Mayor Strauss called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00PM. The purposed of this Special Meeting at the LaGrange Lion’s Club was for Council to discuss future cooperations with LaGrange Township Trustees.

Honer, Price, Gregory, Kincannon, Dill and Karpinski were present. Also, present were LaGrange Township Trustees and Fiscal Officer, Solicitor Jon Clark, Asst. Prosecutor Jerry Innes, and Village Fiscal Officer.

Clark opened the meeting with setting ground rules for what was to be discussed and how the audience would participate after discussion between Village and Township officials have subsided. He stated the primary focus should be on the maintenance of the Cemetery. His understand is that Council wants things back the way they were with the Township taking care of the Cemetery. Legally, this cannot happen, but a joint service agreement might be in order.

Asst. Prosecutor Innes stated that there needs to be a mechanism for resolution. The Trustees do not want the cemetery back, but would consider a Joint Service Agreement. Innes stated that shared services is encouraged by the State. The Village is willing provide services to the Township if they take over the cemetery, such as area use in the Future Village Hall for Township meetings and offices, which was quickly rejected by the Trustees.

After the Village questioned the services or lack of provided to the Village residents from the $50,000-70,000 a year the Township receives through inside millage paid for by Village residents, the idea of seceding from the Township became a topic of conversation. Shortly after several talks between Council and the Trustees about seceding, it came to everyone’s attention that the Township cannot maintain a cemetery that is in Village limits. Residents seeking internments were put at a disadvantage because the Village was not equipped with anything in place to provide internments or maintain the cemetery. Council is willing to end talks of seceding if the Township take over the maintenance of the cemetery.

The cemetery, which has approximately 15 graves left to intern in the future had been a revenue stream for the Township through sales of cemetery plots and past internments. However, the Trustees cannot legally take back the cemetery, but would like a fee schedule for internments to be paid to the Township and a joint service agreement for the maintenance of the cemetery.

Gardner stated that an agreement similar to what is in place for the Community Park would be acceptable. However, the park has been unequally supplied with labor weighing more so on the Village, according to Council. Trustees argue that the Township provided infrastructure for the park with its use of heavy equipment and dual volunteering of time. Both sides argue of their support through donation of time, equipment use, or man power, whether it be short term or long term, and feel each has been more supportive and beneficial to all residents.

The Trustees believe that through collaborations, such as Opportunity Way and the forming of the LCIC, the Park, the leasing of land for an EMT substation behind Village Hall, and the Community Park have greatly improved the Village solely and give indirect benefit for the inside millage the Township receives yearly. However, Council argues that it is the Village that pays for the plowing and maintaining of Opportunity Way; one and a half full time employees have been working at the Community Park consistently over the past few years, and the EMT substation was to benefit all residents south of the railroad tracks to have emergency services. Gardner believes the collaboration could continue because of the inside millage and the indirect benefits the Village receives.

Mayor Strauss said the Village residents should not have to pay for cooperation. The cooperation’s should continue regardless of whether the Village secedes or not. He stated that taxation without representation is occurring with the inside millage that goes yearly to the Township. There is no benefit to the Village residents but they have to pay.

Gardner mentioned a possible JEDD; Strauss stated to be prepared to have to pay half the cost of the road repairs, maintenance, future replacement, and plowing. It’s not just about the revenue the Township would receive, but also the costs incurred.

Kincannon questioned if the Township pays the employee portion of OPERS; they do. He also questioned if the Trustees and Fiscal Officer receive health insurance through the Township; they do. It was also mentioned that the Township will be receiving funds, starting at approximately $147,000, from the pipe line installation for the next 20 years.

Residents in the audience noticed the lack of coming to a solution and that seceding seems to be what will happen. Considerations will then be for contracting for Fire and EMS services, but other existing cooperation’s should continue. Future discussions will ensue.

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 8:19PM.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Kimberly A Fallon, Fiscal Officer

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Kim E. Strauss, Mayor