

**Laurium Village Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2025**

Meeting called to Order by President Sullivan 6:00 pm

Roll Call:

Present:

John Galbraith

Andrew Erickson (by Zoom)

Jennifer Jenich-Laplander

John Sullivan

Jeff Erickson

Absent:

Krista Carlson

Wesley Pietila

Also Present:

Ian Lewis, Village Manager

Mary Pat Crampton, Village Clerk

Kurt Erkkila , LVPD chief

Public Hearing:

President Sullivan announced the public hearing on the Five-year Parks and Recreation plan. The plan has been approved by the Council and only minor changes can be made to it. The public is welcome to comment. Ten minutes was allotted for comments. Hearing none, the public hearing was closed and the meeting resumed at 6:12 pm

Approval of Regular Agenda

Motion by Jenich-Laplander Second by John Galbraith

Call Vote: Yes: 4, Abstain - Andrew Erickson (cannot vote by Zoom) Motion carried

**Approval of Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting December 17th
Meeting**

Motion By Jenich-Laplander Second By John Galbraith
Call Vote: Yes: 4, Abstain – Andrew Erickson
Motion carried

Submission of Bills

Jenich-Laplander reported regular bills and prepaid bills to be approved.

Motion by Jenich-Laplander to accept the bills as presented

Second by Jeff Erickson

Call Vote: Yes: 4, Abstain – Andrew Erickson

Motion carried

Communications to the Council - None

Public Comments - None

Reports from Council Committees

President Sullivan asked committee members to confirm their requests for committee assignments. Assignments for 2025 are as follows:

Finance – Jennifer Jenich-Laplander, John Galbraith
Recreation/Parks/Beautification – Erickson, Pietila
Public Safety (Police/Fire) – Carlson, Galbraith
Streets/Equipment/Sanitation – J Erickson, Galbraith
Property/Building/Ordinance – Pietila, A Erickson
Community Relations – Jenich-Laplander, A. Erickson

Finance - No Report

Recreation/Parks/Beautification – J Erickson reported that the Mite Tournament at Gipp Arena begins on Friday. DPW folks will help prepare, clean up for a good showing for the tournament.

There is signage designating a locker room for women in the event there are girls on the teams. J Erickson suggested Locker room #2, rather than #1 because it is more private. If there are no girls on the teams, the locker rooms will remain their traditional designations.

J Erickson reported on the ice plant. \$225,000 has been raised through various sources. There is a \$75,000 donor whom Jeff has been working with. It is

nearing the time to kick off the crowd funding portion of the fundraising. Jeff had talked with Ian about taking \$25,000 out of the Gipp fund, leaving about \$100,000 remaining. They would like to generate some donor excitement to kick off the fundraising and grow towards phase two of the project. Jeff has spoken with St. Cloud and discussed re-sleeving the pipes to 1 inch and using Calcium Chloride that could get us through the years.

Looking at the boards and glass phase of the project – cost is \$200,000 and the flooring phase of the project is estimated at \$700,000. Ian suggested looking into have the glass professionally cleaned by a company out of Duluth. J Sullivan asked about the deterioration of the plexiglass. J Erickson stated that when we do replace the glass, it will be higher than it is right now for safety reasons.

Jennifer Jenich-Laplander asked what the total cost of the project is and J Erickson stated about \$1.1 million.

St. Cloud will provide an updated quote by the end of the week. J Erickson suggested that if the DPW can build the platforms and we can barter with local electrical providers we can save \$7500.

J Sullivan mentioned board and glass sponsors, Jenich-Laplander asked what the cost is to provide sponsorships. J Erickson is looking into it.

Public Safety –

John Galbraith reported that he and Lewis had met with both the Police Chief and Fire Chief.

Kurt reported that he has been contacted by Hancock City Police Chief regarding being part of a pool of Part time officers that would be sponsored by the Village through an MColes grant. Hancock reported that they recently hired some part time officers and had many good candidates that may be available. A part time officer could help fill in on weekends and for other officers' vacations. It would be benefit the department if a full time person were to leave as we would have a pool to choose from, ready to go. It would be a step in the direction of the Council's goal of bringing the department up to full time.

Jenich-Laplander asked how we would get this done. Kurt will hire an officer and send him/her to the academy

Lewis reported on the payment for the chassis for the Fire Department vehicle is in process. It has to go through the state process. The new Fire Equipment vehicle is on schedule to be ready in a year. Carlson reported that she is

working with the Fire Department on the Fireman's Tournament to be hosted by the Village on 06/21/25. The committee will get together after the holidays. Kurt will handle the MColes paperwork. The part-time person may not stay if offered full time but there will be a pool to choose from if necessary. Ian will initiate an ad for applications with a one week time frame. He feels one week is enough as Hancock had several good candidates. The Council will vote during New Business.

The Fire department is anticipating the new truck around Christmas of 2025. They discussed the aerial truck and getting a newer one that would not be as costly to repair. There are electrical issues with this truck that have been very costly. The current truck is a 2001. To date the Village has met the needs of the department and is moving towards satisfying the 'wants'. They have discussed painting the firehall, removing the rest of the fencing that was started last summer. Ian Lewis is pursuing a grant that would replace the heating system at a total cost of \$133,000. He hopes to hear good news in April.

Streets/Equipment/Sanitation Committee

Jeff Erickson reported that all payroll will be electronic from here on out. A check was received for the Zamboni. Currently we are storing a Zamboni at the Gipp for the Township. They own it, we are able to use it. There is a leak that the mechanics will look at. J Sullivan asked about wrapping the Zamboni.

The blower needs a new chain and sprocket. New tires are needed for the new loader/that will be addressed this summer. Working now on 'wants' for equipment, rather than needs.

J Erickson will get in touch with Qumodo. We have paid for the service, if we do not see value in it in the next few months, we will cancel.

Property/Building/Ordinance Committee - No Report

Ian Lewis reported that the Village will take action against the homeowner on Lake Linden Avenue. The house was slated for demolition but it has not happened. There will be a couple of tear downs on Hecla. On the Willow Street property, the homeowner has passed away and Ian is reluctant to approach the widow at this time. The Tamarack parcel was sold. A house in the 100 block of Kearsarge is slated for tear down, contractors already in place for the spring. Regarding the recent fire at an Ahmeek Street residence – the house was fully insured and will be taken down in a few weeks. This summer, 5 lots were sold to Hyrkas and were combined to make three larger lots on Seneca. There will be 2 new builds there in addition to a refurbished building.

Community Relations Committee – No Report

Manager's Report - Grant Update

Lewis is working on three grants and reported that we qualified for the FD CVT and having our audit late worked in our favor. We are looking at a grant for 2 new police cars and a grant for the new heating system for the firehall. If we receive this funding we could be using our PIF \$ for projects in the Village instead of having to use it for police cars.

Lewis is looking at a grant from the Keweenaw Community Foundation for a Splash Pad. The cost of the pad is \$90k – 100k if we have the company do everything. If DPW can handle some of it, we can save \$20,000. The grant could be for \$20,000 with \$10k from KCF and 10K from the Health Foundation with a 1/1 match = \$40k. Lewis reached out to L'Anse to talk with them about their Splash Pad.

The pad would be installed at the Gipp Recreation Area.

I Lewis said J Kalcich talked about the possibility of removing the Bocci Ball courts and replacing them with cornhole. There would be community support for that and it would look good for our area. We will also fix the volleyball court this summer – an inexpensive project but one that would be well received.

Budget Amendments – the following budget amendments were proposed by Lewis:

Sanitation = \$6000 amended to \$16,500
Water Fund = \$7000 – \$12,000
Municipal Fund = \$2000 - \$2500

Motion by J Erickson Second by J Galbraith
Call Vote: Yes – 4, Abstain 1 A Erickson
Motion carried

Lewis reported that there is a Resolution the Council needs to pass to be eligible for permitting from MDOT – Performance Resolution for Municipalities

Motion by J Erickson Second by J Jenich-Laplander
Call Vote: Yes – 4, Abstain – 1 A Erickson
Motion carried

Unfinished Business

The five-year Parks and Recreation Plan is good. The Council needs to vote to approve it and the Planning Commission will handle any minor updates such as typos.

Motion to approve by John Galbraith Second by J Erickson
Call Vote: Yes – 4, Abstain – 1 A Erickson
Motion carried

Community Survey – 69 residents responded, it will be open until the end of February. 79% are in favor of changing from a Village to a City. Lewis has dropped paper copies off at businesses, people have picked them up in the office, but no paper copies have been returned yet. The survey has brought up some interesting tax questions. It is very tight on whether the community would support a 2.0 mil or 1.5 mil increase, but there is community support. Businesses have asked if they have a platform if they own a business in the Village but live outside of the Village. We will accept their opinions, but the survey itself is for residents. If they have questions, Lewis encourages them to come in and talk to him.

The Council would like to boost the fb survey. J Jenich-Laplander said there is a minimal cost to boost. Lewis will appear on Copper Country Today with Todd Vandyke to discuss on the radio. Lewis would like to get to 100 surveys.

New Business

Lewis would like to change the hearing date for the Budget meeting from 02/18 to 02/27. The Council's regular meeting will be held on 02/18. Notices will have to go out 6 06 7 days prior. Put in the paper next week. MPC will work with Paige to handle that.

Call for a motion to approve the hiring of one part time police officer and to advertise immediately.

Motion by J Galbraith Second by J Erickson
Call Vote: Yes – 4, Abstain – 1 A. Erickson
Motion carried

Lewis would like to create a Rink Manager position. DPW often needs help in the summer. The Rink Mgr could work 50 hrs/week in the winter and 30 in the summer to allow for DPW vacations and extra help. The position would be paid out of a number of funds including Sanitation, Multi-Rec, Gen – to provide another body. The position would be a salaried position, not MERS position, the Village would send the candidate to CDL school if they did not have that license.

They would be required to commit to a period of time in exchange for that training. This position would be committed to the Gipp Arena in the winter. The plan would be to identify potential employee by June 1 allowing time for CDL training, ready to go by Fall. Council Members will assist in interviewing possible candidates.

J Sullivan cautioned to be very clear on job description

Motion to approve new position by J Erickson Second by J Galbraith
Call Vote: Yes – 4, Abstain – 1
Motion carried

Old Business

Discussion on contract of attorney Letzman Council received a copy of the contract. Village will be billed based on hours, not flat rate, not to exceed \$25k The Council or Ian will be only contacts for attorney. Should the people vote in favor of the City of Laurium, a Charter Commission will head up transition. Council had no questions on contract.

J Sullivan reported that there is an opening on the Planning Commission and will put an ad out for appointment in February

Zoning – a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) must be established. If we cannot come up with 5 members and 2 alternates, the Council can serve as the ZBA. As Laurium is landlocked, it should not be too time intensive. The council will advertise for positions.

Danielle Park – The Village needs to find someone to handle Danielle Park for this summer. The position is volunteer and includes booking talent, concessions, opening the park. J Erickson has started looking at acts. I Lewis suggested reaching out to record store to connect with fresh talent or coordinating with the folks from Dam Jam and Farm Block. Residents have asked for some variety in acts.

Recognition for outgoing clerk – J Jenich-Laplander will coordinate a thank you for outgoing clerk, Trisha Goulus for her many years serving the Council.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

**Mary Pat Crampton, Clerk
Village of Laurium
January 15, 2025**

(Minutes are considered unofficial until approved by Council at their next monthly meeting)