

October 9, 2023

Council President Mr. Martin called the October 9, 2023, Belpre City Council meeting to order at 7:32 PM. The roll was called with the following members present: Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. McClead, Mr. Millhone, Mr. Null Ms. Abdella, and Mr. Wallace present. Also present were Mayor Lorentz, Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell, City Auditor Mrs. Nolan, City Law Director Mr. Webster and Clerk of Council Mrs. Meredith. Absent from the meeting was Treasurer Mrs. Cassady.

Council President Mr. Martin asked that everyone please rise for the Prayer and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Lorentz gave the invocation and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President of Council Mr. Martin asked that everyone turn off cellphones or turn them to vibrate so they don't interfere with the recording.

If you address council this evening, please rise, state your name and address clearly so that the clerk can record it for the minutes.

President of Council Mr. Martin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of September 25, 2023. Mrs. Dennis made a motion to accept the September 25, 2023 minutes as presented and by-pass the reading. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employment of an employee. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye except Mr. McClead, Mr. Millhone, Mr. Null and Mr. Wallace who voted nay. The vote was 3 voting aye and 4 nays. Motion failed.

**Reports of City Officials:**

Mayor Lorentz reported that on your desk you will find a notice from Dominion Gas stating their rise in rates. This may be good information for you constituents.

On October 4<sup>th</sup> I attended the Chamber of Commerce breakfast hosted by CAS Cable. The entire room was full of our business leaders and county officials.

The issue with our flower baskets being hung on the light poles continues. The committee has asked why we don't purchase the poles? If we do, they will be metered and the city will then be the owner of the poles and all maintenance of them. Mayor Lorentz was not in favor. According to the AEP rep they are \$1200 each.

Remember, we do not have an electrician on staff. I have scheduled the baskets for removal on the 15<sup>th</sup> per AEP directions.

The Girl Scouts of Black Diamond received a grant for trees and are working with the Tree Commission to start an orchard and grove of trees in Belpre. We originally thought the lot on Main Street was suitable but, no parking. We have now chosen the land off Boulevard Drive where Campbell Street swings around. As this work progresses, we will communicate or present the final plan to the council.

We are still waiting for Dominion Gas to give us the answer as to whether we have enough volume of natural gas for a generator.

With the retirement of Denzil Ray fast approaching we have promoted Eddie Richardson to Denzil's position and Craig Barker will move to Eddie's spot. Both of these gentlemen have all the credentials and licenses to satisfy all our requirements and they will be an asset to all in their new roles.

Ms. Abdella asked what the date was of Denzil's Retirement and if they are planning on doing something for him. Mrs. Hoblitzell stated that November 30, 2023 is Denzil's Retirement. Mayor Lorentz stated that they probably would do something but haven't got that far yet.

Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell reported that Eddie and I and the Treatment Plant Foreman along with Jeff Carr and his team went to Chicago to learn about several pieces of equipment that would be best used for the design or upgrade of the sewer plant.

We are taking applications for Laborer II in the street garage and police officer. If you see this on Facebook please share.

Tina and I are still working on the Capital items for the departments for the 2024 Budget.

City Auditor Mrs. Nolan stated that Ms. Abdella requested a Profit/Loss Statement for the pool at the last meeting. We are waiting on a check in the amount of \$276 from the Boys and Girls Club along with invoices from CasCable, AEP and Ring Central. We should have these items by the next meeting and will be able to apply more accurately.

City Law Director Mr. Webster had no report.

City Treasurer Mrs. Cassidy was absent. No report was given in her absence.

**Communication and Petitions:** none

**Reports of Standing Committee**

Mr. Ferguson Finance/Audit Committee announced that there was a committee meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 for the purpose of discussing the 2024 Tax Budget. At this time, I would like to make a motion to add to the agenda for first reading **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. Mr. Ferguson called a Finance/Audit Committee meeting for October 23, 2023 at 6:30pm, November 13, 2023 at 6:30pm, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:30pm and December 11, 2023 at 6:30pm to continue our discussion on the Budget for 2024. There are copies on your desk of the 2023 Budget that was approved last year. This is what we will eventually use for the first three months of 2024 at 25% with the exceptions of EMS, 2 police cars, Senior Center Contract and Soil and Water Conservation District. Please call me if you have any questions.

Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire Committee had no report. Mrs. Dennis announced that on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 there will be a Pancake Breakfast held by the Belpre Volunteer Fire Department.

Mr. Greenley was present to give an EMS Report. He reported that there were 109 calls made last month. We responded to 97 of the 109. Twelve were missed because they were other agencies. It was a good month. We are still in the process of securing additional funding for transport. We will be running a second truck within the next few weeks. At this time there have been no transports done.

Mrs. Dennis stated that there is a flier on Facebook about the Pancake Breakfast.

Ms. Abdella, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer Committee had no report. Ms. Abdella stated that she sent to the law director legislation from Parkersburg about people sleeping on public property. Ms. Abdella called a committee meeting for October 23, 2023 at 6:15pm for the purpose of discussing the legislation regarding people sleeping on public property. Ms. Abdella to send a copy of the legislation to all members of council. Mr. Webster to prepare legislation to allow for any corrections they may have.

Mr. Millhone Utilities Committee had no report.

Mr. McClead Parks and Recreation Committee had no report.

Mr. Wallace Planning and Zoning /Economic Development committee reported that his committee met on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7:00 to discuss rezoning property behind Kroger's. Representing David Johnson was Mrs. Astorg with Remax. Questions were asked and we will take everything into consideration.

Mr. Null Rules Committee called a committee meeting for 6:10 on October 23, 2023 for the purpose of discussing the Codified Ordinance.

**PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL - AGENDA items only:** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. This will lie over until the next meeting of council.

**PERSON APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Tom Menear 754 George Street, Belpre appeared before council and recapped a discussion that he had on September 25, 2023 meeting. This was in regards to property at 750 George Street that is owned by WASCO. He stated that there are eight people taking care of two adults living in the home. He addressed disorderly conduct such as loud music, loud talking, arguing, etc. They are causing damage to his property by a bus driving over water and gas lines. They recently put a roof on the garage that looks like it should have been torn down. No building permits. Mr. Menear addressed trash blowing in their yard. He also addressed a closed alley behind his house. There is a water maple on his property that is hanging over on my property. Mr. Menear had pictures he forwarded to Mrs. Hoblitzell. President of Council Mr. Martin asked Mr. Webster if he could trim what was on his property. According to Mr. Webster as long as he didn't kill it. This is a private issue and should be handled between you and your neighbor. Also, a closed alley is private property. Mr. Martin stated that this isn't something that council can fix but we do want to see it rectified.

Karen Locke 726 Tuttle Street stated that the Apple Butter Stir Off is this weekend. Please come out and support the event. We will have some soup beans and corn bread.

There will be Meet the Candidate held on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:30pm at the Belpre Elementary. Come out meet those running for mayor and council. We would love to have you attend.

**ADJOURN:**

Mrs. Dennis made a motion to adjourn at 8:03 pm. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

*Larry B. Martin*

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President of Council Mr. Martin

*Kimberly Meredith*

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Clerk of Belpre City Council Kimberly Meredith