

**BELLEFONTAINE CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025
7:30 pm**

CALL TO ORDER: Zeb Wagner
PLEDGE & INVOCATION:
ROLL CALL: Fitzpatrick *First Chair*
James
Reser
Springs
Aler
Baker
Davis *Minister* All Present

SUSPENSION READING OF MINUTES: Moved by Springs, seconded by Aler V All Ayes

CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS: none

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS:

Mayor - In regards to Ord. 24-31 the Mayor states “This is a very contentious annexation. We know the intended purpose of this property is for a solar farm. Many residents of Bellefontaine and surrounding the city are opposed to solar farms. Lake Twp and the county commissioners have also said no to solar farms. Also, the city operates on income tax, not property tax, not sales tax. As the property sets now, we will not receive a great amount of income tax and the number of jobs this solar farm will produce is minimal. Allowing this to proceed with the contention of solar farms in the county and the low benefit to the city, I do not think this is the best for the city of Bellefontaine to have a solar farm inside the city limits. With these reasons, at this time, I do not feel that I can sign this request for annexation.”

S/SD- Thanks the DBP, Ms. Stotler, Chamber, volunteers and first responders for a great event downtown on Saturday. Good to see all the people downtown.

Law - No report

Auditor - No report

Police Chief - June 21st will be the last piece in the process for sergeant vacancy and at that point we will promote two officers to the position of sergeant.
The cruiser on order should be built this week.

Fire Chief – We had a successful downtown business appreciation cook out and a good turnout for Pineapple Palooza.
Happy to say that 10 candidate interviews were completed yesterday. The list will be established and certified.
The second week of Safety Town has been completed.

Engineer- No report

Utilities- Not present

Parks & Rec- Not present

Economic Dev- Had the opportunity to go to the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission event which brings in 50 college interns. Spoke with interns about plans and many are basing their plans on what apartments look like. Became clear that they would not consider our community because we do not have this. Appreciate all the efforts of Council and Administration to continue to bring housing to our area. The piece that is still missing is the need for a multifamily apartment complex. Encourages council to take seriously and to welcome these opportunities.
Regarding the annexation, not for or against solar. Questions have come up for economic development purposes. Have had Jobs Ohio requests for this property and have submitted our advice on this site. Industry is looking for places that have heavy power, transmission lines and rail service. Jobs Ohio did identify this property as having potential. Questions answered.

Downtown Dir- Not present

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Finance – Explained ordinances/resolution on the agenda.
Rules - Explained ordinance on the agenda.

Safety - No report
Utilities - No report
Streets - The committee met on June 3rd at 10:30 with no action taken.
Sidewalks, Curbs & Parks -No report
Audit – No report

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS: Don Mitchell, Cty Rd. 218, questions what has been done to keep up with the growth of the city. Fire department and first responders are needed to keep up with the growth. Since his retirement in 2003 from the fire department, there has been only one man added per shift. The fire department has to call mutual aid to take care of situations. Also, the solar field will not produce revenue for the City. The county did not want this so they are now trying with the city. A council member works for and rents an apartment from Mr. Duff's son. Section 2921.42 of the Ohio Revised Code addresses this. (reads this) Since this person did not abstain from voting, is this legislation for annexation legal? Thanks Mr. Springs and Mr. Aler for using good judgement and listening to the people.

Sue Neer, 3743 Logan Rd., supports the annexation. A lot of people support the annexation but are not as loud, mean or nasty about it. Most or all reasons against solar are wrong or outdated. New technologies are making these projects better. Very minimal homes are not in view of the site and the developers have agreed to build fences to block their view. This is a prime location for this type of project. Growth of our town is happening. Schools are at capacity. Need additional funds for the police, fire and schools. Tired of taxes going up. Trust the owners to do what is right. Track record of these people speaks for itself.

Sara Schmeeder, 2068 TR 56. Only 32 acres of this land is a quarry the rest of it is farmland. Solar farms are detrimental to the environment and to wildlife. The life of a solar farm is 25-30 years. Who will clean up the mess after 25-30 years. Mr. Duff will not clean this up. They are an eyesore, and we don't need this in our community. The people of Lake Township have said no. Why do we have elected officials if they go against the will of the people. Urges council to listen to the will of the people.

Brenda Carpenter, 3583 CR 91, thanks Mr. Aler and Mr. Springs for voting no against solar. They care and will fight for the people. Numerous people have opposed this solar farm project. Lake Township trustees have voted against it because the people they represent did not want this. Now they are trying to go through the back door and using council for their own good. Council is sending a direct message to the people that they do not have the people's backs. Asks that Council represent citizens and vote no.

Scott Duff, 9085 O'Connors Point Dr. , just asking for annexation to put this property into the City of Bellefontaine. We are not trying to hide that we may present solar as a possible project or maybe warehouses or data centers. But this needs to be annexed into the city so we can follow the rules and regulations. Only asking for one thing and that is to annex into the City of Bellefontaine so we can follow the city's rules and regulations.

Christian Gilligan, Bailey Cavalieri Law Firm, 10 W. Broad Street, Columbus, thanks Council for their time and consideration of the annexation ordinance and respectfully requests that it be approved this evening.

Terri Lamb, 2174 TR 56, bought this property 15 years ago. Two teenage drivers in her household and the trucks fly up and down the road. Who will fix these roads. The township has already said no. The railroad track is bad. Worry about her kids driving with all the trucks flying down the road. No one has planted this field for the last 3 years when solar discussion started. There was planting in the previous 12 years. Is the city going to pay for the railroad and road repair. That land is in Indian Lake school district. Who will get the money for this. Thanks Mr. Aler and Mr. Springs for voting no.

Beth Brentlinger, 202 TR 190, two beautiful homes will have to look out their windows and see this rolling hill turned into a rolling hill of horrid solar farms. No one would want this for their home. They will surround these homes.

Will Heinig, 2180 TR 56, his home will be one of the homes that borders the solar farms. Would ask for a response to Mr. Mitchell's comments considering growth of the city. Moved here from Madison to buy farmland to raise his family in the country. He does not want the city going around the township and taking this land. If there is a solar project, will this make Bellefontaine more attractive or less attractive to the people we are trying to attract to our community?

Mrs. James clarifies for all that what is before us this evening is R1 residential single family zoning which does not allow principal use solar.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

1. ORDINANCES FOR 1ST READING

- 25-35 A. AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND AMENDING THE PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE FOR PURPOSES OF PARKS, POOL AND FIRE DEPARTMENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. **FINANCE**
- 3RR- Moved by Springs, seconded by Baker V All Ayes
 Passage-
 Adoption-
- 25-36 B. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR AND/OR PARKS SUPERINTENDENT TO SEEK PROPOSALS AND/OR ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT FOR THE HARMON PARK PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. **FINANCE**
- 3RR- Moved by Springs, seconded by Reser V All Ayes
 Passage-
 Adoption-
- 25-37 C. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR AND/OR PARKS SUPERINTENDENT TO SEEK PROPOSALS AND/OR ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT FOR THE DESIGN OF THE NEW HOFFMAN MUNICIPAL SWIMMING POOL PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. **FINANCE**
- 3RR- Moved by Springs, seconded by Aler V All Ayes
 Passage-
 Adoption-
- R25-38 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR AND/OR BELLEFONTAINE MUNICIPAL COURT BAILIFF TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A \$5,000 GRANT AWARD FROM WAL-MART. **FINANCE**
- Adoption- Moved by Springs, seconded by Baker V All Ayes
- 2. ORDINANCES FOR 2ND READING**
- 25-32 A. AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND AMENDING THE PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE FOR PURPOSES OF PARKS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. **FINANCE**
- 3RR- Moved by Springs, seconded by Fitzpatrick V All Ayes
 Passage-
 Adoption-
- 3. ORDINANCES FOR 3RD READING**
- 25-28 A. AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AND PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION FOR MUNICIPAL COURT PROSECUTOR COVERAGE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. **FINANCE**
- Adoption- Moved by Springs, seconded by Baker V All Ayes
- 25-31 B. AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING APPLICATION FOR ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN TERRITORY/ REAL ESTATE TO THE CITY OF BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO, CONTAINING 200.827 ACRES OWNED BY DUFF QUARRY, INC., LOCATED IN LAKE TOWNSHIP ADJACENT TO THE CITY OF BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO, ESTABLISHING ZONING CLASSIFICATION THEREFORE, AND AMENDING THE ZONING MAP. **RULES**
- Adoption- Moved by James, seconded by Baker V All Ayes

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CLERK: Received a liquor license transfer from Village Variety Store, 200 E Sandusky Ave. to Bellefontaine OPS at the same address. If no objections, this will be mailed.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL: Mr. Springs asks that the Rules Committee and the Police Department look into kids riding motorized scooters and bicycles that are terrorizing the downtown area. There have been numerous accidents. After consideration, President Wagner assigns this to the Safety Committee.

President Wagner addresses the Mayor's comments and the vote of 5-2 on Ordinance 25-31 regarding the annexation of the Duff property. He refers to Council Rule 22 which mirrors Revised Code Section 731.27. "Our rule says that every ordinance or resolution will, before it goes into effect, be presented to the mayor for approval. The mayor if he approves such ordinance or resolution will sign it and return it to council. If he does not approve it he will within 10 days after passage or adoption return it with his objections to council or if council is not in session to the next regular meeting.

Objections of the mayor will be entered into the journal. The mayor may approve or disapprove the whole or any item of an ordinance appropriating money. If he does not return such ordinance or resolution within time limited herein it will take effect in the same manner as if he had signed it and less counsel by its adjournment prevents its return. When the mayor disapproves an ordinance or resolution or any part thereof and returns it with his objections, the council may after 10 days reconsider if such an ordinance/resolution or item upon reconsideration is approved by a 2/3 vote of all members elected it will then take effect as if signed by the Mayor".

In light of the Mayor's comments, after today, he has 10 days to provide council with his written objections. (Asks that the Mayor provide these to the Clerk and the President by city email) at which point we will reconsider at the next meeting in June. At that meeting, the ordinance will take 5 votes to overrule what the Mayor vetoes.

Upon receipt of the written objections of the Mayor, the Clerk will add this to the meeting of June 24th.

This will be added in the category of "Ordinances for Reconsideration" at the end of Ordinances for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Reading. Questions answered.

ADJOURNMENT – 8:16 pm moved by Aler, seconded by Fitzpatrick

Bonnie Hosier, Clerk of Council

Zeb Wagner, President of Council