

April 14, 2025

Council President Mr. Martin called the April 14, 2025 Belpre City Council meeting to order at 7:35 pm. The roll was called with the following members present: Mr. Ambrozy, Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Ferguson, Mrs. Campbell, Ms. Riffle and Mr. Seebaugh. 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 First Ward Councilman Mr. Locke.

Council President Mr. Martin 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 Mr. Martin 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 rise, come to the podium, state your name clearly so the clerk can get your information, and address council.

Council President Mr. Martin asked for a motion for the March 24, 2025 meeting minutes. Ms. Riffle made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and to by-pass the reading. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Reports of City Officials:

Mayor Abdella allowed time for several folks to speak.

Chief Stump addressed before council the Centralized 911 for the Police Department. On Thursday Chief Stump stated that we met with the Commissioners. At this time, they are going to divvy up the funds for the Centralized 911. I would like to thank the Commissioners for making that decision. I would also like to thank the City of Marietta for working with us on that. We also appreciate council's support on the appropriations in helping us accomplish projects that has needed done for a long time. House cleaning has been going on, on the other side along with cleanup to the Sallyport. Officers are doing a great job.

President of Council Mr. Martin verified with Chief Stump that The City of Belpre will continue to have their stand-alone 911 Center. According to Chief Stump that is correct.

Pastor Gary Webb, Pastor of the First Nazarene Church of Belpre and Ministry Fellowship announced that on Saturday, April 12th, there was a Community Event for the kids hosted by Belpre Church of the Nazarene along with several other churches, Belpre Lions Club, and the Mayor's Office. We all came together for fellowship and joined in a Glow Easter Egg Hunt. We

had approximately 350 Children. I would like to thank Mayor Abdella, Chief Stump, Safety-Service Director Mr. Kirby and other organizations for their attendance and support in this effort. I would also appreciate you letting me know if there is anything that I can do to help in the community.

Mayor Abdella stated that she was approached about doing this kind of fellowship for the children during Halloween.

Dr. Jeff Greenley addressed council about what is happening in our schools and what we can do to help. I can't thank Chief Stump and his team for all their support to our schools. Night or day his team is visible on our campuses. He spoke about the May 6th, ballot. Without a new revenue source, we can't continue to keep up on the maintenance of the buildings as we are having building aging issues, class sizes, additional funding for our students, etc. Dr. Greenley presented a picture of an upcoming new building structure of what Belpre High School could look like if the levy passes. The two campuses would eventually come together in Phase II where the Elementary School will join. Property that is now the Elementary Schools would close and the land would be sold for development of homes. Mr. Seebaugh asked if you sell Rockland will the Board Office be moved? Mr. Greeley stated that the idea is that everything would be solely on one campus. For any reason if something would come available for the Board Office, we would definitely look at that for saving money. We want to sell that property as a whole to leave more development for growth. We have 930 students in Belpre. We are trying to build the school to accommodate the growth. It would be built for about 1150 to 1200 students. The State will only fund us for the number of students we have now but our school board has saved money for additional projection of students.

Ms. Riffle stated that since all of the changes that are going on now with the restructuring of the US Education Department, how will that affect us? Mr. Greenley stated that under the Federal Government there will be different funding streams that will flow through other government agencies such as Health and Human Services which will not affect special programs. Mr. Greenley stated that it will be a challenging budget with a lot of proposed changes. At the State Level, our Governor proposed an increase of 2.5 in funding but the House version is only expected at 1.3% funding per school district. There are definitely some changes there.

Mrs. Campbell stated that she would like to see Belpre grow. If we have a beautiful school, folks will come to our community.

Mr. Greenley stated that if the levy fails, we do not have the physical money for repairs however they will have to be addressed.

Mrs. Wonycott asked about the property tax evaluations. Mr. Greenley stated that there are six different things they can do with property taxes. At the State level they are looking at property tax changes but no decisions have been made at this time.

Chief Stump thanked the leadership of our school system. They have operated with more for less. It has been rumored that the police department does not have access to cameras at the school. I want to let folks know that we do have access to cameras at the schools.

Mayor Abdella emailed a copy of her report to all members of council and had copies in the back for the public. A copy is on file in council chambers.

Safety-Service Director Mr. Kirby reported the following updates within the city on April 14, 2025.

Police Department:

- Working on getting their mandated training completed for the year.
- Sending officers to CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) in Marietta. This is a 40-hour training course that focuses on how to deal with people who may be having some type of mental distress or illness.
- Working to complete the renovations for the dispatch center.

Street Department:

- Continue street patching throughout the city.
- Continuing to work on replacing signage, stop signs, street signs, etc.
- Replacing the catch basin on Richmillers Avenue.
- Received quotes for replacing the storm drain on Braun Road from White Oak Street to the north of Braun Road. You will find that on the supplemental you have tonight.
- Preparing to open the city park bathrooms at Depot Street, Howe's Grove, and Access Park. Civitan is currently and has been open.

Water Department:

- Installation of MXU radios/water meters
- Preparing for annual exercising of the critical valves throughout the city that is required by the EPA. All critical valves are done yearly. All others are exercised every 5 years.

Sewer Department:

- Set up the water hauling station for the season which is now open to the public.

- Hosted and toured members of the Fire Dept. around the facilities in the event of an emergency. The buildings at the plant will soon have building numbers placed on the sides to help identify each to make it easier for the fire department and or police dept.

Code Enforcement:

- Assisting people with permits and how to obtain. The city shared on social media some common repairs or replacements with properties that require residences to obtain permits but were not limited to just those items. The zoning permits fees are \$10 for the first \$5,000 of material costs and \$2 for each \$1,000 thereafter. According to the city ordinance, the first \$500 dollars of improvements completed within three consecutive months to the existing residential structure or building without changing the existing structural configuration are exempt from fees. This ordinance passed and has been in effect since 07/08/2002.
- We have had conversations with the Ohio Department of Commerce about the mobile home parks in the city and how to identify the regulations required. Part of the discussion also involved the floodplain and how to manage mobile homes.
- Attended the Southeastern Ohio Regional Code Enforcement Meeting on 04/11. Topic items included on how to collaborate and communicate among Code Enforcement professionals in Southeastern Ohio.

City Auditor Mrs. Nolan – Thank you Mr. President and Council. We have been busy working with the State Auditors and Julian & Grube compiling information for the 2024 Audit. I was told today they will be finishing up their field work here 1-day next week. The 2024 FRAQ Interview Form, you would have received March 28, 2025 and was due April 10, 2025. I was asked to remind Council that If you have not completed the form, please do so as soon as possible. If any of you have questions about the form, please reach out to Lisa Weisend, State Auditor.

Our Records Retention meeting April 8 was rescheduled for tomorrow April 15 at 8:00am.

City Law Director Mr. Webster announced that he received an update on the EMS lawsuit however this is not a public record. Secondly there are new statutes regarding the operations of the city and thirdly there is legislation this evening that will be brought before council this evening regarding litigation.

City Treasurer Mrs. Cassady had no report.

Communication and Petitions:

Council President Mr. Martin assigned the following to the Finance/Audit Committee:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE BELPRE CITY COUNCIL, LARRY MARTIN, TO A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SSD TO ENTER INTO A SALT CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT).

Reports of Standing Committee

Mr. Ferguson Finance/Audit Committee reported that his committee met on April 14th, 2025 at 7:00pm for the purpose of discussing the paving of Lee Street and the 2025 Supplemental Appropriations.

At this time, I would like to make a motion to by-pass committee and add to tonight's agenda for first reading **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE BELPRE CITY COUNCIL, LARRY MARTIN, TO A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

I would also like to by-pass committee and add to tonight's agenda for first reading **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SSD TO ENTER INTO A SALT CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT).** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to add to tonight's agenda for first reading **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2025 APPROPRIATIONS.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire Committee had no report. Mrs. Dennis called on Mr. Greenley to present his EMS Report before council. We had 154 calls with response time 6 minutes and 26 seconds. Our sheet time was 2 minutes, 13 seconds. We completed 27 transfers. We will only take 2 transfers in the evening so the squad is available in the city. Earlier this evening we had our Board meeting and we entered into negotiations to acquire a new space in the City of Belpre for Ambulance Service. It has not been finalized yet. I just wanted you all to know. We have been running 7 days a week with 12 hours a day with a second truck. They have been ready to support. With this second truck we are able to help with transfers however we are not a transport company. We prioritize the City of Belpre.

Mr. Locke, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer Committee was absent. No report was given in his absence.

Mr. Ambrozy Utilities Committee reported that on April 2, 2025 his committee met to discuss

- Fluctuation in Water Bills
- Water Meter Replacement Status

- How Water Bills are Calculated
- Backflow Preventor Inspections

While we were prepping for that committee meeting, we had a very interesting discovery. The approved water usage rates that were approved for 2024 had not been entered into our system. Because of that finding Mr. Ambrozy made a motion to add to tonight's agenda for first reading **AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 8, 2024-2025 ESTABLISHING WATER RATES.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

I have also attended numerous meetings over the last two weeks including three different meetings with three different engineering firms who are interested in our new Wastewater Treatment Plant. I also attended the Trash Contract Pre-Bid meeting.

Mr. Seebaugh Parks and Recreation Committee announced that the Spring Sports are in full swing. Baseball and Softball has started up. Belpre Soccer started last Saturday. Mr. Seebaugh encouraged folks to get out and support the high school sports, track events, and youth athletics.

Mr. Seebaugh made a motion to excuse Mr. Locke from this evening's meeting as he was out of town. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mrs. Campbell Planning and Zoning Committee had no report.

Mrs. Campbell Economic Development Committee reported that her committee met this evening at 6:32pm regarding business application permits Chapter 733. We talked about tiered programs and whether or not we were going to implement. We are going to place this on hold until a later date.

Ms. Riffle Rules Committee announced that April 13-19 was National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in Ohio. Ms. Riffle thanked the dispatchers for all their hard work. I'm impressed by the professionalism displayed and the multi-tasking that they do. I appreciate everything they do for us.

PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only –

Jesse Wonycott 805 Main Street addressed the water bills and asked if everyone's water bill was incorrect. Mr. Ambrozy stated that it was the water usage rates for residential customers outside the city limits and all commercial customers. The residential customers inside the city limits were correct. Mrs. Wonycott asked if the fees could be separated out from the water usage? This is to be checked out.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: -

Mr. Ambrozy brought before council for second reading **AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING MAYOR SUSAN ABDELLA TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT, AND ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCADA SYSTEM FOR THE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTS BETWEEN THE CITY OF BELPRE AND THE OHIO WATER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy moved to suspend the rule of council on three different days to allow for the third reading of **AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING MAYOR SUSAN ABDELLA TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT, AND ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCADA SYSTEM FOR THE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTS BETWEEN THE CITY OF BELPRE AND THE OHIO WATER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy brought before council for third reading **AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING MAYOR SUSAN ABDELLA TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT, AND ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCADA SYSTEM FOR THE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTS BETWEEN THE CITY OF BELPRE AND THE OHIO WATER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy moved this be Ordinance #24, 2024-2025 and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

New Business:

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2025 APPROPRIATIONS.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved to suspend the rule of council on three different days to allow for the second and third readings of **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2025 APPROPRIATIONS.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for second and third readings of **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2025 APPROPRIATIONS.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved this be **Resolution #27, 2024-2025** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE BELPRE CITY COUNCIL, LARRY MARTIN, TO A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved to suspend the rule of council on three different days to allow for the second and third readings **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE BELPRE CITY COUNCIL, LARRY MARTIN, TO A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for the second and third readings **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE BELPRE CITY COUNCIL, LARRY MARTIN, TO A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved this be **Resolution 28, 2024-2025** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A SALT CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT).** Discussion followed on the amount ordered. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved to suspend the rule of council on three different days to allow for the second and third readings **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A SALT CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT).** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for second and third readings **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A SALT CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT).** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved this be **Resolution 29, 2024-2025** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy brought before council for first reading **AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 8 (2024-2025) ESTABLISHING WATER RATES.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy moved to suspend the rule of council on three different days to allow for the second and third readings of **AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 8 (2024-2025) ESTABLISHING WATER RATES.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy brought before council for second and third readings of **AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 8 (2024-2025) ESTABLISHING WATER RATES.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy moved this be **Ordinance #25, 2024-2025** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy asked for confirmation when the new rates were entered into the system.

Mr. Ferguson requested a copy of the appropriations for the first quarter from the auditor.

PERSON APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:

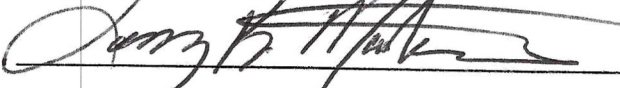
Chief Stump 715 Park Drive publicly recognized the dispatchers for all their hard work, their professionalism of their job and all the multi-tasking that they do. They provide amazing service for the Citizens of Belpre. Our dispatchers have also been trained on the 911 Center and have moved right into that role.

Chief Stump also mentioned the first show of the Ohio Valley Opry is on Saturday the 19th, It is going to be Country, Bluegrass and Gospel Music. The first performance is at 2:00pm. This is a 750 seat compacity. Please have patients with traffic when the show is over. We will be there to assist.

Adjourn:

Ms. Riffle made a motion to adjourn at 8:47pm. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Council President Mr. Martin



Clerk of Belpre City Council Mrs. Meredith

