

**Laurium Village Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 15th, 2025**

Meeting called to Order by President Sullivan 6:00 pm/Recite Pledge

Roll Call:

Present:

John Galbraith

Andrew Erickson

Jen Jenich-Laplander (late)

John Sullivan

Jeff Erickson

Wesley Pietila

Krista Carlson

Also Present:

Ian Lewis, Village Manager

Mary Pat Crampton, Village Clerk

Kurt Erkkila , LVPD chief

Dan Zubiena, LVFD chief

Approval of Regular Agenda

Motion by Galbraith Second by A. Erickson

Call Vote: Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting June 17 minutes

Carlson asked for amendment to add her name to the list of attendees.

Motion by Carlson to approve with amendment Second By Pietila

Call Vote: Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried

Submission of Bills

John Galbraith reported merchant account bills of \$122,612.25 and Prepaid bills of \$83,633.78

Motion by Pietila, Seconded by A. Erickson

Call Vote: Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried

Communications to the Council - None

Public Comments - None

Reports from Council Committees

Finance - No Report

Recreation/Parks/Beautification – J Erickson discussed the Daniell Park concert series/good turnout last Thursday. Still seeking volunteers to work concession stand. John Sullivan asked for dates open. Ian Raymond will send. Sullivan discussed possibly moving cooler or freezer so we could sell ice cream.

J Erickson stated that a resident had mentioned that when they try to see pickleball schedule, it bounces to fb and resident does not have fb. I Lewis will look into posting in both places.

SAIL workers are painting the locker rooms at the Gipp Arena, they will be done on Thursday. They've painted the parking rails at the tennis courts and have enjoyed the work because of the variety. J Erickson has ordered pizza for them for Thursday. Sullivan asked that there be follow up with SAIL and J Erickson will do it.

Bassett – the ice arena equipment has arrived. They will get started on the project as soon as the rain stops. They have set a date to start up in the first week of October. Council discussed Homecoming floats and a fundraiser. Work has to get done when they can do it. They will talk to schools and give them a heads up. J Erickson will talk to Jesse Patrick re: start youth hockey early. A Erickson asked if the cold storage building would be ready by then. It will not.

Work on the Splash Pad has begun. DPW is working on it. There is a 100 amp feed that was discovered that will be sufficient to run it. There will need to be a shed built to house the equipment. Looking around for possible local donations. Found one for \$5500 + shipping /steel siding, roll door. Could at some point use

part of it for a concession stand.

W Pietila brought up the subject of recycling water. I Lewis explained that we will not recycle but will capture and use as grey water for watering, etc.

JErickson reported that we have barrels and will begin extraction of glycol for transfer facility. Meet the company halfway.

J Sullivan got a quote from Tamarack Tree service to trim hedges at Gipp Memorial. \$2700 to do it in the fall. I Lewis talked about doing it after the fountain is again operational. JS will bring questions back to Tamarack.

Motion by W. Pietila to accept the quote. No second, discussion followed. Tabled the vote until the next meeting.

Public Safety/Fire Department

K Carlson – nothing to report. Kurt Erkkila mentioned that our cadet will graduate on August 22nd from the academy. Kurt will attend the graduation and Ian Lewis may also.

I Lewis reminded Council that there is a monthly police activity report in their information.

(Jenich-Laplander joined the meeting)

Streets/Equipment/Sanitation Committee

Jeff Erickson reported that the grader and all of its attachments are complete. There is need for a sander and Ian is currently bidding on one. It is a hook truck with a sander attachment and 2500 gallon water tank and can haul big dumpsters. The bid is currently at \$6800. There is a jib arm issue but the DPW mechanics are confident they can fix it. It is a 2010 and max bid for VOL is \$20,000. It is a 3-in-1 vehicle and can be used year round.

J Sullivan inquired whether we will have enough room in the future cold storage building for the equipment. J Erickson said yes. We are in the process of analyzing all of the salvaged pieces from the fire and will shed some of the old stuff that we will not use. Our equipment needs are met and exceed the standard of the previous pieces.

K Carlson asked if Qmodo has updated everything. I Lewis reported that he has been working with them on the sanitation route, getting Ipads for the drivers. AErickson asked if there would be Ipads in the trucks. Ian reported that there will be when all is in place and they will need Ipads to submit timecards. That can wait for a few months.

J Sullivan reported that the white garbage truck is a one-man truck, the orange will continue to pick up larger items and work with businesses where the arm just won't work (Miller's). Carlson stated that the businesses are unable to make their garbage available because of the cars parked. Ian said he has tried to work with the businesses to come up with solutions, but they will have to meet us half way. Carlson inquired about the time change for pick up. Ian stated that the driver may not know and may not be doing the route the same way that previous drivers have. There may just need to be communication with the drivers.

J Erickson asked about progress on AT&T poles on First Street. Ian stated that AT&T will come and take down the poles. He will confirm that they will remove the poles from First Street

AErickson asked about a plan for cardboard. Ian said the ordinance states it must be contained. Should be in a box IN the garbage container. So far has been good.

JErickson stated that in the long term there will be recycling with the addition of the cardboard bailer.

Property/Building/Ordinance Committee

Ian Lewis reported that the Ordinance committee is reviewing the Good Neighbor Ordinance.

A Erickson stated that he has been asked about ordinances with regard to renter and dog complaints.

JErickson mentioned some dogs that have been harassing residents. Kurt Erikkila mentioned that when a complaint is serious, it should be submitted, but to some extent, people have to learn to live with each other. Landlords don't seem to care who they rent to.

Sullivan stated that they are getting further into the ordinance for an update.

Kurt Erkkila explained that enforcement is not likely for every problem that comes along.

Community Relations Committee – No Report

John Sullivan stated that we need to put the 25 mph speed limit on the website and really advertise that. Discussion followed regarding where the best places to put signs and suggested one near the 'Welcome to Laurium' sign. I Lewis suggested they be put on the numbered streets. Much discussion was had regarding 4 wheelers. Kurt will look into that. Wes Pietila asked about the sign for the corner. Ian will order it from Amazon.

Manager's Report - Grant Update

Lewis has submitted the Reimbursement to the Sate of Michigan for \$165k for the grader. He has also submitted a grant for the salt shed to the State.

Ian is currently rewriting some of the ordinances. He found an attorney from Lansing – Dickings/Wright for \$420 and hour. The Village can seek reimbursement of fees through liens. There were no local attorneys to do the job – some due to conflicts. Agreed to the hourly rate, which is far less expensive than the retainer. There has been no point to bring anything to an attorney.

Ian is looking at the dangerous buildings ordinance/Fire – Jeff Jepson from city of Houghton can give some advice. We are looking at following their ordinances. We will have to send the rewritten ordinances to the attorney for review.

Short Term Rental (STR) Ordinance will charge an annual fee of \$250. J Sullivan stated that our ordinances are old and ineffective in today's market. We have to put money toward an attorney so that they will stand up in court if necessary.

I Lewis mentioned that he will put up the yellow postings for lawns and will send out blight notices, then move on to dangerous buildings.

Tax season is underway – J Koskiniemi has made his 1st deposit.

Budget amendments were printed and handed out to Council. They have all been talked about but never formally adopted due to all of the changes because of the fire. They will be formally inserted into the budget.

The Flowers fund has been moved to the general fund.

Tools Proceeds @ \$100,000 – Establishing a Revenue/Expenditure

Contents Proceeds @ \$200,000 – Establishing Revenue/Expenditure

Building Proceeds @ \$3.6 Million – Establishing Revenue/Expenditure

Grader Grant @ \$165,000 – Establishing Revenue/Expenditure

Flowers @ \$2,500 – Establishing the Expenditure

Equipment – Repair Parts @ -\$2,500 – Offset the Flower Expenditure in Gen Fund

Motion to approve budget amendments by: Jeff Erickson Second: A Erickson

Vote: Yes – 7; No – 0

Motion carried

Unfinished Business

John Sullivan called for additional Public Comment – 3 minutes per person after stating name and address. No Comments heard

New Business

I Lewis – Sam Stonelake has resigned from the Planning Commission. He held the seat that does not require residence.

Motion to accept his resignation by Jenich-Laplander Second by: K Carlson

Vote: Yes – 7; No – 0

Motion Carried

Old Business

Ian Lewis began the discussion of creating a Fire Authority that would combine the Laurium Village, Calumet Village, and Calumet Township departments. There was discussion of the pros and cons of combining. The pros include combining some services. There would be no impact on the Village's decision of whether to become a 'city' as it would be written into the contract. A board would be created of managers, chiefs, and officers. There could be one efficient new building built that would house all equipment. For Laurium, it would give us the ability to sell the property currently housing the VOL Department and put it back on the tax rolls. We would write in protections should we have to seek a millage to build the new building. The board would help do that. It has been proposed before but more seem to realize that we are struggling for coverage, especially during the day.

Zub talked about the pros and cons of the proposed Authority. He said many folks are getting older and don't feel they can retire leaving their departments short. Most younger folks would like to be involved with Calumet Twp because there is more activity there. He doesn't see much opposition. K Carlson asked what Tim and Megan think of it and what is their reasoning. J Sullivan mentioned lack of cover, abundance of equipment but a lack of personnel. Carlson stated that these are three different groups. Sullivan admitted there will be challenges but overall it is for better service to all three entities. W Pietila asked if equipment would be combined. Lewis stated that it would because all the departments struggle to get new equipment. Carlson stated that the reason she ran for council was to get access to grants and to be able to help get air tanks and masks for our guys.

Ian mentioned that there would be many more opportunities for grants if we consolidated.

Zub said that I Lewis came to him, it is a concept that has been discussed for many years. There are 12 pcs. Of equipment within 1.5 miles of each other. There is a lot of duplications. Repairs to equipment are not cheap. We lose guys to the Twp. Because young guys are excited to be involved and want to go on more calls. For too long, no one wanted to talk about it. This is a good time to take advantage of the opportunity.

Carlson asked how the firefighters felt about it. He said there has been no discussion but he thinks it is positive and working together will be helpful. W Pietila says everyone shows up when there is a fire. Zub stated that during the day in Laurium there are only two guys.

Ian stated that this would allow for older firefighters to retire. There are no new ones to fill in. He will attend the township meeting. All of the departments are in the same boat. What Ian is asking is to agree to allow the managers to look into it.

J Erickson asked if it would affect our existing millages. Ian said no because it will take time to make this happen and in two years we will be fine.

The township could impose a millage for Public Safety.

Carlson asked about current numbers. Zub said that VOL has 14, Calumet Village has 11 or 12, and the Twp has 20.

Jenich-Laplander asked what it takes to become a volunteer firefighter. Zub stated that there is a Firefighter 1 course and that is 2 cycles of school. We buy the books and the Fireworks Grant pays for the school. J Laplander asked if that could be promoted. Zub stated that there is a screening process, they just don't take everyone. Ian stated that some are turned away. J Laplander asked if there are background checks.

Carlson asked about drug and alcohol testing. Zub stated that there are driver's training course for fire school. FF1 is 175 hours. Jenich-Laplander stated that it is done on their own time.

J Sullivan asked Council to provide any feedback to Ian by the 24th of July.

Jenich-Laplander asked if Pat Boberg had been approached. Zub said no.

Carlson named all three chiefs. Kalcich is a big support. I Lewis will send out info

Zub said there will be questions so we will wait and see.

Sullivan suggested we move forward asap.

Carlson asked if it would affect our bid to become a city. Lewis stated that protections would be written in to the creating documents.

Zub stated that he hopes this will start something.

I Lewis also mentioned that if this were to go forward we could offload our millage for equipment.

JErickson asked about the new truck. Zub said it is still on course for December.

AErickson asked if we sell the truck, do we get the money. Lewis stated that it would go to the Authority.

More discussion followed around best practices, templates for setting up the authority and advocating for equal opportunity for all of the guys.

Motion by Jenich-Laplander to move forward with discussions after July 24th if Calumet Village and Township agree. Second by: A Erickson

Vote: Yes – 7; No- 0

Motion Carried

Carlson stated that she would like to hear from the other chiefs.

JErickson thanked Zub for his efforts with the Firemen's Tournament and Zub thanked the Council for its support.

Carlson said she heard many positive comments about the event and that it was well organized.

Zub stated that the department received \$100 from another department thanking them for their efforts in the tournament.

I Lewis stated that the splash pad creation is underway tomorrow!

Meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Pat Crampton, Clerk

Village of Laurium

July 15th, 2025