

**CITY OF BELLEFONTAINE NEIGHBORS
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY MAY 4, 2023 – 7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT Mayor Reverend Dinah Tatman, City Attorney Dorothy White-Coleman, Director of Parks and Recreation Jimmy Kirincich, Chief of Police Jeremy Ihler, Rick Rognan and City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall.

NOT PRESENT Director of Public Works-Jeff Ross (*EXCUSED ABSENCE.*)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY Mayor Reverend Tatman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall called the roll:

- Alderwoman Regina Harmon-Ward-Present
- Alderman James Thomas, Sr.-Present
- Alderwoman Lynette VonSeggern-Present
- Alderwoman Peg Warnusz-Present
- Alderman Theresa Hester-Present
- Alderwoman Alicia Smith-Present
- Alderwoman Alease Dailes-Present

Seven Present -Quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor called for a motion to approve the agenda. **Alderman Theresa Hester**, Second made by **Alderman Lynette VonSeggern**. **Mayor** called for any discussion. **None**. **Mayor** called for an all in favor:

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed.

Alderman Alicia Smith made a motion to amend the agenda to add new business move to line # 14 and treasures report to line #15 and move everything down one. Things added to the agenda under the amendment would be to discuss things regarding the Bond Issues and Money. **Second made by Alderman Regina**

Harmon-Ward. Mayor called for any discussion. None. Mayor called for an all in favor: Ayes have it, motion passed

CERTIFICATION OF APRIL 4, 2023 ELECTIONS:

BILL NO. 2672 AN ORDINANCE DECLARING RESULTS OF THE GENERAL CITY ELECTION HELD BY THE CITY OF BELLEFONTAINE NEIGHBORS, MISSOURI ON TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2023-(INTRODUCED BY ALDERMAN ALEASE DAILES)

Alderman Alease Dailes made a motion to announce the certification of the April 4 election Bill #2672, first and second read. Second made by Alderman Alicia Smith. Mayor called for an all in favor:

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed.

Alderman Alease Dailes-made motion for first read of Bill #2672. Second made by Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward. Mayor called for an all in favor: Ayes have it, motion passed.

Alderman Alease Dailes- made motion for second read of Bill #2672. Second made by Alderman James Thomas, Sr. Mayor called for Roll:

ROLL CALL: City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall called the roll:

- Alderwoman Regina Harmon-Ward-Yes
- Alderman James Thomas, Sr.-Yes
- Alderwoman Lynette VonSeggern-Yes
- Alderwoman Peg Warnusz-Yes
- Alderman Theresa Hester-Yes
- Alderwoman Alicia Smith-Yes
- Alderwoman Alease Dailes-Yes

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed.

PRESENTATION OF UNAPPROVED MINUTES (BOA MEETING ON 04/20/23)

Motion made by **Alderman Alease Dailes** to approve the unapproved minutes of the Board of Aldermen meeting minutes of 04/20/23, 2nd made by **Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward**. **Mayor called for any discussion. None. Mayor called for an all-in favor:**

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES OVER \$500 (04/20/23-05/02/23) \$17,336.39

Motion made by **Alderman Alease Dailes** to approve invoices over \$500 for 04/20/23-05/02/23 in the amount of \$17,336.39, 2nd made by **Alderman Lynette VonSeggern**. **Mayor** called for any discussion. **Alderman Alicia Smith** states she had a question for **Jeff**. **Jeff** has an excused absence; **Aldermen Smith** states she will hold her question. **Mayor** called for an all-in favor.

6-Ayes/1-Nayes. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES UNDER \$500 (ALL OF APRIL) \$12,017.34

Motion made by **Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward** to approve invoices under \$500 for all of April in the amount of \$12,017.34, 2nd made by **Alderman Alease Dailes**. **Mayor** called for any discussion. **Alderman Alicia Smith** asked if we receive a tally of what they were. **Mayor** stated you would be receiving a tally. **Mayor** called for an all-in favor.

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed.

COURT REPORT (ATTACHED)-Tabled until 05/18/23

Mayor called for a motion to accept the **court report**. **Alderman Alease Dailes** made a motion to **table** report until next meeting on 05/18/23 to approve. Second made by **Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward**. **Mayor** called for any discussion. **None**. **Mayor** called for an all-in favor.

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed

IMAGE & BEAUTIFICATION REPORT ATTACHED (03/14/23 & 04/11/23)

Mayor called for a motion to accept **I & B report** for 03/14/23 and 04/11/23. **Alderman Alease Smith** made a motion to approve **I & B report** for 03/14/23 and 04/11/23. Second made by **Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward**. **Mayor** called for any discussion. **None**. **Mayor** called for an all-in favor.

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT-JIMMY KIRINICH

- Gymnasium Update: The masonry is about 95% complete they have one wall to finish up and should be fully completed by May 10th. The sheet metal workers and roofers will start working on May 11th to install the flashing and gutters. That will complete the exterior portion of the project.
- The weight room flooring is installed and the equipment will be arriving on Tuesday, May 9th
- The gymnasium flooring is being installed. They have about half the subfloor completed and then will start installing the maple floor, striping the lines, and putting the finishing products to seal the floor. Missouri flooring said it should be ready to walk on by May 27th.
- Midwest Audio installed all the new speakers in the weight room, hallways, and indoor/outdoor pools. The new receivers will be installed tomorrow and then the gymnasium speakers will go in once the floor is completed.
- We are planning on having a reopening date of June 1
- Senior Van: We received the senior van. Chief got the bus put on our insurance list and Semmie is working to register the vehicle. The van will go in on May 11 to have the city graphics installed. I hope to have the van operational by next week.
- Tanglewood Fence: Ethan Waters- Operations Manager MSD- The St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District's (MSD) policy regarding fences along creeks and channels is that MSD will repair fences that are cemented into a concrete improved channel wall, but MSD does not maintain or repair fences along creek banks or unimproved channels. I sent an email to our insurance with this information and still waiting to hear back from MIRMA.
- Pool: Westport will be out next week to install the new pool pumps at the indoor and outdoor pools. We had enough funds in the Aquatic account and equipment maintenance so I will pay for one pump out of each account.
- Park Maintenance started to drain and power wash the outdoor pool. We hope to have water in there by next Friday. The outdoor pool will open for the season on Monday, May 29 from 12:00-6:00pm.
- Camera Update: Communication Technology will start installing the new cameras at the Recreation Center towards the end of May. They had a

delay in receiving some of the equipment and wanted everything on site before they got started.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT-READ BY TERRI CASE (ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT)

- Trees and limbs are being cleaned up due to the storm, which hit on April 15, 2023. Recent windstorms resulted in further down limbs throughout the city.
- Multiple tree stumps were taken care of until the stump grinder broke. Vince has repaired the grinder. We have a backlog of stumps needing attention.
- Potholes filled
- Boarded up house on Chambers
- Ordered a new side broom for our sweeper. Once this is installed we can once again resume sweeping streets.
- Loaded / unloaded tables and chairs for Health Summit at the high school
- Contracted with Drury to remove several trees off Green Acres. Update: The trees have been cut down and removed.
- Sewer lateral repairs in progress
- MSD has reported several properties with broken laterals resulting in sinkholes. Having difficulty tracking down the tenants on Hoyt and Gardo Ct. to allow AAQuick Plumbing access to scope the lines. Will continue to pursue these residents and/or property owners.
- Beginning to tag vacant homes with tall grass. After the tag, a letter is sent requesting the grass be mowed. If that does not happen, the Street Department will mow the grass and charge the homeowner.
- The Public Works department will participate in Career Day at Highland Elementary on May 12 to discuss different careers in Public Works.
- The Street department has cleaned up and removed down trees in the common ground on Mead and Cabot along with multiple residential trees on the City's easement.
- We will be helping with the City cleanup on Saturday, May 6.

POLICE REPORT (CHIEF JEREMY IHLER)

- Thanked Mayor for employee meeting on April 25, 2023
- Reported on Crime Activity
- Crime behavior up a little bit

- Auto theft up
- Calls for service up considerably-21%
- Accident reports down-20%
- Motorists contacts up-50%

Alderman Alease Dailes asked if we have any officers pending for hire. **Chief Ihler** stated yes we do; one we have in the hiring process now. **Alderman Dailes** stated this is not against you but for public records. Out talking to the citizens and other elected officials and other individuals in South County, West County in my opinion and this is just my opinion just in speaking to the residents because our neighborhood has changed. I think we are on the verge of a Michael Brown incident. I think our police department needs to be diversified, more African Americans, females, Asians. We need to be that instead of being a 90% community of African Americans with only two Black Police Officers. It could erupt, nothing against you but we do need more female officers. If you go in West County, they have more African Americans Police Officers in white neighborhoods than we do. I know no one wants to hear race but I am just going by what the citizens say to me. It is nothing against you but I just want it on the record. Because I did say, I would mention that when I come to the meeting on behalf of the citizens. **Chief Ihler** stated for the record with that I have asked the board repeatedly and the community repeatedly to bring forth people that are interested in policing #1, and #2 people policing their own community, it is twofold. We are not the sole responsibility for recruiting. Our whole community is actually responsible for recruiting employees of the city, especially police officers. I am always for a diverse work force, so go back and tell your constituents to help us out and bring forth some people who are interested and will be more than happy to sit down and have a conversation with them, **Alderman Dailes** stated she will do better and I will let you tell them when you come out in the community. **Alderman Smith** stated two things. I thought you said we had a recruiter, do we not have a recruiter. **Chief Ihler** stated I think you ask that the last meeting and my response was that you cut our recruiting budget so there is no way I can have a recruiter. **Alderman Smith** stated the other was there is an issue, I cannot think of the name of the street however, we have a resident in Ward 4 who the Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department were called, and you people came out. There is a huge ordeal to the point where it has now escalated where weapons have been drawn and as an elective official I do not carry my weapon to others homes things like that when I go knocking on

doors or they come and ask can I come out because of an issue and things like that. I do not get in the middle of residential disputes. Especially when the Police are called. That is their job to do. The police recommended and provided their recommendation the homeowner did do what the officer explained to do. It is now ten times worse. This is why **Alderwoman Dailes** was explaining, there were racial slurs between the adult and the children. Having children myself, I totally can understand. I hoped in my car and I left only because again I represent all of the citizens but always say to everyone. Put yourself in the next person shoes what if it was your child how, would you feel. What would you think, and that is why I left. So, we will talk off record. **Mayor Tatman**, asked if this discussion can be tabled and **Alderman Smith** make appointment with **Chief Ihler**. **Mayor Tatman** stated today, just today the **Chief Ihler** and I had a discussion because I received a phone call from **Lincoln University**. I do not know how many people know that **Lincoln University** have their own police academy, and so the Dean of Lincoln University was in St. Louis today and so we are setting up a meeting with the Chief of the Police Academy for Lincoln University to do exactly what we are talking about. So the Chief and I discussion today and he said to me the same thing he just said to you. **Alderwoman Dailes** stated, just to be clear so the police it will not be their fault, we have seen people have driven up in peoples driveway and knocked on peoples doors and gotten shot. This is the situation in Bellefontaine being taught to those babies who do not drive your bike by my house with racial slurs that is why I say we are at a boiling point. **Mayor Tatman** stated I would like to challenge us, we are all one community is to look out for one another when we see strange things like that. We cannot expect our police department to be the one all.

NEW BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS CONCERNING BONDS AND MONEY:

Alderman Smith stated **Rick** you may be able to assist not sure but I will read my entire request. I would like to **make a motion to:** Put a hiring and promotion freeze effective immediately for the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors to also include all spending, except for the daily operations which must be approved by the Board of Aldermen with a majority vote. Any essential hiring for the day-to-day operations for the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors must be verified and approved by a majority vote of the Board of Alderman. Except for any candidate who is currently pending hire and have already received their offer as of yesterday, May 3 2023. This motion will be effective as of today, May 5, 2023 if

approved by a majority vote of the Board of Alderman until all audits are completed for the fiscal years of 2021, 2022 and 2023. Second made by **Alderman James Thomas, Sr.**

Mayor called for any questions: **Alderman Lynette VonSeggern** asked you want to put a freeze for a year, so that means we will not have a building inspector for another year. **Alderman Smith** stated I did not say a year. With us losing our bond, if we were to have a natural disaster we are not covered. Who is going to loan us money. **Mayor** stated your bonds do not affect your cash flow balances, your cash balance or your accruals. Only thing that the bonds are effect is if we are in the issuing faze, we would not be able to sale those bonds because we do not have a rating. That is security bonds, which has nothing to do with your cash flow, nothing to do with your balance in the bank; it has nothing to do with your accruals. Therefore, there is no emergency because we are not trying to sell any bonds. The bond rating is only applicable to bonds. If we were trying to sale those bonds you are right, we would not be able to sale them. **Alderman Smith** stated she still lost on somethings. From my understanding, a bond is related to a loan as well. If we lost our bond, how are we contacting a bank for a loan if we lost that rating? **Mayor** stated good question. We are not trying to borrow money for bonds you do not borrow money for bonds. Bond is almost like a dollar bill what you are saying is I want to make this particular dollar bill be applicable to a project I have and so I want other people to help me with that project. I am going to purchase or be given a certain amount of money or bonds a piece of paper and then I am going to try and sell it to people in the public, and so the people in the public (it is normally corporations that buy them) so they would say I want to invest in that city, I want to buy those bonds to help them. We are not trying to put out a bond issue; if we were, we could not do that. **Alderman Smith** stated she knows that. **Mayor** stated bonds are not tied to our bank account. It has nothing to do with our bank accounts. Bonds are only applicable to securities themselves. Nothing to do with our assets, our money in the bank, **Alderwoman Dailes** stated basically what her motion is saying because we have not done any audits in three years and bond company pulled our rating and therefore we do not know what could happen. Which means that if you do not have an audit for three years you do not know where you are going what has happened across the board. Therefore, to protect the City of Bellefontaine

Neighbors, this is why that motion is going forward and anything that is essential to Bellefontaine Neighbors will come before the board before anything is spent because we always have to think about a natural disaster. This is until all the audits are complete. When they pulled our ratings. It was 10 cities that they pulled the ratings and Bellefontaine was one. Because we do not have our audit done. This could mean our insurance could go up. However, we do have to pay that fine until our audits are done. We have to pay the state a fee until we get our audits done, so to protect the city this is why this motion is going forward. **Mayor** stated again the bonds do not preclude us because they are not tied to our bank accounts; it has nothing to do with our liquidity. A natural disaster if it happens we have money in the bank. **Alderman Smith** states many things she see is not logical. **Mayor** stated she would like to caution and encourage this board that the things that we are asking for, we had a meeting. We need staff to make this government work proficiently. We need staff to do the audit. Staff to enforce our ordinances. Therefore, we need a code enforcer, a building inspector. We need an assistant financial director. It has been stated several years when we talked about Mr. Greene, internal controls. Therefore, the staff that we need to make this government work proficiently to get the audit done to bring those things that are out of compliance we need staff. One of the things staff said to me is Mayor we need help. Are you happy at the way the city looks? Are happy at the way your government is running. If you are happy it is ok, but what I am saying is the essential staff we are hiring are those staff members that are needed to make this government of Bellefontaine Neighbors to run proficiently and the staff is here every day. They know what they need and they know what their jobs are. I want to encourage this board, because every day occurrences are the staff they know what to do, they know what they need and they know how to do it. In addition, I made a commitment to them that I would get them help. We need an assistant financial director or an assistant treasurer to help get those three audits done. The one audit, our auditors have been here since Monday. They worked on whatever was needed for 2021. We will have that done by no later than the 19th. We have what we need for our 2021. Our 2022 is late because it was due 27 January. Our 2023 is due the 27th of 2023. The commitment I have for our auditors who became our accountants because they did all of the applicable work because our financial director needed help and she could not do all of that by herself because of internal controls. In order to get that done I made a

commitment to her I am going to get her help. I want to encourage the board to give your staff help. We will be hiring a city administrator, assistant treasurer, code enforcer, maintenance person, and an accountant. The board will be informed. Since there is a motion on the floor and state statue, I will refer to Counsel. **Attorney Dorothy White Coleman** stated to the extent that the motion interferes with the responsibility of the Mayor, and then it would not be in order. However, the motion has not passed at this point and time. However, if it passes the Mayor still has the authority given to the Mayor by statue and under the city code. **Alderman Dailes** stated to your response the board have the right to make a motion we handle the budget and that is what we are saying. As long as the audits are not done with our bond rating being pulled, the motion is on the floor it has been second and I ask for a roll call vote. **Attorney Dorothy White Coleman** stated she need clarification on the motion to. She is hearing different things. I heard that to the extent it effects essential staff then the Mayor still has under the motion has the authority to do that, is that what you are saying. **Alderman Smith** states for the third time essential workers will not be effected if this city needs essential workers who in their right mine know offense to anyone. **Attorney Dorothy White Coleman** stated it sounds like you and **Alderwoman Dailes** are saying something different. **Alderman Dailes** stated we are saying the same thing in the 2022/2023 budget we cannot go outside that budget, we cannot spend money we do not have. **Mayor** stated who would do that. **Alderman Dailes** stated based on what she said (**Mayor**) we do not know what we have. She just named City Administrator; she just named a bunch of things when we did the 2022/2023 budget we cut all of that out to get in the black so until we get our audits done for the safety of these citizens. The Board has the right to protect this city. **Attorney Dorothy White Coleman** stated **Alderwoman Dailes** I agree with you completely I am just trying to understand the essence of your motion. What I just heard was to the extent essential staff is involved then your motion does not impact the Mayors authority there. **Alderman Dailes** states what we are saying until this audit is done if we cut a City Administrator out of this budget if we cut all the things out the budget how are we going to add it back in if we did not have the money then. Moreover, we do not have an audit to say what we do and do not have or what the irregularities were, how we could do that. Right now today with all of that taken out to get in the red when we got the \$3000 for the two events we used the money from the vacant houses. I think we

had about \$78,000.00 to bring us in the black and now you are talking about adding \$200,000.00 into a budget that was not approved because of the state this city is in. **The Board of Aldermen** has the right to do that, which is the legislative body, I would like it to go to a vote, and we can talk about it later. Because it could end up in court because we know what our rights are and we know, we can put that motion on the floor. All we are asking before anything is done to bring this city into the red is that the board be informed on the essential workers, that is it and that is what we were elected to do. **Attorney Dorothy White Coleman** stated so you are not trying to impede the Mayors authority to hire essential workers, **Alderman Dailes** stated no we are not. If we are in the red, let the board decide when we see the money. The auditors need to come before the board and inform the board what is going on because we are behind three audits, we still go to pay those fines that are not in the budget. **Treasurer Rick Rognan** stated each month the audit is late there is a fine, whether they will waive it or not we will have to see. **Alderman James Thomas, Sr.** stated when we did the budget we took out all the positions you just stated. In order for us to balance the budget. We cannot approve of putting that back in when it does not exist. Without the board coming forward and approving saying they can be hired because the money does not exist. I do not know where you are going to pull it from but it does not exist. **Mayor** stated well the forecast; **Alderman Thomas** interjected and said no no no. This discussion can go on and on until about 2:30am. **Mayor** stated go ahead and make your motion I would continue to hire the essential persons we need. **Alderman VonSeggern** asked if there would be an ordinance drawn up for those positions with a pay scale like the one we have right now. **Mayor** stated yes exactly because that is our law. **Alderman Thomas and Alderman Dailes** stated (at the same time) anything that effects the budget has to come through the board. All we are doing is saying we are going to stop any hiring until the audits are complete. **Mayor** stated and that is what we do not understand, you are saying until the audits are complete, that is where the amiability is you said until the audits are complete. We have 2021 that will be completed by May 19, 2023 we have to other audits that will not be completed until January and that is where we wanted clarity so we do not have any essential workers until January of next year. You said **Alderwoman Dailes** until all the audits were done. Therefore, do you just mean 2021? **Alderwoman Dailes** stated in the motion 2021, 2022 and 2023. **Mayor** stated then that prohibits hiring. You

said until. **Alderman Dailes** stated except for essential workers. It has to go through the board. **Alderman Thomas** called for the vote.

Mayor called for a vote:

ROLL CALL: City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall called the roll:

- Alderwoman Regina Harmon-Ward-Yes
- Alderman James Thomas, Sr.-Yes
- Alderwoman Lynette VonSeggern-Yes
- Alderwoman Peg Warnusz-Yes
- Alderman Theresa Hester-Yes
- Alderwoman Alicia Smith-Yes
- Alderwoman Alease Dailes-Yes

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed

TREASURER'S REPORT- RICK ROGNAN

- Working on the budget, keep in mind July 1 will begin a new budget so we are going to get a new opportunity to visit all these revenues and expenses to see what is pertinent and acceptable to the city for the next fiscal year.
- The goal is this; we are working with department heads as we speak. The Mayor had a kick off the other day. We are going to have a budget ready for this board by June 1. That way you get a chance to look at the budget before we approve it this second meeting in June. So we will present it give everyone time for questions and come back at the next meeting to ask questions with the intent on getting this budget approved before the next fiscal year.
- Therefore, we all are going to have input on positons, in regards to revenue and expenses. Everyone will be engaged. Therefore, that is our opportunity to either put in certain workers. We are going to try to use it as a priority one, two and three. We talk about that with the department heads. Priority ones we have to have priority ones. Priority ones are anyone who is here today is automatically a priority one. Priority twos and threes if we do not have a balance budget we are not going to entertain any twos or threes. It is going to be just that easy. Therefore, we are going to entertain this philosophy as we commence this budget. Will make our lives much easier because if we cannot get through priority ones we do not

need to talk about priorities two and three. So all of the department heads are going to bring to the table personnel and expenses for priority one, two, four and three. Therefore, we can very easily navigate them. So when the board gets them keep in mind you probably only going to see priority ones. We will see how difficult it will be to have priority two, three come before this board. Not knowing what those revenue sources are going to be. This is what is proposed and we are on track to make that happen.

- To the Mayors point on May 19, the auditors should present their last report. Now keep in mind there are going to be variations or difficulties in regards to internal controls we all know that. **Resident Anthony Green** discussed that quite a bit. Cannot have one person in finance the finance department and have internal controls. Keep that in mind so we are going to see them but we are going to be changing. We talked about that a few months ago. Before the article came out where the other municipalities had someone slipping in bills. We do not need that here. How do we prevent that? We already started with check registers listing dates; this check register should also have what? Beginning check number and ending check number. And what was the last check number from the last meeting that was approved. Also any new vendors in here and we need to navigate through them if there are any issues or any concerns. Then we have done our due diligence to make sure it is a good vendor for the city. Semmie and I have talked about that, after it is signed, Semmie would take the checks, and someone in her department will mail those. Therefore, that person that issued those checks will not have any part after that. What does that mean? They cannot slip checks in. If you are able to see the entire check register from start to finish with check numbers and we publish those on this agenda to, with the last one and keynote any new vendor that will prevent many issues.
- As a city, we already have positive pay. Positive pay means this; as soon as those checks are signed that check register is uploaded to the bank. They know who that payee is, the date, and the amount. They have all the attributes on that check if one of those attributes do not add up, that check gets rejected. Therefore, that prevents someone from grapping the check-out of the mailbox doing the washing of the checks you keep hearing about. They will not be able to walk into a bank and go to the counter to get the money. That is why positive pay is put into place. We have that established with Simmons Bank.

- Once the auditors come in and see the new procedures in place that will make all the difference in the world. One person is never ever in any accounting system any accounting system the city or anywhere else is going to get it done. There is no such thing as segregation of duties when one person is doing everything. Therefore, when they say segregation of duties that is the most important thing it cannot happen until we have additional personnel. We need to make sure we are all on board to move this forward and if we are, we can do that.
- Right now, you are on modified accrual we do not need to be on modified accrual. It really has no bearing. We have our fiscal year in the middle of June and our tax dollars come in, in December and January. Your last big tax check is in May. Sales tax are almost evenly split throughout the year you go through all your revenue categories you say what difference it makes on an accrual. The same thing on salary and wages so what if it is a few days here and a few days there. It has no significant bearing on your audit the rating services could care less. The bottom line is if it is not going to impact your rating and it is going to speed up the audit process a lot of what is going on with Sikich is they have to tie all these accruals down. Accruals through every single revenue category, they got to go through the expenses how many these checks that we paid in July represent a service that took place in June. Let us just move forward and do what needs to be done. It has no significant effect you see our expenses they are about the same every single month. Seventy-five percent of our expenses are paying bills the other twenty-five percent are these other items. The idea of being on modified accruals does one thing and that is to delay audits, causes a lot more expense and creates a lot more issues with no significant benefits. If it were a significant benefit, I would say that is where we need to be. However, I think it is something we need to consider. What I recommend before making a decision is (a) put it on the agenda and (b) ask the auditor when they are here. Would it be acceptable to move from a modified accrual to modified cash. Get the blessing of the auditor and make it effective immediately. What I am saying to get ready for cash takes a day to get ready for accruals take a week. I am just suggesting from the city's standpoint expedited if it were a significant difference, problem, or market to look at it or react differently I would say let us reconsider. However, the market is not looking at it. Your bond rating will not be impacted by it at all.

- For insurance, everyone is talking about in an event of an emergency. Keep in mind to get a bond you have to go to the voters anyway to get approval and that takes a long period. However, if you need money the banks are more than willing to step up. You go through a different underwriting process. I am not saying it will be easy, I am not saying without a bond rating it creates more issues, I am just saying a bank more understanding because they are regional and they are going to be more likely to loan money. Why? It is called tax anticipation. Banks do it all the time. Therefore, I am not saying we will ever be in that position. However, I am saying if the city gets there. If something catastrophic happens we have to do something, we have the ability to go to a bank and borrow money. Keep in mind we do not have to go out and get a bond issue. We don't have to have a bond rating. There are plenty of other cities that do not even have bonds, and they still are capable of borrowing money. Not saying we do that, I am just saying if something happens to transpire, we do have the ability to do that. We have the ability to be credit worthy to be able to borrow money. Simmons Bank or one of the other regional banks in St. Louis. **Alderman Dailes** stated if we did borrow, we could be borrowing at a higher rate. **Rick** stated keep in mind being a political sub-division we have tax exempt financing anyway. Federal Government allows preferential treatment in regards to tax exempt financing. This is where Martin your financial advisor needs to come in and answer any questions. No one is proud or accepting what transpired in having that bond rating. That is not acceptable. Not only is it not acceptable it is something we should let happen ever again. We need to take precautions, I agree. There is a lot we need to know before we move forward. However, we have to still move forward. I am just letting you know if something catastrophic happens the ability is there to borrow we are going to pay a little higher but not a lot higher. However, we need to get on the agenda the ability to move to a modified cash after we ask the auditor if she is accepting to this and the board has enough knowledge in regards to that. I strongly recommend we consider that moving forward and adopt it as our accounting policy as we move forward. This is what I strongly recommend. We have to have the motion and approval from the board, and we have to make sure we get a third party like the auditors agreeing to the fact. I would even ask **Mark (our financial advisor)** what the impact to the bond market would be if we elect to do this. Three different opinions, the board, auditor and financial

advisor and hope all would agree. Ask everyone so we can move forward. However, if we continue on the modified accrual we get no benefits and all we get are more delays.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT -DOROTHY WHITE COLEMAN

- Thank you Mayor this is a report I am very happy to give tonight. I have periodically reported to you the City of Winchester vs Charter Communications. This lawsuit was filed in 2010 by the City of Winchester approximately 118 other municipalities against Charter. Alleging Charter owed them license taxes derived from their operations that were related to telephone services. Charter Communications denied that but in January 2021 the circuit court found in favor of the municipalities and awarded them approximately thirty nine million dollars against Charter. Since that time, Charter has been appealing that verdict. When I reported in December just had gone before the court of appeals and the court of appeals denied them their appeal. They then sought to go to the Supreme Court, they asked the Supreme Court to take the case on motion. On March 3 I believe it was, the Supreme Court denied that motion. So after that they had no other state avenues for appeals. The municipalities filed a motion to enforce the judgement in April and the judge granted that motion. Charter however indicated that it still indicated to file for a writ of certiorari in the United States Supreme Court the judge in the meantime ordered them to pay the money. So very recently, last week as matter of fact I believe it was the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors received a check by Federal Express in the amount of \$236,370.00 in payment in share of those fees. Because Charter however still has the right to file for that writ of certiorari. The City has placed that money in a segregated account until June 5 comes and goes. And, they don't get cert by that time then that money will belong to the city. So hopefully after thirteen years this lawsuit will be coming to a conclusion.

ELECTION OF BOARD OF ALDERMEN PRESIDENT

SEC. 217-B:" The acting president of the board of aldermen shall be selected by the members of the board of aldermen at the first meeting of the board in the month of May each year, or at the first meeting of the board after certification

of the election and seating of the members thereof following the regular city election in April of each year, whichever shall occur later. The acting president of the board of aldermen shall serve for a term of one year or until a successor is selected and qualified as provided by law. The acting president of the board of aldermen shall be a member of the board of aldermen and shall be selected by the members of the board of aldermen by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the mayor shall be empowered to cast the deciding vote.”

Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward made motion to nominate Alderman James Thomas, Sr. as President of the Board of Aldermen. **Mayor** called for any other nominations on the floor. **None.** Second made by **Alderman Alease Dailes.** **Mayor** called for roll call vote:

ROLL CALL: City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall called the roll:

- Alderwoman Regina Harmon-Ward-Yes
- Alderwoman Lynette VonSeggern-Yes
- Alderwoman Peg Warnusz-Yes
- Alderman Theresa Hester-Yes
- Alderwoman Alicia Smith-Yes
- Alderwoman Alease Dailes-Yes
- Alderman James Thomas, Sr.-Yes

7 Ayes/0-Nayes. Motion passed.

APPOINTMENT OF WESLEY GILLESPIE-WARD 1 ALDERMAN SEAT

MO. STATE STATUE: 79.280. If a vacancy occurs in any elective office, the mayor or the person exercising the duties of the mayor shall cause a special meeting of the board of aldermen to convene where a successor to the vacant office shall be selected by appointment by the mayor with the advice and consent of a majority of the remaining members of the board of aldermen.

Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward made motion to appoint Wesley Gillespie to Ward 1 vacant seat, Second made by **Alderman Lynette VonSeggern.** **Mayor** called for roll call vote:

ROLL CALL: City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall called the roll:

- Alderwoman Regina Harmon-Ward-No
- Alderman James Thomas, Sr.-No
- Alderwoman Lynette VonSeggern-Yes
- Alderwoman Peg Warnusz-Yes
- Alderman Theresa Hester-Yes
- Alderwoman Alicia Smith-No
- Alderwoman Alease Dailes-No

3 Ayes/4-Nayes. Motion failed.

Mayor made a statement that there is a quarter of our citizens that do not have representation, the seat was vacated because of the election that just passed. I hope that since it is an appointment by the mayor with the vote of the alderperson that this board would then take the recommendation from the mayor for the person to work in that seat and honor because we have done it before when Alderman Thomas was appointed to his seat December 5th and served out an unexpired term. I was appointed in 2019 and served an unexpired term. Alderwoman Lynette VonSeggern was appointed and we did vote at that particular time. So I would like the board to consider the person who will be working along with that other person to allow them to choose who they want to serve in that seat.

DISCUSSION ONLY OF FENCE ORDINANCE FOR CITY (ALDERMAN THOMAS)

Alderman James Thomas, Sr. stated he has been receiving phone calls concerning the height of the fence and by ordinance; the fence in a residential area cannot be any higher than 48 inches. I am going to ask that the planning and zoning review this and come back with recommendations of changing the fence height.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (With 3-minute time limit)

ALDERMAN'S REPORT

Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward

- Residents calling in reference to someone putting trampoline in front yard.
- Thanked everyone for coming out.

Alderman James Thomas, Sr.

- Thanked the Board for entrusting him with the Presidency of the Board. I will work my due diligence.
- Thanked everyone for coming out.
- I was appointed December 2019.
- Fannie Lou Hammer "Quote"-**Nobody is free until everybody is free.**
- May 20th from 10am-1pm Ward 3 will be having a meet and greet at Bissell Hills Park.

Alderman Lynette VonSeggern

- Thanked everyone for coming out, nice turn out.

Alderman Peg Warnusz

- Feels wonderful to have people participating so regardless of what side of the fence you are on. We need you here so that people can make decisions.
- Keep track of missed Waste Management missed pick-ups.
- Thanked everyone for coming out.

Alderman Theresa Hester

- Thanked everyone for coming out.
- Saturday is City Wide Clean Up and will meet at the recreation center.

Alderman Alicia Smith

- Thanked everyone for coming out.
- Thanked Semmie and her entire team. I appreciate you and your team.
- I would like to talk about derelict vehicles, 18-wheelers, tractor-trailers and the box trucks that seem to roam in our community.
- I was asked how often we cut grass in our community. Be mindful of your grass.
- Adopting a school. I adopted Danforth and it is boxtopforeducation.com.
- Thank you.

Alderman Alease Dailes

- Coming up on Juneteenth right after Memorial Day our great councilwomen, Shalonda Webb, Reta Heard Days. What they have done is brought the district One and Four, which is North County together so this

year we are going to be celebrating a 5-day event. The City of Bellefontaine Neighbors will be one of the premier cities. All of the information on the city website starting tomorrow. Art contest we will give out up to \$1000.00 and hopefully if donors give we are looking for more money and I think we are going to give some of those that are going to be in the talent show some money for HBCU'S.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT)

- **Barbara West-97XX Calumet Drive**
 - As a resident and former alderman of Ward One I am very very disappointed my neighbor here was not appointed. I want yawl to know that you disappointed me. I cannot see why he was not, but since he was not I would be willing to serve until April if you would put me in.
 - Summer not here yet but there are trouble with hoops not being up against the garage.

- **Wesley Gillespie-6XX Marshfield Drive**
 - I am the person that was up to fill the seat for alderman.
 - I appreciate the kind words.
 - At the time I was married and moved into the neighborhood I started things around the neighborhood.
 - I am disappointed, I found out there were four aldermen that were going to vote against me.
 - Being in corporate America for over 35 years I have ran corporations of upward of over three quarter of a billion dollars.
 - I think I am qualified for filling the seat for one year.
 - I did not plan to run again, but then again after tonight, I might.
 - I texted each of you and while at work, I work full time. You did not have the decency to acknowledge it.
 - Politics must be playing a roll and I am truly disappointed.
 - Now Aldermen Hester is by herself.
 - I would say I am truly disappointed.
 - I would like to sit down to hear your responses why I am not qualified.
 - Do I get a response? I will set up a meeting with each one of you.

- **Marcie Gooden-94XX Duenke Drive**

-One thing and that is to my buddy here the Chief, we probably need to make an appointment.
-Because we have that black Mercedes that I thought the Police had taken care of but evidently it has not been taken care of.
-I am a little upset and disappointed.
-Mercedes on has two tires on flat. Tenants said no one ever reached out to them. I talked to them and they have been there seven years, and then you should know the ordinance.
-I have talked to you several times and nothing has happened. Either they do not want to obey the ordinance, they do not care or whatever but I need a police officer over there tomorrow.

- **Faye Davis-97XX Colony Drive**

-First thing; I was looking at letter from Mayors desk, bullet point second to the end statement said citizens are invited to get involved. I was wondering how I could do that.
-Second thing I wanted to ask is National City cleanup day. Well I have a complaint about cleanup day. I have been talking about this for quite a while. You send letters about the grass but what about trash? I have been complaining to my alderperson about this.
-You give them a letter for not cutting their grass but what do you do when they do not pick up their trash?

- **Felicia Ezell- Gillespie-6XX Marshfield Drive**

-Good evening. I am a resident of Ward 1-Marshfield; I am also a former resident of Ward 4. I know that my husband had to submit his resume to the board, but I also want the citizens to know what this man has done without a title.
-He personally calls the Chief and every time we make a phone call to city hall, we get a phone call back.
-We see police cars patrolling our ward more.
-Wesley also made contact with St. Louis Housing Authority and he actually did very well making sure they knew the section 8 properties in our neighborhood that were in violation of their housing contracts.
-We live here in our community; we worship here in our community. We will be out here Saturday with members from our church that are not residents of this community to help clean this community.

-It is our job to be good citizens; we do not ask anybody that we would not do.

-So hopefully this board will have an opportunity to look at his resume.

-He does not need this title to be the man that he is. Because he will still rise and do positive things in this community.

-But if you know what is good for you, you would want someone like this on your board.

- **Anthony Green-92XX Waldorf Drive**

-Few wrap up items; (1) Would like to hear status on Collector being bonded. If he does not get bonded that needs to be consequences for that (2) HR Clerk, It seems you have a hiring concern, I think for the FY 2024 budget you need one. Part time. Not having one I think presents a systemic risk to the organization here.

-If you can afford a raise for the police chief (not that he does not deserve it), you can afford a part-time HR clerk to look into HR compliance matters.

-It is very essential that you have a person in HR for it; I have not seen it in previous Mayors administration I would like to see it in this one.

-When Angela Dorn completes the audit on May 19th I hope that she opens up questions to the public. It should be done on a schedule basis that people can attend.

-Transparency is very important at this time. I have a lot of questions.

-Originally we were told the hold up on the FY 21 audit, is that Sikich lacked the appropriate staffing, it seems now that they have gotten on board not staffing issues but journal entries. Is it both, then it change? Seems we are in a different narrative now.

- **Jeff Howe-92XX Waldorf Drive-102XX Bellefontaine Road**

-I will respond to Anthony Green first. Because I think, he was out of the loop on this one. That bond was completed about six weeks ago.

-I was told that the City Collector is not needed at this time.

Mayors Report-(SEE ATTACHED)

-I am not going to go over all of this. Ms Faye I do want to answer your question and Mr. Green. The way you can get involved is to call Ms. Semmie she will take your name down we are going to start meeting as we go through this process.

Mr. Green you brought up so valid points that involved the auditor. It was two

things, when discussed (1) shortage of staff, that is why she had an extra person to help her. In addition, because the audit was not done the only time bond rating is pulled, well there are three things. (1) no internal controls, (2) audits consistently being late (3) when it shows that after an audit there may have been some fraudulently activity. Therefore, ours was audits being consistently late. Ms. Angela Dorn brought a gentlemen in her with her because there was a lot of documentation that was needed. I have talked to some of the aldermen about a human resource committee. That committee will do exactly what you were talking about. The Human Resource Committee will be responsible for looking for people, entering in people and making those financial schedules and then bringing them to the board.

ADJOURNMENT-Mayor called for a motion to adjourn. **Alderman James Thomas, Sr.** made a motion to adjourn, second made by **Alderman Peg Warnusz.** Mayor called for an all in favor:

7-Yays/0-Nays Meeting adjourned at 10:15pm.

ATTEST:


Semmie Ruffin-Hall, City Clerk

Approved by the Board of Aldermen on 05-18-23