

January 12, 2026

Council President Mr. Martin called the January 12, 2026 Belpre City Council meeting to order at 6:30pm. The roll was called with the following members present: Mr. Ambrozy, Mr. Cassady, Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Locke, Ms. Riffle and Mr. Seebaugh. Also, present was Mayor Abdella, City Auditor Mrs. Campbell, City Law Director Mr. Webster, Treasurer Mrs. Nolan and Clerk of Council Mrs. Meredith. Absent from the meeting was Safety-Service Director Mr. Rhodes.

Council President Mr. Martin asked everyone to please rise for the Prayer and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. City Auditor Mrs. Nolan 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 December 22nd, 2025 meeting minutes. Mrs. Dennis made a motion to accept the minutes of December 22nd, 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 of January 12, 2026 before council. It is as follows:

We have started the 2026 year with the swearing in our City Officials on January 1st, 2026. I am pleased and excited about the experience and passion of the members elected to serve the community.

Since our last meeting, we have been working diligently on the budget and identifying the projects and needs that face our community.

I attended the Mayor Partnership for Progress meeting this month where RCAP was our speaker. They share their services and reinforced the need for all elected officials to attend the fiscal boot camp series.

I also attend the SOPEC Board retreat to have a better understanding of the priorities of our electric and gas aggregation.

Council we still have several projects in the works. The 10" water line replacement project is on going and they have been working on Richmiller. The water tank project remains at a pause as we wait for recommendations of the Geotechnical firm.

The SCADA project is underway being built and bench tested. Onsite installation is scheduled for late April.

The lighting and some electric at the fire station upgrade has been completed.

I also met with a grant writer this week. They work for an hourly rate and are willing to assist us with several larger grants we are looking to apply for; the critical one is for Marcs Radios. We currently have not heard from the TAP grant at this time. This is the one to study the area of Stone Road for traffic when new school is built. The traffic study for Farson Street area is ongoing.

Safety-Service Director Mr. Rhodes was absent from the meeting. Mayor Abdella presented the following update before Belpre City Council on January 12, 2026 that Mr. Rhodes prepared. It is as follows:

- 2025 totals for Code Enforcement actions = 101/2025 totals for Zoning Permits = 187. Of these totals, 71 (70.29%) Code Enforcement actions have been taken and 77 (41.18%) Zoning Permits have been issued since August 15th when Pat Gherke came on board.
- Stonegate Construction has been making progress on the waterlines on Richmiller Ln. and Pride Ave. The foreman for Richmiller advised he anticipated having the line in place up to the tank site in approximately three to four weeks. The foreman for Pride is working with Clint Sayre regarding the waterline on the school property as they are nearly there. The tie-in may possibly occur on Monday, January 19th when school is not in session.
- The lighting update at the Washington Boulevard firehouse has been completed.
- The water department is continuing to update MXUs. At the end of November 2025, there were 1, 311 MXUs needing changed out. As of today, there are 641 MXUs remaining to be replaced.
- Last week we picked up 48 office chairs donated by the Bureau of Fiscal Services. All of them are in like new condition. Several of them have been distributed in the police department and administrative offices. The rest of them are being stored in the Badger building.

Mayor Abdella also presented before council her State of the City address for 2025. See below. She also prepared a PowerPoint presentation.

Office of the Mayor,

State of the City 2025

Thank you for allowing me the time to provide a State of the City Address. I would like to start with thanking all those that make Belpre what it is - The staff of all our departments that keep our community going strong. This community runs on 43 employees 4 volunteer city commissions. and a volunteer fire department. Plus, we elected officials. This is pretty amazing when you look at our community. However, this beautiful river community that we live in would not be so special if it were not for all the volunteer organizations that work effortlessly to provide Belpre with events, activities, culture and entertainment.

Slides 3-5

This year we hosted three large festivals in our beautiful park. This was the first year of the Multi-Cultural Festival and the park was alive with a variety of ethnic food and entertainment. It was estimated that over the weekend we hosted 10,000 visitors to our park. I heard today that the Multi-Cultural Festival will be held in Belpre again this year. During our 93rd Homecoming we hosted 7-10 thousand visitors. Belpre Woman's Club Music by the River is a hidden treasure. Every Tuesday evening, they have a performance at the bandstand where 300-500 people come and enjoy our waterfront and the music. Holiday Lights host thousands of visitors to Civitan Park this year. Prior to Christmas on a Saturday evening, we anticipated we had 3000 cars in the park, traffic was crazy. However, families were out enjoying the lights, and the first Christmas market and Carousel. It has been determined that we provided carousel memories to approximately 4000 visitors over the 5 weekends. This carousel was sponsored by citizens and organizations that see a vision for our community.

All of the amazing things that have happened that require electric has the name Darien Lorentz in the sentence. Therefore, this year I was honored to have named him Belpre's Citizen of the year. The help and support of Darien have allowed this communities events to "shine". I am so excited to see how he helps us this spring during the America 250 Ohio Celebrations.

Our sports venue provides children activities such as NFL Flag; we have the largest rural league in the US. Our soccer community is growing and expanding providing opportunities to our youth

Why do I share with you the efforts of some of these events and our local nonprofits. Each of these events bring visitors to our community showcasing all we as a city has to offer. During the Holiday Lights, many are drawn to our restaurants for dining and shopping. Each brings more opportunities to our community to allow for future growth and development.

As we think about growth in our community we have been given two very unique opportunities. A New Women's and Children's Hospital and a long-awaited new school facility. Each of these require various components to be successful and fill a need in our community.

The key components to our growth and future are housing, infrastructure and public services. In order for us to look at our housing shortage we received an \$85,000 grant to help us with housing technical assistance. We are working with a consulting firm to look at opportunities around planned developments, accessory dwelling units, zoning codes, and preapproved housing plans for infill housing. We are excited that we will have this information for council to review in the spring.

In order for our landscape to be prepared for the growth that is happening in our area we have had to work on the completion of several projects that were first started in 2022. These are key infrastructure projects. One being the building of a new 2.5-million-gallon water tank. This project is underway but has been stalled due to some needed ground stabilization work that was identified as being overlooked. We are also wrapping up a 10" water main project. This project has taken us to various parts of the city: Farson St, Richmiller, Pride, Barclay, and Mead.

Another key project that many of us have talked about for several years is the SCADA project. This is monitoring equipment for all booster and lift stations. When this is completed our utility teams will be able to know if a station has malfunctioned in order to reduce backups and equipment damages.

As we have worked on these projects in 2025 and have dealt with significant weather events and we have identified several projects that need to be added to our work in 2026. During several major water line breaks we learned that the cities valve system is antiquated and in need of review and planning to update and replace key valves that operate areas in the community. An example is in the Barclay Street area as the line work was happening, the team was unable to turn off the lines. Therefore, they had to break the line and insert extremely expensive valves to complete the work. Each valve cost approximately 10K that they had to insert.

Another area that continues to come up is related to water modeling and where can we supply additional water to homeowners and businesses that want to utilize public water. This is a critical study to allow us to help developers determine future growth so that we are prepared for development inside and outside of the city. As we work on this model our utility departments will be doing hydrant flushing, pressure testing, and mapping so we have the most up to date information going forward.

In early 2000's Burgess and Nipple conducted a study of the City Stormwater system and stated that it was not able to effectively handle the stormwater in the City of Belpre. Over the past year we have seen this time and time again. We hosted a public forum to discuss the topic and identify key areas of concern. The outcome of this is to start a community wide stormwater

assessment while trying to find temporary fixes for the top identified areas of concern. While the study, design and engineering are being completed.

As we work to complete infrastructure projects and provide a strong community base, a key component that we have not discussed was our Police, Fire Departments and our partner in Emergency Services. Below is the basic metrics for each department. However, the EMS information is based on calls for service from dispatch and may not represent all work the organization is doing.

With everything we have talked about, I am sure everyone is wondering what the financial health of the City looks like.

Just a reminder these numbers include, all income tax, levy dollars, loan proceeds, fines and interest, as well as property tax dollar. These numbers only include general fund and not the revenue of water and sewer. Those are enterprise funds and not to be considered in operations of other departments. My impression is we are being fiscally responsible but will need to continue to work with our commissioners and legislators to fund key projects while seeking grant dollars.

Grant dollars received in 2025

In 2025, The city of Belpre received several grants to support several efforts. Our grants awarded totaled \$1,465,000.00

- Housing Technical Assistance
- Rockland lift station
- All-inclusive playground - This was invested to our community
- Source water protection
- Wellfield generator

Important projects and outstanding current grants for 2026

- Fire and EMS levy set to expire in 2026
- Rockland Lift Station - \$700,000 grant received for this work
- Complete Lead line survey so we can participate in the funding opportunities for line replacement.
- Begin planning the RT 7 sewer line replacement that was cited to us by EPA 10 years ago. It is on their timeline to be completed in 5 years.

- Critical Valve Identification Grant submitted for this work \$20,000.00
- Traffic Study around Stone, Campus, Maple and Washington grant submitted (TAP 1.7 million)
- Fire Equipment - for turnout gear we have several sets that are expired (\$50,000)
- Water line extension to provide water to areas of high PFAS. Areas identified, Farson Street back side, 10" line from New Tank to a booster site at Braun. Other areas of possible work Beach drive

Looking forward:

- Sewer ---Begin planning the RT 7 sewer line replacement that was cited to us by EPA 10 years ago. It is now on their timeline to be completed in 5 years.
- Street -- ODOT planning RT 7 resurfacing in 2029-2030 Farson City Limit sign to the Memorial Bridge.
- Street -- Any Farson Street upgrade due to traffic will not be possible until 2028-2029 due to funding availability

Thank you for your time and opportunity to serve our community, and I look forward to an exciting 2026.

City Auditor Mrs. Campbell Thank you Mr. President and Council,

This has been my first full week, and we have hit the ground running. Tina, Lisa, and the mayor have been a great help to me this first week. Tina has helped with getting new signature cards, learning our new system VIP and going over the Quarter Budget and Expense reports.

We have already worked on a few supplements for January, thank you Tom and Kim McFee for getting the Resolution to us before our meeting.

Each one of you will have an Expense Account detailing the General Fund for 2026. This is not the final and changes still can be made, but at least you have a worksheet to review before your Finance Committee Meeting on the 19th of January.

Here are a few things that are happening in the next coming weeks, months.

1. Post Audit is Jan 14th 1pm all City Council members are welcome to attend in the Admin Conference Room.
2. I have registered for a virtual class for Sunshine Law on Feb 10th 10am to 3:30pm
3. Registered for Utility Management and Financial Management on March 18th in Newark.

Again, if you have any questions, please contact me via email auditor@cityofbelpre.com

I'm usually in the office from 9am to 4:00pm Mon-Friday

City Law Director Mr. Webster announced that he is preparing documents for the EMS Levy. Decision needs to be made if it will go on the primary ballot or the November ballot. Mr. Webster also requested that there be an Executive Session called at the end of the meeting this evening for the purpose of discussing litigation and possible litigation.

City Treasurer Mrs. Nolan had no report.

Communication and Petitions:

Council President Mr. Martin stated that as you know we are beginning a new term with only one new member. Committee chairs will be the same as the 2024-2025 term. Mr. Cassady will be the new Committee chair for Planning and Zoning and Economic Development committee replacing Mrs. Campbell. I'm asking that each chairman of their committee inform me of committee assignments that need carried over from 2025 to 2026. These assignments may be assigned back to your committee or assigned to another committee.

Reports of Standing Committee:

Mr. Ferguson Finance/Audit Committee had no report. Mr. Ferguson reminded his committee that Finance/Audit committee will meet on January 19th, 2026 at 6:30pm for the purpose of discussing the 2026 Budget. Mr. Ferguson is in hopes of reviewing the first 11 pages during the committee meeting. He stated that within the next 2 ½ months, he hopes to get through the next 30 pages. He also stated that his plan is to have the legislation on for first reading either the first or second meeting in February.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to by-pass committee and add to tonight's agenda for first reading **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2026 APPROPRIATIONS**. Ms. Riffle asked if this would be one reading or all three readings. Mr. Ferguson said he would like to run for three readings. Mayor Abdella addressed the items and told the reason for the supplemental and when they needed to be paid. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson announced that he would be making a motion to go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire Committee had no report. Mrs. Dennis asked President of Council Mr. Martin about the committee chairs. Mr. Martin informed Mrs. Dennis that the chairman of the committees will stay the same however the subcommittee may change. Mr. Cassady is filling the spot of Mrs. Campbell.

Mr. Locke, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer reported that on December 17, 2025 I attended a meeting at Triple W. (WWW INTERSTATE PLANNING COMMISSION). A review of 2025 projects and accomplishments and 2026 goals were discussed. Thirty-six Ohio projects and 78 WV were noted.

On December 30th, 2025 I had the opportunity to inspect a street cleaner that was made available for the administration, street department and me to inspect improvements over our old one were noted. I hope to present to council in the near future to purchase one.

Our street department has poured the concrete pads for two new shelters at Civitan Park. These are smaller than the large one removed to allow Hattie's Playground to be installed.

Also, I recommend we investigate the possibility to purchase a new tractor, to do our mowing on Rt. 50 and other areas around town. Our current tractor is a 2013. Our current tractor has had many repairs done to the mower "arm".

Mr. Ambrozy Utilities Committee reported that on January 8th, 2026 he attended the monthly EDG Project update meeting that is led by Jeff Carr.

Mr. Seebaugh Parks and Recreation Committee announced that he had talked to the mayor regarding Scott Gilbert who is draining his farm pond. He was asking if the fish (trout) could be released in our city pond. Mr. Seebaugh stated that after the conversation with the mayor it was decided to allow Mr. Gilbert to do so. This would save the city some money as they wouldn't have to stock the pond this year.

Mr. Seebaugh had no report.

Mr. Cassady Planning and Zoning/Economic Development had no report. Mr. Cassady stated that he was sworn in January 1st, 2026.

Ms. Riffle Rules Committee informed President of Council Mr. Martin that the Moratorium needed reassigned to her committee as it was intended to roll over as well as Policy and Procedures that need completed. Ms. Riffle also asked Mr. Webster if we should be looking into the Interstate Cooperation that is being drawn up. Mr. Webster stated that he attended a meeting that police agencies for Washington, Wood and Pleasants County were present and they were discussing the legislation to be presented. At this time, it is still up in the air. The goal is that Ohio will respond to get in place.

PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only – none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: -none

New Business:

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2026 APPROPRIATIONS**. The Exhibit A was for expenses for the following. General 1101-71, Line item 090-550153 police small equipment increase of \$18,088.; Street 2202-73, line item 170-550172 salt/cinder, \$30,000 increase, Water 5602-76, line item 270-540258, well field generator, \$50,000, 5602-82, line item 270-550163, small equipment, \$5,500 making a total increase of \$103,588. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to suspend the rule of council on three different days to allow for the second and third readings of **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2026 APPROPRIATIONS**. Ms. Riffle asked if we really needed to do all three readings this evening. According to the mayor she needed this by the end of February. Ms. Riffle stated that we really don't need three readings this evening. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye except Ms. Riffle who voted nay.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for the second and third readings **A RESOLUTION SUPPLEMENTING YEAR 2026 APPROPRIATIONS**. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson moved this be **Resolution 1, 2026-2027** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

PERSON APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:

Karen Locke 726 Tuttle Street asked about what area the boat ramp falls under. She was informed that it would be under Parks and Recreation. Mrs. Locke asked Mr. Seebaugh if we could look for grants to fix up the boat ramp. Mrs. Locke stated that the boat ramp could use some straightening up. The road needs paved, additional lighting, etc. With the bass tournaments being held at the boat ramp throughout the year it would be nice to see some needed repairs done in that area.

Mr. Webster commented that our street crew does so much better job than our surrounding areas.

President of Council Mr. Martin stated that our street department does a remarkable job.

Linn Nelson, Stone Road, complimented our street crew for the great job they do.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing litigation and possible litigation at 7:12pm.

Council President Mr. Martin announced that there would be no further discussion come before this council once council resumed from executive session.

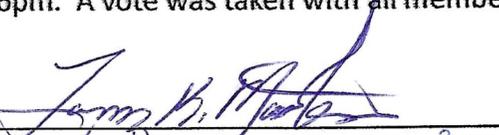
A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Council resumed from executive session at 7:46pm. Ms. Riffle made a motion that we adjourn from executive session. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Adjourn:

Ms. Riffle made a motion to adjourn at 7:46pm. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

President of Belpre City Council Mr. Martin



Clerk of Belpre City Council Mrs. Meredith

