

**CITY OF BEL-RIDGE  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR  
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2019  
6:00 PM**

This meeting was called to order by Mayor Fair at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A ceremonial swearing of the new Board of Aldermen Alan Whitaker (Ward 1), Jerome Robinson (Ward 2), and Henry Watts (Ward 3) took place by City Clerk, Andrea Jones. Attendance was called by City Clerk, Andrea Jones.

Mayor Fair makes statement to congratulate the new Board Members.

Roll Call:

Alderman Abernathy- Present      Alderman Watts- Present      Alderman Tope- Present  
Alderman Ruff- Present      Alderman Whitaker- Present      Alderman Robinson- Present  
Mayor Fair- Present

City Attorney Kevin O'Keefe also present.

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BEL-RIDGE REGARDING BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATURE CHANGES AT ST. JOHN'S BANK AND TRUST**

Attorney of O'Keefe motioned to adopt to be in order

1<sup>st</sup> motion by Alderman Watts and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alderwoman Abernathy.

Roll Call:

Abernathy- yes  
Watts- yes  
Tope- yes  
Ruff- yes  
Whitaker- yes  
Robinson- yes

Motioned Passed

**PRESENTATION FROM EBONI HOOPER FROM ST. LOUIS RECAST GRANT**

RECAST (Resilience in Communities After Stress and Trauma) is a 5yr. grant that is currently in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, and was rewarded to the department by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services).

Recast targets all residents that live within the Promise Zone and Bel-Ridge is in that Zone, which is a federally funded area in North County. It is all about getting community members that reside

in the promise zone engaged in the decision-making process of how RECAST spend its money. The four priorities are: Mental Health, Peer Support, Youth Engagement, and Violence Prevention.

Residents will be the ones to come up with the project ideas and decide which local organizations get funded to bring to life. Currently RECAST is in the process of recruiting community members to become community delegates to decide on the projects for year 4.

Alderman Watts asked for an example of what they did in year 3? An organization funded this year was a group by the name of Employment Connection. They are a job readiness program that help people build resumes, help prepare people for job interviews, help people that have been incarcerated, and also helps them with clothing. Another organization that is being funded this year is called CHIPS. They are a peer/ student mentorship, that trains local high school students. In year 2 they funded 13 small organizations of \$20,000 apiece. One of which was Annie Malone.

#### **VOTE TO APPOINT PRESIDENT OF BOARD**

Mayor nominated Alderman Tope to be President of the Board and asked for a motion and a second.

Alderman Robinson motions and Alderwoman Abernathy seconds the motion.

Voice vote

All in favor / Zero oppose

#### **Motion Passed**

#### **ALDERMAN TOPE DISCUSS TRANSCRIPT ON PENDING LAWSUIT WITH SPRINGWOOD APARTMENTS**

Alderman Tope makes a motion to authorize the City Attorney to order transcript of the Administrative Hearing regarding the apartment complex at a cost of approximately \$1000. Alderwoman Abernathy makes second motion.

Roll Call

Abernathy- Yes

Watts- Yes

Tope- Yes

Ruff- Yes

Whitaker- Yes

Robinson- Yes

6 Yes/ 0 No

#### **Motion Passed**

Alderman Watts asked about status on Springwood Apartments and Attorney O'Keefe explained where city is at and what is needed.

## **ALDERMAN TOPE SPEAKS ON THE AUDIO AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS IN CITY HALL**

It makes visitors, employees and officials uneasy and concerned that their activities may be constantly monitored and recorded and concerned about who may have access to that information. To improve morale and allow employees and citizens a greater peace of mind, Alderman Tope makes a motion that the Chief of police be directed to cause any and all audio and video surveillance systems in the municipal complex to be suspended immediately in all areas other than the police department offices, prisoner processing and holding areas, and evidence storage areas; and , further that the Chief of Police and the company that installed and services the system immediately file a report with the board, through the City Clerk, detailing (A) all areas inside and outside the municipal complex which are subject to surveillance; (B) specifications for the system installation and operations; (C) Data as to how and by whom any surveillance information or recordings may be accessed, and (D) a report as to each instance between April 1, 2018, to the present when any information recorded by the system was accessed including, but not limited to specific details as to what information was accessed, by whom and for what purpose.

Alderman Tope makes a motion to suspend all audio and camera in the Municipal Complex and City Hall except Police Department Offices. Alderwoman Abernathy seconds the motion.

### **Roll Call**

Abernathy – Yes  
Watts- Yes  
Tope- Yes  
Ruff- No  
Whitaker- Yes  
Robinson- Yes

5 yes/ 1 no

### **Motion Passed**

### **Open to the Public**

Marilyn Martin- 8728 Marcella

Concerned about the lack of School Zones and speed limit signs on Marcella. Concerned as to why don't we have any signs up?

Cary from public works mentioned St. Thomas is closing at end of month and that should cut down on traffic.

Darryl Robinson- 3537 St. Henry

Concerned about people trespassing and cutting through yards from St. Henry to Trumbell. Also, spoke about trash cans still sitting out, several derelict cars sitting in drive ways no license plates and would like for City to take a look at this.

Julia Anderson- 3319 Werder

Asked if Apartments are still leasing to people and collecting money, and wanted to know if City will be stopping them from doing that?

Also noticed that there was a \$200 credit card purchase and wanted to know if it was stopped from being used by Mayor?

A gentleman in the room from Local 42, a video that Julia took, was the one passing out paper with rumors about breaking up the police department.

Also concerned about the city speed limit is 20 mph and need to be posted.

Alderman Robinson states to Mr. Winston that a house across from his residence has never had an inspection for anyone to move in. Due to a storm, a tree fell over on a lady's house and the owner of that lot was never notified. Mr. Winston was not aware of it. Mayor asked that Mr. Winston take a look at it. Location is Maybelle and St. Henry.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF APRIL 2019 BILLS**

**Alderman Watts makes motion of acknowledgment of April bills paid. Alderman Abernathy seconds.**

#### **Voice Vote**

All in favor, no oppose

Motion Passed

#### **Committee Reports**

**Code Enforcement-** Mr. Winston received ten requests for inspections for vacant apartments and four mechanical permit applications from Springwood. He is waiting to see if he can go ahead and approve from board for Apartments to proceed.

Attorney O'Keefe suggested that Mr. Winston go ahead and get them started on permits.

Alderman Whitaker asked Mr. Winston to explain process of when he requires payments on permits from City.

**Parks-** Alderwoman Abernathy asked for any input that can help with summer programs or activities for kids to keep them off computer and bring them outdoors to be more active.

Alderman Watts suggests the board get together and designate Aldermen to collect information for Committee Reports.



Mayor Fair makes a statement to Local 42 Representative in audience about the rumors of getting rid of the police department. Mayor Fair states "I never said anything about getting rid of the police Department."

Alderman Watts mentions he has been a resident for some years and Bel-Ridge has always had their own Police Department since 1985 and there has been no discussion that we would outsource the Bel-ridge Police Department. It has been asked and they have been told NO. Alderman Watts read same notice that was put out, and concerned why someone would spread rumors.

Alderman Tope called the number on the flyer and spoke to the Union Rep and he admitted that someone told him from police department along with other people about doing away with Police department, but wouldn't give any names. Alderman Tope told the Rep. the professional way would have been to call the Mayor and introduce himself and ask for a meeting to talk about it instead of spreading rumors that are not true.

Chief Harris stated that police in this department cares about the community. The rumors hurt the improvement, because no one wants to come work with us. This brings more of a challenge to the policemen. Our policemen are committed to this city. We invite anyone to come ride with the department to see what all we do.

Asst. Chief Martin is working together with Northwoods Police Department and hopefully getting the Northeast Fire Department also, once school is out, to hold a Children's Book Fair/ Book Reading for ages 2-9yrs old. Once a confirmed date is set, flyers will be made and put out and posting on website. If anyone has small children books to donate, please put to the side.

Alderman Watts mentions Bel-ridge Newsletter needs to be revived. Mayor asked the City Clerk to make a note of that.

Alderman Ruff makes a motion to adjourn and Alderman Watts makes second.

Voice Vote

All in Favor

Motion Passed to Adjourn at 7:00pm.

The meeting minutes were taken and transcribed by City Clerk, Andrea Jones.

The May 7<sup>th</sup>, Board meeting minutes were approved by the Board this 5<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2019.

Andrea Jones  
City Clerk

