

The Berea City Council met in a special called business session, Tuesday, October 6, 2026.

Mayor Bruce Fraley presiding.

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** Mike Barnett, John Payne, Katie Startzman, Teresa Scenters, Jerry Little, Steve Caudill, Barry Poynter, Virgil Burnside

**COUNCIL ABSENT:** None

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Jerry Gilbert, Shawn Sandlin, Robin Adams, Daniel Brindley, Priscilla Bloom, Amanda Haney, Aaron Boycan, Nancy Conley, Charlie Russell

**INVOCATION:** Teresa Scenters

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Virgil Burnside

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Caudill motioned; Payne seconded motion to approve agenda as presented.

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 15, 2026**

Scenters motioned; Startzman seconded motion to approve minutes as presented.

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council Member, Little, requested Council to consider two public comment sessions for the agendas, i.e., agenda items and non-agenda items, and to consider increasing the time limit for commenting.

Mayor Fraley stated this could be considered along with a Municipal Order which sets the rules that govern our City Council meeting, if the Council chose to do so.

Startzman felt, in his role, Mayor Fraley was able to read the room, with some discretion, allowing people to speak longer than three minutes and seemed Council had been amenable to that.

Caudill commented the point of asking to be placed on the agenda was if someone needed additional time to speak and/or for a presentation. He had felt public comment was to speak about an agenda item, and this had been the reason Public Comment had been moved back to the top of agenda, especially if an item was going to be voted on. He was not sure of how to get people to utilize public comment. A point to consider.

### **COMMON SPIRIT ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL BEREAS UPDATE**

John Yanes, President, Common Spirit St. Joseph Berea & London, shared there had been a lot of change in the hospital's history since its establishment in 1898. Recently, a new sign had been added to the building, i.e., Common Spirit. Common Spirit was a national organization in which St. Joseph Hospital was a member. In March of 2019 Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) and Dignity Health merged and formed Common Spirit, a national brand. Locally, they would continue to be St. Joseph Hospital Berea. Common Spirit was one of the nation's largest non-profit Catholic health systems dedicated to building healthier communities. Being a part of a system like Common Spirit ensured that our hospital

could be in a position to continue to be viable and successful going forward. Annually, Common Spirit does over \$5 billion in charity care with approximately \$1 billion of that in local community charity care. St. Joseph Berea was a critical access hospital, a designation that the federal government had given certain organizations that provide vital resources to local communities primarily in rural areas. They were licensed for twenty-five beds, have approximately 19,000 visits through the emergency department, recently added orthopedic services, and working on bringing back urology. St. Joseph Berea was a part of the Kentucky market / service area. Within that market, there were six acute care hospitals which included Berea Hospital.

Rhonda McMaster, Cardiovascular Service Manager, St. Joseph Berea, shared a report regarding the health of our community. As heart disease was still the leading cause of death in the United States, identifying those risk factors were extremely important. She sets up a booth at the Spoonbread Festival and visits different areas within the City of Berea and surrounding communities to measure heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, etc. On a comparative analysis, from 2025 to 2026, hypertension had reduced. She hoped the reduction was due to the community education effort. As there was a significant number of attendees at their booth during Spoonbread, she noticed younger crowds. It was good to know that young adults in the community were interested in their heart health. The average age for blood pressure screenings was forty to seventy years since, as we age, this is when we begin noticing changes. Many people had returned to her booth over the years for a blood pressure check or to share positive results since the previous year. Her key takeaway was to educate our community, fellow members, families, and friends on the risk factors of heart disease and what we could do to make healthy lifestyle changes. Rhonda was available at the St. Joseph Berea Heart Institute and suggested visiting the online American Heart Association website for guidelines and printable educational items.

#### **BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH - BELINDA'S LEGACY MOVEMENT PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Fraley read Proclamation in entirety and present to Amanda Pearson, Belinda's daughter, along with several family members in honor of Belinda Fothergill and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Amanda's message she wanted to send out was to be sure to get checked throughout the year, not only in October, and encourage your friends, men and women, to get checked.

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH JOINT PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Fraley stated this was a Joint Proclamation signed by Judge Taylor, Mayor Blythe, and himself. Mayor Fraley read the proclamation in entirety and presented to Jennifer Lainhart, Executive Director, Hope's Wings.

Lainhart expressed the importance of raising awareness about domestic violence as Kentucky ranked number two in the nation for the highest rates of domestic violence and a third of our nation's children lived in homes where domestic violence was occurring. One in four women and one in nine men will experience domestic violence within their lifetime. Within the past year, fifty people lost their lives due to domestic violence, including one in our local community. Although domestic violence would always be a problem, there were agencies / partnerships in the community that made Madison County, the City of Berea, and the City of Richmond safer places. Hope's Wings provided emergency shelter to victims and their children and transitional housing for survivors and their children. Thanked the community for what they do and its continued support for domestic violence services.

To help and/or donate funds, visit their website and click on the link to give online, checks are accepted, follow on Facebook for posts of lists for items needed, and/or participate in fundraisers.

**RESOLUTION #10-2026 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEREA, KENTUCKY, REGARDING THE APPLICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR ASSISTANCE UNDER THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND ACT OF 1965 FOR THE BEREA PARK IMPROVEMENT PLAN.**

Corporate Counsel, Gilbert, read Resolution #10-2026 in entirety.

Payne motioned; Caudill seconded motion to approve and adopt Resolution #10-2026.

Voice Vote: All ayes Motioned carried.

**ORDINANCE #15-2026 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BEREA, KENTUCKY, ANNEXING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED NEAR BEREA, MADISON COUNTY, KENTUCKY. - 1<sup>ST</sup> READING**

Corporate Counsel, Gilbert, read Ordinance #15-2026 in entirety.

Amanda Haney, Administrator, Codes & Planning, shared a brief overview of the annexation stating the annexation involved three parcels of land, i.e., 646, 658, and 673 Richmond Road, just over twenty-one acres, which were a portion of the Helen Smith farm. The property owners have given voluntary consent to annex. The Madison County Fiscal Court had been notified, the annexation plat and the legal description for the land had been received. An enactment of the ordinance would be submitted to the Secretary of State Land Office. There would be a public hearing at the next Planning Commission meeting to zone the property. Following would be the second reading of the ordinance, at a City Council meeting, to approve and adopt the annexation.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

**Susan Helton, Director, Finance**

Helton shared an update of the Finance Department during the last fiscal year. Finance had processed 9,228 invoices and planned to look into automation for invoices for streamlining. Plans were to also look into paying vendors through ACH.

Accounts Receivable had processed 10,220 cash receipts, excluding utility payments, and 8,879 business tax returns which included payroll tax and net profit, restaurant tax, franchise fees, etc. Although online business tax had taken longer than anticipated, they were in the final stages of testing. Utility Billing and Collection had an incredibly busy year for FY26. They began the fiscal year with the reclassification of commercial and industrial electric rate classes, customer outreach, and customer education. By mid-year they were implementing new 911 fees on all water bills, which also included customer education. Currently, full steam ahead in the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meter change-out process.

Praised her team and Utility Billing/Operations for the work taking place in addition to their daily workload.

As they never get out of the budget rotation, the amended budget would begin next month with presentation scheduled for February 2027.

The Fiscal Year 2026 Audit took place in September. As the Federal Government had not yet released the compliance supplement, the auditors would be unable to deliver their audit report in October. Since this was election year and the City wanted full transparency for the public to understand where the City was at the end of the year, the auditors had been asked to present an update report on where the City stood on the financial statement audit.

**Priscilla Bloom, Director, Parks & Recreation Department**

The Parks Department was currently planning the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Halloween at the Park free event with forty businesses / organizations. Activities included handing out candy to trick-or-treaters, firetruck rides, inflatables, photo booth, etc. The event was scheduled for Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Bloom also requested Council's approval for Berea's Trick-or-Treat night to be set for Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Madison County and the City of Richmond had also set the same date and time for Trick-or-Treat night.

Caudill motioned; Scenters seconded motion for the official time frame for the City of Berea's Trick-or-Treat night for Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., which would be consistent with the City of Richmond and Madison County.

Voice Vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

No report.

**MAYOR'S REPORT / COMMENTS**

- Delegation for Hokuto City, Japan, had arrived last week visiting the City of Berea, Berea College, City of Richmond, Madison Fiscal Court, Eastern Kentucky University, Madison Airport, miscellaneous locations throughout Berea, and lifts in the firetruck tower for a bird's eye view of Berea.

This was the 39<sup>th</sup> year exchange between Hokuto City and Madison County. As the exchange alternates annually, next October a delegation would be sent to Japan.

Thanked everyone involved in the planning for such a meaningful time and the Council Members who attended. The Delegation expressed gratitude for the hospitality and information provided to them.

- Shared comments regarding being elected as President of Kentucky League of Cities (KLC). Thanked those who reached out to him. The position was a volunteer, non-paid position. The last four years he had served on KLC's Executive Committee which was the governing body for the Kentucky League of Cities. During the last two years, he had served two years as second vice president and first vice president. He was thrilled to be able to represent the City of Berea and this also gave him the opportunity to represent Berea in Frankfort and Washington D.C. He shared that in his work life, the City of Berea and the citizens of Berea were always his first priority and his duties with KLC would come second. He was glad to volunteer his time to an organization that made a great difference for our City and for all Kentucky cities. As he encouraged all to take training, attend meetings, and be a part of KLC, under his leadership he hoped to bring more cities into being actively involved. His duties would be similar to those as first vice president and second vice president. He was looking forward to and willing to work at it for our City and for KLC. He felt it important for everyone to understand how it worked, to know it was an honor to represent Berea's citizens at the highest level of KLC, and put Berea in a positive light.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**Little** No comment.

**Caudill** No comment.

**Poynter** Congratulated Mayor Fraley as President of Kentucky League of Cities and fully supported his work with KLC.

**Burnside** Congratulated Mayor Fraley on the leadership of Kentucky League of Cities. KLC was a very important organization for cities in terms of thinking about policy and their representation at the local, state, and federal levels. Encouraged everyone new to Council and continuing on Council coming in next year to utilize the training provided by KLC as it would help their work in terms of serving this City.

**Scenters** No comment.

**Startzman** Thanked Mayor Fraley for his work with Kentucky League of Cities. Shared Burnside's comments regarding what a great organization KLC was for representing us as a City in Frankfort and protecting the role / responsibility they had as Council Members. Grateful Mayor Fraley was involved with KLC.

**Payne** Echoed sentiments. As training was very important, KLC offered a great service. Thanked fellow Council Members for their questions regarding Resolutions, Ordinances, etc. as he learned a lot every time they asked questions.

**Barnett** Congratulated Mayor Fraley. He had training with KLC and it was really good. He was also fortunate that he had served on Planning & Zoning, which also included training.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Caudill motioned; Payne seconded motion to adjourn at 6:42 p.m.

Voice Vote: All ayes      Motion carried.

---

Mayor Bruce Fraley

---

City Clerk