May 09, 2022

Council President Mr. Martin called the May 09, 2022 meeting to order at 7:30 PM. The roll was called with the following members present: Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. McClead, Mr. Millhone, Mr. Null, Mr. Ruth and Mr. Wallace present. Also present was Mayor Lorentz, Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell, City Auditor Mrs. Nolan, City Law Director Mr. Webster, City Treasurer Mrs. Cassady and Clerk of Council Mrs. Meredith.

Council President Mr. Martin asked that everyone please rise for the Prayer and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Ruth gave the invocation and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President of Council Mr. Martin reminded council and the administration that if you have a report, please see that the clerk gets a copy of the report.

Mrs. Dennis made a motion to accept the minutes of April 25, 2022 as presented and by-pass the reading. A vote was taken with members of council present voting aye.

**Reports of City Officials:**

Mayor Lorentz announced that April 28th the Service Director, Auditor and I travelled to Marietta for the Governors big announcement. Although the 500 million is a huge number we must wait for the house to pass and see if a benefit is there for us.

April 29th, we celebrated Arbor Day with a lot of supporters. People’s Bank sent volunteers to help mulch all the trees in Civitan and plant 9 trees in our parks. Belpre High School Student Council sent an entire class as well as Wood County Christian School, thanks to Sergeant Mike Stump for arranging this and helping.

As reported earlier I did make a call to the Department of Commerce voicing my concern as well as numerous residents’ concerns on Barclay Street. This week the rumor started that I was trying to close the trailer courts. If you hear this, please let folks know all we are doing is ridding the area of blight and bringing violations to light.

On Friday May 6th my wife and I took a group from the Tree Commission to Zanesville for the Tree City U.S.A. awards. This was our 29th year receiving this award in Belpre.

On May 18th I have been invited to the un-official ribbon cutting for the Memorial Bridge. As you know construction has started and the owners seem very interested in being good neighbors.

Today started the equipment mobilization for the Farson Street water line. Tomorrow the saw cutting across Washington Blvd. starts. Expect some delays and traffic changes.

Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell reported the city has applied though the Eastern Federal Lands Access Program for grant funds to install a handicap kayak launch. We will know in July if we were chosen for these grant monies.

I attended the Ohio Association of Public Safety Directors conference at the Ohio State Reformatory this past Friday.

I put a copy of the pool fence advertisement form on your desks and on the table by the door. Please pass these on to businesses so they have the opportunity to advertise and help with the costs of running our city pool.

I put the 2021 Annual Report from the Marietta/Belpre Health Department on your desks. Any questions about the report contact Barb Bradley with the health department.

York paving started mobilizing today for the Farson Street 10” water main line installation.

City Auditor Mrs. Nolanreported the last two weeks have been dedicated to the 2023 Tax Budget.

The City’s Audit scheduled for May 2, 3, 4 was re-scheduled by Julian and Grube to June 6, 7, 8. They advised we are on schedule with the items they have requested to date.

Software Solutions sent a welcome letter Friday May 6 along with a list of items they require to begin implementation they call the first stage “Taking a Deep Dive”. We have begun collecting data and will deliver as soon as possible.

Last meeting a request was made for the March Water and Sewer report. Due to the size of the file, it was sent via email in a PDF. Anyone interested in a copy email me at [belpreaudit@lumos.net](mailto:belpreaudit@lumos.net).

In regards to the 260 account “Clerks Computer Fund” the monies received are from multiple items i.e. fingerprinting, automobile fines, indigent funds, victims of crime, convenience fees etc.  When entered into the software they are split out/distributed as set up in the software between Mayor’s Court and Clerk Computer Fund.  The funds accrued are then appropriated for office supplies, office equipment, software support.  These are line items 3110, 3111, 3122 under Clerk of Courts on the Budget. After reviewing the distribution report, the $480 was actually received in February and deposited March 2. This is why it showed up on the March Treasurer’s Report.

City Law Director Mr. Webster reported that the city is negotiating with the Washington County Commissioners in regards to the sewer billings. We hope that this will be a final agreement so when they complete the lining of their three lines of their sewer line and we complete the force main by the end of the year we will have a final solution to their line item and will have a better idea as to how much sewage we will have. It is so variable from month to month we hope to know how much storm water gets into the sewer. We have to report if there is a lot of rain in a particular month. Their purpose of relining is because it is cheaper. This is an ongoing evaluation of their part and our part. I’m working with the Prosecuting Attorney to try and put together an agreement that recognizes all those issues. This will keep us from arguing back and forth. These issues should go away. Good results for us both. Hopefully by next month we will have that agreement ready.

City Treasurer Mrs. Cassady had no report.

**Communication and Petitions** – none

**Reports of Standing Committee** –

Finance/Audit Committee Mr. Ferguson reported that his committee met prior to this evening’s meeting for the purpose of discussing the Tax Budget for 2023. Mr. Ferguson thanked Tina for her participation on how she came up with all the numbers. It was the decision of the committee to add this piece of legislation to this evening’s meeting. At this time, Mr. Ferguson made a motion to add to the agenda for first reading **A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE TAX BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2023.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mrs. Dennis, Police and Fire Committee met on May 9, 2022 at 7PM for the purpose of discussing salaries for the police department. We had a very informative discussion as to what is coming for the police force.

Mr. Ruth, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer had no report.

Mr. Millhone, Utilities Committee stated that he does have a couple here this evening wishing to discuss parking on Murray Street. Mr. Millhone stated that the mayor is aware of this. Folks on Murray Street are parking in people’s yard.

Mr. McClead, Parks and Recreation Committee reported that we had a meeting earlier about the RC Track at the park. Some of the items that they would like to see changed is they would like to have an automatic renewal and a longer term. Mr. McClead called a committee meeting for May 23, 2022 at 7PM for the purpose of discussing the Ohio Valley Racing Controlled Car Club.

Mr. Wallace, Planning and Zoning Committee had no report.

Mr. Wallace, Economic Development Committee had no report.

Mr. Null, Rules Committee reported that his committee had a meeting this evening for the purpose of discussing how to do our committee meetings in a better way. Down the road we would like to make our meetings more informative. I will have minutes at the next meeting.

**PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only** ((President of Council will ask if there is anyone wishing to address City Council on any agenda items.))

Council President Mr. Martin stated we have two pieces of legislation on this evening’s agenda. One is the Senior Center for second reading and we added the Tax Budget for first reading.

**Unfinished Business:** -

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for second reading **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR 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.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE TAX BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2023.** A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye. This will lie over until the next meeting of council.

**PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Dr. Brian Eaton 1901 Pennsylvania Avenue, Belpre addressed council in regards to the flashing traffic signal light at Washington Boulevard and Maple Street. Currently, (last four or five months) there has been a sign stating the light is under study. No one is observing. We have an issue with congestion at that intersection and backed up traffic. I have a signed petition with 80-90 signatures with folks wanting that light turned back on. I could probably get 500 if necessary. I think if we would get a traffic indicator light in Belpre it would help with the traffic issue and move traffic through town better. For two years the light at Stone Road has been flashing on and off. I asked city workers what they had done to get the lights in such a mess. They stated the wire in the concrete has been broke and has been broke for some time. If we can get both lights fixed it sure would help. Dr. Eaton presented Mrs. Hoblitzell with the petition. Mrs. Holitzell stated that the lights on Washington Boulevard would be fixed when the paving begins. According to Mr. Martin questions of such should be directed to the Safety-Service Director before coming to council. Dr. Eaton stated that he did do that however he wanted to take it a step further since he had gotten the petitions. Further discussion about the light was made by Mr. Wallace regarding the visibility. Mr. Null asked the mayor if there was information being collected. According to ODOT it is a useless light. Mayor Lorentz stated that he would like to see the light put on the same sequence as the one at Hardees. On 7am-7PM and off at night. Mr. Ruth asked Dr. Eaton what he thought about putting that light on a timer. According to Dr. Eaton it would be a big improvement. Mr. Null asked about the 25-mph speed zone. Mayor Lorentz stated that an officer pulled a lady over who stated she had her cruise control on but was travelling 62 mph in that area.

Jeff Walker 2124 Murray Street, Belpre addressed parking next door to him. My problem is coming in and out of my driveway. I can’t see! They fly down that street also. The other day they were parked 3 ft. from my grandsons’ basketball court. My other concern was I bought property in 1985 and paid to have trees cut down. I came down to the city building to discuss the trees on city property. I was informed that it is city property but the trees didn’t belong to the city. I hate to see someone park there. Something needs to be changed. They are tearing up the property. Mr. Martin asked if he had talked to the Safety-Service Director about it. According to Mr. Walker he had not.

Mr. Null asked Mr. Walker if he had talked to Mr. Wiggins about the issue.

Mr. Millhone stated that he talked to the Mayor and Mr. Wiggins about this 3 years ago. He was told that the city needed legislation to stop this. Mr. Millhone stated that he would like to see this happen. Parking on the street, etc. Leonard went to the property on Friday to take pictures.

Fritz Forsthoeal 2129 Murray Street lives across from Jeff and he sympathizes with him. He spoke about the parking on Murray Street. He thought a study should be done first. Also, Parker Alley is heavily used. It has large pot holes and chuck holes. Semi-trucks are parked on residential property also. He was also asked if he had addressed this with the Safety-Service Director. He stated that he has not.

Mrs. Hoblitzell stated that parking in grass is a problem. It causes storm sewers to be smashed. It opposes a problem with the city’s infrastructure.

Mr. Martin asked Mr. Ruth to get with the Safety-Service Director about the issue.

Mr. Null spoke about parking on Murray Street. We do need to be concerned about the storm drains and also sink holes. It would be nice to find the gentleman a place to park so that the Walkers are able to go in and out of their driveway.

Mr. Martin stated that he has asked Mr. Ruth to take a look at it.

Jeff Totten 614 Arrowhead Road addressed council by stating that he is not here to complain but here to encourage. I have known most of you my entire life. Folks your business is all over social media. You are trying to save a town. I have spent the last seven years in Economic Development Committee meetings trying to understand and learn as much as I can about the place that I call home. I have lived here as a kid and I side with the kids. Everybody I talk to tells me how important the kids are and we can’t even pass a levy. There is a lot of people that can’t afford higher taxes. This is not the issue folks. It is trust in the school board members and this council. We are all in this together. You are a big anchor. The behavior I’ve seen is appalling. I am not here to complain. I’m here to encourage. There are people outside these doors that doesn’t know how this works. When they see someone here screw up their feeling is why do anything for the City of Belpre. People don’t understand the process. If there is something I can do let me know. It is important to understand and get your message across. We have got to do better. All of us? The leaders of this community need to do better for all of us.

Mr. Ruth stated that the process as far as people in the city do need to understand the process. I was approached by someone today regarding the storm sewer issues in the city. Poplar and Clayton needs addressed. Also, the corner of Clayton and Virginia. I’m going to get with Connie to discuss. Our process is broken and we need to work together to get it fixed. I pray for unity and unity in this council. We need to get our heads together and work as a council and do what we were elected for. I appreciate what the gentleman said.

Jackie Cassady spoke before council as a Beautify Belpre participant. I just want to say we had a lot of folks in this room that helped plant trees, mulch, etc. I would like to thank each and every one of you. All planters have been purchased but one. If anyone is interested the cost is $250. We will be planting on May 25th, 2022. Bob’s Market plants our baskets for us. We will be planting the other containers.

**ADJOURN:**

Mrs. Dennis made a motion to adjourn at 8:10. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

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Clerk of Belpre City Council Mrs. Meredith