September 8th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on September 8th, 2026 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

Roll call was taken with council members: James, Hogue, Legge, Penny, Lowery and Matthews were present. Village Officers: Mayor Houchin, Solicitor Carothers and Fiscal Officer Ridder were present. Village Administrator Bingham was absent and filling in for him was Scott Coy.

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on August 11th, 2026 was made by council person James, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Penny, and 2nd by council person Matthews, all proved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for August 2026 was made by council person Hogue, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Council reviewed and signed the August 2026: Summary of Withholding Payments Report, Tax Filings Report, the Utility Adjustment Reconciliation Report and purchase orders. Council reviewed the Cash Summary by Fund Report YTD through August 31, 2026.

Mayor Houchin discussed the creation of the Zoning Appeals Committee, which includes 2 Village Council members and 3 residents and 1 alternate. The Committee is made up of: Lance Houchin, Bob James, Brooks Pool, Sara Miller, Laurie Navarro, Rick Bednarki and Tony Houchin; all council members approved.

Scott Coy, the Village Zoning Officer discussed issues that the zoning committee will be meeting about: to rezone three properties from commercial to residential: 109 W Main, 102 S Elizabeth and empty lot at 111 W main. Next zoning meeting to be determined. Cathy Pool, Fiscal Officer of Richland Township said that the committee needs to send letters to all surrounding properties before the next meeting.

Miranda Warren was in attendance and discussed her candidacy for Logan County Common Pleas Court Family Court Judge. The Election will be November 3rd.

Fiscal Officer Ridder presented Resolution 2026-11 " authorizing the Logan County Engineer to submit an application for paving funding on behalf of the Village of Belle Center...." Mayor Houchin then called for the approval of the resolution, council person Legge made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Lowery, a roll call vote resulted in all approving. Fiscal Officer Ridder noted that this paving will take place during 2027 on the following streets: Plum, School, N. Elizabeth, W. Vine, remainder of S. Elizabeth and remainder of Main.

Fiscal Officer Ridder presented Resolution 2026-12 "Supplemental Appropriation for $10,000 from the general fund...". He said this money would be used for repaving of the walking track at Murry Griffin Park. Mayor Houchin then called for the approval of the resolution, council person Penny made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Legge, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

Solicitor Carothers said there was no news regarding the annexation of the pump station property and no news from the Logan County Sewer District.

Scott Coy discussed the project to replace water main valves on Monday September 21st. He also reminded everyone that a boil alter will be in place until the water test results are returned (probably a couple days).

Mayor Houchin discussed the Classic Car Show to benefit Behind the Badge which will take place on Saturday September 12th from 2pm to 5pm on Main St and Keller Ave.

At 7:36 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person Lowery, 2nd by council person Matthews, all approved.

Next council meeting is October 13th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

August 11th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on August 11th, 2026 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

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

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on July 14th, 2026 was made by council person James, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Hogue, and 2nd by council person Penny, all proved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for July 2026 was made by council person Legge, and 2nd by council person Matthews, all approved.

Council reviewed and signed the July 2026: Summary of Withholding Payments Report, Tax Filings Report, the Utility Adjustment Reconciliation Report and purchase orders. Council reviewed the Cash Summary by Fund Report YTD through July 31, 2026.

Mayor Houchin said that the 250 Anniversary Picnic went well and thought attendance was around 125 people.

Mayor Houchin discussed the need to create a Zoning Appeals Committee, which requires 2 Village Council members and 3 residents. Mayor Houchin appointed: Bob James, Brooks Pool, Sara Miller and himself; all council members approved. He will get 1 additional resident for the committee.

Administrator Bingham said that the walking track repaving at Murry Griffin Park will take place the end of August. The quote had to be adjusted because it was calculated, by a previous employee, with an incorrect width of the track. This results in the total cost of $29,000 of which Mary Rutan donated $10,670.

It was decided that residents Sam and Gracie Kirkpatrick at 211 Main St would not get a wavier to the livestock ordinance to have two horses on their property.

At the last meeting council decided that bicycles were allowed on the walking track but that all motorized or battery powered vehicles were not allowed. Fiscal Officer Ridder presented Ordinance 2026-06 "Prohibiting the operation and parking of motorized vehicles withing Village parks and public recreational lands." 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 Matthews made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Hogue, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

Fiscal Officer Ridder presented Resolution 2026-07 "... Authorizing the Logan County Auditor to add an additional tax lien on delinquent utility balances..." Mayor Houchin called for a motion to pass this resolution on one reading and on an emergency measure, council person Penny 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 James made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Hogue, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

Fiscal Officer Ridder presented Resolution 2026-08 "... accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Logan County Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary tax levies..." Mayor Houchin called for the approval of the resolution, council person James made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Penny, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

Solicitor Carothers presented Ordinance 2026-09 "... Authorizing the Mayor to initiate a petition for transfer of delinquent real estate located withing the Village..." This would allow the Village to purchase 211 E Main if it goes unsold at the Sheriffs auction and the expected price would be around $8,400 plus court fees. Mayor Houchin called for a motion to pass this ordinance on one reading and on an emergency measure, council person Matthews made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Legge, a roll call vote resulted in all approving. Mayor Houchin then called for the approval of the ordinance, council person Penny made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Legge, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

Solicitor Carothers presented Ordinance 2026-10 "... Authorizing the annexation of certain real property to the village..." This would request the annexation of property 36-022-00-00-003-000, current site of the sewer pumping station, which is currently located in Richland Township. Mayor Houchin called for a motion to pass this ordinance on one reading and on an emergency measure, council person Legge made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person James, a roll call vote resulted in all approving. Mayor Houchin then called for the approval of the ordinance, council person James made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Penny, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

At 7:45 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person James, 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Next council meeting is September 8th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

July 14th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on July 14th, 2026 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

Roll call was taken with council members: James, Hogue, Legge, Penny, Matthews and Lowery were present. Village Officers: Mayor Houchin, Village Administrator Bingham and Fiscal Officer Ridder were present. Solicitor Carothers was absent and standing in for her was Solicitor Joe Casavecchia.

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on June 9th, 2026 was made by council person James, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Penny, and 2nd by council person James, all proved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for June 2026 was made by council person Legge, and 2nd by council person Hogue, all approved.

Council reviewed and signed the June 2026: Summary of Withholding Payments Report, Tax Filings Report, the Utility Adjustment Reconciliation Report and purchase orders. Council reviewed the Cash Summary by Fund Report YTD through June 30, 2026.

Mayor Houchin said that the fireworks went well.

Mayor Houchin said that he and Administrator Bingham met with representatives from Ohio Senate Presidents Rob McColley and US Senators Jon Housted office to discuss: the proposed Logan County Sewer contract with Belle Center and also the current Local Government Funds calculation used by Logan County. The meeting went well and they were given advice and additional State of Ohio contacts to consult.

Residents Sam and Gracie Kirkpatrick at 211 Main St were in attendance and asked council if they could get a wavier to the livestock ordinance to have two horses on their property. The mayor said he would consult with all joining neighbors and look at their property with them about the proposed location. The mayor will report back to council next month.

Tracy Baker, Trustee for Richland Township was in attendance to discuss the community picnic to celebrate USA turning 250 which will take place on Sunday August 9th from 1 to 5 pm. Issues discuss were cost share of food with Village, advertising, flyer, use of the Shelter house and getting grills. Members of the Council said that they would help with this event.

Fiscal Officer Ridder presented Ordinance 2026-5 "...establishing a fee for checks returned because of insufficient funds or non-payment." Mayor Houchin called for a motion to pass this resolution on one reading and on an emergency measure, council person Lowery made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Legge, a roll call vote resulted in all approving. Mayor Houchin then called for the approval of the resolution, council person James made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Penny, a roll call vote resulted in all approving.

Administrator Bingham said that the repaving of the walking track at Murry Griffin Park will be done the first two weeks of August.

We received a question about bicycles being used on the walking track. After much discussion council decided that bicycles were allowed on the walking track but that all motorized or battery powered vehicles were not allowed on the track. This includes but not limited to: golf carts, minibike's, motorcycles, battery powered bicycles, all terrane vehicles', etc.

Administrator Bingham disused in summary the process for the Village to build its own waste water treatment plant, including: petition the EPA, design, budget and financing of the project.

Administrator Bingham disused the need of the Village to have its own flow meter at the end of the waste water system to accurately monitor flow out of the system. He said the meter would cost about $5,000 plus installation and Council agreed to proceed.

Administrator Bingham said that the Village could petition Logan County Commissioner's to make the Logan County Sewer District an official Regional Network. Then all township and village municipalities included in the district would have representation on a board of directors that would oversee the sewer district. Currently the sewer district is overseen by the Logan County commissioners with no input from the participating municipalities. We could contact all member municipalities and begin a petition process to allow members to have more of a say on how the Logan County Sewer District is run.

Solicitor Casavecchia disused property at 211 E Main St going up for Sherriff's sale. If no one bids on the property then the Village has an option to purchase.

Council President Legge disused the recent Veterans Monument ribbon cutting ceremony at the Richland Township Memorial building. The event went well and had a write up in the Peak of Ohio.

Council Member James asked about mosquito spraying in the Village. Administrator Bingham said that it was done a few weeks before the 4th of July and that they could do another spraying in a few weeks.

At 7:50 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person Lowery, 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Next council meeting is August 11th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

June 9th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on June 9th, 2026 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

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

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on May 12th, 2026 was made by council person Penny, and 2nd by council person James, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Lowery, and 2nd by council person Legge, all proved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for May 2026 was made by council person James, and 2nd by council person Hogue, all approved.

Council reviewed and signed the Summary of Withholding Payments and Tax Filings Report and the Utility Adjustment Reconciliation Reports for May 2026.

Mayor Houchin said that the fireworks reverse raffle fund raiser went well and the fireworks are funded for anther year.

Mayor Houchin said that the Village will be paying for two Logan County Sheriffs for the upcoming 4th of July celebration event on Saturday July 4th.

Mayor Houchin delivered the ½ down payment to repave the walking track at Murry Griffin Park.

Fiscal Officer Ridder notified council about Ohio House Bill 309 and presented them with documents from Jack Reser, the Logan County Auditor. The bill requires county auditors to review all property benefits and determine whether collection of the levied taxes are necessary for the upcoming years. Ridder will prepare and submit a worksheet showing all fund balances, actual activity for 2024 and 2025, as well as, forecasted activity for 2026 and 2027.

Administrator Bingham presented council with a draft wastewater collection and treatment contract from the Logan County Sewer District, a rates worksheet and an email from Breanne parcels, Assistant Prosecutor for Logan County. The email discussed our ongoing negations with the Logan County Sewer District. The contract basically brings our yearly rate with the Logan County Sewer District from the current rate of $97,782 to a new yearly rate of $181,105, this is an 86 percent increase in one year to take Belle Centers wastewater. If we agree to this contract our monthly sewer rate for each resident would go from $55.70/month to $103.16/month for sewer service.

After much discussion Council feels that the best option for Belle Center is to build its own wastewater treatment plant. Council has authorized Administrator Bingham to begin the process of initial planning, design & engineering and financing for the proposed treatment plant.

As discussed last month, Alan Wobler of the Ohio Rural Water Association worked with us to create a water rate study for the Village. Administrator Bingham presented council with a worksheet that projects our water fund reserves with a 2% annual water increase which we previously planned. Unfortunately keeping to a 2% annual increase will result in fund overdraft by the end of the year 2027. Bingham presented council with a water rate increase Ordinance (2026-04) to take effect on August 1st for $1.90 per month which is a 15% increase. This would take our water rates to the following:
Resident Inside Village current rate of $12.65 on 8/1/2026 to $14.55
Resident Outside Village current rate of $16.35 on 8/1/2026 to $18.80
Bulk Water current rate of $13.50 on 8/1/2026 to $15.55
Mayor Houchin called for a motion to pass Ordinance 2026-04 on one reading and on an emergency measure, council person Legge made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person Penny, a roll call vote resulted in all approving. Mayor Houchin then called for the approval of Ordinance 2026-04, council person Penny made the motion to approve, and 2nd by council person James, the vote resulted in all approving.

Solicitor Carothers notified council that the property at 211 E Main St will be going up for Sherriff's sale in the next couple of months.

At 7:44 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person Lowery, 2nd by council person Penny, all approved.

Next council meeting is July 14th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

May 12th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on May 14th, 2026 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

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

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on April 14th, 2026 was made by council person Penny, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Legge, and 2nd by council person Hogue, all proved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for April 2026 was made by council person Lowery, and 2nd by council person James, all approved.

Council reviewed and signed the Summary of Withholding Payments and Tax Filings Report and the Utility Adjustment Reconciliation Report for April 2026.

Mayor Houchin said that we are in the process of putting up the Veterans banners in town and will be completed before Memorial Day.

The fireworks committee still has 30 tickets available for the Reverse Raffle fund raiser.

Richland Township is sponsoring a community picnic on Sunday August 9th to celebrate USA 250th. It is still in the planning phase but will probably be hot dogs and chips for everyone with a pot luck dessert dish.

Administrator Bingham said that the Logan County Sewer district began charging penalties' and interest on our sewer account. The Village will continue to pay the original contract amount until a fair contract is negotiated. So far, the LCSD has little to no communication with the Village about the continuing issues.

Administrator Bingham presented council with a document from the EPA titled "Belle Center Pump Station Rehabilitation" which is for a loan for $1.7 million dollars for Logan County and the document discusses their plan. The County does not have permission from the Village of Belle Center to expand the footprint of the pump station. In addition, a portion of the land that the County wants for the station is currently under contract with Patton Farms and corn has been planted for the season. The Village continues to assert that we need a new contract and the Sewer District and the County Commissioners should be reasonable, come to the table and negotiate with the Village but unfortunately both continue to ignore the will of the Village of Belle Center Council.

Administrator Bingham said that we have a new EPA rep and we are going through a Sanitary Survey, process that takes place every 3 years. All is going well.

The Ohio Rural Water Association is working on a water rate study for the Village. Preliminary information is that our rate is too low to cover future expenses. Example, our rate water rate is $13 per month with Rushsylvania at $19 per month and Lakeview/Russells Point being $30 per month. Bingham said that once the rate study is completed, he will make a recommendation to the Council.

Administrator Bingham notified council that a resident is living in a shed in town and ask Council to consider their options: allow people to live in sheds in town or to do an Ordinance to prevent this form happening. Council will revisit this issue at the next meeting.

Administrator Bingham received two quotes to repave the walking track at Murry Griffin Park, the lowest being $21,000. We will also be receiving a donation from Mary Rutan for 10,000 to pay for the track. Bingham said we will begin this summer.

Council discussed vacating the alley located between 303 Vine and 407 Washington Street. Solicitor Carothers presented Ordinance 2026-03 to vacate this alley. Motion to approve was made by Council person James and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Council President Legge discussed the upcoming Poker Run, a fund raiser for the fireworks, which will be held Saturday may 16th and the need to close a portion of Main Street for the festivities. Mayor Houchin said he will coordinate that on Saturday morning.

At 7:36 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person Lowery, 2nd by council person James, all approved.

Next council meeting is June 9th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

April 14th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on April 14th, 2026 at 7:00 PM with Mayor Lance Houchin presiding.

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

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on March 10th, 2026 was made by council person James, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Penny, and 2nd by council person Hogue, all proved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for March 2026 was made by council Matthews, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

Council reviewed and signed the Summary of Withholding Payments and Tax Filings Report and the Utility Adjustment Reconciliation Report for March 2026.

Council member Legge discussed the plans for the Veteran's monument, wall and banner at the Memorial Building. The monument should be done by Memorial Day and the wall by the 4th of July.

Administrator Bingham said that they will be flushing fire hydrants at the end of April.

Administrator Bingham discussed replacing 6 water main valves in town. It will mean that the water tower will need to be taken off line. If planning goes well it should be down for only a few hours. He plans to do the work sometime this summer. Announcements will go out to residents well in advance.

The Logan County Sewer district sent us a letter threatening that if we don't pay the full amount billed that we will incur penalties' and interest.

The Village will get a survey of the pump station on Elizabeth St to begin the annexation process.

Administrator Bingham has two bids to repave the walking track at the park: $35,000 and $21,000. He is waiting on an additional bid.

At 7:44 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person James, 2nd by council person Mathews, all approved.

Next council meeting is May 12th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

March 10th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

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

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

Motion to approve minutes from the regular session on February 10th, 2026 was made by council person Legge, and 2nd by council person Matthews, all approved.

Motion to pay monthly bills was made by council person Penny, and 2nd by council person Legge, all proved.

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for February 2026 was made by council James, and 2nd by council person Penny, all approved.

Mayor Houchin discussed repaving the walking track at the park. Administrator Bingham will get some quotes and also look into getting a grant.

The Village will have $160,000 in title one and sales tax money to do paving the in 2027. Streets discussed were Elizabeth, School and Plumb.

Administrator Bingham notified Council that we have renewed our Cash Rent Agreement for 5 years with Patton Farms for the 2.95 acres of land he farms near the lift station on Elizabeth St.

Administrator Bingham discussed Clean up week this year May 4th to 8th. Truck load charge will stay at $30. New this year we will take car and truck tires at $5 per tire (no rims) and also take TV's at $10 each.

Council discussed creating a Board of Zoning and a Board of Appeals, and will discuss at the next meeting.

At 7:34 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by council person Legge, 2nd by council person Hogue, all approved.

Next council meeting is April 14th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

February 10th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on February 10th, 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 13th, 2026 was made by council person Lowery, and 2nd by council person James, all approved.

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

Motion to approve the bank reconciliation for January 2026 was made by council Hogue, and 2nd 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.

Logan County Sewer District contract update

Administrator Bingham discussed the ongoing contract negations with the Logan Sewer District and the last meeting took place on January 20th. 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

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, 2nd by council person James, all approved.

Next council meeting is March 10th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer

January 13th, 2026
VILLAGE OF BELLE CENTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Belle Center Village Council met in regular session on January 13th, 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, 2nd 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, 2nd 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 9th, 2025 was made by council person Lowery, and 2nd by council person Legge, all approved.

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

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

Mayor Houchin discussed the ongoing contract negations with the Logan Sewer District and the next meeting is set for January 20th.

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, 2nd by council person James, all approved.

Next council meeting is February 10th, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Lance Houchin, Mayor

Joe Ridder, Fiscal Officer