

**CITY OF BELLEFONTAINE NEIGHBORS
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY APRIL 20, 2023 – 7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT Mayor Tommie Pierson, City Attorney Dorothy White-Coleman, Chief Jeremy Ihler, Planning and Zoning Board Pat Barrett and City Clerk Semmie Ruffin-Hall.

ABSENT City Engineer-Clayton Klein and Treasurer-Rick Rognan.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY Mayor Pierson at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

Eight Present -Quorum was established.

SWEARING IN OF NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS BY CITY CLERK SEMMIE RUFFIN-HALL:

- **Dinah Tatman sworn in as the newly elected Mayor of The City of Bellefontaine Neighbors.**
- **Lynette VonSeggern sworn in as the newly elected Alderman of the Second Ward of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors.**

Ex-Mayor Tommie Pierson, Sr. handed the podium over to Mayor Dinah Tatman.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Tatman called for a motion to approve the agenda. Alderman Alease Dailes made motion to approve agenda with amendments tabling items 9, 10, 11, 12,13,14,16 and 17. Second made by Alderman Alicia Smith. Mayor Tatman called for any further discussion. None. Mayor Tatman stated all in favor.

7-Ayes/0-Nays. Motion passed.

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

- Anthony Green-92XX Waldorf Drive
 - Two things. First of all I hope that the City Attorney will talk about what Missouri State Law says when we do not have a publish balance sheet.
 - Don't know why but Rick has been excused tonight. We do not have a 12/31 balance sheet. Missouri State Law Chapter 79 Sec 165 states (*No money of city to be disbursed until statement is published — penalty*). *Both balance sheet and interest statement must be published*. We do not know what the city's indebttness looks like. We have two CPA'S (Angela Dorn of Sikich) and (Rick Rognan of Rognan). I am not seeing a balance sheet.
 - Second thing. I am not sure we need to redact our schedule. Because I have a few questions. We do not have answers to these. (1) Where is the FYI 2021 City of Bellefontaine Neighbors Audit that was due to the Federal government on 12/31/21? (2) Where is the FYI 2022 City of Bellefontaine Neighbors Audit that was due to the Federal government on 12/31/22? (3) Did the city find out what happened to the \$771,000.00 overdrawn that was in the Citizens Bank Money Mutual Money Market Account? What was the nature of the error, was it lost money, was it misappropriated money. What is it? How far are we on the development of the FY 24 Budget, which is due two months from now? We excused the treasurer from this meeting, we redacted the schedule today and I have not heard anything about the FY 24 Budget. Is the city going to terminate the collector who failed to be bonded two or more months ago? I do not know if he is bonded now. In addition, there is a state law about approving invoices when there is no balance sheet. The board has a fiduciary duty and the city attorney needs to speak on what Missouri State Law requires. I am happy we have a new mayor. However, what I want us to see us retire is the culture of just dismiss things because it is an inconvenient truth. We should

be asking some tough people questions who have direct deposit going to their payroll.

- **Angela Walton Mosley-Florissant, MO.**
 - I am here to congratulate our new mayor. The first female mayor of Bellefontaine, Neighbors.
 - I am not going to read it over again, but I have a (Certificate of Recognition) for you.
 - I am excited for you and I am proud of you, and I am looking forward for what we are going to be able to do together.
- **State Representative Marlene Terry of the 66th District**
 - I am honored to stand here before you today.
 - I am going to read mine (Certificate of Recognition)
 - From experience, it is not easy being the first.
- **State Representative Jay Mosley of the 68th District (Florissant, MO.)**
 - Honored to be here today to celebrate this momentous occasion.
 - Thank you very much for allowing me to be here and present for this.
- **State Representative Yolonda Fountain Henderson of the 85th District**
 - This is a true blessing because I was once the first time Mayor of Jennings. So I know what she is facing. Just say a prayer that she will be successful, which she will be when she is not crying. However, they are tears of joy.
 - Thank you. This is a beautiful day.
- **Dr. Miranda Avant-Elliott (Dr. Mae)-11XX Jolene Drive**
 - I am a former alderwoman for four years and now I am on the Riverview School Board.
 - Current Mayor Congratulations. She has already started working with the school district and I am looking forward to the partnership with the board more. Because our families and our students really need support from the community. Everything that is going on. She is inheriting a lot, so there is going to be a lot to clean up. There is going to be a lot of time needed to do that, but accountability is the key to do all the accountable to the legislation. Her being accountable to the citizens and abide by the rules and we can all work together and be successful. I was hesitant with what I experienced on the board but my spirit said to vote for her so since I put my vote to her I am going to hold her accountable and make sure that she is great and excellent in what she do. That is what we are supposed to do not only as Christians but also as citizens.

PRESENTATION OF UNAPPROVED MINUTES (Regular B.O.A Meeting Minutes 03-16-23 and Regular B.O.A Meeting Minutes 04-06-23) -Motion made by Alderman Alease Dailes. To approve the unapproved minutes; second made by Alderman Lynette VonSeggern. Mayor Tatman called for any questions. None. Mayor Tatman called for an all in favor.

7-Ayes. 0-Nays. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES OVER \$500 (04-05 -23 through 04-18-23)-Motion made by Alderman Regina Harmon-Ward to approve invoices over \$500 for \$91,578.58. Second made by Alderman Alease Dailes. Mayor called for any discussion.

Alderman Alicia Smith stated for the record, she would love and she believes that the city needs to pay its bills but because of contact with the state and carrying a misdemeanor. I have to say no.

Mayor stated she would like to address that. I want to thank Anthony Green he has been diligent in bringing this issue up. So what we did to make sure we covered myself and this board we did seek our legal counsel as well as other legal counsel does. I want to read Missouri Citation Chapter 79 Section 79-160(Board shall publish semiannual statements. — The board of aldermen shall semiannually each year, at times to be set by the board of aldermen, make out and spread upon their records a full and detailed account and statement of the receipts and expenditures and indebtedness of the city for the half year ending with the last day of the month immediately preceding the date of such report, which account and statement shall be published in some newspaper in the city.) It states here under statue 79-165 (In the event the financial statement of any fourth class city is not published as required by section 79.160, the treasurer of such city shall not pay out any money of the city on any warrant or order of the board of aldermen after the end of the month in which such financial statement should have been published until such time as such financial statement is published. Any treasurer violating the provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a class A misdemeanor. As this verbiage is stated and we had it vetted by legal counsel, our government is set up where our bills are paid by the board of alderpersons, not our treasurer. So therefore we are safe in paying our

bill because as it is stated in this it says if the treasurer. Our board of alderpersons are in charge of paying the bills; therefore, there is not threat of legal ramifications. Mayor also stated she has been communication with our accountant Angela Dorn from Sikich. We had some challenges there was a point of time where we did not have a treasurer and the responsibility of that treasurer was left undone. And because of that, when it came time for the audit because those responsibilities were not adhered to there were a load of things that needed to be done. I want to commend Sikich and Angela Dorn because what they are doing for us, they have become our treasurer. They are doing that for us. We have an audit firm that has taken on the responsibility of doing those data entries for us. That is not their job. However, it was done because of relationship. Because they care about this city. Therefore, because I am privy to that information I thought that the citizens needed to know the reason why it has taken so long and I would say they are doing that because of relationship for us that we allow them that time. We have talked to our S&P Representative who have taken what we have to prevent us from losing our bond status. Our bond company has taken that information that they now have full privy of, they have decided to wait, and so we are looking at either the first meeting of next month or definitely the last meeting. I myself have offered my help. Because I know how to do balance sheets. We are going to get it done, but I wanted to let you know why. They are doing what they do not have to do. Not only the first year when we did not have a treasurer when we acquired a treasurer, he tried to do input in real time. In addition, inputting that information made it worse because not all of the other information had been inputted. So actually, they are doing a year and a half. I am asking our citizens that are here, be patient now that you have all of the information. Give us an opportunity to get that done and we will be proud to know that we have an audit firm that is willing to go that extra mile to help us get this done. Thank you.

Mayor asked if there are any other questions or concerns. Therefore, it has been moved and seconded with one question. All those in favor of paying the bills:

6-Ayes/1-Nay. Motion carried.

QUALIFICATIONS ST. LOUIS CNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

- **Mayor Tatman** states we received a letter from St. Louis County (Sam Page) letting us know that we do qualify for the CDBG Grant. The information

that you have before you board that is just letting us know we do not have to do anything if we did not want to qualify for the grant we would send a letter saying we do not want to be available or qualified for this. I wanted the board to have this information. To the citizens there are several grants that we qualify for I say that to say this we have a grant writing team that was established a few years ago. It would be wonderful if that team would come back around because your mayor is going to teach the class where we as citizens and this board can write our own grants. Because there are a lot out there that, we qualify for.

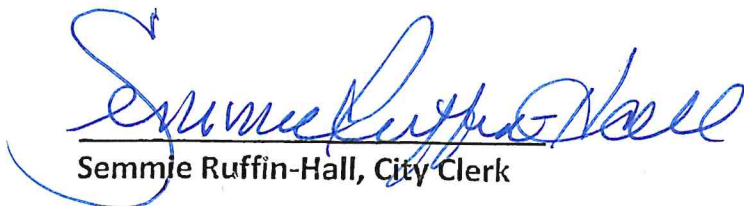
- Second thing I am so excited about the possibility that we have, I am excited about this board. We have a plethora of talent and passion. Each one of us are passionate about the citizens that we serve. I also want to talk about a great opportunity that we have. Something we did not have to work for. We are going to have a twenty million dollar project that is going to be built in our city. Instant tax revenue and actually this project was requested by the Governor. So it will be a facility for the National Guard, where there will be training, storage and extra supplies. It will be located off 367 next to Mo Dot Station. Again, tax revenue, entice other businesses to come and hopefully families to replenish and repopulate our community.

ADJOURNMENT-Mayor Tatman called for a motion to adjourn. Alderman James Thomas, Sr. made a motion to adjourn, second made by Alderman Alicia Smith

Mayor called for an all in favor: 7-Ayes/0-Nays. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

ATTEST:


Semmie Ruffin-Hall, City Clerk

Approved by the Board of Aldermen on 5-4-23