

March 23, 2026

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis called the March 23, 2026, Belpre City Council meeting to order at 6:38pm. 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, Safety-Service Director Mr. Rhodes, City Auditor Mrs. Campbell, City Law Director Mr. Webster, Treasurer Mrs. Nolan and Clerk of Council Mrs. Meredith. Absent from the March 23, 2026 meeting was President of Council Mr. Martin.

Council President Protem Mrs. Dennis 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.

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 Protem Mrs. Dennis asked for a motion for the March 9, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Locke made a motion to accept the minutes of March 9, 2026 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:

Council President Protem and Citizens:

This has been an incredibly busy week, we continue to work on the housing technical assistance grant, by getting the ordinances ready to facilitate growth in our community. We will soon be ready to ask you to review this information to make building homes easier to those wishing to invest in our community.

- We have several groups meeting to participate in the planning of America 250 activities. So far, we have the Community Picnic underway, the Revolutionary War Grave registration work underway to document all the soldiers in Cedarville and Rockland Cemetery
- I have submitted a request to Representative Ritters office to help us with the funding in the state budget to continue work on the park renovations.

- On March 18th several of us attended the Financial Management for utilities presented by RCAP in Newark. This training is a requirement for communities to qualify for principal forgiveness dollars when applying for funding.
- We had the pleasure of meeting with the planning committee for the Multi-Cultural Festival. We are excited that the event will be held in Belpre again this year.
- Today, I attended a meeting with the Southeast Solid Waste District. This is the organization that supports the region in trash hauling, recycling, contracts and other issues. They are established via ORC 343.01. Today's meeting was a presentation by Rumpke to build a transfer center here in Washington County. The site is at 618 and 339. Why am I telling you this. The members of the policy committee will be voting to approve or deny the request to place this in our area. This group is made up of 6 counties.

Project Work:

- As you can see painting and carpeting in Council Chambers.
- Water tank will resume construction in May
- 10" Water line project is coming to an end. They have been working in the area of Pride, Ann and Farson.
- SCADA – Work on sites to begin in April.
- Lift station assessments at Rockland and Clement – this project to kick off Thursday.

Grant Awards:

- Ohio EPA Drinking water - \$20K to do an assessment of the city's water valves.
- ODNR Grant award from Land and Water Conservation fund for \$486,506.00 awarded to expand the walking path and add additional lighting and expand the walking path in the soccer field.

Upcoming Events:

- March 28, 2026 Belpre Easter Parade
- April 18, 2026 8am to noon Spring Clean up at Belpre Street Garage.
- April 24, 2026 Civitan Park – Planting an America 250 White Oak with our Memorial Trees
- May 31, 2026 Memorial Day Flag Raising Ceremony at Leavitt's followed by a Memorial service at Cedarville Cemetery to honor our Revolutionary War Soldiers.
- June 27, 2026 Belpre will kick off 4th of July week with a community picnic and our theme is "Proud to be an American". There is a lot of exciting things happening this day a list of the day's events will be posted soon.

Legislation Pending:

- Southeastern Ohio Equipment – Street Sweeper Purchase
- EMS Contract Renewal
- EMS Equipment Lease Renewal

Mr. Seebaugh asked if this will allow for TV's and large items. Mayor Abdella stated that it would not. Those items will go to Solvay.

Safety-Service Director Mr. Rhodes reported on the Safety-Service Directors updates:

- Code Enforcement Actions since March 9, 2026: 5 code violation warnings /8 zoning permits.
- MXU progress: Approximately 250 MXUs still need to be replaced. Target is to have these completed by the end of the month.
- USI reimbursement the city \$15, 138.93 for the water well damage caused last spring. Check arrived today.
- The tie-in to the new water line on Richmilller/Mary/Hill was completed last week. The tie in on Ann was completed today.
- Sewer Line Jetting: Metropolitan Environmental was supposed to begin today, but it was pushed to next week. The targeted streets are as follows: Lambert Street, Hocking Rd. to Hill across U.S. 50, Hill St, Circle Drive, Norway Ave, Middle St., Parker Alley, Farson St., Rockland Ave., and Poplar St. If completed we have more to add.
- Pat Gherke attended the safety luncheon at the Marietta Shrine for BWC. By attending these monthly meetings, the city can earn a 3% safety council rebate on BWC premiums not to exceed \$5,000.
- Steel plates have been placed over collapsing roadways. Farson St. near Station 2 and Sixth and Elm are still covered. The collapsed roadway on Florence St. was repaired by Doug Lowe, but we have not received a bill yet.
- SOPEC locked in Belpre's natural gas aggregation program rate for Belpre on February 19, 2026. Will take effect in May 2026. Attached to Mr. Rhodes report is a copy of the letter from SOPEC for further details.

City Auditor Mrs. Campbell presented her report before council. It is as follows:

- We went to training last week in Newark and Columbus and found out more information about grants for our street, water, sewer dept through BWC and many other ways to invest in our community.
- Working on letter to landlords for the 6-dollar fee and website update to better understand our water bill with Angie facilitating.
- Working on a Generator Gant for the end of March
- Meeting with Julian and Grube tomorrow to go over our receipts from 2025

Mrs. Campbell stated that the Budget is up for third reading this evening. She addressed some changes to the 2026 ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS. She also stated that she had talked to Mr. Ferguson regarding the changes. The amendment will be included in the attachment as Exhibit A.

The February 2026 Expense/Revenue Budget Reports, Check Register, Payroll journal, and Receipts reports were emailed to Council Thursday, March 19, 2026, and March 23, 2026 in the afternoon before council.

The Bill Adjustments and Credit Memo Report for February 2026 were emailed to Council Thursday, March 19 & 23, 2026. The **Bill Adjustment** report will need Councils approval please.

President of Council Protem Mrs. Dennis asked for a motion to approve the Bill Adjustment report. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to approve the Bill Adjustment report for February 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. Nolan gave the following report. It is as follows: Thank you Madam President Protem and Council,

Julian and Grube will be onsite tomorrow to pull files for the 2025 Audit. As previous Auditor, they requested my presence tomorrow morning for questioning.

The February Treasurer's report was emailed to Council Thursday, March 19 and will need Councils approval. There are copies on the back chair.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the February Treasurer's Report as presented. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Communication and Petitions:

President of Council Protem Mrs. Dennis assigned the following to committee:

- **EMS Contract Renewal – Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire committee**

- **EMS Equipment Lease Renewal – Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire committee**
- **Southeastern Ohio Equipment – Street Sweeper Purchase – Mr. Locke, Streets Sidewalks and Storm Sewer committee.**

Reports of Standing Committee:

Mr. Ferguson Finance/Audit Committee had no report. Mr. Ferguson stated that there would be an amendment for the Budget to add Grant replacement dollars. Mr. Ferguson also congratulated Mayor Abdella for the Grant received for the walking track.

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

Mr. Locke, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer presented his report before council:

As of January 1st, we used over 300 tons of salt for snow and ice removal. The dept has trimmed trees throughout the city streets and alleys. We have replaced over 30 stop signs along with other street marker signs. We have replaced 6 traffic signal lights and are currently working on the 4-lane intersections overhead lighting. We have cleaned and checked most of are storm water out fall pipes (ends of culverts for are storm water system). We are opening and checking catch basins to update mapping along with checking to see which ones are in need of repair and have cleaned 15 catch basins. We have some sink holes around the city we are working on fixing. We have found an old section of the storm sewer pipe that is not on the mapping system. We did all the maintenance on lawn mowers, weed eaters, trucks, and equipment. We have used over 15 tons of cold patch for potholes. We have been working on potholes in alleys and the city streets. We do have park rounds every morning to check trash and restrooms along with the rest of the park equipment.

I attended a Planning Committee meeting Monday March 16, 2026 at 6:30pm. Many new ideas for housing were presented.

I attended an all-day class presented by RCAP (Rural Community Assistance Partnership). The day was split into 2 sessions.

1st Session, Utility Management for Governing Boards.

2nd Session, Financial Management for Governing Boards.

Mr. Locke called a Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer committee meeting for April 13th at 6pm for the purpose of discussing a street sweeper for the City of Belpre.

Mr. Ambrozy Utilities Committee reported that he attended the Planning & Zoning meeting on March 16, 2026 at 6:30pm regarding the Housing Plan. On March 18th I also attended the RCAP training. The first session, Utility Management for Governing Boards and the second session, Financial Management for Governing Boards. Overall, it was a good day of training.

Mr. Seebaugh Parks and Recreation Committee apologized for canceling his March 16, 2026 meeting that was scheduled to discuss some park projects. With that being said Mr. Seebaugh rescheduled his meeting for March 30th, 2026 at 6pm for the purpose of covering park projects and enhancements. Mr. Seebaugh stated that with Spring near he would like folks to go out and support our youth activities. Mr. Seebaugh was asked how many children were participating in soccer this year. Mr. Seebaugh stated that there are 740 soccer players. This is the largest group we have had thus far. The majority comes from Wood County. Mr. Seebaugh also stated that there are a little over 800 players for Flag Football. These organizations are very active.

Ms. Riffle asked where the majority of kids came from? Mr. Seebaugh stated that 30% comes from Little Hocking and Belpre. We get a large portion from Wood County along with kids from Marietta.

Mr. Cassady Planning and Zoning/Economic Development stated that he had also attended the RCAP training last Wednesday. It was very informative.

Mr. Cassady reported that he called into order the Planning and Zoning/Economic Development Committee at 6:15pm on March 16, 2026.

Committee members in attendance were as follows: Chair: BJ Cassady along with Bill Locke and Dave Ferguson.

Other council members present were John Ambrozy.

Also in attendance were Mayor Abdella, Safety Service Director Brian Rhodes, Sam Tuten from Sunday Creek Horizons and member of the public, Karen Locke.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear a presentation from Sam Tuten concerning 2 possible upcoming pieces of legislation and our current moratorium on drug treatment centers in the city.

Mr. Tuten was tasked with going through several of the cities Planning and Zoning studies over the past 10 years and pulling out items for changes/improvements/additions and deletion that we could implement into our existing Zoning laws. (Burton & Sixmo)

Sam presented two drafts for our consideration. The first being Chapter 1162 – Infill Housing Overlay District Draft.

The purpose of Chapter 1162 is to encourage residential infill development construction on vacant or underutilized residential lots by authorizing the use of pre-approved residential building plans or other compliant residential building plans submitted by an applicant; facilitate reasonable development of legally established lots of record that may not conform to current zoning regulations due to historic subdivisions patterns; and reduce unnecessary discretionary

review while preserving public health and safety. Also included in the discussion were a number of preapproved blue prints for the committee to view.

Discussion was held and questions were presented to Mr. Tuten concerning the legislation and answers were given. There was also input from Mayor Abdella why this was needed and the locations of lots in the city that this legislation could be applied.

The next item presented by Mr. Tuten was Chapter 1163 – Backyard Cottage Overlay District Draft. This purpose of this legislation is to establish and promote infill housing, provide for flexible living arrangements, support aging in place, and improve housing affordability. This would allow for the development of backyard cottages, also known as ADU, accessory dwelling units, on lots within the Residential R-2 District that meets the eligibility criteria set forth in this Chapter. Discussions were held and questions were presented to Mr. Tuten concerning the legislation and answers were given. There was also input from Mayor Abdella why this was needed and examples given as to what structures could be built.

The moratorium for drug treatment centers was discussed. Ideas for possible zoning of said facilities were discussed, one being a possible cap on the number of said facilities based on city population for consideration. Also, discussion was held on possibly changing some parcels due to the new hospital construction as some lots need to be rezoned because of their current zoning standards.

For the time being, we are going to put our focus on redefining our R-1 and R-2 zoning classifications. The mayor suggested that this was an achievable goal along with the items needing rezoned for the hospital. Our current classification of Hospital/Clinic may be too vague and could be in need of updating.

The committee felt that it would be best to look into extending our current Moratorium for Drug Treatment Centers for another year as more study is needed to adequately address the issue because the Moratorium bars any new facilities in Belpre as it is written.

At this time, the committee will set another meeting to consider all the items discussed tonight for later in the year. No legislation, at this time will be forwarded to the Council as a whole, for consideration as more work is needed to advance the issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm.

Mr. Cassady asked that the clerk add into the minutes.

Ms. Riffle Rules Committee had no report. Ms. Riffle apologized for missing the committee meeting on March 16th, 2026 as she was in the hospital. She also apologized for being so grumpy or moody. She stated that she didn't realize she felt so bad.

Mrs. Dennis also apologized for missing the meeting as she had another commitment.

PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only – none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: -

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for third reading **AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING CALENDAR YEAR 2026 ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS.**

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to amend Exhibit A and add the Grant replacement dollars. What we are adding is less than 1% of our budget. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for third reading **AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING CALENDAR YEAR 2026 ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS as amended.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

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

Mr. Ambrozy brought before council for third reading **AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 939.08 OF THE BELPRE CODE OF ORDINANCES BY ADDING A SENTENCE TO SECOND PARAGRAPH OF SECTION 939.08 – ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT OF RATES.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ambrozy moved this be **Ordinance #2, 2026-2027** and duly passed. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for second reading **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE BELPRE SENIOR CENTER.** 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 **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF BELPRE TO SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE CITY OF BELPRE TO CONTRACT WITH WASHINGTON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT TO SUPPLY TECHNICAL STORM WATER MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE FOR THE CITY OF BELPRE.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. This will lie over until the next meeting of council.

Mr. Ambrozy brought before council for second reading **AN ORDINANCE TO READOPT ORDINANCE NO. 20 (2020-2021) WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY ADOPTED ON OCTOBER 26, 2021, AS SECTION 939.04.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. This will lie over until the next meeting of council.

NEW BUSINESS: none

PERSON APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:

Joyce Jones, Maple Street, Belpre addressed council regarding the Belpre Tree Commission. She stated that there were proposal and modifications to the Tree Commission Ordinance. She presented Mr. Seebaugh with a copy of the proposal and modifications.

Mariam Allen, Poplar Street, Belpre addressed council in regards to sewage backup in her basement on September 2nd, 2025. She has a lot of property damage that she feels the city is responsible for. The city workers came down and ran a Jetter and had to come back with a larger one. Mrs. Allen feels that this is the cities responsibility. Mayor Abdella stated that they have been talking to the insurance company however because the city went out to fix the line the insurance company denied the claim. They were confident the administration would take care of it. Mrs. Allen said; well, she would see.

Mr. Seebaugh mentioned the Easter Egg Hunt on March 28th at noon sponsored by the Soccer Club and C&G Apparel. Also, there is breakfast with the Easter Bunny at the fire station and the Easter Parade that evening. A lot going on in the city.

Adjourn:

Ms. Riffle made a motion to adjourn at 7:22pm. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

President Protem of Belpre City Council Mrs. Dennis Wendy Dennis

Clerk of Belpre City Council Mrs. Meredith Kimberly Meredith