

VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD
COUNCIL MEETING
September 18th, 2025

The St. Bernard Village Council Meeting was held on September 18th, 2025, in Council Chambers.

The meeting was opened with a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Presentation given by Hamilton County Auditor Ms. Jessica Miranda.

Hamilton County Auditor, Jessica Miranda- Thank you Councilman Moreton and thank you to the entirety of this fine council here is the Village of St. Bernard and everyone is the administration. I greatly appreciate it. I know your time is valuable in local government and I greatly appreciate putting me on the agenda tonight. You have in front of you have a pamphlet listing the services we provide at the county auditor's office. You also have our business cards attached to that pamphlet including mine, Connor Moreton, who is our Director of Public Affairs, and Willow Lopez who is our Community Engagement Coordinator. It is important to announce that this is the first time in our county's history that we have had a Public Affairs office, and they make sure we are in each community within the entire county and make sure we are servicing every pocket of the county. I have served in three different levels of government now and I know how important that connection is between you as a council, your county government, your state government and everywhere in between. Please know that you can contact us with anything at any time here in the village. So, introducing myself since I didn't have the privilege and honor to represent you all in the statehouse, you were a little bit outside of my district. I spent 5 1/2 years serving as a lawmaker in the Ohio State House, which really translates to about 50 years in real human years. It is wild up there, but I did what I could do with the time that I had and made a lot of necessary changes, but also learned about all of the things that we struggle with here in local government, whether it's the county level or here on the village level are derived from the laws in which are passed in that state capital. So, we worked really hard to try to do things like fiscal responsible things for local governments and school districts and you know, try to do something about our current unconstitutional funding model here in our state that we've struggled with for over 3 decades, but got some small things done. As you can see there, I have a very, very complex understanding of not only fair school funding here in the state, but of local government funding. Because before I was in the statehouse, I served as the school board president for my local school district, which is the Winton Woods City School District, then Forest Park, Green Hills, Springfield Township in a tiny piece of Wyoming. The fact that not a lot of people know about. I am a lifelong Ohioan with three daughters and my oldest just went off to college. I want to talk a little bit about what the auditor's responsibilities are, because I think this is probably the most unknown or confusing piece about what your Hamilton County auditor does and perhaps some of what we don't do. Just think of us, think of

me as your counties CFO. The auditor pays all of the county's bills and we are also the payroll agent for all of the county's over 5,000 employees. We assess all real property for the county and Hamilton County is the third largest county in the State of Ohio. We have a little bit over 350,000 parcels in the county including residential, commercial and industrial. We are 1/3 of the county's Board of Revision and 1/3 of the county's Budget Commission. We are the gold standard for the Board of Revision process. We work very diligently for the taxpayers of Hamilton County. We are also the administrator for a few different county programs including Rental Registration Program, Homestead Exemption Program and Owner Occupancy Credit Program. So, any landlord that you have in the village is required by law to file a rental registration with our office. You can find all the information for landlords and rental registration on our website or contact us directly. The other programs are property tax relief programs. The Homestead Exemption Program is for our resident who are 65 and older who meet an income requirement. So, they get a break on their property tax liability. The Owner Occupancy Credit is the other property tax relief program. It is simply, if you own your property and live in your property you get a 2.5% credit towards your property taxes. We are making sure all our homeowners and property owners are getting these credits if they qualify for them. We also do the dog licensing for the county. We are not the Dog Warden for the county, just the dog licensing for the county. We know dog licensing has not been put on the front burner in the last few years. You will see something come out from our office in the near future to put another intentional effort behind this so we can make sure for safety reasons and if your dog gets lost, we know who to bring it back to. The last is the Weights and Measures. I consider this our consumer protection. So, for example, we are going to every gas station in the county, which is a little over 5,000 of them, every grocery store, every farmer's market, every place that sells any type of food products, need to be weighed. Our team is there to make sure that the pound of turkey you are purchasing is actually a pound and that gallon of gas you purchased is actually a full gallon. So, we are out here protecting our consumers to make sure you are getting what you are paying for. Ohio is one of three states that does not test our fuel. This is something I tried to get done and would still like to get done so we can be confident in the liquid that we are putting in our cars. It is something that has not passed yet, so if that is something you care about, please contact your State Lawmakers and make that known. If you do go to any of the gas stations in Hamilton County and you happen to get a batch of bad fuel and it ruins something in your car, you can file a complaint with us, and we will go out and check into it. We are all making sure our team is out in the community. In September we did our biannual forfeited land sale. All of our properties and parcels of land that do not sell in the Sheriff's Auction are given over to us and then we run the forfeited land sale. We just completed that on the 9th, and I am happy to report that 98 of those parcels out of 125 were sold. That is the highest percentage than any other time we have ran this sale. We are making sure that those properties are participating in our county and our property taxes and paying their proper fair share. We are running a new program called Top Dog Program to try to get every dog in our county licensed. We are partnering with 4th grade classrooms across the county. We are going to have our kids write essays about why they think their dog is the Top Dog in the county to encourage the dog licensing we talked about earlier. We are also doing our AudiTour, which is what I am doing tonight. We are going around to multiple municipalities to introduce you to our services and hopefully learn something from our presentation. So, we do serve the community, but we do not do it all. We do not collect the property taxes. We do not manage deeds. We do not provide surveys and maps. And we also do not make abatement and tax policy. So, in the Auditor's office, we work in values, not in taxes. So, just because your

home values goes up or down by a percentage, that does not mean your property taxes follow that same percent. It is all a formula done by the state that involves every levy that may or may not be passed in your municipality as well as any county levy that may or may not be passed and local tax or abatement policy in your local community. There is a lot more that goes into your property taxes, not just the value of your home. (Auditor shows slides to compare the same monetary valued home in different communities and locations). Now, I want to talk about how we appraise properties here in the county. We are annually looking at property values every year. A common misconception is we appraise every three to five years, but we are doing work that comes from permits and new construction across the county every year. However, by state law, we have two appraisal processes we must abide by. They are the Triennial and the Mass Appraisal. Every three years we do a desk top review. We look at comparable sales in any given area to get those values of homes. Then every six years our staff goes out into the field, boots on the ground, and looks at every single property in the county, all 350,000 properties, and we appraise to fair market value. I am sure you are all familiar with the Hamilton County Auditor's website. Our website has been the same for 32 years. We have now updated it. We are going page by page with the updates. We now have a translation tool that can translate our website into over 100 languages. Our website gets about 120,000 views per month and they come from over 100 countries. That is a great addition to our golden standard website. We get a lot of great compliments on our website and all the information we provide on our website. We have also added a search bar and an accessibility tool to our site. We have added a video series to our Board of Revisions website which will help them with anything they need if they want to file a Board of Revisions complaint on the website. The last thing on the website, which I really like, is the pie chart for each parcel's property taxes. This will show you exactly how much and where your property taxes are going. The biggest part of the pie in Hamilton County will always be your school district. I want to remind everyone that the Hamilton County Auditor's office is the only office that landlords are statutorily obligated to complete a rental registration. I know local municipalities are requiring a rental registration as well, but you must register with the Auditor's Office. It is very easy to see if a rental property has been registered with the county on our website. So, help me help you to make sure our records match and are correct here in the village. The last thing I want to talk about is the Homestead Exemption Program. Ohioans can get immediate property tax relief with this program. There are four qualifications. The property owners must be over 65 years old, own your property and occupy as their primary residence and the gross income is less than \$40,000 a year. We are making sure we are talking about the Homestead Exemption across the state. This is the relief to who needs it the most. We are indexing the program for inflation and property values skyrocketing. If we do not increase the exemption rate to match inflation, our seniors may not be able to stay in their homes. Please contact your state representatives to help us get this exemption raised. Please check out our social media handles and follow us. This is the first time in county history that we are involved in social media. So, that is all I have and I want to thank you once again for your time this evening. Any questions?

Council Member, Mr. Edwards- Is the owner occupancy credit automatically applied, or do you need to apply for that? Does social security count toward gross income?

County Auditor, Ms. Miranda- No that is automatically applied. It should be marked on your closing documents when you purchase your home. But please double check that you are

receiving the credit for your home and we will make sure we correctly that and get it right moving forward. Social security is not included in your gross income.

A motion by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Estep, to dispense with the reading of the last council meeting minutes and approve of the written minutes of the last council meeting. Motion passed 6-0. Minutes stand as submitted.

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Thank you, Mr. President.

I would like to start by asking everyone to please keep our good friend and councilmember Ray Culbertson in your prayers. Ray and his family could use some positive thoughts and prayers as our gentle giant is on the mend. I have some exciting news to share with you all this evening. The Village of St. Bernard is the proud recipient of Metro Transit Infrastructure Funds - Round 5 review period that will fund 50% of the project cost for the improvements to lower Washington and Tower Ave. from the intersection of McClelland to Mitchell. Our total project cost is \$1,320,000 and we received \$660,000 to offset those expenses. I am very proud of our team who have been able to procure funds to improve our infrastructure, our streets, our parks, and other vital public improvements. Dangerous Jim and the Slims will be rocking it out this Saturday from 7 to 10 pm in the pavilion at Vine Street Park. Bring your chairs and coolers and the Recreation Department will be grilling for everyone. The St. Bernard Garden Club will be having their annual pumpkin sale on Saturday, September 27th from 9 am to 1 pm at the Community Garden at 505 Tennis Lane. Get there early to get the best choice. They have great pumpkins and great prices. Thank you to Troop 354 for coming to meet with me this afternoon for their BSA program to discuss constitutional rights and obligations of a US citizen. I am very proud of these young men who are truly model citizens. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Thank you Mr. President. I really don't have a report tonight. I will say that our audit is 100% finished we did we had no issues at all and it's available out on the state auditor website if anybody wants to look at it. That concludes my report.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenberg- Thank you. Last night we had a Laws Contracts and Claims Committee meeting. We discussed the proposed amendments and additions to the tax code. I'll be working on those and hoping to have something available to present at the next Committee of the Whole. Also, I do need to go into executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss pending litigation and that concludes my report thank you.

Treasurer, Ms. Darrenkamp- Thank you, Mr. President. The Star Ohio account as of August 29th, 2025, balance is \$9,449,511.62 and that concludes my report.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Wendling- Thank you Mr. President. I am happy to report the curb and drive apron replacement has commenced on the northeastern side of Greenlee Avenue. Work will continue on the northeastern side until the contractor reaches Mitchell Avenue. They will then work their way back toward Ross Avenue on the western side of the street. The affected property owners will be notified by the contract as they progress. Please feel free to reach out to my office at 513-242-7770 if any special accommodations are necessary. On another note, the

municipal lot was milled and repaved earlier this week and it looks great. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused. We received three bids for the municipal building HVAC service and maintenance contract. We will be reviewing them over the next several days with a recommendation anticipated in October. Finally, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve the village. I look forward to working with everyone in the coming years. That concludes my report.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- August 2025 end of month receipts

- Tax collections for August 2025: \$561,994.00.
- August 2025 is down 7.91 % or \$48,301.00 from August 2024.

I am requesting Ordinance 24 2025 please put on the table for the next council meeting. This is to amend section 182.17 to simplify and remove unnecessary language that pertains to the State Tax Commissioner and not the Tax Administrator. The 3rd Quarter of 2025 bills will go out the second week of October.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Finance, Mr. Moreton- Thank you, Mr. President. The Finance Committee met yesterday to discuss a collaboration with LISC through their Revive and Thrive Home Repair Program. We decided, due to greater compatibility with LISC's financial partner, Warsaw Federal, to leverage existing Village funds to alleviate the loan closing costs for folks with income below 80% AMI. I would like to thank LaChé Roach for her presentation and for answering our committee's questions regarding the program. We're excited to hear back from LaChé with more information to share broadly around the Village. I also would like to thank Auditor Miranda and Willow Lopez from the County Auditor's Office for their presentation today. I heard a rumor they are a great team to work with, and today's presentation confirmed that. I also want to thank Councilmember Jeff Edwards - I made a bet with my team at the office that Jeff would ask if I was a good coworker and he asked just that, so thank you. Our next Finance Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 15th at 6PM in the lower level of City Hall. The next Community Connect is scheduled for Thursday, October 2nd at 6PM in the lower level of City Hall. As always, all who live, work, or shop within the Village are welcome to attend to share any celebrations or concerns. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Service, Mr. Stuchell- The Waste Collection Fee Report for August 2025 shows that \$26,485.08 was remitted to the Village. As part of the Waste Collection Report for the month of August 2025, the Service Department completed the following:

- Spotted 36 dump trucks at residences.
- Spotted 35 dumpsters at residences.
- Hauled 188.55 tons of garbage to the landfill.
- Sent 26 tons of recyclable material to Rumpke Recycling.
- Recycled 4,860 pounds of scrap metal.
- Recycled 4 batteries.
- Responded to 8 nuisance property complaints, resulting in 6 properties being cut and billed by the Village. The remaining 2 were resolved by the property owners.

As another reminder as the fall season quickly approaches, the Service Department will operate the Leaf Truck from October 10th through December 5th. Residents with leaves prior to October

10th should place them in bags or cans for collection on their regular garbage days. We appreciate residents' cooperation in helping maintain a clean community. 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 report on an amazing presentation by Shane Meeker the corporate storyteller of the history, growth and corporate philosophies of The Procter and Gamble Company. Procter and Gamble was founded in 1837 by two brother-in-law's, one a candle maker and the other made soap. They came to Cincinnati for two reasons. First was the river to transport their goods and the second was the availability of byproducts from our local pork industry needed for both of their products. P and G grew over the years but really exploded in the late 1940's with the development of Tide. We were told that Tide is not soap but was a new technology that changed laundry day forever and this new technology has led to many new products including Crest toothpaste. We were told how product developers communicating with each other developed the Swiffer using two existing products Mr. Clean and Always. Who would have known? The philosophies that keep P and G growing are 1) to make a product that fixes a problem potential customers have and 2) even if their products are doing well, stay ahead of the competition by making your own product obsolete. Don't rest on your current success. These same philosophies can be applied to our Village. Study to see what our people (customers) need and look for ways to fill that need. We can also look at other villages(brands) and see if their ideas can work here. This presentation was amazing. I want to thank The St. Bernard - Ludlow Grove Historical Society for sponsoring another great program. The Historical Society meets the third Monday of each month at 7 pm in the main hall of our Municipal Building. All our welcome. Thank you, Mr. President this concludes my report.

Safety, Ms. Hausfeld- Thank you Mr. President. Tonight, I have the police department report. For the month of August, the Police Department had 628 calls for service resulting in 398 contacts. There were an additional 495 other services/details that were not necessarily called in by the public. These calls for service included:

27 Total Criminal Offenses and resulted in

54 Criminal Arrests

36 Traffic Citations including 10 for speed as well as 90 Traffic Warnings

They responded to 19 accidents as well as 24 requests for mutual aid.

News and Notes:

We'd like to thank everyone who attended our annual Steak Fry. The event was a huge success with almost all 700 tickets sold. If you were contacted after winning one of the numerous door prizes or raffle merchandise, please remember to pick those items up ASAP. Additionally, the Police Department has extended conditional offers of employment to two individuals that graduated from the police academy this month. Pending successful completion of a few more requirements, you should be seeing them real soon. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Laws, Contracts and Claims, Mr. Schildmeyer- Thank you Mr. President. As Valerie mentioned, we had a Law Contract and Claims meeting last night where we discussed changes to the tax ordinances. Valerie is going to be sending out language following the meeting the week of the 29th. We have a follow up meeting that will be held on October 7th at 6:00pm in Council

Chambers with the goal of having language ready for the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 9th. Thank you that concludes my report.

Marketing, Mr. Culbertson- Absent.

Business and Industry, Mr. Estep- Thank you Mr. President. I have no report, but I would like to say, I know in the past couple of weeks we've lost two lifelong citizens, Bob Wilking and Dave Saint Claire. If we already had a moment of silence for Bob, it's my apology. But if we gave a moment of silence for both those guys, I'd appreciate it. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Committee of the Whole, Ms. Stegman- Thank you Mr. President. The minutes for the last council meeting were submitted on Wednesday the 17th and I have no communications this evening.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Estep, to place Ordinance 24 2025 on the table for tonight's council meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 24, 2025

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD CODIFIED ORDINANCES
SECTION 182.17 REGARDING THE ASSESSMENT; APPEAL BASED ON PRESUMPTION
OF DELIVERY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Estep, to suspend with the 2nd and 3rd reading of Ordinance 24 2025. Motion passes 6-0.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Estep, to adopt Ordinance 24 2025. Motion passes 6-0.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- At this time, does anyone on council have anything under old business? New business?

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Edwards, to enter executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss pending litigation. Motion passes 6-0.

No audience participation.

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

Council enters executive session to discuss pending litigation.

Council returns from executive session after discussing pending litigation.

The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on October 9th at 7:00pm in Council Chambers.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Edwards, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned.