

Village of Laura Council

7:00 PM

September 8,

2025

Attendees: Mayor: Ken James, Council Members: Monte Evans, Mark May, Jackie Knight Glen McSparran, Chris Foster, Fiscal Officer-Gretchen Slagle, Solicitor-Andrew Johnston. Others Present- Jonathan and Lisa Thompson.

Previous Minutes: Minutes of the August 14, 2025 meeting were previously reviewed and acknowledged. Ms. Knight made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. McSparran seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Evans-Abstain, Mr. May-Abstain, Ms. Knight -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.

Sheriff's Report: 1. No Report. Mr. James asked if the Sheriff Dept. would patrol along St. Rt. 571 around Dollar General. If the speed wagon was available, that would work.

Citizens Comments: 1. House Bill 331. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were present to ask Council about the passing of House Bill 331, and how it might affect the Village of Laura. Mr. Thompson wanted to make sure he had correct information to pass on to other residents, as he is very interested in making sure we can retain control of running our town's legislature and utilities. There has been talk of what will happen if Laura fails to meet the criteria of the bill, meeting 5 of the 10 identified criteria to be considered a town, and having someone run on the ballot for each open seat on Council and BOPA. Mr. Johnston stated that there is concern from many villages and towns around this area and Ohio. After the next census, and based on the HB331 criteria, the County Auditor, County Treasurer and a County Commissioner will evaluate entities to determine if the entity should be dissolved. If the entity doesn't meet the criteria, it could trigger a vote by Laura residents as to whether the town should be dissolved. Mr. Johnston noted if it were to be dissolved, Laura would become part of Union Township. We would no longer have a Council or BOPA, we wouldn't be responsible for water, sewer, trash, etc. Mr. Thompson was interested in how the regionalization of the water/sewer project that West Milton was looking into might affect us and whether we could be annexed by West Milton. As long as Laura is incorporated, there cannot be any annexation without Council approval.

Solicitors Report: 1. 205 South Main Street. This property is in violation as of August 14. Mr. James noted there has been some progress on cleaning the property up. We will table this until next meeting.
2. Elected Seats. Mr. Johnston noted the Village doesn't have any elected positions on Council or the BOPA, all are appointed. We will have four open seats at the end of 2025 and two open seats at the end of 2027. The mayor's seat expires in 2027 also. Mr. Johnston will send a letter to the Board of Elections letting them know Mr. Stein resigned his seat.
3. Potsdam/Regionalization. Mr. James asked Mr. Johnston what we would need to do if we decided we could possibly supply Potsdam with water. Mr. Johnston stated both parties would have to present an agreement for approval from both Councils. Mr. Johnston thought it would be hard for us to run water lines to Potsdam, we would need easements all the way there, it would be costly. Mr. James thought Potsdam had a survey done around 2018 that provided options for potential water sources. We'll see if Potsdam has that information.

BOPA: 1. Water Tower Leak/Evaluation. Eric Bowling of Tower and Tank Restoration will be doing an evaluation of the water tower. He gave an estimate of around \$14,000 to fix the leak by welding or painting with epoxy to seal the hole. It also includes washing and sanitizing the inside of the tower after repairs. Mr. Bowling noted there isn't a 100 percent guarantee for this, and until he actually evaluates the tower, he won't know for sure he can repair the leak. Mr. Bowling noted for around \$175,000 he could paint the tower. That could possibly add 20 years to the life of the tower, but again, hasn't evaluated the tower yet. Choice One Engineer, Andy Shumer, was present at the meeting and said he agreed with the information Mr. Bowling gave us. Mr. Shumer noted an estimate of between 1.8 and 2 million dollars for a new water tower.
2. Water Outage. Residents were without water for an hour or so August 28. The controller for the water level in the tower was stuck. Mr. Vore fixed the problem and suggested we put checking /cleaning the controller on our regular maintenance schedule.

3. Back-Up Generator. We are waiting on a pressure test on the generator tank. We will have to buy the fuel for the tank. Someone from Cummings will show us how to run the generator.

Mr. James noted it might be a good idea to make sure we have 30-foot radius around the generator that is clear of trees or anything that could damage the generator. It would also be a good idea to let the Fire Department know when the water tower is drained.

Old Business. 1. Joint Water Regionalization Study/Project. Mr. McSparran will try to go to the meeting in West Milton tomorrow night.

2. Solar, Electronic Speed Limit Signs. No Report.

3. 503 Ludlow Street/AES. The BOPA prefers the electric lines be bored along the creek to the new house being built. Mr. Barker noted his work deals with AES and easements all the time and generally there isn't an issue with them. We need to see if AES would accept less than the full easement they described in the contract.

4. Street Sweeping/West Milton. Mr. James left a message with Mr. Herron; we haven't heard back yet.

5. Golf Cart. Mr. James noted it is hard to find a gas-powered golf cart. He suggested we ask Matt Wolf of Wolf Property Maintenance to take the trash from the park to the dumpster. Council thought this was a good idea. We'll ask Matt how much he might charge.

6. Street Repair Chestnut Street/ Second and Main. We have a quote from Wagner Paving for \$500 to repair the street in front of Dunn resident on Chestnut Street. Mr. Foster made a motion to approve the repair by Wagner Paving, Mr. May seconded the motion.

. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Evans-Yes, Mr. May-Yes, Ms. Knight -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.

New Business. 1. Trick or Treat. Trick or Treat will be October 30. 6-8pm.

2. Snow Plow Bids. Council is happy with M & T Excavating plowing our streets. Mr. Evans made a motion to approve M &T Excavating to plow the village streets this year, providing the cost isn't more than 10 % of last year's costs per plow/salt. Mr. James will contact M&T.

3. Fire Department Request. Mr. James noted Council appropriates \$2000.00 every year to help provide the fire department with equipment they might need. Ken Saunders has given us an invoice for two pair of fire pants that they purchased. The cost was \$2831.36.

Mr. Evans made a motion to increase the appropriation for the fire department from \$2000.00 to \$2831.36 this year, and reimburse the fire department for the pants. Ms. Knight seconded the motion Roll Call Vote: Mr. Evans-Yes, Mr. May-Yes, Ms. Knight -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.

4 2025 Miami County Rates. Mr. May made a motion to accept the 2025 rates as 3.40 mills, Mr. Evans seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Evans-Yes, Mr. May-Yes, Ms. Knight -Yes, Mr. McSparran -Yes, Mr. Foster -Yes. The motion passed.

5 Smith & Associates/Septic Tank. Smiths would like to know when their tank was pumped. It was pumped in June of 2023.

6. Phone Hack. Mr. May noted our phone line was hacked. It took a couple of days before we realized it had happened. Our monthly bill will be higher next month.

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

PERS	\$852.11	AES	\$1739.69
Gretchen Slagle	444.87	Ken James	108.78
Amy Elmore	90.00	Shipman Dixon	246.00
Laura Fire Company	2831.36	Wolf Property Services	880.00
Rumpke	116.12	Monte Evans	36.44
Mark May	72.88	Jackie Ezerski	108.72
Glen McSparran	108.72	Chris Foster	108.72
Laura Fire Company	2831.36		

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

