to Bell on Monday.

Parsons moved to approve the consent agenda with the amended claims. Devie seconded. Yes: Savely, Devie, Bartling, Parsons, Runge. No: none. Motion carried.

Claims as amended:

AMAZON, OFFICE SUPPLIES - PAPER, 72.25; BLACK HILLS ENERGY, UTILITIES, 579.85; CARROT-TOP INDUSTRIES INC, COMMUNITY HALL FLAG, 57.55; CHAPPELL LUMBER, DUPLICATE KEYS, 22.14; CITY OF SIDNEY, LANDFILL, 882.00; DANA HILL, POSTAGE, PUZZLE TOURNAMENT, 78.21; DEARBORN LIFE, FD LIFE INSURANCE, 92.88; DUTTON-LAINSON COMPANY, CFG-1300-004 MOUNT KIT, 616.00; EAKES OFFICE SOLUTIONS, OFFICE SUPPLIES, 270.10; ELLIOTT EQUIPMENT CO, 95 GALLON Q TRASH CARTS, 1,070.00; FRENCHMAN VALLEY COOP, MOWERS, TRASH TRUCK, 549.86; HIGHLINE, OFFICE PHONE & INTERNET, 415.19; HOMETOWN LEASING, PRINTER LEASE, 166.28; IDEAL LINEN & UNIFORM, RUGS, 165.49; LINDA HARDEMAN, DECEMBER MILEAGE, 12.97; MIDAMERICA BOOKS, BOOKS, 177.87; MILLER & ASSOCIATES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, 2,000.00; NEBRASKA PUBLIC HEALTH, WATER SAMPLES, 15.00; NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER, REPAIR STREET LIGHT WIRE, 601.55; NETWORK SOLUTIONS, RENEW DOMAIN, 44.99; NWRA, MEMBERSHIP DUES, 105.00; PREMIER AUTO PARTS, PRESSURE GAUGE, 26.99; ROBERT KUHNS, WATER OPERATOR FEE, 500.00; SIDNEY SUN-TELEGRAPH, INC, LEGAL NOTICES/PROCEEDINGS, 216.67; TANYA ENGEL, MILEAGE, POSTAGE WATER SAMPLES, 154.67; USA BLUE BOOK, SAMPLING ADAPTER, ROD, 402.44; USPS, POSTAGE, 68.00; WHEAT BELT PUBLIC POWER, SEWER, 454.64; WHEAT BELT PUBLIC POWER, WHEELING, 3,366.11; TAXES TO BE PAID, FED/STATE/SALES, 28,000; PAYROLL 5,668.70.

Chair comments: Residents can mix steel and aluminum cans and place both in the steel side of the recycling trailer. Volunteers with a CDL to help drive the trash truck are needed.

Board comments: Devie discussed the responses emailed to Cindy Bondegard on June 1, 2024, regarding questions she submitted at a previous meeting. (Responses follow). Parsons requested the NMPP 90-day termination letter be on the July 2024 agenda.

Meeting adjourned 10:21 P.M.

Response to Cindy Bondegards' May 6, 2024, questions.

Finance:

1. Did the current clerk/treasurer know that bills were not getting paid?
 - a. The current clerk/treasurer realized the bills were not being paid accurately due to conversations with the job share partner and Board members. In December the current/clerk treasurer took over bill paying beginning with claims presented in January. Outside of sales tax, the Village is now current on all of its bills.
2. Board minutes wages split per department:
 - a. We do not need to publish payroll by department. Municipalities can opt to break it out in the claims in that manner if they so choose.

Nebraska Statue 19-1102. City clerk or village clerk; proceedings of city council or village board of trustees; publication; contents.

It shall be the duty of each city clerk or village clerk in every city or village having a population of not more than one hundred thousand inhabitants as determined by the most recent federal decennial census or the most recent revised certified count by the United States Bureau of the Census to prepare and publish the official proceedings of the city council or village board of trustees within thirty days after any meeting of the city council or village board of trustees. The publication shall be in a legal newspaper in or of general circulation in the city or village, shall set forth a statement of the proceedings of the meeting, and shall also include the amount of each claim allowed, the purpose of the claim, and the name of the claimant, except that the aggregate amount of all payroll claims may be included as one item. Between July 15 and August 15 of each year, the employee job titles and the current annual, monthly, or hourly salaries corresponding to such job titles shall be published. Each job title published shall be descriptive and indicative of the duties and functions of the position. The charge for the publication shall not exceed the rates provided for in section 23-122.

3. How many people employed by village:
 - a. Employees: 4.
 - i. Tanya Engel, clerk/treasurer, fulltime
 - ii. Dana Hill, librarian, parttime
 - iii. Diane Block, library custodian, parttime
 - iv. Preston Richards, occasional maintenance help
 - v. Trash truck: when Bill Taylor was not available, volunteers with a CDL drove the truck.
4. Are employees approved by the board?
 - a. All employees approved by the board.
 - i. The superintendent needs to get approval and a vote needs to be taken by the board to hire a new person.
 - ii. If the person has previously been approved by the board the superintendent would need to request the temporary help.
5. Are employees covered under insurance?
 - a. All are covered by the Village's workers comp insurance, village does not provide health insurance.
6. Was someone else hired to take down Christmas lights:
 - a. NPPD (Nebraska Public Power District) took the Christmas lights down for free as part of their community service program.
7. All monies received are distributed to the appropriate funds.

Board Meeting and Office Hours:

8. Board Meetings, does this really serve the community best?
 - a. The change in board meeting times was presented at the March board meeting and placed on the April agenda. Agendas are available before the meeting at the PAC and online. The meeting was opened to community comments but no one spoke about the proposed time change.

- b. The board meetings began at 7:00PM and the length of the meetings created a very late night for all that attended. Most attendees did not stay to the end. The hope was that by starting the meeting earlier it would finish earlier even if the length may be 4 hours, such as the May 6th meeting and attendees would be more likely to stay to completion. The topic was presented by the clerk in the March. At the April 2nd meeting the ordinance to move the meeting to 5:30 time was voted and approved by the board in open session. Input would have been allowed. Hopefully, the items on the agenda will start to decrease allowing for shorter meetings. When that happens the start time can be reevaluated again.

9. Office hours:

Village clerk Rita Bartling the office was open in the mornings 8 to 12 and closed in the afternoon. Not sure if this was always Rita's hours or if this was changed with Rita. Village clerk Katie Barker the village office was open in the mornings 8 to and closed in the afternoon, worked 1 to 3. Village clerk Tanya Engel the village office is open Monday 8:30 to 11:30, Tuesday noon to 3, Wed noon to 3, Thursday closed, Friday 8:30 to 11:30.

My understanding from previous clerks was that by having the office closed in the afternoon this allowed the clerk to perform tasks and not be interrupted. While most of us think the clerk's position is utility billing and board meetings there are many other tasks that they perform having time to focus on those tasks without interruption beneficial. (Add some of clerk tasks that people do not consider). Tanya was originally hired part-time and has a part-time position with another business. When the other clerk resigned it was in the best interest of the village to allow Tanya to have Thursday off for her other job.

- Office hours are set for two mornings a week and two afternoons a week instead of 4 mornings weeks so that people who can't come in during the mornings have access in the afternoons. It has also been stated and posted and in the newsletter if those times don't work for someone, contact the office and the clerk is happy to set a time to meet. Previous clerks had office hours only in the mornings.
- The hours have been the same since the current clerk was appointed to full time in January. If the office will be closed for training or PTO, the dates are posted.

10. Why does the village office have to have the door closed and customers speak through the whole?

- a. At the downtown office there was a partition and locked door to where the clerk sat. There was not glass between the clerk and customer at the counter. When the clerk left the downtown office, the office could be locked up. The PAC cannot be locked up since individuals are allowed to use the gym, weight, and other rooms at all times of the day. There is confidential information in the office that must be secured customers' personal information and employee information. The glass partition may not be customer friendly like at the downtown office; however, it provides for the office to be locked up at night and maintain some security of personal information.
- b. Window glass for the physical safety of the clerk/treasurer. Previous clerks had threatening encounters (or so I've been told).

11. Consistency of trash pickup, hopefully when a maintenance the employee is hired and CDL is obtained the consistency of trash will be restored.

12. Complaints, who is calling the shots? There has been a lack of consistency in the response to complaints.

- a. Agree with there has been a lack of consistency in the response to complaints.

13. Do the village vehicles need to be parked in front of the museum?

- a. The village vehicles do not need to be parked in front of the museum.

b. As the Morton building gets organized the vehicles can be moved inside.

Comments: No response published because the Board cannot respond or take action on community comments. Also, minutes are not a meeting transcript.

Submitted by

Tanya Engel

Village of Lodgepole Clerk/Treasurer