**VILLAGE OF LA FARGE**

**Regular Board Meeting Monday, July 12, 2021**

\*Village President Cheryl Purvis called the regular meeting of the La Farge Village Board to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Emergency Services building.

Roll Call - Present at the meeting:

Board Members: Aaron Appleman, Frank Quinn, Karen Leis, Barbara Melvin, Terry Jensen, and Cheryl Purvis. Absent was Aaron Nemec.

Also present: News reporters Lonnie Muller and Shaun Sherman, Public Works Manger Wayne Haugrud, Police Chief Jonathon Brown, Utility Clerk Greg Lawton, Nick Burnard, Mark Phillips, Dean and Marlys Steinmetz, Reggie Nelson, Samantha Laskowski, Erica Steinmetz, Alan Buss, Mark Hafner, and Clerk Kimberly Walker.

\*Verification was given of meeting publishing in the La Farge Episcope, and of posting at the Bank, Post Office, and Village Office on July 9, 2021, with an amendment done on July 10, 2021, to add an item to the agenda.

\*At this time, Cheryl made a request to move agenda item #16 (Approve offer to purchase village parcels by Golden Warriors) to under item #7. We have a long agenda, and this way if people don’t want to stay for the whole meeting, they don’t have too. The Board approved the change.

\*Melvin moved, Quinn seconded to approve the previous meetings minutes: (6-14-21/Regular Village board meeting; 6-24-21/Joint Review Board meeting; and 7-1-21/Finance & Personnel committee meeting). (Carried).

\*No Correspondence.

\*Public Comment: Mark Phillips was present, representing the Free Methodist Church, having some concerns with the property that is on the agenda tonight. He wanted to give a background on it first. In 2009, he asked if the village would cover the insurance for a skatepark. Mark and his son Tyler approached the board at that time to let them know they would raise the money themselves (to construct it), and found the insurance was very expensive. That’s when the property was approved to be transferred into the villages name, with the terms at that time being if it wasn’t a skatepark, the property would come back to the church.

There’s been talk that it’s in the village’s name and can be sold. But if it’s not a skatepark, it goes back to the church. He said they’re not against the advancement of a retail place in town, but they have a purpose for that property. In 2018, after the flood, Mark met with Cheryl on matters of what could be better and changed if we got another flood, and at the end she asked what the village could do to help. Mark told her they were looking at expanding their parking or possibly building, and if they could get the 2 lower lots of this parcel to be put back in the church’s name. His understanding was that this happened. Also, part of the agreement was that the church would mow the property, take care of things, had electricity installed, and have taken care of the garbage. That property is used daily by kids and families. It took 2 years to raise the money and receive a Tony Hawk grant. So he questioned since they’ve been mowing/maintaining it and paying the electric for the past 12 years, why is it not theirs?

\*Reggie Nelson was present regarding their property lines. He lives at 542 E. School Street, and just bought the house right next door at 544 E. School. The 542 address owns part of the 544 driveway. They’d like to own their own driveway (after selling the house). So they got the lot lines surveyed (map on hand). They followed the village ordinances and checked with neighbors, who had no problem with them doing this. So they will be moving the lot line over, so each place will have their own driveway, no easement. And another piece is they are retaining some of the backyard at 542. They’re looking for the village to approve the new survey lot lines. Quinn moved, Jensen seconded to approve the new certified survey map. (Carried).

\*Samantha Laskowski and Alan Buss were present from the Vernon County Energy District. Alan, President of the District, gave a background of the non-profit group formed last year to help retain our energy dollars in Vernon County. In 2010, the village created a 25 X 25 plan. With the substation relocation

being worked on, they hoped to help us with updating that. They received a grant from the PSC to do energy planning in the county. Cheryl said it would be a good thing to look at the plan again and she will meet with them initially to see what they have to offer. She will send them an email to set up a date.

\*Item #16: Offer to purchase village parcels by Golden Warriors, LLC: The Dollar General would like to build on these lots. The village attorney did a review and found no problems. Sounds like an issue, not written anywhere, on if the skatepark was removed or changes, it goes back to the church. A couple of sites, Sandmire Park area, or across the street from the new clinic, have been looked at for relocating the skate park. Cheryl checked with our consultant dealing with our TIF escrow, and it’s in our economic development plan that we can use TIF funds, and some economic development funds to pay to relocate it.

Another issue is the parking for the church. Mark said they are also possibly looking at future building options. Other than the village’s name on the property, he can’t see the legal right that we can sell the property, since it won’t be a park anymore. Jensen inquired if this was in writing and Mark produced a quit claim deed stating this on it that if it’s no longer a park, it goes back to the church. Mark remarked he can see division in this town the way things are going. Cheryl said we are not being under handed. After the last board meeting, a couple people looked at the GIS map and found the village parcels, and none were aware this didn’t belong to the village. That’s why we’re meeting tonight. Village has been looking for paperwork and hadn’t seen that agreement. Cheryl reviewed it and read the clause. Having not seen this, it changes a lot. Unfortunately, this wasn’t brought up before. We had no idea.

\*Cheryl said she will call the developer tomorrow and let them know what’s going on. Prior to this, the village agreed to sell the property to the developer for $1.00. The village has been working on getting them here for the last 2 years. It will bring $900,000 toward the tax base and 6-9 jobs. It’s huge for our community. But with this new info, we’ll need to contact the attorney and table for now. The church needs to see what they want to do, sell or not. This is their 4th site, and the last option. Dean feels communication should be more open, work together. Cheryl apologized for how things happened, nothing intentional was done. We will need to sit down with our attorney on steps to proceed since it’s in our name. Do we need to take it out of our name or what? Mark said he will also need to take it to the church conference, and to the church board. It will bring tax base, jobs, and utilities to the area. We all want it to be a growing community. Appleman moved, Melvin seconded to postpone the approval of the offer to purchase the village parcels by Golden Warriors, LLC. (Carried).

\*Utility business:

\*\*Wayne gave a report on the Compliance Maintenance Annual Report. This is for the wastewater treatment plant. We received all A’s, except for one B, which was on the influent flow and loadings, due to dealing with some issues because of Main Street. It’s considered a good job by the DNR.

\*Main Street Project: Gerke got back to work today. They have a whole new crew. They started running the watermain on the North side, laying pipe from Mill to Bird Street. No updates on the time frame. Wayne reached out to CDA about looking at an extension of the project.

\*Update on Grants: No word yet on the EDA grant for match funds on the electrical substation project or the grant thru Ron Kinds budget appropriations bill. The Safe Drinking Water Loan will be a month or so yet. And for the CDBG-DR second phase grant, we did send out solicitations for proposals last week. That is for multi-housing units in La Farge. Those are due August 6th, for review at our August 9th meeting.

\*Only received one RFQ on the engineering for the electrical substation relocation project: Forster Electrical Engineering (from Oregon, WI). Their contract is to be in tomorrow, so we will need a special meeting to approve it to keep things going. Jensen moved, Quinn seconded to postpone the approval of the engineering contract with Forster Engineering until Monday, July 19, at 5:30 p.m. (Carried).

\*No old business.

\*Leis moved, Appleman seconded to approve the renewal of the ad in the Hidden Valleys Visitors Guide for a cost of $252.70. (Carried).

\*Driftless Wisconsin asked if we’d be a sponsor this year again for an ad campaign promoting area businesses in major areas. Quinn moved, Appleman seconded to approve sharing the $500 sponsorship with LAPA, each paying $250. (Carried).

\*Melvin moved, Jensen seconded to approve hiring Greg Lawton and Kim Walker as the listing officials to do the annual dog count for the village. (Carried).

\*Police report/update: Chief Jonathon Brown reported he had 66 calls for service in June. Municipal court was July 1st. He reviewed a couple citations and an arrest. Been working on cleaning up properties. Jacob Sell has been found guilty and fined, but not cleaning up. Cheryl has had contact with Senator Brad Pfaff on what can be further done on helping municipalities enforce their ordinances more.

\*Committee Reports:

\*\*Library: Barb reported the library board has a meeting later this month.

\*\*Finance/Personnel: The village received the first payment of $39,721, from the American Rescue Plan Act. Not sure what the funds can all be used for yet but start thinking of ideas how to spend it.

\*Quinn moved, Leis seconded to approve payment of the bills. (Carried).

\*Jensen moved, Quinn seconded to adjourn. (Carried). Adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

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Kimberly Walker, Village Clerk/Treasurer