

November 27, 2023

Council President Mr. Martin called the November 27, 2023 Belpre City Council meeting to order at 7:31pm. 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, City Auditor Mrs. Nolan, and City Law Director Mr. Webster. Absent from the November 27, 2023 meeting was Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell, Treasurer Mrs. Cassady and Clerk of Council Mrs. Meredith.

Council President Mr. Martin asked everyone to please rise for the Prayer and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Nolan 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 announced that since the clerk is on vacation there are no minutes this evening but will be presented at the December 11, 2023 meeting.

**Reports of City Officials:**

Mayor Lorentz announced that since our last meeting I attended a parade for a 105-year-old Veteran, Roy Sees.

I went to Kraton Community meeting, attended Chamber Luncheon, and Mayor's meeting in Elizabeth.

The Toys for Tots Train will be at our park December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for rides through the park for the kids.

For the first time in two years the city is fully employed. We hired a gentleman for the street department last week and tonight I have a new officer that has been tested and I'm going to swear him in at this time with council approval. Jason Hall was sworn in as the new police officer to the City of Belpre. Chief Stump welcomed Jason to the department. He told council and the audience that he worked for the Washington County Sheriff's Department and Marietta College. He comes to us highly recommended for the police department. The city and his family are glad to have him working in Belpre.

Also, tonight we have David Hubbard, Maple Street Belpre and a group of ministers present to give a presentation to the First Responders. He stated that we are here to provide assistance to Belpre Area ministries. We are honored and humbled to help the First Responders and always willing to help out. Leavitt's Funeral Home also stepped up to help us. Tonight, Reverend Richard Thomas offered a prayer to our First Responders. There is a box of books left for our First Responders. If there are any left, I would like to ask that the chiefs pick them up for us.

Maxine Hobbs with the Tree Commission explained What Trees do for you and what our grants are used for. Mayor Lorentz talked about a grant a couple of weeks ago. She stated that 2023 has been a very strange sort of year for us. It started off very quietly and recently has gone crazy. It was hard but we all enjoyed it. This year we lost 8 trees, planted 35 trees, adult volunteer hours 715 hours, and children volunteer hours 30. There is a copy of her report on file in council chambers.

President of Council Mr. Martin asked Pastor Hubbard and both chiefs to come forward and present them with their copy of the First Responder book.

Erin Stevens with SOPEC spoke about the Electric Aggregation. She stated that the resolution was up for third reading this evening. We would like to continue our relationship with the City of Belpre. We have started the Gas Aggregation Program but was informed that it was tabled until the next year with our new council. This is the last attempt to activate the program. By moving forward will allow council to agree on price choices for residents. Council must agree with SOPEC Plan of Operations. There will be a workshop set up in January to explain the program to residents. If council chooses to wait there will be a lapse in the program. There is a timeline.

Penne Riffle 763 Ann Street asked if there were any other communities on board with the program. She was informed that the Village of Albany was first to come on and there are two other communities coming on board. Erin informed her that there is approximately 10 communities interested. It is the economy that helps scale the aggregation program.

Mr. Ferguson asked this to be assigned to committee. He was informed that it was assigned to the Utilities Committee at the last meeting. He asked if we could by pass committee for three readings at the next regular meeting? Mr. Webster stated that he needs direction from the committee chair. Mr. Ferguson stated that this would give us time to look over the pricing. He also stated that he is not trying to push this through. Mr. Millhone agreed to have Mr. Webster prepare legislation for the next meeting.

Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell was absent. No report was given in her absence.

City Auditor Mrs. Nolan announced that the October Utility Adjustment Report is before you this evening and needs council approval. Copies were emailed to each member of council and copies are on the back table for your review.

Ms. Abdella made a motion to accept the October Utility Adjustment Report as presented. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

City Law Director Mr. Webster had no report.

City Treasurer Mrs. Cassady was absent. No report was given in her absence. Ms. Abdella asked the auditor if the October and November Treasurer's Report would be available for the December meeting. She was informed by the auditor that it would be.

Mr. Ferguson asked Mrs. Nolan if she wanted **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING 2023 APPROPRIATIONS** added to this evening's agenda. She stated yes. There was some confusion on the \$35,000 to cover the deficit.

#### **Communication and Petitions:**

President of Council Mr. Martin announced that he had accepted the SOPEC report. He asked that the Mayor or Safety-Service Director share a copy of the report that was emailed to them from SOPEC.

Mr. Ferguson wasn't sure how the supplemental went from \$7,000 to \$35,000. He stated that without the Treasurer's Report for October and November he is having trouble coming up with the dollar amount.

Ms. Abdella questioned the \$150,000 Permissive Tax and what that money was used for. She was informed it was for paving. She asked if there was a contract in place at that time and should we have appropriated it at that time? The \$150,000 was spent. Should we have a paving contract in place before the end of the year?

#### **Reports of Standing Committee**

Mr. Ferguson Finance/Audit Committee made a motion to add to tonight's agenda for first reading **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING 2023 APPROPRIATION**. Discussion followed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye except for Mr. Wallace. He stated that he would like to see the October and November's Treasurers Report before voting on legislation.

Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire Committee had no report.

Ms. Abdella, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer Committee had no report.

Mr. Millhone Utilities Committee presented an update on the Spires Old Car Lot. He stated that the curb has been cut, graded and gravel added. When do they expect to pour concrete? He knows that weather plays a part in pouring of the concrete however this should have been done in July.

Mr. McClead Parks and Recreation Committee had no report.

Mr. Wallace Planning and Zoning /Economic Development committee had no report.

Mr. Null Rules Committee reported that he is leaving the feral cat issue tabled. Save the Kitty folks have been working on Florence Street. They have been receiving donations from the public. They are doing a great job.

**PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only:** none

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for third reading **RESOLUTION ACCEPTANCE OF COMMUNITY GRANT FROM SUSTAINABLE OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved this be **Resolution #40, 2022-2023** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Ms. Abdella brought before council for second reading **AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING CAMPING AND CREATING BELPRE CODE ORDINANCE SECTION 541.12.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. This will lie over until the next meeting of council.

Mr. Wallace brought before council for second reading **AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE A 4.05 ACRE TRACT ON LEE STREET OWNED BY DAVID D JOHNSON FROM R-2 TO C-2.** Discussion followed regarding residential property. Mr. Webster stated that it would remain residential until a request was made to rezone. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. This will lie over until the next meeting of council.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for second reading **TEMPORARY APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR CALENDAR AND FISCAL YEAR 2024.** Mr. Ferguson requested a clean copy of the 2023 Budget. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. This will lie over until the next meeting of council.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING 2023 APPROPRIATIONS.**

Mr. Wallace made a motion to table the legislation. Mr. Wallace wanted to see the October and November's Treasurers Report before voting on legislation. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye except for Mrs. Dennis whom voted nay. Legislation was tabled.

**PERSON APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Mr. Locke 726 Tuttle Street asked the administration about the fencing that they are wanting to put around the well heads. What prompted it to be done. Mayor Lorentz stated that it is for protection and to keep folks from driving over them. Mr. Locke stated that he objected to the fencing.

Mr. Millhone asked if we are taking bids on the fencing and if so, he would like council to see the bids. He was informed that bids are being taken.

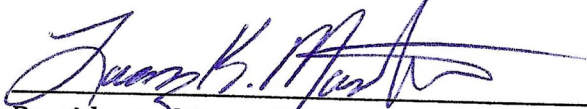
Mr. Null wished everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving. He also thanked the ladies from the Belpre Women's Club and Civitan Club for helping feed families in need.

Mr. Ferguson asked if the fence would go across track?

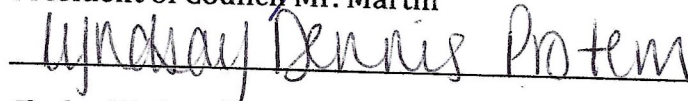
Penne Riffle 763 Ann Street asked about the SOPEC Plan of action. She was informed that they would by-pass committee. There would be no public meeting.

**ADJOURN:**

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 pm. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.



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President of Council Mr. Martin



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Clerk of Belpre City Council Protem Lyndsay Dennis