

September 9, 2024

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis called the September 9, 2024 Belpre City Council meeting to order at 7:32 pm. The roll was called with the following members present: Mr. Ambrozy, Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Locke, Ms. Riffle and Mr. Seebaugh present. Also present was Mayor Abdella, Safety-Service Director Mr. Kirby, City Auditor Mrs. Nolan, City Law Director Mr. Webster, Treasurer Mrs. Cassady and Clerk of Council Mrs. Meredith. Absent from the meeting was Council President Mr. Martin.

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis asked everyone to please rise for the Prayer and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chief Stump gave the invocation and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis asked all present if you have cellphones or any electronic devices to please turn them off or to vibrate so it won't interfere with the recording.

If you plan to address council this evening, please stand, come to the podium, state your name clearly so the clerk can get your information, and address council.

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis asked for a motion for the August 19, 2024 minutes. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the minutes of August 19, 2024 as presented and by-pass the reading. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis asked for a motion for the August 26, 2024 minutes. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the minutes of August 26, 2024 as presented and by-pass the reading. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis asked for a motion for the September 03, 2024 minutes. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the minutes of September 03, 2024 minutes as presented and by-pass the reading. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Reports of City Officials:

Mayor Abdella presented her report before council. It is as follows:

Communications:

- I would like to welcome Olivia Alloway as our newest Patrolman. Olivia comes to us with two years of experience, and a passion to make a difference in her profession. At this time, we will swear Olivia in as part of our department.
- Proclamation – GFWC Belpre Women’s Club, and Canine Companions and September as National Service Dog Month.

Areas of Expertise

Number of dogs trained by Canine Companions

Working support dogs

Street Sealing – We have submitted to have Putnam Howe sealed. It was not included in the original process. By sealing the road, we will add 5-8 years to the life of the road. This is to be completed before the end of the year. There is \$13,000 in Street Department Budget.

Lead Service Lines – The water department is working on a schedule for a door-to-door campaign to complete the needed surveys for the community. We will post the dates when they are confirmed. Staff participating will be identified with a name badge. They will assist homeowners with the process of identifying lines. October 16th is the deadline.

Park Planning: On Thursday we held several focus groups with many members of the community. The discussion produced many wonderful and creative ideas for our community. I will keep everyone up to date as the process continues. There were 235 surveys completed and 55 in attendance for the meeting.

Safety-Service Director Kirby announced that he continues to observe and perform some duties that retired Code Enforcement Officer Leonard Wiggins has been currently dealing with.

The city is working on updating the permit forms to be placed on the city's website for the public to have access to complete and return.

We are receiving numerous calls daily dealing with inoperable vehicles, new construction, trash and other code enforcement issues that we are trying to keep up with. The job description is being put together and we urge anyone that is interested in the Code Enforcement position to apply as this is a vital position that needs to be filled.

City Auditor Mrs. Nolan reported Tuesday morning, August 27, was spent with Heidi, representative from RCAP along with Mayor Susan, SSD Kirby and myself. We worked on finalizing the multiple pages of the Water Tank Loan application. Thursday, August 29, 2024, Melanie, the traveling clerk, worked on reviewing our funds and provided suggestions for appropriations. The 2025 budget will begin being worked October 1 upon pulling the Trial Balance from VIP. Thursday AM, September 5, I was included in the 9:00 participation meeting with American Structure Point regarding development of our river front. The past two weeks have been packed with Invoice Cloud Zoom meetings, testing deposits and returns in the bank account and testing the IVR (interactive voice response) for Auto Pay. We were provided marketing tools and I have passed out some helpful information to get started with. The implementation/extraction from our old Utility System to VIP's Utility system will take place on Friday, September 27. Invoice Cloud will upload and test the files September 30 thru October 3. Our system will be down that week. GO Live October 4, 2024.

City Law Director Mr. Webster reported that he has been working on the following: Inoperable Vehicle 72-hour time frame that Mr. Locke talked to the Chief in the City of Marietta about and I talked to the law director. We are following up on that. One of the issues I talked about with the law director is, has anyone raised the defense of the 72-hour time frame They purchased a special camera which records the time of the parked vehicle on the location on the street. 72 hours later another picture was taken showing it was still there. I asked if anyone has ever challenged that. He said they move the car everyday however no one ever saw them move it. They never had that raised in municipal court yet. That is an issue that is still a problem. One of the other issues was the definition of an inoperable vehicle, and the ability to check if the vehicle is inoperable. The

standard is that an officer can request that the owner start the vehicle to see whether or not it is inoperable however if the person doesn't agree to that we would then have to go to court to determine if the vehicle is definitely operable. It still has to do with the investigation of flat tires, broken windows and these kinds of things. The standard is, is this vehicle licensed in the State of Ohio. There are still issues that will be determined in that. We will continue to work with the legal side of that. Andrew my son is the City Prosecutor and will continue doing the research on the inoperable vehicles.

Mr. Webster stated that he is very happy dealing with the new safety-service director, Mr. Officer Kirby, Officer Kirby is doing a great job educating himself and working very hard. The problem is that there are some issues with zoning applications and permits or other issues that he is currently looking at. You have to remember that he is new on the job and he may have to consult others for assistance with the current standards. Anticipation may be some delay of getting a final decision in regards to those permits. He is working diligently. If you need to talk to him, please call. I saw a list of messages that he has been taking and he keeps good record of those so you are not going to be forgotten. Cut him a little slack if need be.

City Treasurer Mrs. Cassady stated that tonight the amended June's Treasurer's Report needs to be approved by council. There are copies on the back wall. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the amended June's Treasurer's Report as presented. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. Mrs. Cassady stated that she also needs approval by council on the July 2024 Treasurers Report. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Communication and Petitions: - None

Reports of Standing Committee

Mr. Ferguson Finance/Audit Committee reported that his committee met on September 3rd, 2024 to review the Treasurer's Report for June and July. I appreciate the auditor helping with that discussion. We have already approved the June and July Treasurer's Report this evening.

Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire Committee reported that she attended the Ribbon Cutting for Forever Wild. That was a fantastic event. There was a really good

turnout. Really excited to have them in the area. I also participated in the Comprehensive Park Improvement Committee. There was a great response to the surveys. Jeff Greenley President of our EMS Board is here this evening to give his monthly report. Mr. Greenley announced that we had 134 calls with 105 emergencies, 4 transports and 25 refusals. The response time from dispatch to arriving at the scene was 5 minutes 54 seconds. Close to a record. We didn't have as many transport issues this month.

Mr. Locke, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer Committee had no report. Mr. Locke called a **committee meeting for October 14, 2024 at 6:30 pm for the purpose of the 72-hour parking, golf cart amendment** and if I add anything else I will get with the clerk. I hope that Tom can be there for the 72-hour parking meeting.

Mr. Ambrozy Utilities Committee reported that his committee met on September 3rd for the third reading on **AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING WATER RATES** and **AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING SEWER RATES**. Mr. Ambrozy was pleased to say that they both passed. Good News!

Mr. Seebaugh Parks and Recreation Committee announced that he attended the Comprehensive Park Review, first meeting of the day. Like Mayor Abdella said there were a lot of good ideas that came from there. Also discussed was goose poop for some reason, I'm not sure why. There was discussion around the pool and what we wanted to do with that. There was splash pads discussion. That afternoon the mayor had forwarded an email over to us that was a quote from Ryan Taylor with Pickerington and Association. He was looking at a complete over haul. The quote for the low end was \$650,000 and the high end was \$980,000.00. That was if we wanted to make the pool look like it does now with a few upgrades. They also said that if we wanted to open next year, we would need to order parts immediately. I will be calling for a committee meeting here in the near future to discuss. Mrs. Dennis said she would like to thank him for that.

Ms. Riffle asked if the low end was just to get it open? One of the key paragraphs was that you could select not to replace the filters now and roll the dice a bit longer. Mayor Abdella stated that the filters would have to be replaced in the next year. The filter is at the end of life. The pool equipment with filtration procurement and installation is \$550,000.

Mr. Godfrey, Planning and Zoning and Economic Development Committee reported that his committee met at 6:30pm prior to this evening's meeting. A couple of topics discussed were to create a downtown district and restructuring Main Street making that a district in itself and cleaning up the zoning wording to see what is and what isn't permitted.

Ms. Riffle Rules Committee had no report. Ms. Riffle, reminded citizens that golf carts are not permitted on Washington Boulevard unless you are crossing. Ms. Riffle requested that any committee meetings called she would like them to be called after 6:15pm. She has a new job and she doesn't want to miss any meetings. Ms. Riffle stated that she is having surgery on Tuesday and she is in hopes of not missing any meetings however she will be in a brace for 6 weeks. Ms. Riffle, called a Rules Committee meeting for Monday, September 16th, 2024 at 6:30pm for the purpose of reviewing the Policy Employee Manual Handbook. I visited the new Dollar General and if you haven't been there, you should take the opportunity to do so. It is very nice. Some of you who have scanners may have heard that the fire department was called to my residents at 763 Ann Street as I had a fire burning and it was called in as a smoke hazard. Technically I was allowed to burn just not as much. Fire burning regulations in the State of Ohio cover March, April, May, October and November that you may burn. There is a ban from 6am-6pm during those months. After 6pm you are allowed to burn however you are not allowed to burn any grass, weeds, leaves, or trash. You can only burn dry hardwoods. It should be a 3 foot by 3 feet by 3-foot fire. The ground needs to be cleared around it with a circle around it. If the fire itself isn't in a burn barrel it must have a ring with stone around it. Recently the Ohio Fire Marshall put 24 counties on a strict ban for burning. Washington County is on this ban. Right now, there is no burning.

Ms. Riffle moved to add to tonight's agenda for first reading **AN ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INPATIENT OR OUTPATIENT ADDICTION FACILITIES, INCLUDING SOBER LIVING HOMES AND RECOVERY HOMES, WITHIN THE CITY OF BELPRE FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR.** We have had several meetings on this. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mayor Abdella asked Ms. Riffle if she would like her to send council a copy of the Policy Employee Manual Handbook. Ms. Riffle stated that she would send it. She hopes to break it down some.

PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for second 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.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Riffle brought before council for first reading **AN ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INPATIENT OR OUTPATIENT ADDICTION FACILITIES, INCLUDING SOBER LIVING HOMES AND RECOVERY HOMES, WITHIN THE CITY OF BELPRE FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR**. Ms. Riffle stated that this was originally passed on March 25, 2024 and will expire on September 25, 2024 so we will need multiple readings this evening. The period will then go from September 25, 2024 to September 25, 2025. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Ms. Riffle moved to suspend the rule of council on three different days to allow for the second and third readings of **AN ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INPATIENT OR OUTPATIENT ADDICTION FACILITIES, INCLUDING SOBER LIVING HOMES AND RECOVERY HOMES, WITHIN THE CITY OF BELPRE FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR**. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Ms. Riffle brought before council for second and third reading of **AN ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INPATIENT OR OUTPATIENT ADDICTION FACILITIES, INCLUDING SOBER LIVING HOMES AND RECOVERY HOMES, WITHIN THE CITY OF BELPRE FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR**. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Ms. Riffle moved this be **Ordinance #10, 2024-2025** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

PERSON APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:

Harlen Colvin 732 George Street Belpre addressed council regarding water rates and thought that the new council did a very good job explaining rates and usage. I saw in the paper that legislation had been passed on posting signs on private property. He questioned posting signs on private property and asked council for an explanation. Mr. Webster stated that they are not saying you can't have signs on your property. He stated that there are regulations regarding yard sale signs, etc. If you want to put a political sign in your yard you are allowed to do this. The new legislation was intended for commercial activity. We were getting a lot of complaints about yard sale signs being attached to city signs within the right-of-way. There is a restriction of posting political signs in public parks or city property. If you would like a copy of the legislation, we would be glad to supply it to you. We will see you get a copy of it. Signs that are put up by certain people follow the rules as to when they can be put out and when they must be removed. Signs that have been stolen or removed by individuals have not been prosecuted and admits they did so. Mr. Webster stated that charges have been filed against those individuals with additional investigations by the police department and additional information supplied by a couple of witnesses. The police department has not been able to locate the two individuals involved. The case has been dismissed until the individuals are located. They do know the individuals. Mr. Colvin also addressed trash cans that sit out 365 days a year, 7 days a week when indicated on the water bill that they must be at a certain time placed and removed from the city street. If you know of this, report it to the safety-service director and he can determine if they are in violation.

Mr. Locke asked Mr. Webster about the Police Retirement Program legislation. Mr. Webster stated it hasn't been completed yet. No time given on the completion of the legislation as he has been working on some other legislation that was needed.

Mr. Locke asked Mayor Abdella asked Well 2 Rehab. She responded that it is within days of going out for bids.

Mr. Locke asked Mayor Abdella if she was hiring for the water department. The water department currently has one vacancy based on Clint moving to the Forman

position. With the water rate increase it will allow for two additional employees. I have received applications but I'm not ready to hire two at this time. We have not budgeted for two at this time. We have interviews scheduled for three people at this time, passed the test, and their interviews have been scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

Mr. Locke asked Mayor Abdella if she has met with the variance committee at the hospital. Mayor Abdella stated that she has not met with the variance committee at the hospital. We had a preliminary phone call this morning. Our next meeting is on Friday for a 2 ½ hour, zoom meeting. We have discussed storm water, and parking to begin the process.

At the beginning of the year, we discussed replacing water meters. What is the status of these meters? Mayor Abdella stated that the water meters we have has been put in the ground. We have to keep so many on hand in case something goes wrong. The process has started. Clint is getting his feet on the ground and once he is ready, we will begin the process again.

Jesse Wonycott 805 Main Street asked about sewer plant update. I spoke to Mr. Ambrozy at the beginning of the meeting about the USDA helping cities with the process of receiving grants. Where do we have to be with the process before we can contact the USDA to help? Mayor Abdella stated we are nowhere. He had the plan originally and it was just a rough estimate and consensual design. Right now, they are in the process of updating the contract but I did not want to sign a contract until we knew what we were going to do. At that time, we will start at the design phase. I have put in to the ARC for the \$750 back at the beginning of the year. Get with me this week and we will contact the USDA. Mrs. Wonycott stated that it seems like they will actually help you through the whole process. There is a person in Marietta that can help us.

Mrs. Wonycott asked for an update on the city income tax. Mayor Abdella stated that we met with Al and we are able to log into RITA and we are able to print out percentages of dollars. I'm not able to print out at the individual levels. He has a list and he can go to the hospital to verify the names. I knew of two individuals that live outside the city limits and I asked that he check about them. At this time, I have not heard anything back from him. I was under the understanding that he could research the State data base. There are restrictions. He can only research

those who files to a RITA Community so if you live in Little Hocking and you don't live in a RITA Community he can't find you.

Mrs. Wonycott asked about switching to the new Water Bill. She was informed that everything is ready except for the ACH piece. They are going to charge for the use of credit cards to pay the bill. They are not going to charge if you pay online. Mayor Abdella stated that she thought they took that piece out.

Mr. Ferguson called a **Finance/Audit Committee meeting for October 14, 2024 at 6:15pm to begin the 2025 Budget.**

Mayor Abdella talked about security throughout the city. We have a couple of major security issues that are causing interruptions in certain areas of the city. We have got to get this repaired because it is dropping images from our camera's. I'm not going to say where it is. Greg discussed the problem. We need to address our access point. Greg discussed what an access point was. Point to point network from here to the water tank and then we have point to point network to other cameras throughout the city. Those dishes are failing. Life expectancy is 3-5 years. Unfortunately, they were placed 6 years ago but when we looked at the equipment, they were much older than that. We are close to year 12. You have two options: One is to reset everything or buy new stuff. Until you decide what you are going to do, they are going to continue to fail. I have asked for two quotes, one to fix the access points and the other is to fix the access point and the camera's that are the problems. Mr. Godfrey asked if these are the cameras on top of the water tower. He was told yes. He said we may have to put up some other kind of pole. Are there other places they can be placed besides the water tower? Yes, but are those towers going to be demolished in 5 years? We have tried to get the city on one network. We are planning to put Hotspots throughout the city. Point to point are going to be with a dish or you can have an OMNI pole that radiates in a circle. Some of them has issues however they would pick up the majority of the city. Mayor Abdella stated that this is coming about and we are going to have to get it fixed or we will have safety issues.

Mayor Abdella spoke about lift stations. Some have locks while others do not. Chris and Clint are working on the issues to perhaps key differently.

Mr. Greeley spoke about Safety and Security issues both foot and car traffic throughout the school property while school is in session. I'm extremely concerned about the foot and car traffic. We are continuing recessing it.

Ms. Riffle stated that 3-4 years ago Warren made the decision to arm the teachers. Do you know if this is still in effect? Mr. Greenley stated that he can't confirm what Warren is doing. Districts are permitted however training is required.

Mr. Godfrey asked if the city and the school could work together in splitting the cost of an officer to help with the situation. If we could have another officer on roster and also an officer in the building whether at the Elementary School or the High School to help with the protection.

Chief Stump stated that he went to the school board meeting and had a fairly extensive conversation with members of the board. One of the big issues right now is finding someone qualified. You can't just take any police officer and put them inside a school. We have a Reserve Officer within the County and he has come down to discuss in depth. The discussion mainly was the necessity for the operating levy to pass. If it passes, it's not going to be guaranteed. We definitely are going to get an officer. I have met with Leslie about obtaining a grant for that. We are attacking the issue and are 100% on board to be sure that our schools are safe and secure. The State of Ohio is providing training for officers for events in the schools. We are approaching from the law enforcement side. We are trying to educate the community of the importance of passing the levy to help provide some funding.

Ms. Riffle stated that Sheriff Mark Warden has mentioned that Belpre is the only school that doesn't have a Resource Officer. He stated that he would like to have one in every school. I wasn't sure how that is funded.

We appreciate the schools keeping us informed about what is going on in our schools.

Mr. Godfrey asked if our Resource Officers can teach a class in Criminal Justice?

Mr. Greenley stated that it would have to be an Elective class.

Mr. Godfrey asked if we could close that road to traffic and foot traffic?

Chief Stump stated that the Security Apparatus would be first and foremost. We would have to decide that. There is Grant funding for security outside that. The school system has done a great job with the cameras. Closing the access would be a big undertaking. The school has been very proactive. If something happens at the school it will take top priority. Officers will respond as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Dennis stated that she would like to be involved in a plan to move forward. She stated that this has been a very public empowered meeting.

Adjourn:

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to adjourn at 8:52pm. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Lindsay Dennis Protem

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis

Kimberly S Meredith

Clerk of Belpre City Council Kimberly Meredith