

**February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

Roll call was taken with council members: James, Hogue, Legge, Lowery, Penny and Matthews were present. Village Officers: Mayor Houchin, Village Administrator Bingham, Fiscal Officer Ridder and Solicitor Stratton were present.

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 was made by council person Lowery, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person James, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Legge, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person Penny, all approved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for January 2026 was made by council Hogue, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person Matthews, all approved.

The Village received a total of \$920 in Donation for the Memory of Don Houchin. Council has decided to use the funds to replace Christmas light displays that are put up along Buckeye and Main Streets during the holidays.

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Logan County Sewer District contract update

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Administrator Bingham discussed the ongoing contract negotiations with the Logan Sewer District and the last meeting took place on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Belle Center was represented by Mayor Houchin, Solicitor Stratton, Administrator Bingham and Brian Mitsch from the Engineering firm of Moot and associates. For the Sewer District, Director Brian Shultz, Assistant Prosecutor Breanne Parcels and a representative from Choice One Engineering were present. The meeting was heated at times with both sides becoming confrontational. No decisions were made and the conflict continues.

Administrator Bingham, gave an overview of the original problems between the Village and the Sewer district with some history for any Village residents who may not be aware of the long history between the Village and the Logan County Sewer District and the current situation.

In the early 2000's the Village of Belle Center took out a loan for \$1.8 million dollars and built the sewer, which was paid by Village residents and the loan paid off in July of 2023. The sewer waste is then pumped to the Logan County Sewer District for treatment, as the Village does not have a treatment plant of their own. A 20-year contract was signed between the Village and the Sewer District, which has now expired.

As part of that contract, the Village currently pays \$21.50 per Belle Center residential hookup of 379, for a total of \$8,148 per month. Our residents pay \$55.70 dollars per month to the Village of which \$21.50 goes to the Logan County Sewer District for waste treatment and the remainder is for maintenance of the local system for equipment and staff salary. The Village sewer system has 287 grinder pumps which take continued maintenance and upkeep.

Since 2022 attempts for the Village and the Sewer District to come to a new contract have failed. The Logan County Commissioners passed a rate increase of 5.5% to the full Logan County Sewer District

system in their October 10, 2025 meeting for all residents to pay \$53.25 per month. Belle Center would pay 50% of the \$53.25 rate for waste treatment, as we maintain our own system equipment. This is a 19% increase to the Village but Administrator Bingham and the Village Council approve of the increase as long as it is tied to the counties base residential rate of 50% of \$53.25 . At this time the residents of Belle Center will continue to pay \$55.70 per month for their sewer service.

Brian Shultz, has proposed an alternative, volume rate charge, to the Village of Belle Center which will amount to a 45% increase to the waste treatment cost. Administrator Bingham and the Village Council have protested against this unfair increase by the Sewer District.

The immediate problem now is that the waste pumping station, on Elizabeth Street, on Village land but maintained by the district, is in real need of repair and updating.

The Logan County Sewer District wants to greatly expand the pumping station in Belle Center. The proposed estimate is \$1.1 million, for 60 hp pumps, and Shultz has said that Belle Center residents should directly pay for it. The Village Administration and Council questions why the pumping station needs to be greatly expanded, from its current 35 hp pumps. Village Administrator Bingham believes that the County District wants a bigger pumping station because it is having issues farther up the line that a bigger station in Belle Center would fix. Over 40 thousand feet of sewer main leaves Belle Centers lift station toward the county treatment plant. On the way several areas hook into the line including but not limited to: North Fork, Longview Cove and the Village of Huntsville. Bingham believes this is why the county wants a bigger pumping station in Belle Center. He also said that the pumping station in Belle Center could be rehabilitated for a cost of around \$500 thousand dollars. And if Logan County Sewer District needs bigger pumps for the discharge line, then it needs to establish an additional station in the area of 273 and 117.

It is also believed that the county does not want an additional pumping station near the lake because of the smell. A pumping station at O'Conner's point, in the past, was closed due to complaints by residents of the smell. But yet a bigger station is "needed" in Belle Center without regard for our residents having to endure the smell.

Administrator Bingham and the Council of Belle Center further feel that any capital expansion of the Logan County Sewer Districts pumping station should be passed to the enter county system and not just the Belle Center Village residents. This would be consistent with previous Logan County Sewer District capital expense practices.

**The Village of Belle Center Administration and Council believe that the Logan County Commissioners need to bring this disagreement to a close. We need to negotiate a common-sense contract with the Logan County Sewer District for the removal of the waste from the Belle Centers sewer system at a fair rate. And that any cost for a new pumping station should not be applied directly to Belle Center residents but the county system as a whole.**

Attached to this document is a map of the sewer line from the county's "Sanitary Sewer Study, Evaluation of Belle Center Force Main" 12/12/2025

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Fiscal Officer Ridder presented a Supplemental Appropriations Resolution 2026-02 for \$25,000.00. Ridder explained that it was omitted from the original budget in error due to a calculation error, this will fix that. Mayor Houchin called for a motion to pass this resolution, council person Lowery made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Penny, all approving.

At 7:44 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person Lowery, 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person James, all approved.

Next council meeting is March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 7:00 PM.



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Lance Houchin, Mayor



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Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

**January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

Mayor Houchin said that two council position are open as of the first of January and he would accept motions:

\*Council member James made a motion to appoint Megan Hogue to the Village Council, 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person Penny, a roll call vote resulted in all voting yes.

\*Council member Legge made a motion to appoint Joe Matthews to the Village Council, 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person James, a roll call vote resulted in all voting yes.

Solicitor Stratton then administered the oath of office to Council Members Hogue and Matthews.

Roll call was taken with council members: James, Hogue, Legge, Lowery, Penny and Matthews were present. Village Officers: Mayor Houchin, Village Administrator Bingham, Fiscal Officer Ridder and Solicitor Stratton were present.

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 was made by council person Lowery, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person Legge, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person James, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person Penny, all approved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for December 2025 was made by council Hogue, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person Matthews, all approved.

Mayor Houchin discussed the ongoing contract negotiations with the Logan Sewer District and the next meeting is set for January 20<sup>th</sup>.

We had a water main break on Center Street last month with resulted in water for the town being temporary shut off. A water boil alert was also issued and the water test came back clean.

Fiscal Officer Ridder presented the final 2025 Fund Summary report to council and said that the numbers look very good and our fund balances are doing well.

Administrator Bingham presented Council with resolution 2026-1 "An Ordinance adjusting the Utility Fees for Water, Sewer, Garbage and Capital Improvement" as follows:

Resident Inside Village	Old Rate	Increase	New Rate
Water	\$12.42	\$0.23	\$12.65
Sewer	\$55.71	\$ (.01)	\$55.70
Sewer w/ Electric Cr	\$42.98	\$0.02	\$43.00
Garbage	\$18.14	\$0.36	\$18.50
Capital Improvement	\$13.80	\$0.00	\$13.80
Resident Outside Village			
Water	\$16.03	\$0.32	\$16.35
Garbage	\$22.16	\$0.44	\$22.60
Bulk Water	\$13.24	\$0.26	\$13.50

Dumpster rates increase by 2%, rates were rounded to nearest .05 and

a \$2.00 monthly credit will give given to any resident who receives their bill by email.

Mayor Houchin called for a motion to pass this resolution on one reading and on an emergency measure, council person Legge made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Matthews, a roll call vote resulted in all approving. Mayor Houchin then called for the approval of the resolution, council person Penny made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person James, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

In attendance was Aaron Smith of the Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission. Belle Center has been a long-time member of the LUC. Smith said that they are helping members to review and update their zoning laws, Belle Centers were last reviewed in the 1990's. The Village will need to appoint a zoning board of appeals to begin the review process. Council discussed updating the zoning map this year and reviewing the zoning laws next year, no decision was made.

Council Member Legge told council that the Veterans Memorial Foundation received a \$2,500 grant from the Logan County Visitors Bureau for the monuments project.

Administrator Bingham told council of the need to repair and replace part of the water main in the spring. This would result in having to temporarily shut of water to the town. Bingham said that we would plan this well in advance and notify the Village residents accordingly.

At 7:40 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person Lowery, 2<sup>nd</sup> by council person James, all approved.

Next council meeting is February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 7:00 PM.



Lance Houchin, Mayor



Joe Bidder, Fiscal Officer