

February 27, 2023

Council President Mr. Martin called the February 27, 2023 Belpre City Council meeting to order at 7:30 PM. The roll was called with the following members present: Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Millhone, Mr. Null, Ms. Abdella and Mr. Wallace present. Also present were Mayor Lorentz, Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell, City Law Director Mr. Webster, and Treasurer Mrs. Cassady. Absent from the meeting were Mr. McClead, City Auditor Mrs. Nolan 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. Mayor Lorentz gave the invocation and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President of Council Mr. Martin asked that everyone turn off cellphones or turn them to vibrate so they don't interfere with the recording.

If you address council this evening, please state your name and address clearly so that the clerk can record it for the minutes.

President of Council Mr. Martin asked for a motion to accept the minutes of February 13, 2023 as presented. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the minutes of February 13, 2023 as presented and by-pass the reading. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

#### **Reports of City Officials:**

Mayor Lorentz announced that the Tree Commission is getting ready for Arbor Day on April 28<sup>th</sup>. This year we hope to plant a tree at the Elementary School with some of the students helping. A fruit tree planting will also start on Main Street where we acquired the property from ODOT.

It looks like we will be fortunate enough to hire a young patrolman for our police department. If all the paperwork comes through in time, we will meet him at our next meeting and swear him in.

At our monthly board meeting with the O'Neill Center, I found that an incident occurred that caused quite a concern with security. With this knowledge Chief Stump and I started a Vulnerability Study for our center as well as this building. The world we now live in is not what we grew up with.

IDAP will be doing phone upgrades, internet improvements, cameras and assisting us with the vulnerability study. The gentleman has already found that we can tie phones

at the center to this building as well as internet. This alone will save the city money all the while making it better for all.

Shriver's Pharmacy is well underway. We met with the construction crew today to eliminate some of the storm water issues. The west end is growing and really changing the landscape of Belpre. Wings Etc. will open on the 7<sup>th</sup> with the Ribbon Cutting on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Our little city is blessed with opportunities.

ADR engineers were in and hopefully we have a plan now for the new water tank start. This is badly needed and hopefully can start by fall.

Chief Stump is in the process of replacing a dispatcher as one of ours turned in a resignation seeking other employment. We do have a candidate from the last test. This morning Civil Service advised we collected 5 applications for the Laborer jobs now posted.

I attended the chamber luncheon, Levy Meeting with our citizens as well as Health Board meetings.

Safety-Service Director Mrs. Hoblitzell reported that the City of Belpre EMS, Inc has been approved to be a corporation. The board members have been chosen and will meet to discuss bylaws, agreements, leases, etc. Hopefully, there will be full services starting in the next week or so.

Chief Stump, the auditor and I met with iDTAP owner Greg Brewster, iTech owner Mike Williams and Modern Tech representative Andy Offenberger about phone systems. We have chosen to use iDTAP and utilize a company called Ring Central. We will not be paying any more for this system as we are currently paying for our current system. Mr. Brewster is also fixing some of the IT problems the city has.

Due to vandalism in our parks all restrooms will be closed at dark.

City Auditor Mrs. Nolan was absent. No report was given in her absence.

City Law Director Mr. Webster reported that the city got a tax bill that he investigated for the auditor for Real Estate Taxes. All parcels in the City of Belpre are tax exempt as a municipality. Our tax bill includes our new pole barn behind the Sewer Treatment Plant. I was told by the county auditor that it is State Law that all new buildings that are built in a commercial area have to be taxed. We have to file for a motion for exemption. We can then get a refund for anything that we have paid. The county auditor is supposed to be supplying me with the state code section. He is supposed to be getting that for me. The building is a city building that is used for city purposes therefore it shouldn't be taxed. The auditor's office requires that it be taxed. I will follow-up on that.

Mrs. Hoblitzell was talking about the EMS Service. There is going to be a new nonprofit independent corporation that has been formed. At this point, it has already been



incorporated. In the next few days there will be a Board meeting, we will be electing officers and to start the process of operating an EMS Service that will require a contract with the city. In order to do that since it is an independent organization it is not a city department and it won't be city employees. It is not the previous corporation that we dealt with. The contract is brand new. The members are new and they will look at their by-laws and actually start operations.

City Treasurer Mrs. Cassady reported that before you and on the desk in the back are copies of the July, August, September and October 2022 amended treasurer's report. I was informed by our auditor on February 21<sup>st</sup> that closing the year 2022 an error was discovered on the July report in the 101 General Fund, which resulted in changing July which carried thru to August, September and October reports. The auditor sent me the correct cash reports to correct the treasurer's reports, which she then sent the copies to council and explained. Those reports need council's approval. Council President stated that the reports need approved one at a time. Discussion followed. Ms. Abdella asked how the cash report is created. Mrs. Cassady stated that the auditor sends me the cash report that has all the figures on it. I take the numbers and add into the Treasurer's Report. This is how the Treasurer's Report is made. If there is a mistake in the cash report then the Treasurer's Report will have to be done as well.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the amended July 2022 Treasurer's Report. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the amended August 2022 Treasurer's Report. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the amended September 2022 Treasurer's Report. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the amended October 2022 Treasurer's Report. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

Also, the council has before them and on the back table copies of the December 2021 treasurer's report and the Year-to-Date 2021 report that was amended by the city auditor after a correction had been made from the cash report and sent to the state auditor and everything is good with both reports. The auditor sent me new copies of the cash report for 2021 and the new amended December Treasurer's Report and Year to Date 2021 report. I believe that council should approve these amended reports, and I should give signed copies to Connie to put amended reports on the website and give signed copies to Kim Meredith, clerk, to file.

I have not received the cash report for January, I hope I will be able to give January Treasurer's Report next meeting.

I would ask if the website could be updated with amended reports and the November and December's report be made available on the website also. I have received phone calls that the treasurer's reports are not updated on website, I would ask that they

would be.

**Communication and Petitions:** None

**Reports of Standing Committee**

Mr. Ferguson reported that his committee met prior to this evening's meeting at 6:00PM to review the 2023 budget. I would like to call another committee meeting for March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7:00pm to further our review on the 2023 budget.

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

Ms. Abdella, Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewer Committee had no report. Ms. Abdella asked if it would be possible to have a committee meeting at the Street Department for both the Utilities Committee and the Street Department so we can have a tour. I haven't been there in a while so I would like to see what is there and what we are doing. Mrs. Hoblitzell stated that Denzil, Chris and Eddy said you are welcome to come down there however they would like it to be a one on one. Just call them and set it up. Mr. Null wanted to know what is a good time to go down. According to Mrs. Hoblitzell you will need to call them.

Mr. Millhone Utilities Committee stated that there is a letter that went out on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 about irrigation systems. I have received 30 letters from folks about this. I'm going to call a committee meeting about this to reference this issue. The meeting will be called for March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:30pm for the purpose of discussing the letter that went out to all irrigation owners of the city. If your irrigation system doesn't currently have a back flow prevention to suddenly reduce pressure the device has to be installed and tested by a certified backflow tester to have your system turned on. The letter goes on. I will get copies made.

Mr. McClead Parks and Recreation Committee was absent. No report was given in his absence.

Mr. Wallace Planning and Zoning Committee had no report

Mr. Wallace, Economic Development Committee had no report.

Mr. Null, Rules Committee reported that we have legislation but it needs fine tuned on feral cats. I talked to the feral cats' folks and they informed me that Boxers has six full time veterinarians and they have taken 120 cats, 40 from Belpre which were spayed and neutered. The cost amounted to \$2,800 in expenses that they raised in their nonprofit organization. They informed me that they have another 40 applications from Belpre where folks are wanting to get their cats taken care of. They are very happy with Boxer's. They are doing an excellent job in the area. I want to get with our law director so he can get in contact with Kandy with Save the Kitty to see if they can work out how to pay the fee for Boxer's or someone else in the future



that will do the same excellent job as Boxer's. If we get this done, we should have legislation ready for the next meeting of council.

**PERSONS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL – AGENDA items only** ((President of items.)) None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** ((President of City Council will recognize that there is or is not any Unfinished Business this evening)). None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Ferguson brought before council for first reading **AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING CALENDAR YEAR 2023 APPROPRIATIONS**. 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:**

Karen Locke 726 Tuttle Street asked a question about cats getting fixed at Boxer's. Is this for anyone that has a cat and can't afford to have their cat spay or neutered or is it just for feral cats? Per Mr. Null, this service is only for the cats that have no owner. Pet cats do not qualify. Mrs. Locke was inquiring about the applications that folks were completing to have their cat spray or neutered. Are these people collecting stray cats? Save the Kitty will capture and have them taken care of. After they are spayed or neutered, they will be returned to the area they were originally found and released. Mrs. Locke asked how do you know these stray cats are from Belpre? Mr. Null stated how do we not know?

Tom Callihan corner of Ruble Avenue and Boulevard Drive addressed the letter he received and the issue if your water is not turned on, do we need to do anything. There was no warning on this. President of Council Mr. Martin stated that chair has called a meeting where it will be addressed before council. You are more than welcome to attend the March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 6:30pm meeting.

Kay Marks lives at the end of Boulevard Drive asked about the letter from the city. She stated that it did say that if you didn't follow this you could be fined as stated in the city ordinance. Where do you find the city ordinances and can we get this before the meeting to have to review? She was informed by Council President Mr. Martin that the ordinances are on line. Council President Mr. Martin also stated that we didn't see this letter until this evening. Ms. Abdella told Mrs. Marks how to locate the ordinances on the website.

Rusty Lee lives at the end of Boulevard Drive asked if the water is not turned on, do we need to do anything? Do we need to comply with this? Council President Mr.

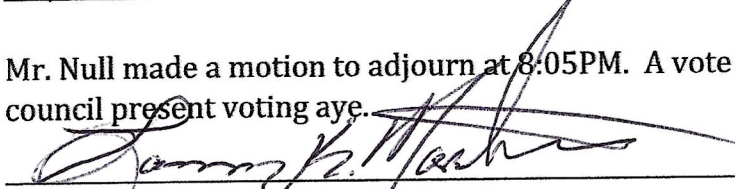
Martin stated that again we just learned about the letter and I can't give you an answer until we look into it.

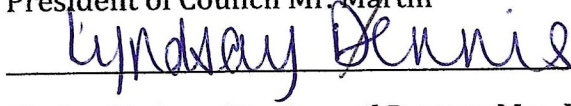
Earl Handschumaker asked if the committee meetings are public? He was told that yes, they are. He also addressed the letter.

Mayor Lorentz stated that there would be folks present that could answer questions regarding this topic.

**ADJOURN:**

Mr. Null made a motion to adjourn at 8:05PM. A vote was taken with all members of council present voting aye.

  
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President of Council Mr. Martin

  
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Clerk of Belpre City Council Protem Mrs. Dennis