

THE VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

March 14th, 2024

The St. Bernard Village Committee of the Whole was held on March 14th, 2024, in Council Chambers.

Roll call showed all seven members were present: Mr. Moreton, Mr. Stuchell, Mr. Edwards, Ms. Hausfeld, Mr. Schildmeyer, Mr. Culbertson. Absent: Mr. Estep.

A motion by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to approve the written minutes of the February 22nd, 2024, council meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- The next thing on the agenda is to discuss the Rules of Council. The section under President of Council is what I was looking at. Back when the President Pro Temp used to run the COW meetings, instead of President of Council. Section I-3 states: The Committee of the Whole shall consist of the members of council only, and the President of Council shall run the meetings. President Pro Temp resides at all Committee of The Whole meetings. I am proposing the change to eliminate the President Pro Temp presiding at all Council Meetings and change that it reads the President Pro Temp, with the absence of the President of Council, shall run the Committee of the Whole meetings. If both are absent, the succession would follow the committee on committees.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Culbertson, to make the stated changes to the Rules of Council. Motion passes 6-0.

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Just like to thank everyone who participated in Bill Helton's final ride home in celebration of his life. This past Saturday, it was great to see all the orange ribbons and the people lining the route as we honored a life well lived. His celebration of life included a very diverse group of people who Bill impacted throughout his entire life will definitely have a void in the village. And we will continue to honor him on August 3rd as it will be declared Bill Helton Day in Saint Bernard during the German Luau. Scout Night of course will be Thursday, March 28th and I'll be having my pre-meeting with the Scouts before the regularly scheduled meeting. Also, this week I attended the annual meeting for the Hamilton County General Health District Advisory Council this past Tuesday. It was very rewarding to be there and be part of that as a collaborative group. As you all were aware, we've received funds to be applied towards the Vine Street repair project. As we've previously discussed, we have evaluated the street and feel that just fixing the current compromised areas would not be in our best interest. Wanting to move forward with the bids to repair the areas where the roadbed is deteriorated. Repave from McClelland to Bertus and then add Bertus to Orchard and the first section of Leonard off of Bertus. The repair cost on cleaning, paving, speed cushions for traffic calming in particular areas, striping of crosswalks would be approximately \$800,000. Paving Bertus to Orchard and the

small section of Leonard is approximately \$100,000. Design, engineering and administration would be \$90,000 which would put us at a total cost of 990,000 less grant funding of \$284,200.00, so we would be asking for local funds of \$705,800. We would be asking to take from reserves to put towards the improvement projects to deal with our dilapidated infrastructure. So, we are moving forward with bidding. There isn't anything that has to be put on the table as far as this evening. Just trying to make you aware of what we're doing. The engineering firm, JMA consultants, will be going out to bid on our behalf and then we'll be coming back to you with this. We have this increasingly deteriorated portion of Vine Street that we have, which is going to be a challenging time trying to do the project. But again, if we wait, we're going to get another year out and then we're going to be dealing not with just the Norwood Lateral project, we're going to be dealing with the I-75 project. So, we can't win, but we do need to do it while we have the opportunity before it gets worse, because it is a pretty rough ride. Also, will we need to hold two public hearings for the upcoming round of CDBG funds for public improvements. I am proposing having them on Thursday, April 11th and Thursday, April 25th. This has to be completed by the end of April, so I wanted to ask President, Council's advice on this, either start the hearings at 7:00pm then go right into our regularly scheduled meetings or whether we start at 6:30. Those two hearings that have to be done, one requires the majority of council be present, the other doesn't. But to me, it makes sense to just have them both on council nights. We do need to advertise this in the newspaper also.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Before I start my report based on what the mayor said. Moving forward is council in support of the Vine Street project for the funding? If you are not going to approve using the reserves, then we won't go forward with it.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- I would like to circle back with the mayor and get more details on this before formally making an opinion. We plan on rescheduling the Finance Committee Meeting so we can sit down and discuss those details and make a more educated decision.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Is that ok with our time frame?

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- It may not. We may have to call a special meeting to figure that part out.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- I mean Vine Street is collapsing. We have had issues with the school children and the street calming. I don't think we really have a choice in this matter. Vine street is our major thoroughfare.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Part of the issue is getting the work done in the summer months. We just had a bid come back to us just now. We cannot do this project while school is in session. That is not an option. So, we would run into issues with drop offs and pickups at St. Clement. But they don't know if this is a sewer problem, so there is going to be major excavation. You might want to reschedule your meeting sooner rather than later. I cannot wait a month.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- It would not be rescheduled a month out, we were going to be pushing it a week, but we can reconvene to meet the necessary timeline.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- That is great. Are all the other council members going to be there? Do any of you have an opinion now? We need to know if we are moving forward with this. I think this needs to be discussed now also.

Council Member, Mr. Schildmeyer- Connor, when do plan to reschedule the meeting?

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- Anytime Monday through Friday, the week of the 25th.

Council Member, Mr. Schildmeyer- I am in support of the Vine Street project and moving forward. I would like to discuss it to understand more of what is going on, but I am in support of it.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- I was just confused because we used to discuss projects with everyone at the meetings here.

Council Member, Mr. Edwards- I always thought that Vine Street was a county road. Do we get any kind of money from the county for this?

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- That is not true. We did get grant funding for the repair portion. It was a 50% matching grant for what they estimated for just patching the areas. We have major excavating that needs done, then milling and repaving. At this point, we did not qualify for anything else. If they are doing all the work at this time, it just makes sense to get all the paving done. They will make us aware of other financial options or grants also that we may qualify for. The road is still our responsibility. If they are going to be digging it up to fix the collapsing, we might as well do the whole thing. We are still trying to go out for other grants.

Council Member, Ms. Hausfeld- I am all for moving forward with the project. I do have some concerns about the traffic being heavier now with the Norwood Lateral being closed, but I do understand the time. The only other concern I have is the last time we did Vine Street, right after they were done, they had to dig it back up. I hope we get it correctly done this time.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- I don't recall the exact nature of having to dig the street back up the last time except for the underground utilities that were put in. Those are part of our problem. We need to make sure we restore those properly, so we do not have more settling. Maybe it wasn't done properly. But we need to get it done now before it gets worse. The Norwood Lateral project was not announced when we started getting this Vine Street project together. I wanted to start it sooner, but we need to wait till school is out for the summer.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- I know sometimes people think we try to rush things through. In this case, we have had plenty of meetings when it comes to these grants. Each one has a different time frame. We meet one, and then maybe we don't. So, we try to come back to you when we have everything together, but then usually it is time to go and move on with the project. We have been working on this for a while. We just got the go ahead 2 weeks ago. We have so many road projects right now so it might seem last minute, but we really aren't. We have to wait for permission from these grants along with a time frame for approval.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- There are times where some grants can be stacked. One portion of this grant was deemed as repair. So, we were looking at potential opportunities, but the timing did not work out.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- I have additional appropriations. There was an accident, and we received a reimbursement from the insurance company in the amount of \$4,330.00. We are going to repair the damage the car caused. I added the check to the general fund. We need to appropriate the

check to O-5-M-P-9- Streets and Sewers. O-1-2-I-9- Professional Services I am asking for an additional \$10,000 due to legal counsel fee for the updated tax codes. I know we were talking about the shred day for the community. We will need to add additional appropriations for that, once we know the amount that will be due. It was asked if I could dock pay for council members missing meetings, or just being paid per meeting. Right now, payroll is paid at the beginning of the month. Then I was asked could I move it to the middle of the month. I can easily move it to the middle of the month. Your next paycheck would be the third week of April. If we do that, the best way would be to move all the monthly paid positions to the middle of the month.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- We are going to take the shred funds out of the community events line item, so from the Recreation Department.

Council Member, Mr. Culbertson- I am fine either way. I am not strongly opinionated about it.

Council Member, Mr. Schildmeyer- I think part of this is in response to a question I brought up with the Laws, Contracts and Claims issues and what happens if people miss council meetings and docking pay. Thank you for looking into that for us. I might have a better response when I come back to the Laws, Contracts and Claims committee.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- In all honesty, I think it probably should be that way. I would suggest moving it to the middle of the month.

Council Member, Mr. Morton- If this does go through, how would the transition work? Would people be getting paid ahead of time before the transition? Or would that be delayed by half a month? I would just suggest that we let this be known in advance so folks can make adjustments and have ample time to accommodate.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- You should have before you Resolution 2 2024. I worked with Councilman Morton on this and since it's his baby, I'll I will let him speak to it more. But we do want that on the agenda for the council meeting in two weeks. Also, I do apologize, I've been out of town with a family emergency, I will be preparing for you, and I do want an ordinance on the table next week. We do need to prepare an ordinance to do Chapter 105, which actually speaks about having wards in the city and electing council people by wards. So, I think I need to take a look at that and need to get something for you. So, I'll be working on that this weekend and hope to get something out to you early next week to look at ahead of the Council meeting.

Treasurer, Mr. Ungruhe- Absent.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Paul- I was to discuss Microsoft Office. However, I investigated, negotiated, and came within my budget, so I will not need council's help at this time.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- February 2024 end of month receipts.

- Tax collections for February 2024: \$610,728.
- February 2024 is down -.32% or -\$1,957.00 from February 2023.
- Refunds for February: \$46,798.15.

- Delinquent tax collected with Capital Recovery: \$437.20.
- Delinquent tax collected with the Ohio Attorney General's Office: \$22,715.67.

St. Bernard tax returns are due on April 15, 2024. This is the same date as your Federal and State tax returns. Please be aware that your St. Bernard tax return is NOT automatically filed when you file your state and federal using tax software such as turbo tax. It also is not always filed when going to a tax preparer such as H & R Block. In Ohio you are required to file 3 tax returns: Federal, State and local.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance, Mr. Moreton- At the last Finance Committee Meeting, we agreed to submit our Village's budget information to OhioOpenCheckbook to make our budget even more publicly accessible. I have since heard back from the folks who manage that site and am in the process of completing their template. Thank you to our Auditor, Peggy Brickweg, for helping set this up and for translating the municipal finance systems jargon. The Finance Committee Meeting scheduled for Wednesday has been canceled due to a lack of agenda items while we wait for more information regarding potential appropriations for upcoming street projects and needed Fire Department equipment; however, I anticipate it to be rescheduled for some time in late-March or early-April once we have the information to talk through. Lastly, I want to thank those who were able to attend March's Community Connect and especially Chris Sauer from our Recreation Department for attending all three events so far to help answer questions and share the exciting programming they've put together for this summer. Lastly, before Council today is a draft of Resolution 2 2024, which if passed would instruct the mayor to sign the Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls Pay Equity commitment on behalf of the village. This resolution would solidify and exemplify our village's commitment to eliminate the gender pay gap. And I'd like to discuss this at the upcoming council meeting. So, with, I'd like to make a motion to put Resolution 2 2024 on the table for Marches council meeting.

Motion by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer, to place Resolution 2 2024 on the table for the next council meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

Service, Mr. Stuchell- I have the waste collection fees for the month of January 2024. \$24,723.02 was remitted to the Village. For the month of February, the Service Department had:

- 26 dump trucks placed at residences.
- 33 dumpsters were placed at residences.
- 230 special pick-ups at residences
- 145.92 tons of garbage taken to the landfill
- 23.10 tons of recycling material collected.
- 138 pounds of aluminum cans
- 6 car batteries
- 7,000 pounds of scrap metal collected.
- 32 tires

This past Tuesday the Service Committee met for our second meeting of the year. During the meeting we discussed an update on grants being worked on such as the Residential Recycling

Incentive Program that was recently submitted through Hamilton County Resource. We also discussed the upcoming Clean Up St. Bernard Day which will be April 28th from 12pm-3pm and the Community Shred Day which will be on May 18th from 9am-12pm down at the safety center. More information will come out about each event in the weeks leading up to them.

Public Improvements, Mr. Edwards- There was no need to have an improvement committee meeting this month, but I'd like to report on the pancake brunch fundraiser I attended and the information I received at the St. Clement cafeteria. The brunch raises money for the St. Clement Food Pantry. The Pancake brunch was on February 25th. They served approximately 200 meals and raised \$28,105.00 and free will donations. I toured the food pantry with Diane Smith. The Food pantry serves mostly Saint Bernard and Elmwood Place. It is open every second and 4th Monday of the month from 4:30 to 6:30. The building is right behind the school and the pantry serves approximately 40 families, about 300 people each time it's open. Most of the canned goods are from the Christmas Light contest here in Saint Bernard. There's also some frozen or hygiene products that's given away, and I'd like to thank Saint Clements Pantry for helping those in need in our community and showing compassion to those needing assistance.

Safety, Ms. Hausfeld- I will report that I am having a safety meeting on April the 2nd, 6:00 PM here in Council Chambers. No topic or concern, just residents' concerns for the Safety, Fire, and Police Department, that kind of stuff. Both chiefs will be here in attendance.

Laws, Contracts and Claims, Mr. Schildmeyer- The Laws, Contracts and Claims meeting will be held on March 19th, which is next Tuesday at 7:00 PM here in Council Chambers. The agenda is picking up all four things we worked on last meeting: short-term and long-term rental program, the front yard garden and weeds ordinance, golf cart community and the council attendance policy. Also, we are looking into other possible requirements for council members in addition to the attendance policy.

Marketing, Mr. Culbertson- The next St. Bernard Ludlow Grove Historical Society meeting will take place on Monday 18th at 7:00 PM. Please note that this meeting will take place at the Teen Center in the lower level of the municipal building. There will be a presentation given by Barb Jennings entitled A city Within a city Union Terminal. I would like to give a big shout out to Saint Bernard resident Thaxton Mullens. Thaxton finished his high school swimming career at Saint Xavier High School with four state titles. Thaxton won the 100 freestyle and the 200 freestyle. He was also part of the 200-freestyle relay team and the 400 freestyle relay team. Congratulations to Thaxton. Finally, the Saint Bernard Annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Saturday, March 30th at 1:00 PM at Vine Street Park. Toddlers through 8th graders are invited to join the account. There will also be a petting zoo. That morning be on the lookout for the Easter Bunny riding around town.

Business and Industry, Mr. Estep- Absent.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- Is there anyone in the audience wishing to address council?

Laura Jennings, 214 Bank Ave- and. I wanted to say that I had to move to Saint Bernard for health reasons a little less than two years ago. I have found everyone that I have had to deal with in Saint Bernard has been wonderful. I had a new fence put in and I had it disabled parking spot.

Everything has been fine, but I wanted to bring up a point of contention about the swimming pool. I figured that this would be a good time to bring it up so that you would have time to deal with it. I have noticed many times when I have been to the pool the decibel of the music and it was so loud that you literally could not speak to the person who was standing right next to you unless you were shouting. One day towards the end of the season, there was a friends and family day I attended and the music that day was much louder than it had been before. I decided to try an experiment. I was the only person in the deep end of the pool. There were 2 lifeguards on duty. So, I flailed my arms and said help. Neither one of the lifeguards looked my way. I walked closer and closer to the lifeguards still flailing my arms yelling hey! No one looked my way, and nothing was done. If I had really been in distress, I would have drowned. Previously there was a young gentleman working at the pool, and if I asked about the music, he would turn it down. I was told who the pool manager was and I brought this up to her. She told me no she could not turn the music down and the lifeguards are trained to look at a zone. I told her they never once looked my way. She refused to turn the music down, so I left. My concern is the music being so loud, and I like the music, but it does not need to be that loud. I am sure it is a danger to young children's ears. This is also a safety issue, especially the lifeguards because they are not looking at the whole pool, and if you were to yell for help, they would not be able to hear you. Is there anything you can do about it? I checked with Hamilton County and Ohio Health Departments, and they have no regulations on decibel height for a public pool. I want to bring this to Council's attention to see if there is something that can be done.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- I will talk to the pool manager about this so we can create some new standards. I also want to discuss the zones for the lifeguards. If there was no zone coverage in the area you were in, regardless of the noise, that is still an issue, and it will be addressed.

Laura Jennings, 214 Bank Ave- Thank you. Like I said everyone in St. Bernard has been great to deal with. Thank you again.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Saint Bernard is kicking off a new chapter as a We Thrive community. We want to invite everybody in the community to be involved and join us for our kickoff event on March 21st from 7:00 to 8:00 PM here are here in the main hall to talk about the We Thrive program in Hamilton County and how our village is planning to be part of it. After this event, there will be monthly meetings to discuss goals and actions towards improving the health and wellness of our community. Light refreshments will be provided, so please join us to help work to improve Saint Bernard.

Thomas Fox, 309 Jackson- Are you tearing down the old indoor swimming pool? What about the basketball courts, will they stay?

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Yes, the old indoor pool is being torn down. There is a new indoor pool at the back of the building. You can see it from the Aquatic Center through the windows. The gymnasium will be staying. So, the board office and the gymnasium will stay.

Council Member, Mr. Edwards- Could I address Mr. Fox please? It was Tommy's birthday yesterday. He was 48 years old. He's been my neighbor for almost 36 years. And I was going to say there's something under the microphone on that shelf for you and just in case you showed up tonight.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- I usually don't say anything about resolutions and ordinances. I've been in local government now pushing 25 years and I did read the resolution recently that the number 2, which is proposed for the next council meeting. And in my opinion, you know, being in local government for a long time. I want to say it appears to be a little divisive. I don't feel like as a woman that's been in this field for a long time, but I don't need to empower myself or women by tearing down other groups. You know, we can't grow as a society if we are constantly blaming everybody else, you know, for things in the world. I just wanted to say that my employer has always been fair here. I love working for the city of Saint Bernard, I love Mayor Stuchell. And you know, I've always been treated very well here, and I've never felt discriminated against or paid unfairly. I've always been made to feel like I was part of the team and I just wanted to let council know my thoughts on that resolution.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- just quick response to that. That is absolutely not the intention of this in the slightest bit. So, I'm disappointed that it came across that way. Something I want to emphasize is that the purpose of this is to reinforce. That positive culture here that already exists. This is not saying we are fixing something. This is an opportunity that was proposed by the Hamilton County Commission of Women and Girls. They are recruiting municipalities around the county to sign this commitment. It is a non-contractually binding commitment as well. It is not specifically targeted to our village. It just shows we are trying to rally behind a good cause. How I would like it to come across is the complete opposite of anything accusatory by any means. I fully trust and hope we do not have any cases of pay discrepancy across genders here. This is saying that we as a village stand behind it as we have always stood behind it. It is here to act as a clear stamp or a clear sign that we are one of the good communities, especially when recruiting talent.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- Appreciate that. I do realize that was put together the best interest. However, in line 2, you know in the way society is today, do we need to be divisive? Do we need to you know point out white men versus white women versus black women? Does that need to be pointed out to still get the point across that you know we believe in equal pay you know for women and minorities.

Council Member, Ms. Hausfeld- I want to thank Leighanne for actually speaking up about this. It was put on the table to be voted on in the next council meeting but there was no discussion about it. I'm glad it was brought up and it was discussed a little bit more.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- This was not meant to be sneaky at all. I figured since next meeting was the first reading it would be discussed there. In regard to the race related content, that is how data is discussed. There is not some ulterior motive to identify a race wage gap, albeit that is also accurate and true. This is here to discuss the background and importance of it. The race-based element of this, if you see this as divisive, then we can amend it. But I think that is a crucial part of this resolution.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- I am siding with Leighanne. When I saw this, I did not like that. I am totally fine with the rest of it, even the gender-based wage disparity. I'd just take out the separation and wage figures. If we keep dividing, we will never come together. If we keep pointing out what is different, how will the next generations come together? I don't think that is what you meant but that is where I went. I would take that part out before you vote on it.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- I understand where that point is coming from and we don't need to go into an argument about whether or not that is true because I believe something different, so if that is the only hinderance to passing this then we can remove it. This was just background information. We can amend it and remove it.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- I would be happy to amend this, but I thought it was important because it shows the most recent information gathered within the Greater Hamilton County area. The numbers are what the numbers are. But if you feel that is divisive, we can certainly amend this.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- According to their packet, if we are going to keep the numbers, black women make .77 cents. I think we should keep accurate numbers.

Council Member, Ms. Hausfeld- Was this resolution discussed in a committee? Or just something that you brought forward?

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- Something I brought forward.

Council Member, Mr. Schildmeyer- Do we have the ability to direct the mayor into signing something?

Mayor, Stuchell- No.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg-We can suggest he sign things.

Council Member, Mr. Schildmeyer- Connor, I know your heart is in the right place, but I would suggest changing the verbiage to recommend not direct.

Nicole Klungle, 551 Church Street- I have a request. Members of the administration who are making personal comments should do so at the podium. So, it doesn't sound like the comments are coming from the administration. And I also want to point out that ignoring differences in race-based pay does not erase them and that is why it's important to make that acknowledgement. Mr. Moreton, I hope you won't cave under these requests. I do understand that they are very well-intentioned, like the resolution is, but there is a reason to call out, as Ms. Valkenburg Walden pointed out, there is a reason to call these things out and it is important to know these differences that so that they can be addressed not ignored.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer, to excuse the absent member. Motion passes 6-0.

Council Member, Mr. Culbertson- I do not think we made motions for the ordinances for the next council meeting.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- No, you are correct.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to place a transfer and addition appropriation ordinance on the table for next council meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer, to make changes and updates to Chapter 105 on the table for next council meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer, to adjourn. Motion passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned.