

**CITY OF BELLEFONTAINE NEIGHBORS  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
TOWN HALL MEETING MINUTES  
September 15, 2022 – 6:33 PM**

**PRESENT Mayor** Tommie Pierson, City Attorney Dorothy White-Coleman, Chief Jeremy Ihler, Street Supervisor Jeff Ross, Treasurer Rick Rognan and City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall.

**MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY** Mayor Pierson at 6:30 pm.

**ROLL CALL:** City Clerk Semmie Ruffin Hall called the roll,  
Present: Alderwoman Dinah Tatman, Alderwoman Theresa Hester, Alderwoman Peg Warnusz, Alderwoman Lynette VonSeggern, Alderwoman Alicia Smith, Alderwoman Alease Dailies, Alderwoman Regina Hamon-Ward and Alderman James Thomas. Quorum was present.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Mayor Pierson

**Mayor Pierson** introduced Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, Department Heads and Committee and Commission Chairs.

**MISTRESS OF CEREMONY** Dorothy White-Coleman gave a short scenario on what a Town Hall means in the community.

**BEAUTIFICATON AWARDS**-Presented by Mayor Pierson and Jennie Stewart (Image and Beautification Board Chair) to present the winner:

**2021 Winners**

- Sam Ella Bennett-Ward 1 (Not present)
- Denise and Albert Quinn-Ward 1 (Not present)
- Mark Thomas-Ward 1 (Not present)
- Richard and Eveline Burgdorf-Ward 2 (Not present)
- Andrea Buckner-Ward 2 (Not present)
- The Gibson Family-Ward 3 (Present)

Jennie Stewart asked her board members to stand, and she recognized them during this time. Giving them praise for all the hard work that they do.

- Larry Smolinsky-Ward 3 (Present)
- Jane E Jones-Ward 4 (Not present)
- Roy and Maxine Foster-Ward 4 (Not present)

**2022 Winners**

- John and Karen Kulla-Ward 1 (Not present)

- LaMark Miller-Ward 1 (Not present)
- Lee and Joyce Bradley-Ward 2 (Not present)
- Walter and Vera Peters-Ward 2 (Not present)
- Jeffery Clay-Ward 3 (Present)
- Sandra King Monroe-Ward 3 (Not present)
- The Poe Family-Ward 4 (Not present)
- Michael Goodwin-Ward 4(Not present)

Jennie Stewart stated for 2023 we will revert back to giving certificates for the winners as well as having a picture of their home hanging at City Hall and at the will be recognized at the next Town Hall Meeting. Jennie also advised of the city wide clean up taking place on 9/24/22. Will meet at the Recreation Center (9669 Bellefontaine Road) 9am until 1 pm. This is done twice a year. Jennie also advised of Adopt-A-Street program where you sign a contract to pick up trash off a specific roadway at a ½ mile stretch 4 times a year.

Mayor Pierson introduced the New City Clerk-Semmie Ruffin-Hall to the public.

Ceremony turned back over to The Mistress of Ceremonies (Dorothy White-Coleman) who also congratulated the new City Clerk.

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

- Tammie Bell-8XX Marias
  - Calls on Chief Ihler and Alderwoman Dailies. Problem is solved but then back to same issue
  - Call non-emergency number and she has been threatened they will come to her home and arrest her for the calls
  - Large amount of derelict cars
  - Detail shop at a resident home
  - Home with broken out windows No Inspections
  - Rodents
  - She pulls ordinance
  - Lawn crew cuts grass at 6am and she confronts them, and she is disrespected
- Robert Gibson-14XX Blackhurst
  - Rodents running around
- Stephanie Royal-9XX Coach and Six
  - Landlords have no responsibility to community except collect their rent
  - What kind of law, rules or ordinance do we have on the books for landlord that simply collect a check
  - What is being done to the Landlords for putting irresponsible people in their property
- Tracy Gibbs-104XX Bellefontaine Road
  - Thought Town Hall Meeting was where the public express their thoughts and Board answer at another time
  - Accident on 9/6 In front of her home. Fatal, Two families. Families need help.

- Motorcycles speeding No passing signs and slow down signs
- No positive things from TV stations only negative
- Marjorie Cook-89XX Bellefontaine Road
  - The sign at the entrance to Bellefontaine Neighbors should be repaired
  - Dog owners need to pick up the dogs dropping
  - What happened to Bellefontaine Nursing Home
- Vickie Woodson-Wallace-93XX Ardmore
  - Pit Bulls running around
  - Weeds on fence lines
  - Sewer main on Ardmore growth coming up and out of control
  - Speeders on 367

## **SPECIAL GUESTS**

### **A. SHALONDA WEBB (Councilwoman-4<sup>th</sup> District St. Louis County)**

- Dogs roaming around free when Covid hit everyone wanted a furry baby, but now we are back to work, and now we are saturated with furry babies. Bellefontaine does not control this issue because Bellefontaine does not have their own ACC, that is St. Louis County. Working with ACC to get a Justice Help Welfare meeting to address the animal care and control issue.
- Some shelters say they are not a no kill shelter which is unrealistic. We must find a human way to deal with these animals. Second is County no longer takes care of the sick animals that is the APA, but St. Louis County is still responsible for control of all the County. Facilities are overcrowded.
- Staffing issues
- Speeding, everyone is experiencing speeding. We do not chase people because of tragedy. Would like to model Roundabouts and chevrons to control speeding implemented in Castle Point. Everything cannot be speed bumps Not respecting red, green, and yellow lights what makes you think they will respect signs
- Constantly working with Transportation to come up with solutions
- Budget season for County trying to see how to get more budget projects for District 4
- Precent 1 has 10 times more volume of any precent and they have more dangerous calls than anyone else.
- Crime Prevention Summit coming up on 10/1/22.
- Working with Block Captain Federation to implement Block Captains in St. Louis County.
- Team Players, Titles do not make a difference everyone has to get involved.
- Jamestown Mall Hall Meeting on 9/21/22 last three options need you to show up and not complain after the fact
- Know you are fed up, but don't give up on North County

### **B. ISHMAEL SISTRUNK (Executive Director of Communications at Riverview Gardens School District)**

-Everyone struggling to be fully staffed, Riverview Gardens School District is no exception. Channel 4 ran a news piece a month ago. 180 vacancies 90 teachers and 90 support staff

-Let people know to apply at the school's website [rgsdmo.org](http://rgsdmo.org).

-Beautify RSG Event on 9/24 (7:30am) - this day will be mainly focused on planting perennials plants and flowers. One was done on 8/20 which consisted of trimming hedges, picking up litter and planting flowers.

Four schools committed for the upcoming clean up are:

Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center

Glasgow Elementary

Gibson Elementary

Meadows Elementary

-Riverview Gardens District Homecoming and Homecoming Parade this year is on October 1, 2022 at 10 am. The parade will start at the bus depot on Chambers Road and march over to the homecoming game against Normandy High School at 11 am.

-To register for the parade, you can speak with an Alumni or go to school's website

-Public Health Safety Summit October 1, 2022, at the High School there will be a lot of activities so come and participate on that day.

-School Safety is important and the district is trying to address. Photo ids for all staff and students (K-12). We need to know who is in our buildings or if a child becomes missing there is a photo.

-Bullying (happens everywhere) especially on social media. Not just happens on social media and in the public. Children are hit with bullying from all areas

-Community and parents need to be involved.

-Riverview Gardens School District has been Provisionally Accredited since 2016 and in the past 3 years the state of Missouri hasn't made any changes since Covid 19. Covid has dropped test scores considerably. Riverview Gardens scores have dropped to a level that is unacceptable. New Superintendent working hard, and all schools are working with a turn a round company to improve the schools test scores for accreditation.

-Resident mentioned Chain of Rocks Road Bus Stop and the dangers of children catching bus there.

#### **MEETING OPENED BACK UP TO THE PUBLIC**

- Sandra Henry-101XX Newbold

- Are we going to lose Bellefontaine Police Department

- Why is there a decrease in Police

- Why are two Alderwomen trying to disband the Police Department

- Take care of the Residents in the community

- Respect Police Department

- Wand Lane-

- Administrative Warrant was introduced several weeks ago-no idea where we are with this process and maybe it can be addressed at the appropriate time

- Derelict Vehicles

- Nuisance Properties

- Management is not turning a blind eye to the issues
- Continue to make our voices known
- Jeffrey Clay-XXXX Dwight Drive
  - Speed Bumps want stop people but will slow them down
  - Trucks come around the curve speeding and ran into his truck a couple of weeks ago
- The Gibson Family-XXXXX
  - What are officials doing to resolve issues
  - Taxes are being paid, but for what
  - We are not against you, but you need to be for us

Dorothy White-Coleman states she wants to echo what Wanda Lane stated that the Board of Alderman and the Mayor are working on things to improve the city but just will not happen overnight.

#### **STATE OF THE CITY REPORT-Mayor Pierson, Sr.**

- Increasing Cities Financial Health and Welfare with our Treasurer-Rick Rognan
- Passing this year, the first balance budget we have had in years under the guidance of Rick Rognan
- Funds are not missing but have been identified by Rick Rognan
- Over Two million dollars In ARP Funds that must be spent by 2024.
- Now in discussion on how the funds are to be used best
- One time money to get it right
- Public Works Department ran by Jeff Ross-contracted out to remove 15 dangerous trees
- Shout out to Jennie Stewart and her team for keeping our city clean. Forms are on website or at City Hall to Adopt-A-Street. Get involved in keeping our city clean.
- Team with MSD to place plate carts-to lock down covers on drain
- Dept of Natural Resources Audit-City passed
- Cutting grass of common ground. Over 100 vacant homes that the Street Department cuts.
- Many potholes have been patched
- Working with developers to get all streets that need to be paved. This is done with grant money.
- Speed bump-studies need to be made to see where they can be placed
- Park and Recreation department received a grant in January 2022 in the amount of \$420,000
- Roof problem is being worked on
- \$313,000 grant money pending approval in October
- \$1,007 grant received to replace water fountain (bottle fillers) in Recreation Center
- Community Block Grant from St. Louis County-\$30,000 received for pool repairs to take place in December
- Star guard Life Audit received 5-star rating
- Upgraded HVAC software at Recreation Center and City Hall
- See something, say something. Public Safety more important than ever.
- Parents take responsibility for your child's behavior

**POLICE CHIEF JEREMY IHLER'S REPORT:** Mayor Pierson introduced Chief Ihler

- Director of Parks and Recreation, Director of Street Department, and the City Clerk, we work closer now than ever
- Prioritize things-With the upcoming budget Police Department not funding records clerk or a Detective slot
- Already down 3 Patrol Officers and soon to have 3 more Patrol vacancies which is becoming a big problem
- Running 3 people a shift with 1 swing person if available
- Community involvement is pertinent
- I rather be proactive and have problems solved when you call but that is not going to be possible
- Police and The Courts do not have the level of deterrence needed to stop a lot of these bad apples-the driving the shooting the robberies

**Past 12 months (9/2021-8/2022)**

- Burglary decreased 11%
- Larceny increased 32%.
- Motor Vehicle theft decreased by 14%
- Four homicides compared to 2 during this time frame of (9/21-8/22)
- Six Rapes (do not have percentage on that at this time)
- 25% decrease in robbery
- Speed bumps, barriers are all good things for the problem, but they are not the complete solution to the problem. It is a social problem therefore, it is a community problem.
- Over 10,000 residents and only 1% in the room tonight need more community involvement
- Traffic crashes decreased by 10% on municipal roads
- St. Louis County will not put no passing signs on their county roads and if we put it there ourselves they will remove signs
- Stray animals we cannot house them at the City we do not have the resources, key issue is with ACC provide limited services.
- Do not have packages left on front porch from different services
- Grants \$45,000 no matching funds that money went to purchase laptops, speed trailers and load bear bullet –resistant vest carriers
- The Innovative Public Safety and Crime Prevention Summit is one of my favorite annual events. The theme this year is focusing on child safety. There will be several presentations along with lots of raffles and giveaways, including bicycles. Event is October 8 -10:00Am-2:00PM at the Riverview Gardens High School gymnasium, 1218 Shepley Drive.

**TREASURER-RICK ROGNAN:** Mayor Pierson introduced Rick Rognan

- Discussed Way Fair and Used Tax-Without Used Tax the City cannot collect any of the way fair in-home shopping sales tax. This equals resources for the City.
- Without Used Tax you cannot have any in home shopping revenue
- Tax Rate for 2022 for the City-Assessments going up by \$5,324,938 which is all concentrated in personal property tax

- Personal Property tax has been raised more than last year- but Bellefontaine has nothing to do with this /real estate bill stays about the same
- Tonight (9-15-22) City is setting a tax rate for 2022
- General fund rolling back on residential side by .0020 new rate to be proposed tonight is .2010
- Debt Service to retire our Bonds will be the exact same as last year 1.1057 across the board
- Total tax rate proposed tonight for the City for residential is 1.3067 keep in mind last year it was 1.3087-rolled back by .0020
- Additional revenue for the City –personal property increase from general fund a total revenue of only \$12,008
- Debt Service-additional revenue of \$61,000 can only be used to retire bonds
- City's total additional revenue-\$73,608

**RICK ROGNAN STATED THE FLOOR OPENED TO THE PUBLIC ON COMMENTS FOR OR AGAINST TAX**

- Anthony Green-92XX Waldorf
  - Thanked Rick for discussing the retirement of the debt service bonds
  - Five million or six million dollars were taken out to improve roads. I would like to know which roads were repaired.
  - Brain storm about ideas to generate revenue
- Wanda Lane-
  - Thanked the Treasurer for everything he has done to improve financial outlook of city
  - Tax rate rolled back per household it will be \$20
  - Residents need a mini course of what all these taxing authorities are

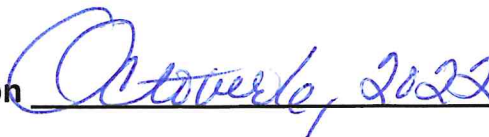
**MEETING ADJOURNED:** Mayor Pierson thanked everyone for coming.

Meeting closed at 8:37 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

  
 Semmie Ruffin-Hall, City Clerk

Approved by the Board of Aldermen on

  
 October, 2022