

Mayor Dinah Tatman  
City of Bellefontaine Neighbors  
9641 Bellefontaine Road  
St. Louis, MO 63137

Mayor Tatman,

As the governing body of this great city, it is our duty to ensure that all local ordinances along with federal and state statutes are adhered to. During your tenure in office, you have repeatedly violated the state statute and local ordinances to further your personal agenda with a complete lack of transparency and proper communication to the Board of Aldermen. Our role as board members is horizontally aligned with the office of the mayor. As such, this is not a dictatorship, but rather a full governing body who should be focused on the health and safety of the residents of this great city. Your failure to communicate with this board and your willful violation of the ordinances of this city along with federal and state statutes will not be tolerated. Since you took office in April of 2023, you have committed the following violations:

- Failed to secure bids over \$10,000 on a quote that was \$13,324.00 in violation of Bellefontaine Neighbors (BN) City code 2-256 and violated City ordinance 2-256(a) by subdividing the quote when it exceeded \$10,000.
- Your initial misappropriation of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the above-mentioned bid, resulting in having to reassign the purchase to Capital Funds.
- In violation of a unanimous vote by the Board of Aldermen on May 4, 2023 to enact a hiring freeze until city audits have been complete for fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023 excluding essential personnel, you hired a finance clerk for the City without the required approval of the Board Of Aldermen. To date, only the audit for fiscal year 2021 has been complete which further places the city at risk for higher interest rates and a lower bond rating.
- You approved an unsecured and unauthorized volunteer's access to the City's Finance Department to assist the above-mentioned unauthorized and not bonded finance clerk, resulting in compromised passwords and requiring the re-establishment of passwords for security.
- You have repeatedly ignored and dishonored motions unanimously passed by the Board of Aldermen on May 4, 2023, June 15, 2023, and July 20, 2023.
- You also dishonored the June and July meeting motions which caused the incompleteness of the City's budget, resulting in the disqualification of the East-West Gateway Parks Grant which denied the City grant funds of up to \$420,000.
- You requested Board participation in budget discussions with less than a 24-hour notice in violation of the Sunshine Law.
- You irresponsibly vetoed the City's budget despite Board approval due to the Board's unanimous vote to suspend certain social community events until there is a clear understanding of the City's financial status.
- You falsely declared during board meetings that quotes for building security items had been submitted when no quotes were obtained.


- You irresponsibly approved expenditures of \$92,500 of ARPA funding without Board of Aldermen approval that do not follow federal guidelines and may result in the city having to pay the funds back to the federal government.
- You have repeatedly made unauthorized approvals of taxpayer dollars without proper documentation and without approval of the Board of Aldermen in violation of the ordinances of the City resulting in the approval of invoices that are duplicates, contain incorrect amounts, have no budget line designation, and providing no receipts.
- You promoted a city job fair despite the unanimous decision of the Board to enact a hiring freeze until City audits are complete, which to date, are not.
- You have intentionally refused to honor the Missouri Municipal League's recommendation that "Councilmembers should be set apart from the rest of the room" despite complaints from the Board of Aldermen and the public which causes confusion as city employees are occupying the dais with elected officials.

Therefore, as duly elected officials, we are charging you with dereliction of duty, misappropriation of funds and instill a vote of "no confidence" in your ability to lead this City effectively and demand that you take the following corrective actions:

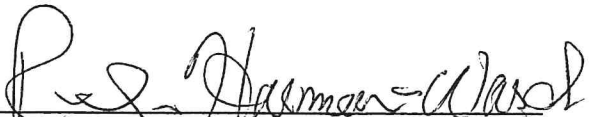
- Adhere to Missouri statutes for the governance of Fourth-Class Cities, as published in the Missouri Municipal League's Manual for Newly Elected Officials, August 2020 and understand that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen are equally positioned on the official state statute organizational chart.
- Maintain the oath of office taken to uphold the ordinances of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors as they are presently adopted, and any updates that may follow.
- Always maintain truthful and transparent communication with the Board of Aldermen.
- Report in a timely manner all financial proposals, ventures, grants, etc. relating to the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors to the Board of Aldermen prior to any initiations or executions with city employees as The Board of Aldermen should not read about any financial goals or activities established with city employees on social media, particularly when the Board of Aldermen is solely responsible for the disbursement of taxpayer dollars, be they local, state, or federal funds, by ordinance.
- Adhere to all local, state, and federal laws and be prepared to explain any deviation from any public and published law or ordinance, citing specific references to the exact statute that it pertains to.
- Remove City employees from the dais immediately as the dais will be reserved for elected officials, the City Clerk, and the City Attorney only.
- Enroll in a series of training sessions offered through the Missouri Municipal League and the Municipal League of Metro St. Louis to be completed by July 1, 2024.
- Refrain from all teaching/instruction of municipal/legislative/grant writing classes on City property until the above-mentioned training has been completed.


A copy of this letter along with supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Missouri Ethics Commission and the Attorney General's office of the State of Missouri for review and prosecution of any violation of the laws of St. Louis County or the State of Missouri. Additionally, a copy of this letter along with supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Auditor's Office of the State of Missouri along with a formal request to audit the financial records of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors.

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Alderman James Thomas, Board President

  
Alderwoman Alease Dailes, Ward 4

  
Alderwoman Regina Harmon-Ward, Ward 3

  
Alderwoman Alicia Smith, Ward 4



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### **FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK, NOVEMBER 21, 2023**

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**Dear Citizens:**

**I pray you and your family are safe and healthy!**

**I promised to be transparent so you would be informed about what is happening in our “Great City” and hold me accountable for my decisions. I am keeping that commitment.**

**I’m writing to inform you that Alderman James Thomas read a “No Confidence” statement on Thursday, November 20, 2023, at the Board of Alderman’s and Mayor’s meeting. I had an opportunity to respond.**

**This morning, I received a voicemail at 9:47 a.m. from Naseem Benjamin, a reporter from the Post-Dispatch, saying that they were notified about what happened and asked for an interview. I met with him at 4:10 p.m. today in my office. Our City Clerk, Semmie Ruffin-Hall, was present. The story might be in today’s newspaper.**

**My Response:**

- 1) We had all of the vents and carpets cleaned in the police, public works departments, and city hall. Each company was asked to present a bid for each job. There were three bids submitted. I did not have to get proposals because each job was under \$10,000. After checking each company’s report with the BBB, we chose Dalmation Cleaning. They performed the work at different times. This information was given to the board.**
- 2) There was no misappropriation of funds. The payment was assigned to the wrong account. Payment was made from the correct account.**

- 3) There was a unanimous vote by the Board of Alderman on May 4, 2023, to freeze hiring except for essential employees. I hired a finance clerk, who is a crucial employee. The city lost its bond rating because of the late audit and for not having GAP (general accounting policies) in place. We are still not in compliance!**

**There is only one person in the finance office producing checks, doing accounts payable, payroll, and producing payment ledgers! The executive branch, mayor, and city administrator ensure that our government runs efficiently and has the authority to hire. We do not have the proper number of employees to offer services and handle daily tasks. While prohibiting hiring ALL essential employees, the board gave themselves a raise in the 2023-2024 budget.**

- 4) There was never a security breach (see attached statement from Finance Director Lori Lenz).**
- 5) The Executive Branch is given certain powers by Missouri State Statute 79.120 and our city Ordinance 2418 sections 2-47 and 2-48, free from interference from legislators.**
- 6) The Executive Branch started working on the budget on Tuesday, May 10, 2023. We completed it on Wednesday, May 31, 2023. It was a balanced budget with all new and present essential employees, and the general fund was projected to have a \$9928 surplus. The board of Alderman didn't complete and pass their budget in time for the Parks and Recreation Director, Jimmy Kirincich, to submit a grant application. (See attached statement).**
- 7) Sometimes, there were conflicting schedules, which prohibited giving notice within 24 hours. We invited the Board of Alderman to participate in ALL budget meetings.**
- 8) Please see the attached statement.**
- 9) Our Directors of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Chief of Police have been and still are working to receive additional bids. We currently have a**

**company working on installing cameras, monitors, PA systems, etc. They have been working for several months.**

- 10) On Thursday, October 5, 2023, a vote was to expend funds to give to employees. The vote was three yes and three no. I broke the tie by voting yes. Audio, videotape, and minutes will be available after our City Clerk, Semmie Ruffin-Hall, transposes the meeting minutes.**
- 11) The legislative branch receives invoices and ledgers to pay the city's bills 48-72 hours in advance. There have been mistakes, and the board has been asked to communicate their findings promptly. The city bills have been paid to prohibit late fees, loss of credit rating, and disconnect notices.**
- 12) The Executive Branch hosted a "Career Fair" to attract and hire essential employees.**
- 13) I respect the recommendations from the Missouri Municipal League and have chosen to continue to project a united government. I also agree that we need to have our finances audited. FY2022 is late, and the FY2023 will be late as well. The Board of Alderman voted on Thursday, November 20, 2023, to hire CR Williams & Associates for both audits. I will be assisting our Finance Director in preparing for our audits.**

**Your Servant Leaders  
Mayor Dinah Tatman  
Employees & Staff**

9641 Bellefontaine Road  
St. Louis County, Missouri 63137  
Office: 314-867-0076  
Fax: 314-867-1790



## Veto of Bill No. 2674, Ordinance 2648

Members of the Board of Aldermen,

I am returning herewith **BILL NO. 2674, ORDINANCE 2648** entitled **AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR FOR THE CITY OF BELLEFONTAINE NEIGHBORS, MISSOURI**, WHICH THE Board of Aldermen passed with five (50 affirmative voted and two (2) negative votes at the Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen, which was held via zoom on Thursday, August 31, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.



**Dinah Tatman**  
**Mayor**

In accordance with my authority as Mayor of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors, I hereby notify you that I decline to sign **BILL NO. 2674, ORDINANCE 2648** and hereby veto the same and return it to you for further consideration as provided by law.

I firmly believe that adopting this Bill is not in the best interest of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors' citizens, employees, and the executive body. It lacks funds for community events, essential employees, and adequate monies for police recruitment and community engagement. Also, whereas the **Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri 79.120** and the **City's Ordinance 2418, Section 2-47 and Section 2-48** give the executive branch specific powers and duties free from the interference of the legislative branch, the Bill seeks to usurp that authority.

**For reasons stated herein, I hereby return BILL NO. 2674, ORDINANCE 2648 unexecuted and hereby refuse to approve the same.**

*Dinah Tatman*

Mayor Dinah Tatman

September 5, 2023

Date

**From:** [James Kirincich](#)  
**To:** [James Kirincich](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Board  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 22, 2023 9:19:07 AM  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)

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**From:** Lori Lenz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 21, 2023 3:29 PM  
**To:** Dinah Tatman  
**Subject:** Board

Any persons assisting the Finance Department were not given access to the City's financial information nor passwords. There was never a request from the Finance Department to have any passwords reset or changed to due to any compromise.

Thank You.

Lori J. Lenz, F.P.C.  
Director of Finance  
City of Bellefontaine Neighbors  
9641 Bellefontaine Road St. Louis, MO 63137  
314-867-0076 Ext. 235





**From:** [James Kirincich](#)  
**To:** [Dinah Tatman](#); [Semmie Ruffin-Hall](#)  
**Subject:** Municipal Park Grant  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 21, 2023 4:13:00 PM

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Hi Mayor,

I wanted to follow up to the conversation at the October 5, 2023 Board of Alderman meeting when I was asked from a resident on why the Parks Department did not apply for the Municipal Park Grant this year to renovate Tanglewood bathroom and pavilion.

As I stated on October 5, the Board of Alderman did not pass the budget on time and it did not allow sufficient time for me to complete the application. The 2023-2024 budget that the Board of Alderman worked on and voted to pass did have the correct grant match for the renovations, but the budget failed to pass. The grant match in the 2022-2023 budget that the city adopted to operate from did not have the 5% grant match funding in order to complete the renovations at Tanglewood. Therefore, no application was submitted.

It was my recommendation that the City start the budget process sooner in order to be able to pass a balanced budget for each fiscal year if the Board of Alderman need two months to review the budget. If the city passed the budget on time that would have allowed the Parks Director two months to complete the application and have supporting documents from the City.

Sincerely,

**Jimmy Kirincich, CPRE**  
**Director of Parks & Recreation**

City of Bellefontaine Neighbors

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