

August 25, 2025

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis called the August 25, 2025 Belpre City Council meeting to order at 7:41pm. The roll was called with the following members present: Mr. Ambrozy, Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Ferguson, Mrs. Campbell, 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, and Treasurer Mrs. Cassady. Absent from the August 25, 2025 meeting was President of Council Mr. Martin and Clerk of Council Mrs. Meredith.

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

Council President Pro-tem Mrs. Dennis asked for a motion for the August 11, 2025 meeting minutes. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to approve the minutes of August 11, 2025 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 to council. It is as follows:

Communications:

- Today I had the pleasure of having lunch with Representative Ritter. He was eager to learn what was happening in Belpre and how he can assist us. Last week I had the opportunity to meet the Leadership from Akron Women's and Children and discuss the future of the campus and how we can partner in the future. Also, Commissioner Place communicated contacted me related to some of the needs we are having with the Rockland lift station and how they can possibly help. With a collaborative approach good things are happening for Belpre.
- This week I will be submitting a grant to ODNR to Department of Forestry for a protective maintenance project for the historical trees located along the access road to the boat ramp. This grant will be for vertical mulching. I would request a voice vote to allow me to apply. There is no match required for this submission.

- This week the SSD and the Street Foreman looked at a used van to replace the one at the senior center. It is having extreme mechanical issues. The one we looked at was 10K. I will update you as we proceed.
- In collaboration with WWW and MMH we have secured a grant to do a traffic, pedestrian and safety study around the Farson street, Washington Blvd. and Rt 7 area. We know there will be an increase in traffic we are trying to determine next steps in how to deal with the increased volume
- The Shelter 2 will be coming down in the park this week in an effort to be prepared for the all-inclusive playground that is being built mid-September in partnership with the Belpre Area Community Foundation and the Haddie Fund. This is a 569,000-dollar investment into our community.
- Tonight, we held a town hall meeting to discuss the Storm water issues in the community. We will be working to find solutions for the identified issues.
- Last week the Health Department along with myself and the Water foreman went out verifying the septic systems that remain in Belpre. Several issues were identified and those property owners will be notified via mail of next steps.
- Operational Issues - We have had to replace one of the stormwater pumps at the Lois Street stormwater station this was 8K. We are replacing the motor on well 5 from a lightning strike. This is 14K motor and repair.
- Vehicles on Order
 - o Rescue Truck to replace the Heavy rescue has made it to McConnelsville. It should be ready for delivery very soon. Just a few finishing touches.
 - o Snow plow - Chris spoke with them they are waiting on one part and it will be complete.

Projects:

- SCADA – Documents are being sent to the EPA so that we can complete and begin this important project - These documents are due back from EPA in the next two weeks to begin this project
- Park Plan - Grant for lighting and walking path to be submitted soon. This will need assigned to the finance and parks to discuss. As the grant being applied for requires a 50% match.
- WWTP – Planning and Design -- Spoke with Heidi from RCAP to determine the debt service we need annually for the construction. The assumptions are 10 million. 30 years, plus interest. Payment will be 527,000 annually

- Well Field Generator - We received 50K towards this project it will be an additional 50K to complete. This will show up on a supplemental this year or on next year's budget depending on scheduling.

- Source Water Signage – in process

Legislation

- Match for Park grant for Phase 1. We will be looking at that the next couple of meetings.

Grants Awarded

- Housing Technical Assistance Grant – Finalized – Scope of work pending

- EPA Drinking Water Grant - Filed: Generator and Signage for area of well field. – We were awarded the generator and source water protection funding.

- o Working with vendor for generator.

- o Source Water Signage

Ms. Riffle asked about the parks match. Mayor Abdella stated that she will request that Mr. Webster prepare legislation, it will come to council to approve or disapprove the match. The park plan is what we developed and it is up to council as how we proceed.

Mr. Ferguson asked if there is an approximate cost on that. Mayor Abdella stated that they are working on that now. They are writing the document for the Park Plan. SOPEC has helped us write the grant for the Park Plan. They are working on the cost of the light poles (96 poles), the asphalt and the increase in the size of the track that will take it to the Soccer Field. This is a lot of the pricing of the project. I spoke to SOPEC today as we move those shelters and we want to put the other one over by the pond we have so much money in our SOPEC kitty that we do have the money to buy the two LED Solar wind type lights that we talked about putting between the walking track by the pond so when the other shelter goes up, we won't have to run electric. There is lots of opportunity as we go forward. Mr. Ferguson asked if the asphalt would go over to the soccer field and stop on city property. Mayor Abdella stated that we hope to build a bridge over with the soccer field.

Mayor Abdella stated that we do have a new safety service director. His name is Brian Rhodes. He started with us last week. Our new Code Enforcement Office is Pat Gherke. Pat and Joe have been working diligently with concerns.

Safety-Service Director Pat Gherke/Mr. Kirby were not present to give a report.

City Auditor Mrs. Nolan – Thank you Madam President Pro tem and Council, the past weeks have been busy continuing to assist the RITA Non-Filers. Today is the filing deadline. Failure to respond to the notice will result in the issuance of a subpoena to Mayor's Court.

The Safety Service Director and I attended a Zoom meeting with a Social Media Archiving company Wednesday, August 20. A decision will be made soon as to which company we will proceed with.

The city's Tax Budget Hearing, Thursday, August 21 at 9:45am with the County Auditor went well and passed with their approval.

The July 2025 Expense/Revenue Budget Reports, Check Register, Payroll journal, and Receipts ledger reports were emailed to Council Thursday, August 21, 2025.

The Bill Adjustments and Credit Memo Reports for July 2025 were emailed to Council Thursday, August 21, 2025. This report will need Council's approval please.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to approve the Bill Adjustments and Credit Memo Report for July 2025 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. Cassidy reported that before you this evening is a copy of the July Treasurer's Report that needs approval by council. Email was sent to all members of council and copies of the Treasurer's Report are in the back for citizens to review. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the July Treasurer's Report as presented. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Communication and Petitions:

Council President Pro tem Mrs. Dennis stated that during the Mayor's Report she asked for a voice vote to apply for a grant to ODNR to Department of Forestry for a protective maintenance project for the historical trees located along the access road to the boat ramp. This grant will be for vertical mulching. She also stated that there is no match required. Mr. Ferguson made a motion for a voice vote to apply for a grant to ODNR to Department of Forestry for a protective maintenance project for the historical trees located along the access road to the boat ramp. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mrs. Dennis assigned to the Finance Committee and the Parks Committee the Park Plan - Grant for lighting and walking.

Reports of Standing Committee:

Mr. Ferguson Finance/Audit Committee had no report. Mr. Ferguson asked is there was a deadline on the Park Plan - Grant for lighting and walking. Mayor Abdella stated that it was due the end of October, or beginning of November. I should have the pricing as to the cost by next week and once I receive, I will forward on to you.

Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire Committee reported that her committee met prior to this evening's meeting to discuss take home cars and police department auto policy. It was the decision of the committee to move forward.

Mr. Ambrozy made a motion for a voice vote that was related to the Police Department's Vehicle Use policy. The revision was for Take-Home use of department vehicles. The revision for reasonable distance to allow take-home use is within 20 air miles or a 30-minute drive time. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Locke, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer had no report. Tonight, we had a town meeting on storm water issues and flooding. A lot of citizens had the opportunity to speak. I'm looking forward to the decisions of how to eliminate these problems.

Mr. Ambrozy Utilities Committee announced that since the last meeting of council I participated in two meetings.

- On August 12th, I participated in a meeting with representatives from Veregy and how they might be able to help the city.
- On August 13th, I participated in a meeting on how to complete our Lead Line Survey.

Mr. Seebaugh Parks and Recreation Committee had no report. Reminder that fall sports are in full swing. Soccer starts up this Saturday. We have 462 registered for fall soccer. We are also hosting the Cross-Country Event held by Rod O'Donald on September 13th. Mr. Seebaugh stated that I had someone ask about the lighting around the basketball courts. I spoke to Chris and he stated that they were not working. Mr. Seebaugh asked the mayor about it and she stated that she thought the meter had been taken out. Mr. Seebaugh stated that there were some gentlemen that liked to play pick up ball now that the evenings are cooler. The mayor said she would get with Chris regarding the issue as Andrea from AEP would be in town.

Mrs. Campbell Planning and Zoning/Economic Development reported that last week we had a joint meeting on the moratorium. We reviewed the minutes and it was approved. We also discussed having a meeting in two months. I would like to call a committee meeting at 5:45pm for the purpose of discussing ocean containers and structures for demolition.

Ms. Riffle Rules Committee presented the following report below on 8.25.2025

TO: Clerk, Belpre City Council

FROM: Penne L. Riffle, Chair, Rules Committee

Erica Campbell, Chair, Zoning and Economic Development Committee

SUBJECT: In-Residence Drug Treatment Facility Moratorium Committee Meeting 8.18.2025

Additional Council Members/Administration present:

Lyndsay Dennis, 3rd Ward

Rick Seebaugh, 2nd Ward

Dave Ferguson, At-Large

Mayor Susan Abdella

Jackie Cassady, Treasurer

Ms. Riffle called the meeting to order at 6:14 pm. The above listed Council and Administration members were present as were 2 members of the community.

Ms. Riffle opened the meeting with a re-cap of previous actions regarding the moratorium, the recently approved continuation of the moratorium, the timeframe now in effect with the continuation and possible steps forward.

The continuation extends the moratorium preventing additional residential facilities from obtaining a license or operating in Belpre City limits until September 2026. This gives us roughly 13 months to determine what actions we want to take as a city regarding in-patient treatment facilities. Ms. Riffle, put forth the following actions:

- 1- Do nothing. Allow the Moratorium to expire and see what happens.
 - a. This is not a responsible approach and only kicks the can down the road for future Councils and Administrations to deal with. Most, if not all, found this approach unacceptable.
- 2- Continue Moratorium for an additional length of time to be determined in Sept 2026
 - a. Again this just creates a situation for future Council and Administrations and would not reflect well on current Council, as well as being irresponsible.
- 3- Utilize Zoning ordinances to restrict/prevent additional facilities in Belpre
 - a. This could be done by creating Special Medical Zoning
 - b. Restricting areas of availability as seen in the Recreational Marijuana Sales laws put into place by the state, i.e. distance to churches, schools, daycares etc.

i. This could be problematic in the future as the new school campus is built and the current locations no longer exists as current use. Opening the possibility for a facility to move into an area previously restricted if, the Council at the time is not alert and prepared for such changes.

c. Zoning restrictions regarding residential areas and proximity

4- Limit the number of facilities based on the population of Belpre

a. Current population is @ 6300 citizens. We could potentially cap the number of facilities to 1/7.5k or 1/10k citizens.

b. Additionally, we could cap the number of beds available by population

i. Example: 25 beds/6.5k citizens, and allowing 5 more beds/1k citizens

Ms. Riffle also informed the meeting of some of the limitations municipalities are faced with in regards to treatment facilities. Most limitations come from the fact that addiction is considered to be a Mental Health condition and is therefore highly protected by federal, state and local laws, codes and ordinances. Wording and intent are very important in any legislation or restrictions moving forward as people suffering from Mental Health diagnoses and addictions are a highly protected class.

Mrs. Dennis felt that by utilizing both Zoning regulations and per capita limits we would have a more successful approach.

Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Seebaugh and Mrs. Campbell agreed with this approach.

Mayor Abdella cautioned that we have to be judicious in determining and defining zoning because once defined you may limit other businesses unintentionally. Definitions are limits within themselves. We do not want to prevent growth or consideration by other opportunities by our definitions. We also do not want to be adjusting and amending Code because we did not consider all ramifications of any new ordinances.

Mayor Abdella also informed us that the Zoning Grant Committee had met earlier in the day and has a 10-month window in which they will be doing a review of current zoning, making recommendations and eventually submitting legislation to clarify and correct current Zoning Code. And while they are not addressing the Treatment Facilities specifically, all medical facilities and businesses will be considered in the Committee's scope.

As a committee and it was determined that we would take the following steps:

1. Continue to research what other communities/municipalities in the state have done, especially those similar in size.
2. Find sample legislation that will meet the objections of this Committee as stated above.

- a. Edit, change, update it to meet our needs and requirements
3. Prepare per capita and bed limitation legislation
4. Be prepared to add zoning verbiage as we get information from the Zoning Grant Committee
5. Submit all legislation by end of July/early August 2026 to be voted on and enacted by Sept 2026 end of current moratorium.

We acknowledged that this would not be completed in this Council's term, but as all members present will seemingly be on Council next term, we felt we should continue the work and momentum and asked for the issue to be re-assigned next Council term.

It was agreed that Council members and especially Committee members should aggressively research this subject and sharing any pertinent information or legislation that is beneficial to the process over the next 2 months. Ms. Riffle will then call a Rules Committee meeting in October for updates, review and informational gathering purposes. At that time, we can assess the status of the process and next steps to move forward.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Penne L. Riffle Erica Campbell

Chair, Rules Committee Chair, Zoning/Ec. Dev. Committee

PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: - none

NEW BUSINESS: none

PERSON APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:

Mrs. Cassady presented an official communication letter to Belpre City Council: It is as follows:

I Jackie Cassady Treasurer for the City of Belpre am requesting that the following letter be placed in the permanent record of the City of Belpre Council minutes at the meeting of August 25, 2025. This is an official communication to the Belpre City Council.

I Jackie Cassady, Belpre City Treasurer, do hereby declare this as my official statement concerning the below described legislation.

The Legislation passed as Resolutions No. 33 & 35 was done so without any prior consult by anyone with in the city with me as treasurer. I had no prior knowledge of any kind of either Resolution until I was handed the legislation the night, they presented to council. I had no

communication or any information on either Resolution prior to the initial presentation before council. I did inquire about certain aspects of both Resolutions after the initial presentation to council and received what I consider inadequate answers. I have not made any deposits on behalf of the City of Belpre as stated in Resolution No. 35 nor have I been asked to do so, I did not give any estimates of any amounts as stated in Resolution No. 33 therefore I as Treasurer for the City of Belpre make this declaration as to these Resolutions and any other Resolutions or Ordinances that has been presented to council during my tenure as Treasurer. They were written and presented without any input, consult or any prior knowledge of the Treasurer of Belpre.

Mrs. Cassady explained why she presented this letter to council.

When my term started January 2022 as Treasurer for the City of Belpre, I was told by administration my duties were to present the Treasurer's report that the Auditor would send me. Sign any checks when the auditor is not available. Four years prior to my term starting, I was asked by the auditor at that time to run as Treasurer and my duties would be to give a Treasurer's report that was sent by her. I did not run at that time. I do not know how long these duties of Treasurer for the city of Belpre have been executed in this manner. But if you read the Ohio Revised Code 733.43 – 733.47, you will find the duties of the treasurer, accounts of treasurer, powers and duties, quarterly account and annual report, receipts and disbursements of funds, duty of delivering money and property. Currently our auditor completes these tasks. And by the state audit has done a great job. As stated before, I don't know when the duties for Treasurers were changed and executed, but I have been told by administration that the duties for city Treasurer will be changing the first of the year. I would like this letter of communication and my comments to be submitted into the official minutes of this council for record on August 25, 2025. (A copy of Mrs. Cassady's Report is filed in council chambers).

Jess Wynecott 805 Main Street addressed the 20% increase in water rates and the 20% increase in the base rates along with the 4% increase that the mayor is allowed to take without council approval. Mrs. Wynecott has asked for additional clarification on them charging for sewer when there was no water usage. Per the City Law Director the President of Council can assign this issue back to Mr. Ambrozy committee for interpretation of the legislation and possible amendment if deemed.

Mrs. Wynecott also addressed engine break signage entrance to city.

Mrs. Wynecott also asked about the breakdown of the Moratorium.

William Cassady stated that he was in support of Jesse. If you go back to Ordinance 9, 2024-2025, it tells who what the sewer rates is. Mr. Cassady explained the Ordinance.

Chief Stump thanked council for voice vote on home use of police vehicles. Chief Stump also thanked Mr. Kirby for his service to the City of Belpre.

Steve Marks 808 Belrock Avenue addressed council in regards of lack of maintenance on properties in Belpre and what are we doing about it. Mayor Abdella stated that this is one of the most frustrating things. The steps we take is if you're not mowing your lawn, we put a door hanger on your door and have to allow you 5 days to take care of the situation. If it is not taken care of, we have to send a registered letter that takes 21 days for it to come back. If it is not done within that length of time, I can hire someone to come in and mow it and charge it to their tax bill. Usually by that time, someone usually mows. There is a process for everything. We struggle because our legislation tells us what can be done but it doesn't have any teeth. We are going to address this in a couple of weeks.

Adjourn:

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

President of Belpre City Council Protem Mrs. Dennis

Lindsay Dennis protem

Clerk of Belpre City Council Pro tem Ms. Riffle

Penne L. Riffle