

THE VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

February 8th, 2024

The St. Bernard Village Committee of the Whole was held on February 8th, 2024, in Council Chambers.

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

A motion by Mr. Moreton, seconded by Mr. Estep, to approve the written minutes of the January 25th, 2024, council meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- I'd like to ask a favor of those in this room this evening and those that are out in our viewing community that you please keep Bill Helton in their prayers or maybe shed a little light on him. He's a special person and needs some help right now. Bill has wanted nothing more than to be able to come back to work and he's been a dedicated member of our service department and again, he really needs your help right now. Thank you. Today I was able to meet with the representatives from the ownership group from CAI Investments regarding the Saint Bernard soap property. I am hoping that good things will come that we will be able to share in the very near future. I've also started a dialogue with Alpine Terrace. I know that Councilman Estep has been in communication with some residents regarding the issues that they're seeing, but the Alpine Terrace Residents Association, the property management group, is willing to partner with us to try to work on the garbage and litter situation and get that under control. I will be meeting with the individuals to discuss these issues that affect the entire subdivision. So, this past Sunday, myself, Councilman Member Gus Stuchell and First Lady Darcy, got our steps in by cleaning up Girl Scout Lane and around Wendy's. I've been communicating with the property owners and the tenants to get the remaining portion or control on the backside of the building and the corner of Vine and Ross, as pointed out by other council members as well, the village does provide contract sweeping for a fee for the property owners which may need to be modified. I have made some progress. We have made some progress thanks to Mr. Paul and the removal of cardboard as the property owner is now paying for it so that it does not build up. And thank you. That concludes my report.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- I just have a couple things on the agenda tonight. First of all, the state auditor has started our audit and so far, it's going great. I will need an ordinance on the table. The first part is of it is just transferring umm see \$8,500 from the general fund to the criminal act forfeiture. We did not do that last time because they rarely used that line item, but they've decided to start using it now. So, we're going to have to do that so we can pay the bills out of that line. Then the Fire Chief came to me, they were able to get three of our newest firefighters in paramedic training. We didn't think there were going to be that many openings, but they opened up. So, he is asking for an additional 20,000 to 7-8-2A and 80,000 to 7-8-2, those are the training

and the paramedic programs. Then that will give us three more paramedics. He's here if you have any questions, the Fire Chief is here tonight. I met with Chris Sauer this week and we were going over some grants that we've received, and we would like to add it with the grant money coming in, we'd like to put an additional \$35,000 and O-1-5-8-9. Any questions?

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

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- The first up was proposed Ordinance 3 2024, which would authorize the solid waste collection fee for residential accounts for the year of 2024. And I do apologize, I'm looking at it again for the umpteenth time. I Found a typo in the word residential in the caption, so we'll get that cleaned up before our council meeting 2 weeks. But as I believe Mr. Paul addressed a couple of weeks ago, we have had this residential waste collection fee for several years. We would like to continue with it. It does help us with our costs, which are of course, as with everything else, are ever growing. The fee is just \$15.00 a month. I don't know if that's something you're still comfortable with or if we if you want to consider increase. I know. Mr. Tobergte was always very serious about not having an increase to that, but with the this has been the same amount for 6 years now. I'm happy to keep it at \$15 if that's still your preference, but I just want to get your input before we put it on the table. Again, that is Ordinance 3 2024. Any questions?

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- My only question is I understand that the \$15 amount was decided some years ago based off of meeting some sort of shortfall or deficit and it's my understanding that we no longer have that shortfall or deficit, but I do understand that the cost to dispose of the solid waste has also increased. Have we done the due diligence to compare that cost versus maybe changing that \$15 amount to something less?

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- I know I did not do that. I don't know if Mr. Paul has worked out those numbers.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Paul- I can add to that I didn't do the study; however, I do know that trash, this time last year was \$33 per ton. This year has gone to \$38 and two years from now the top at \$41. What happens after that I do not know. The \$15 came to be roughly what the service department needs for a packer, to cover fuel and recycling. At the time we were going right out to Sharonville. Republic went under, they now delivered to Rumpke. So, we don't have a choice but to drive all the way out there. So, with the \$15 in place, we're still covering basically fuel and the trash fee, but I'll have to, well you can do the math if we're at \$38 a ton. So, if we just pick the tonnage that it comes in a month. And you can see what we're paying. Then you add that together and you'll find your \$15 or whatever you want to change it to. As far as the contract with Cincinnati Water Works, that rolls over. You don't vote on that anymore. We're in the program. What you vote on is the trash fee itself. I would advise to keep it at \$15.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- Thank you for that additional context. I just think it's important that before we vote, we should actually crunch those numbers just so that we can reassure residents that we're not overcharging a fee. My best hunch, based off of what I've learned so far in the direction of the increased cost, is that \$15 is going to be justified. But I think we owe it to the residents to do that math ahead of time.

Auditor, Mr. Brickweg- I don't know if these numbers will help you or not. Last year we brought in \$308,987.83 through the waste collection fee. Just to run the service department, it costs over \$2 million. Then I hear the complaint about double taxation. Property tax for the village was \$819,000. I think that people are seeing their income tax bill, most of it goes to the school and they're thinking it's coming to us, and it doesn't. So, with the increases alone in gas, we our employees, they finally got some raises. I would think it could easily go up with the numbers. I'm going to be very honest. I think \$15 is very low. Some places pay \$45 a month for once a week pick up from Rumpke. They don't get any special pick-ups or anything like that. I think \$15 for what we have is beyond reasonable.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- Yes, I agree. That those numbers are very helpful because we can take that number, I believe I can reach out to you or look at past reports to get the waste tonnage, multiply that by the 15% increase and then we should be able to kind of compare the two. OK, perfect. Thank you, I have everything that I need.

Council Member, Mr. Edwards-I'd just like to ask, I am assuming the \$300,000 is already factored into the budget as well?

Auditor, Mr. Brickweg- Yes, it is.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- Also, I have before you Ordinance 4 2024, which would amend Section 123.01 B of codified ordinances. That has to do with placement of posting of ordinances, resolutions, statements, orders, proclamations, notices, and reports. Is required by law. There was a change in the law late last year. We need to come into compliance. They should be paced amongst or at a minimum by the following methods: On a website and social media account of the Municipal Corporation. My proposal is to placed them all on the village website and social media account for the Village of St. Bernard. That would be in addition to the other five places that we have currently for postings. The question I wanted to ask you tonight is, do we want to post them this way, or do we want to continue to keep posting them at the current locations? Do we want to keep all five locations? There was some concern Heidi had about how much time it was taking her to drive around to all five locations for postings. But I do think that is the best way for people in the village to see it. Especially for those who don't have access to a computer or internet. I know there are still people who don't. But I do want your input so we can get it on the table for the next council meeting. Any thoughts on keeping the five spots along with adding the social media account and the website?

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- It's kind of funny you brought that up because a lot of our neighbors have been out because it's nice and they're making fun of the box because they've never seen anybody look at the box in our neighborhood. It is in the middle of the park, and nobody looks at it and it's broken. I think maybe as a compromise and I think it would help Heidi a lot, if we went back to down to the Safety Center and this building, City Hall. Maybe I'm wrong, but I literally walk all the time. I've never seen anybody looking at those boards. I think most people have access to the internet. Most people have a smart phone these days. Plus, they can always come to City Hall. We have everything here. I would love to see us get a billboard like the schools have out front. I'm not sure where out front since it is a busy intersection, but I think that could be something we could look into in the future. Just a thought.

Council Member, Mr. Culbertson- Just to be clear, the Ohio Revised code is only asking for us to place it or posted it on the website or on the social media? Is that in addition to? One spot? 2 spots? You say 5 spots, but are any of those needed?

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- I can go back and double check. I looked at this a couple weeks ago. It is my recollection it was 7-31-21 and it was changed. Let me double check. Now that you ask me, I am drawing a complete blank. I mean, I wrote it the way I did thinking that you know, obviously we will want to include, in my opinion, the two locations Peggy did. But let me double check whether or not we need all five, because I'm so I'm just drawing a complete blank tonight.

Auditor, Mr. Brickweg- This is not really answering your question, but we were discussing at City Hall when Heidi brought it up because she does the records retention and the public announcements and from what she said, they're saying that you have to do these too and not the other ones, I think. I am just bringing that up, because in this day and age, this seems the most practical place to do it.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- That is my recollection, but I didn't bring the old version or the ordinance with me tonight or the old version of the Ohio Revised Code with me, so I don't have it to lay out and review. It's my recollection from when I drafted this a couple weeks ago. With that it did not know. It did not require posting as we had been doing. But I will double check and let you know via email.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- So, I have a question on that. We go by that or if we go with these two forms of notification as well as if we want to put it on the board, that's up front. Does that have to be in the ordinance also?

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- We will have to amend the current ordinance and add these posting places and take out any of the other places, the 5 spots that are existing. I think keeping the Safety Center and City Hall makes sense, but I want to be sure about any other spots in the community. I also have ordinance 5 2024. Which would amend Section 145.01 of the Code. Ordinances 5 2024, the village of Saint Bernard, regarding the position of the Director of Public Service and Safety. Basically, the way our ordinance currently reads is very similar to what you see quoted in section one, but it does provide that the individual who accepts the position of director shall move to Saint Bernard within a period specified period of months, that is not required under Ohio law. And. This does hinder our hands somewhat in attracting the best and the brightest to apply for this kind of position. The mayor and I agree because like I said the laws in the ORC have changed. So basically ORC 145 just kind of updates the language. Gender specific language and eliminates the requirement of residency.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to place Ordinances 3,4,5 2024 on the table for the next council meeting. Motion passed 6-0.

Treasurer, Mr. Ungruhe- Absent, no report.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Paul- No report.

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

- Tax collections for January 2023: \$680,785.00
- January 2024 is down -3.95% or -\$28,000 from January 2023.
- Refunds for January \$25,735.32
- Delinquent tax collected with Capital Recovery: \$423.97
- Delinquent tax collected with the Ohio Attorney General's Office: \$8,745.43

E-file portal is up and running and tax returns are due by April 25th,2024. If you have any questions, you can reach me at 513-242-7710.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Finance, Mr. Moreton- I had the privilege of attending the State of the County address this past Tuesday where I heard about Hamilton County's accomplishments and their direction in 2024. I want to share with you all just a few key highlights on their investments: Although we are proud of our own state-of-the-art Safety Center, it's important for our residents to feel safe even when they leave the Village. I was happy to learn that nearly \$100 million was invested in public safety with an emphasis on infrastructure development all around the county. Other funds in the amount of over \$100 million were dedicated to aid Hamilton County residents facing economic hardship. These funds will continue to help aid those affected by unforeseen hardship including hikes in property taxes. The Commissioners emphasized this as a path towards more affordable home ownership. For seniors specifically, the county boasted a \$1 million commitment to helping seniors with critical home repairs. Like our Village's leadership, the county is dedicated to supporting small businesses. They awarded over \$17.8 million in small business grants through the development of the county's Small Business Committee powered by Alloy Development and plan to hold the next Hamilton County Small Business Convention sometime in May. The 513 Relief bus, which offered dozens of services to folks around the county in 2023, is expanding to offer even more services such as Cancer screenings, dental work, and expungement support. For the first time ever, the county has designated funds to hire an Environmental Sustainability Manager so we can feel confident that our water and air are clean and healthy. Lastly, \$3 million was invested into community revitalization grants, including the over \$300,000 awarded to our Village. I want to thank our County Commissioners, Alicia Reece, Denise Driehaus, and Stephanie Summerow Dumas for their leadership. I'm looking forward to better connecting these resources with our Village. I also want to thank those who attended the February Community Connect. The March Community Connect is scheduled for March 7th at 5:30PM at Wiedemann's. As always, all are welcome to attend.

Service, Mr. Stuchell- I'd like to remind everyone that applications for seasonal employment at the same Park Service department are available for pick up at City Hall or online on the village website. Individuals over the age of 16 possessing about driver's license are invited to apply. The due date for submitting applications is next Monday, February 12th. Lastly, the service

department will be closed on Monday, February 19th in observance of Presidents Day. Trash collection for that week will be as follows: Normal Monday collection will be shifted to the Tuesday normal. Tuesday collection will be shifted to Wednesday. Trash recycling collection for Thursday, Friday, we'll remain unchanged.

Public Improvements, Mr. Edwards- No report.

Safety, Ms. Hausfeld- From January, the Police Department had 725 calls for service, resulting in 559 contacts. There were an additional 577 other services details that were not necessarily called in by the public. These calls for service include 56 total criminal offences, resulting in 88 criminal arrests. 43 traffic citations and 100 traffic warnings. Of these traffic contacts, 43 were primarily for speed and three were for OVI's. They responded to 14 accidents as well as far as a special news and note report from the Police Department. With the approval of the Saint Bernard Elmwood Place School District, the police and fire departments were able to combine forces and participate in active Shooter and rescue Task Force training in the old high school building. The final pieces of equipment are being added to the new cruisers, and you should be seeing it out on patrol very shortly. The same goes for our motorcycle. Look for it out and about soon as the weather breaks.

Laws, Contracts and Claims, Mr. Schildmeyer- Absent.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- I do believe Laws, Contracts and Claims has a meeting this Tuesday the 13th at 7:00pm in Council Chambers.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- Yes, it is the 13th. We will be discussing short-term rentals, front yard gardens, Council Code of Ethics and Golf Cart Community.

Marketing, Mr. Culbertson- The Secret Garden Club is holding their February monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 13th at 6:00 PM in Centennial Hall. All are welcome to attend and now is a perfect time to join the club before the spring planting season starts. The first meeting for the 2024 Saint Bernard German Luau is Tuesday, February 20th at 6:00 PM, also in Centennial Hall. The committee is always looking for more residents to get involved and joining us for a meeting is a great place to start, so please mark your calendars now for this year's annual event which will take place. On August 2nd, August 3rd, I'm sure I'll remind you a few more times about that.

Business and Industry, Mr. Estep- A lot of my questions have been answered before the meeting by the mayor. I appreciate that. I get a lot of questions when I walk the neighborhood, a lot of questions at the Eagles. I think some people think we hold the council meeting at the Eagles sometimes. My questions for the mayor, as he answered, as I mentioned, about the dumpsters at Chalet and Hegar, the garbage down there. The pallets in the backyard of 424 E Ross Ave. and the garbage on the hillside of Shur Fine and as he mentioned we have our own guys that clean up that lot and by the time they get there a lot of its blown on the hillside. I appreciate him, Darcy and Gus cleaning Girl Scout Lane last week. I went down just today and met with the reps from CES. It's a new electrical supply company at Kieley and Ross. I invited them to the next council meeting to tell us more about their new company.

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

Nicole Klungle, 551 Church Street- was wondering if the service committee had discussed any type of sliding scale or waiver for trash collection fees for people with fixed incomes?

Council Member, Mr. Stuchell- That can be something we talk about at the next meeting, but Mr. Paul can elaborate on or about how sliding scale would actually work and the only person I believe that would be able to determine that would be the tax department I believe.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- Let me chime in and answer that. I cannot by law divulge that information regarding incomes. Sunshine Law protects that and also federal law. I can be charged with a federal crime by divulging that information.

Nicole Klungle, 551 Church Street- Ms. Helmes, can you stamp yes or no on an application without disclosing income?

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- I would have to discuss that with Valerie and maybe some other cities and with some maybe outside counsel because I've never heard of it before. It doesn't mean it can't happen, but I would have to discuss that with Valerie and look into it.

Nicole Klungle, 551 Church Street- I'd be interested. Also, I was wondering if there's a safety committee meeting planned?

Council Member, Ms. Hausfeld- No ma'am. I have talked to both the Police Chief and the Fire Chief and told them that when there was something they needed me to bring up and discuss, then I would plan the meeting. Thank you.

Auditor, Mr. Brickweg- Uh. Nicole, I was just curious on the garbage because it's only \$15.00 a month. Yeah? What would be the scale of somebody that couldn't afford \$15.00 a month for? What would that look like?

Nicole Klungle, 551 Church Street- I don't know if you remember this. But when the original trash fee was proposed, a few people came up to speak before council saying that they were on a fixed income, to the point that they had to use a food bank to feed themselves for the last week of the month, every month, and they were only putting out like a small amount of trash. I feel like waiver would be appropriate for people who are in that kind of position.

Auditor, Mr. Brickweg- Ok. Yeah, I remember that there were like 3 people. And so, I guess my question is. I don't know how we determine that? I'm going to be very blunt here. I don't want to see a massive amount of work done. I'm sorry. I do remember those three people. But I think out of the it's some point you look at the entire community, you look at the price of the services. And I truly believe somebody can afford \$15.00 a month and you and I can be criticized for that. Maybe if those people can come in and talk to us or something. I don't want to see a ton of work added onto Ms. Helmes for her to possibly get in trouble. I would love some input from others, but do we really believe \$15 is too much for trash pick-up?

Nicole Klungle, 551 Church Street- I think for some people it may be.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Well we would have to figure out how they would prove it without breaking the law. I think we could look into this and figure it out, but I would not hold off on signing this ordinance. I think this ordinance need to go through.

Nicole Klungle, 551 Church Street- Yes, I am not condoning any law breaking.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- Sounds like we will be looking into it.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Can I be considered in the audience for one thing? I need to remind the CIC mowing bids are still being accepted. Packets are available here at City Hall and are accessible on our most recent newsletter. If you're able to print them off, the bids are due by Monday, February 26 by 5:00 PM here in City Hall and a reminder the next CIC meeting will be on Tuesday, February 27th at 6:00 PM here in Council Chambers.

Motion made by Mr. Stuchell, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to excuse the absent member. Motion passed 6-0.

** Four ordinances for the next council meeting:

- Transfer/Appropriation
- Waste Collection
- Amend Section 143.01b
- Amend Section 145.01 of the Codified Ordinances

Next Council Meeting will be held Thursday, February 22nd at 7:00pm in Council Chambers.

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

Meeting is adjourned.