

Village of Laura Council

7:00 PM

July 14,

2025

Attendees: Mayor: Ken James, Council: Mark May, Jackie Knight, Glen McSparran, Chris Foster. Fiscal Officer-Gretchen Slagle, Solicitor-Andrew Johnston. Absent: Monte Evans. Others Present: Robert Presley, Daniel Barker-BOPA, Jonathan Thompson, Angi Deere, Patty Wall-Potsdam.

Previous Minutes: Minutes of the June 9, 2025 meeting were previously reviewed and acknowledged. Mr. May made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. McSparran seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. May -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Ms. Knight-Yes, Mr. Foster - Yes. The motion passed.

Sheriff's Report: 1. No Report

Citizens Comments: 1. Angi Deere. Mrs. Deere was present to see if there could possibly be an ordinance that would prohibit certain types of fireworks being used in town, and have a time limit as to how late they could be used. She stated some of the fireworks could pose a fire threat to houses if the fireworks land on a house, and stated the 4th was rough, with fireworks lasting until 2-3:00 a.m. Mr. James noted the State as enacted laws that legislate the use of and dates when fireworks can be used.

Mrs. Deere also stated she was at the park and noticed weeds and thistles growing up through some of the playground equipment. There were several thistles and weeds, not just a few, you wouldn't want kids playing on the equipment. The trash cans were overflowing.

2. Sewer/Water Regionalization Study/West Milton, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Miami County Commissioners. Jonathan Thompson asked about the rumor he heard about this topic. He asked if Council would voice their individual opinions about this, and explain what is happening. Council members individually stated they did not want to be involved in the study or project. Mr. James has been keeping up with the progress of this group. They are interested in looking into the possibility of a regionalized sewer/water project. The project would involve West Milton providing utilities to Union Township, Laura, and Potsdam. West Milton currently provides Ludlow Falls with water and sewer. Mr. May attended an initial meeting and told them we are not interested in the study or project; the group has continued to include Laura as if we are part of the study/project. Council agreed that they think that the majority of residents wouldn't want to lose control of our utilities, or like the costs that would be associated with the change. Mr. Thompson noted he thought residents would be very interested in the details of this project. Mr. James asked Mr. Johnston if West Milton or another entity could annex Laura. Mr. Johnston stated he didn't know of any law that would allow anyone to annex Laura, since Laura was incorporated. If we weren't able to stay within certain agencies guidelines, such as the EPA, County Commissioners or others, there might be reason for action to be taken, but as long as we are incorporated and meet all guidelines, there shouldn't be reason for concern. Mr. James asked if there was any concern about our ability to apply for and receive grant money for a new water tower, Mr. Johnston said he didn't know of any federal law that would prevent us from getting federal grants, or having grant money taken away once it would be awarded, if used according to the grant agreement. Since there hasn't been any regionalization action initiated towards Laura, we have no reason to do anything.

Council agreed to send a letter to the Miami County Commissioners, West Milton and Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, stating we are not interested in participating in the study or project. Ms. Slagle will send the letters.

Patty Wall of Potsdam was present to discuss the potential problem that Potsdam may have to deal with, the septic systems are causing a problem with the drinking water. Potsdam is looking into ways to fix the potential problem. Residents have individual septic systems and individual wells. Cost is a problem for residents and the town, and they would have to get grants to help with a solution.

Mote and Associates did a study for Potsdam and offered some options: A lift station for septic to Laura, water from Laura or from West Milton. They were looking at options, and a discussion was mentioned about joining Laura's systems. Mr. Barker noted our septic system isn't big enough to take on Potsdam, we would have to expand our plant. Our water tower is large enough to help Potsdam.

Mr. Foster asked about increasing our grant chances by joining with Potsdam, because the EPA likes joint projects. Mr. James asked if Potsdam would have to be annexed or other legal items we would have to consider. Mr. Johnston stated we wouldn't have to annex; an agreement would be used. Could we supply anyone along the service line with water/sewer service? Mr. Johnston noted individuals along the line could petition for service.

Mr. Johnston noted there is a new House Bill, HB331/Ohio's New Village Dissolution Process. Newly created Ohio Revised Code Section 703.331 requires that once every ten years, in the year following every federal census, every village in the state will be evaluated to determine if it should be considered for dissolution **by the voters**.

In every county, the county auditor, county treasurer, and one member of the board of county commissioners will evaluate every village in the county to determine if, over the prior ten years, two factors have been met. The first factor analyzes what public services the village has been providing and the second factor reviews whether at each election at least one candidate for each elected village position has appeared on the ballot.

Regarding the first factor, more specifically the review will focus on whether the village provided, or contracted with a private nongovernmental entity or regional council of governments^[1] to provide, at least five of the following services:

Police protection	Emergency medical services
Fire-fighting services	Road maintenance
Garbage collection	Park services or other recreation services
Water service	Human services
Sewer service	A public library established and operated solely by the village

Solicitors Report: 1. 503 Ludlow Street/ AES Boring. Discussion with AES about how to get electric to the new house. AES wants to switch to the north side of the plant, there are existing easements there. Mr. Barker likes the idea of boring along the creek, just go deeper, under our output line from the sewer plant. Mr. James noted Zoning granted a five-year conditional use permit for this property. Mr. James asked if we wanted to continue discussion. Mr. Foster made a motion to allow annexation along the south side of the plant, there was no second, the motion failed. Mr. May noted concerns and would like to revisit this next month.

2. 205 South Main Street/Junk Ordinance. Mr. James noted no progress on this property. Mr. Johnston will send a letter to the property owner. We will send pictures to Mr. Johnston.

3. 111 Pike Street/Burned House. No Report.

BOPA: Mr. May reported:

1. Back Up Generator. The generator is set.
2. Discussed possibly emailing utility bills.
3. Water Tank Leak. Tank and Tower Restoration will be coming to the next meeting to discuss repairing the tower. We will have to have the tower empty for three days to make repairs and improvements. There will be regulators on each end of the line that will regulate pressure for residents. The quote will include repair, clean, sterilize, and evaluate the condition of the water tower.
4. Jon Cress will exercise the valve at the bottom of the water tower. The estimate is between \$800-\$1200.00

Old Business. 1. Resignation. We received a resignation letter from Eric Stein. Mr. Foster made a motion to accept Mr. Stein's resignation. Mr. McSparran seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. May -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Ms. Knight-Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.

2. Julie Dunn/104 Chestnut Street. Mr. James has contact Wagner Paving for a quote.

3. Electronic Speed Limit Signs. Mr. James noted costs run from \$1000 to around \$4000. The cheaper ones were listed on Amazon, the more expensive ones from Safety Sign companies. Mr. Foster noted we may be better off going with a company that specializes in signs, with some kind of warranty, as opposed to something off the internet, which could be an unknown.

New Business. 1. 2026 Budget. The 2026 Budget was presented and reviewed. Mr. May made a motion to approve the 2026 Budget, Ms. Knight seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. May -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Ms. Knight-Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.
2. TruGreen/ Spray Weeds-Curbs, Streets. We have a quote from TruGreen to spray the streets, curbs, alleys for \$1506.96. Ms. Knight made a motion to approve the spraying, Mr. Foster seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. May -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Ms. Knight-Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.
3. Fireworks/Angi Deere. We will check with Mr. Johnston to see what our options might be.
4. Internet Telephone. Our free service with Twillio will end July 26th. Mr. May will work to get another provider for phone service.

Bills. Mr. Foster made a motion to pay the following bills, Mr. May seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Mr. May -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Ms. Knight-Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.

PERS	\$852.11	AES	\$1394.60
Gretchen Slagle	444.87	Ken James	108.78
Amy Elmore	90.00	Shipman Dixon	727.50
Twillio	2.51	Wolf Property Services	880.00
Rumpke	114.30	Rumpke	382.96
Rumpke	223.56		

Mr. Foster made a motion to close the meeting, Ms. Knight seconded the motion. All yeas, the motion passed.

Kenneth James, Mayor

Gretchen Slagle, Clerk