

# **THE VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD**

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

The St. Bernard Village Committee of the Whole was held on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in Council Chambers.

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

A motion by Mr. Estep, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to approve the written minutes of the May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, council meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

### **REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS**

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Thank you. Mr. President. I'd first like to start by asking for a moment of silence for Cheryl Abrams, who passed away suddenly May 29th. Thank you. Cheryl served as the Administrative Assistant to the Mayor under both John Estep and me until her retirement in 2024. Cheryl was a special person and served as our house mother here at City Hall and even beyond retirement remaining in close contact with her former coworkers and their families. Cheryl, your passing has left a definite void in our hearts, and we will miss you. This evening, we have a special council meeting for the approval of Ordinance 17 2025 to go under contract with Mark Wendling as our Permanent Director of Public Services and Safety. The selection committee including myself, Connor Morton, Chris Schildmeyer and Chris Sauer are asking for your support. You have been giving a copy of the contract and of Mark's resume to review, but due to the time in which Mr. Wendling needs to provide notice to his current employer, we need to get this in process. I will be working with Mr. Williams for support during the interim before Mr. Wendling's official start date. So, we'll be in good hands and there will also be an acting Director of Public Services and Safety. A heartfelt thank you for those who attended and assisted with our Memorial Day ceremony as we paid tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. I am forever grateful to our community, our fire, police and service and recreation departments, members of council, administration, our community organizations, the Saint Bernard Eagles, Saint Bernard Ludlow Grove Historical Society and the Saint Bernard Senior Citizens Club, Troop 354, the Delta Kings Bagpiper Roger Loft and our spiritual leaders Reverend Jonathan Bradner and Father Judd Weitzner. We also had a beautiful day to reflect and remember which ended with Saint Bernard's very own Jerry Wallman singing Our land Saint Bernard. Thank you again. As stated by Calvin Coolidge, "The nation which forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten". Our Garden Club held its annual Blessing of the Garden this past Saturday. Father Judd from St. Clement did a wonderful job blessing this soil and plants, but he also provided us with some spiritual refreshment as well. It was a wonderful time and great comradery. This is a fun little spot in town, and I encourage everyone to connect with the members and consider attending future events. Yesterday the Saint Brown Fire Department and Saint Bernard police Departments held their safety night out. This event was moved from Ross Park where it was normally held on a Saturday in the fall. I have to admit I was originally in doubt about having this during the weeknight, but it was absolutely fabulous. There was a great turn out from the

community. We also had more mutual aid agencies than we ever had before. Kudos to our organizers, Jason Smith from the fire department and CJ Moffitt from the Police Department. Thank you to the community for showing up and thank you for the awesome volunteers and sponsors which include Ashland Ave. Baptist Church who sponsored the bounce house and provided the hot dogs and chips, all the members of Local 450, all our police and firefighters, and our incredible chiefs. I can't say enough about how impressed I was. I would also like to congratulate Sergeant Mike Petraski on his upcoming promotion to Lieutenant and Officer Lucas Barrow for his upcoming promotion to Sergeant. I will officially be swearing them in on Tuesday evening and I promise that I will be having the ceremonial swearing in here in Council Chambers when it is mutually agreeable to all parties. Stay tuned for information on our Independence Day celebration here in the village that will be held on Saturday, July 5th. Rozzi Fireworks will be back to provide us with another awesome show and there will be a fun filled afternoon and evening plans that includes a great concert. Lastly, I wanted to give everyone notice that I'll be serving the Village of Elmwood Place with my notice of intent to either suspend or end service for fire and EMS. There was a recent situation where a staff Lieutenant for the Fire department, Nicholas Whitlock, distributed a text to other members of their department saying, "me and Kyle have decided that squad 39 is now District 39 and Brian can kill himself". Brian being referred to as our chief in this message. I will not tolerate this kind of comment from a mutual aid agency, especially one we provide a majority of their firefighting capability and a large portion of their advanced life support services as well. Mental health is a very serious subject, and I could not subject our firefighters and paramedics to potentially have to work side by side in a lifesaving situation where they may be dependent on this officer. The legal counsel makes me ill in referring to this as locker room talk. This is unacceptable and I ask for your support in this issue to the attention of the Elmwood Place Village Council with the obvious legal requirements of our mutual aid agreement. I'm asking for your support. I'm not going to tolerate this, so I'll be marching up there. You're welcome to join me, but no one's going to make a comment like that. Even in joking. This is not even funny. So just be prepared. I may stir the pot. I have also implemented a social media policy that went into effect today through executive order. We need to provide clear requirements for posting on our village social media accounts and this was long overdue. Anyone that has any questions you've been provided with a copy of that will be also posted on the village website, posted on the social media accounts so that all users. Participants on those media pages will be aware of what will be tolerated and what is legally is allowed. Lastly, I am only going to give it over to Chief Young, who is going to give us a status on our frontline pumper that blew an engine. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Fire Chief, Mr. Young- So, the main points if you guys are aware, our 2011 E 1 Engine, which will eventually become our reserve engine, once our new engine is delivered, our new one should be delivered tomorrow. However, it's going to be some upgrades and things need to happen, radios, small things before we can get it in service. We're trying to expedite that. I've been in contact with Vogelpohl today multiple times trying to get that stuff organized. So, this is the engine back in 2016 that was part of the flood. We had an engine replaced back then due to the flooding. In September of last year, we had an issue with what's called diesel blow by and we knew there was an issue. We're trying to limp along. Unfortunately, we had a structure fire in Springfield Township on May 21st. On the way back, the truck lost power, so we kind of limped back to the firehouse. It has happened multiple times since then. So, on the 25th we had a specialty truck come to our firehouse and looked at it and they thought it was a turbo issue. So,

they recommended us driving it to their facility on that Sunday before Memorial Day so they could work on it. In the process we blew a radiator hose. We're not 100% sure when it is going to happen but there was already a pre-existing issue, and a head gasket was leaking. So, it now needs a motor. I gave Mayor Stuchell a copy of the first bid. This is from Specialty Truck where we drove to on that Sunday and this quote is \$85,800/ We were hoping the \$62,000 or \$65,000 that was the initial quote we got, but the final quote came in higher. So, I will be having Cummins up in Sharonville give us a competitive quote. I will hopefully talk to them tomorrow and get an idea of the other issues, but it would be 6 to 10 weeks before we can even get an engine. So, we're running our 93 Sutfin as our primary truck, which has an electrical issue and also has a pump issue. We're trying to make it and so far, so good but we got a lot of things happening at one time. So, any questions on that quote or anything I explained further on that? I do want to reiterate what Mayor Stuchell said about the Safety Night Out. It was very well attended, with several units there. The Hamilton County dive team and SWAT were in attendance, along with Hamilton County Honor Guard, Ohio State Troopers Helicopter, Norwood K-9 Unit and many more. Thank you to the people who put in their time and effort to support this event. I would also like to thank the service and recreation department for all their help with the event also. Again, it was a wonderful event, great turn out and thanks again.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Thank you Mr. President. I will start my report with an additional appropriation ordinance for the first one being 7-8-A equipment maintenance for \$86,000 and an additional appropriation to general Fund 2 I-9 Professional Services. This is for outsourcing legal services for \$15,000. The mayor is starting to use outside legal representation on contract negotiations, so that is what that is for. I will continue to review the other line items. I did notice today we're starting to run maybe a little over and I'll keep an eye on our fuel line item. I also have Resolution 9 2025. This is the resolution that will go to the Hamilton County Board of Elections for the levy renewal being placed on the ballot for the November election. This levy will bring in \$599,038.00 to the village. I am asking for the resolution to be placed on the table, and I am asking council to support the resolution. I also would like to discuss the purchasing bids to match the state amount at \$75,000. I have also asked the Treasurer to read the report for the public hearing because I am not sure if I will be able to make it to the next meeting. Just to reiterate, this is a proposed and projected budget so this will not be our final budget. You will not vote on this budget; it is just a public hearing before I send it projected budget to Hamilton County. Does anyone have any questions? That concludes my report.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Willaims- I think it has been some time since the council revisited the ordinance we currently have on bidding, which right now is \$50,000. The amount the state had until 2024 was \$75,000. In 2024 the legislature decided to increase and tie the bidding to the CPI increase each year. And so, I think the recommendation from staff at this point is rather than fixing it at \$75,000, which is now not the current number of the state but just affixing it to the ORC code in that situation. I know Valerie and I have talked about that so that it would adjust automatically each year and then the council wouldn't have to deal with it, and it's tied to the CPI. This would be a better solution considering the price and cost are increasing and from the administration standpoint, this would make the most sense, to affixing the rate to ORC.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenberg- So, to clarify, you have Ordinance 19 2025, as two versions, The first version just ties it to a fixed dollar amount of \$75,000 and the second version ties it to

the affixed ORC and matches the state, which does make more sense to me. So, we did prepare both depending on your guidance which one you would like to proceed with.

Council Member, Ms. Hausfeld- Isn't this part of a checks and balance system? I thought that is why we only made it \$50,000 years ago. We are a small village compared to what the state might be purchasing. I thought that was the whole purpose of keeping it \$50,000 was to keep the checks and balances. The state purchases a lot more at a higher quantity compared to the village. I thought that is why we kept the amount of \$50,000 so the administration couldn't just go out and buy whatever they wanted at a higher dollar amount without the approval of Council.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenberg- You are not wrong Ms. Hausfeld. Certainly, the state has much more buying power, and they would obviously spend more money than we would ever. This is your decision to make, but the reality is, the costs are going up. I mean the engine for the firetruck was \$20,000 more than the Fire Chief thought it would have been. So, I would recommend at least moving the limit up to \$75,000. We are facing a period of inflation and tariffs, and other municipalities are moving to matching the state.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Council is obviously still in control of expenditures, increases, additional appropriations and so forth. Council does lose control, however what is trending and becoming normal with expenditures is trending up. Administration would still be coming to council for approval of expenditures. This is for just the bidding process, and it eliminates us going through all the extra red tape that hold us up especially when we have emergency repairs on demand. I agree with the checks and balances, but this is necessary to match the inflated spending level.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- This is just for the bidding process. We would still need to come to council to approve the funding anyway. This is just making the bidding process easier and timelier.

Council Member, Mr. Schildmeyer- Mr. Williams, you mentioned that the current state threshold could be even higher than \$75,000. Do you know what it is currently?

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Willaims- I believe the inflation adjustment is about \$77,000.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- In reviewing both versions of the ordinance, I would prefer the version which adjusts for inflation and matches the state, if we decide to raise the amount.

Motion made by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Mr. Culbertson, to place Ordinance 19 2025, the version that reads the threshold is set by the Ohio General Assembly and incorporated in the ORC Section 9.17, on the table for the next council meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to place Ordinance 18 2025 on the table for the next council meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Estep, to place Resolution 9 2025 to the table for the next council meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Mr. Estep, to place Ordinance 17 2025 on the table for the next council meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenberg- I have been reviewing a couple contracts like the employment contract that goes with Ordinance 17 2025. I am also looking the contract that Mr. Williams provided for a consultant and I will be giving him some feedback. I know there was some discussion at the last meeting about a project that involves an easement with the Eagles Club and Fifth Third Bank. I did go down to the recorder's office and searched; I did not find the original was ever recorded. So, we may have to put together a resolution or something to at least have something recorded. I will check with the Eagles Club and check with the vendor we used to prepare it, and I will get with Mr. Williams on that. I also need to go into executive session after the meeting to discuss pending and possible litigation. That concludes my report.

Treasurer, Ms. Darrenkamp- As of the end of May, we had revenue of \$6,610,663.53. Our expenses were \$6,474,254.96 and that concludes my report.

Committee of the Whole is paused for the 7:30pm Special Council Meeting.

**VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

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

ORDINANCE NO. 17, 2025

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH MARK WENDLING  
AS THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND SAFETY AND DECLARING AN  
EMERGENCY.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Estep, to suspend with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of Ordinance 17 2025. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Mr. Estep, to adopt Ordinance 17 2025. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Estep, to adjourn the special council meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

Special Council meeting is adjourned.

Committee of the Whole meeting resumed.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Williams- Thank you Mr. President. I have a couple items I wanted to touch on tonight. If you recall from the last council meeting, we had introduced the potential project or idea where we could work with our friends at Fifth Third Bank. They were going to repave their portion of the parking lot. I've put in front of you tonight a few maps of the parking lot. The first is one that shows the different pie shaped lots altogether so you can see that there's a portion of the lot that we know is owned by Fifth Third. There's a portion of it owned by the village and there's a portion of it owned by the eagles and then the two aerials behind there delineate what is a little bit closer and what's owned by the village and owned by the eagles. When we first got into the discussion, it seemed like a great idea. I went to Mayor Stuchell and said is that something that you think we'd be interested in doing and he said yes, the parking lot is in bad shape, and it's been a long time since it was paved and that would be a great opportunity for us to work collaboratively with those other partners. The engineer for Fifth Third has been working on that and preparing the plans. Fifth Third is willing to lead the efforts to get the pricing for the paving of the parking lot. As we dug into it a bit we found, with our legal counsel, as mentioned that there was an easement back in in 1981 that was approved by council, apparently not filed, but to an easement agreement in which that a portion, we found out after the fact when this building was built, that we encroached on the Eagle's property by 7 foot on one corner of our building and because of that encroachment we had to have an easement because we were kind of illegally occupying a portion of their property. So, that was all worked out in 1981 and as a condition for that easement the Eagle's asked that we maintain as a village their portion of the parking lot in perpetuity and paving striping and clearing it of snow and ice. As I understand it for many years the parking lot's been treated as a whole as a public parking lot and so it seemed to make a lot of sense. So, what we're asking for tonight is the board to consider at the council meeting later this month a resolution or ordinance that would provide us the ability to pay for the paving of our lot plus the lot owned by the eagles that we have an easement that we've agreed to take care off. The price of both of those together, our portion of it would be \$51,585. This is the engineering estimate when the actual bids finally come in the engineering expect it's going to be a bit less than that. Then the portion that's owned by the Eagle's would be \$22,745. So that would essentially plus what Fifth Third is doing, have the entire parking lot repaved and stripe. So again, potentially a good project for all of us and with Fifth Third only doing their portion it might look a bit strange the way that we have all the different configurations of the lot. If anybody has any questions about it at this point? If not, we will have this prepared for the next council meeting. Thank you that concludes my report.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Do you have an idea of when they want to start the project so I can have funding together?

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Williams- The plan is to have it done before the German Luau, if possible, if not, it will be afterwards. But yes, it would be in this fiscal year so we will need an appropriation that the funding. Secondly, I wanted to note that we received a \$30,000 grant from Hamilton County. We were able to utilize those funds for a study of our historic Vine Street

Business District. We have set up a committee to review proposals and we have been working with Alloy. They have actually prepared the proposals between four different companies. The committee has narrowed that down to two, one being MKSK, the other being Yarden Company. After having in person interviews a few weeks ago, the committee came to the conclusion they felt like that Yarden Company, which is based in a OTR, would be excellent for this. They've done a lot of very similar projects recently including Walnut Hills, and they did one in Mount Healthy, and they've done them in other places as well, and they're really known for kind of rolling their sleeves up and helping to activate spaces. So, we will have at the next meeting later this month, the contract for council to consider. This is an exciting project, and I think it will be a really nice outcome. The study includes the historic district, but it also extends down to St. Bernard Square and across the street. There should be a lot of public engagement with this also. The last thing I want to mention is that the mayor and I have gone through a couple of interviews for our zoning administrator position and currently working on references as we speak. We're moving along with it to I don't know if we'll necessarily have a recommendation for you at the end of the month, maybe, maybe not. We're trying to get it moving along. We do want to make sure that we get the best qualified person we can to not only help with enforcement of our codes, including property maintenance, but also some of the planning aspects that we don't have now. If you read the job description that we had put together, it including helping manage the BZA process and trying to reconstitute a Planning Commission and some of those items. So hopefully we'll have a really good top candidate for you at least within the next month. That concludes my report.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- So, really quick, since we have some additional expenditures and knowing we have some paving work that needs to be done, along the pool loop wall and some of the drains that need to be done, are you sure we should wait? Maybe we add the funding to the additional appropriation ordinance for the end of the month, so we have the funds ready for when they are prepared to do the job.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- I would suggest putting \$100,000 into Capital Improvements 0-7-0-1 so it can be used for all those projects, if council is ok with me adding those funds to the appropriation Ordinance 17 2025.

Council Member, Mr. Schildmeyer- I would be in favor of adding those funds to the ordinance.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- May 2025 end of Month Receipts:

- Tax collections for May 2025: \$710,563.
- May 2025 is up 12.63 % or \$79,699.00 from May 2024.
- Refunds for May -\$29,400.00
- Delinquent tax collected with Capital Recovery: \$211.62.
- Delinquent tax collected with the Ohio Attorney General's Office: \$78,039.00

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance, Mr. Moreton- Thank you Mr. President. The next Finance Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 18th at 6:00 PM is cancelled due to scheduling delays with our contact at LISK. I'm scheduled to meet with them next week to discuss the implementation of a 0% interest home repair program for our residents who are struggling economically. Separately, I would like to encourage folks to help save lives by participating in the Ben Strong Give Back Mobile Blood Drive, which will be right outside here in the next door in the Municipal Building on Friday, July 25th from noon to 6:00 PM. You can find more information about the importance and impact of blood and platelet donations@donateblood.uc.edu. Thank you. That concludes my report.

Service, Mr. Stuchell- Thank you Mr. President. Vine Street is currently closed in both directions between Railroad Ave. and Spring Grove Ave. due to the discovery of an old sewer line during ongoing railroad track repairs. The closure will remain in effect for an undetermined period of time while the issue is being addressed. Detour signs will be posted on Railroad Ave. And Beach Street and Spring Grove to assist drivers with alternate routes to ensure public safety and minimize disruptions, The service department is working diligently and coordination with the railroad to identify and implement a safe and effective solution as quickly as possible. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Public Improvements, Mr. Edwards- Thank you Mr. President. There was no need for a Public Improvement Committee Meeting, but I would like to highlight a meeting that occurred Tuesday Night. I would like to report that Councilman Ray Culberson and I were privileged to attend a Revive Cincinnati Meeting June 10th. This meeting was the Mitchell Avenue Workshop which was designed to update us on any news about area development and was a listening session for ideas to improve neighborhoods in our area. Although it was sponsored by The City of Cincinnati mine and Ray's comments, questions and concerns were well received. We brought up Mitchell Ave. and how it leaves a bad impression as people exit I75 and drive to St. Bernard. Ray brought up a possible redevelopment of the Kessler Avenue and Wuest Street area. Most of the meeting was presented by representatives of Urban Design Associates. They are Urban design Architects designing walking and bike paths, gathering areas, ways to ease traffic and many more ways to make life better for our residents. They told Ray and I that St. Bernard is to be included in this plan, and they have contacted our Administration in the past and will continue to communicate in the future. We also made valuable contacts with groups from North Avondale that share some of our same concerns, primarily traffic on Mitchell Ave. It will be nice to be able to work together on issues that concern us both. Ray and I both believed this to be a very positive meeting for us to attend and there will be another meeting in the fall with further updates. Thank you, Mr. President this concludes my report.



Safety, Ms. Hausfeld- Thank you, Mr. President. I too just wanted to thank everyone that helped out last night at the Saint Bernard Police and Fire Night Out. It was an awesome evening. I didn't get to stay long, but for what I did see and what I got to participate in, it was it was an awesome evening. Kids were loving every bit of it and the parents really appreciate it. I had a citizen that called me today and told me how nice it was. So just wanted to thank everybody involved with putting on last night's terrific evening out. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Laws, Contracts and Claims, Mr. Schildmeyer- No report.

Marketing, Mr. Culbertson- Thanks Mr. President, on Saturday, June 21st there will be a concert in the pavilion with Stagger Lee. The event starts at 7:00 PM. Bring a chair, a cooler of your favorite drinks and we will supply the food. The next St. Bernard Ludlow Grove Historical Society meeting takes place on Monday, June 16th at 7:00 PM in the main level of the Municipal Building. The program will be about Hinnenkamp Dairy presented by Jim Hinnenkamp. Finally, now is the time to prepare for the German Luau. The event takes place on Friday, August 1st from 5:00 PM to midnight and Saturday, August 2nd from noon to midnight. The Luau committee is accepting applications for booths. The committee is now accepting nominations for the 2025 Grand Marshall. Please check the German Luau Facebook page for more details. That concludes my report.

Business and Industry, Mr. Estep- No report.

No audience participation.

Motion made by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to enter into executive session to discuss pending litigation. Motion passes 7-0.

Council enters into executive session to discuss pending litigation.

Council returns from executive session.

Motion made by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to place the easement resolution on the table for the next council meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

The next council meeting will be held Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm in Council Chambers.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

Meeting is adjourned.