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# BEL-NOR CHIMES

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The Official, periodic, Newsletter of the City of Bel-Nor, St. Louis County, Missouri, USA

8416 Natural Bridge Road, Bel-Nor, MO 63121, 314-381-2834

Issue: 6-3-2015

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

- Christina Buchek, Mayor of the City of Bel-Nor

Hello and welcome to our newest edition of the Bel-Nor Chimes. This edition is also available online at our new website, [bel-nor.org](http://bel-nor.org). Please check our website often to see updates.

Since elected in April 2016, I have immersed myself into the world of municipal government attending workshops, meetings, and trying to get a handle on how I can improve our already wonderful city. See some areas of particular interest below. On other pages in this issue, you can find ways to get involved with things that are important to you. I have many ideas, but I cannot bring them all to fruition alone. For that, it takes a village where many hands work together.

**Utility Tax and Bonds for Street Repair** – The upcoming road and sidewalk repair project has occupied much of my attention and led to discussion about a new utility tax. Here are some points about this:

- The street project scope involves restoring Normandy Drive and Arlmont Drive to a concrete surface, replacing buckling sidewalks throughout the neighborhood, and stripping and applying asphalt overlay on several other main streets in the city.
- The project is funded in part by Federal money, in part by the Community Development Block Grant money, and in part by the sale of 10-year municipal bonds that were approved by voters in 2014.
- In order to sell the bonds, it was suggested by the bond sale financial advisor that Bel-Nor increase its general revenue funds to maintain 25% of the annual budget in a reserve account. This will show financial viability and ability to repay the bonds.
- In order to build a reserve account, Bel-Nor must find a way to increase revenue. Now, with 4<sup>th</sup> class City status, a voter approved utility tax could generate this revenue. This type of tax is collected by Laclede Gas, Ameren Missouri, and Missouri American Water as a given percentage amount on a home-dweller's monthly bill.
- At the May, 2016 Bel-Nor Board Meeting, it was approved by the Board of Alderpersons that we put a 6% utility tax on the August ballot. In August, this issue will likely be the ONLY issue up for vote in Bel-Nor.

We need your support. If Proposition 1 for a 6% utility tax is not approved, it is likely that we will not be able to sell the bonds. If we cannot sell the bonds, we cannot complete the street project. Please support Proposition 1 by voting YES in August on this issue during the election.

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## **SB 5 Lawsuit**

Senate Bill 5 (SB5) was passed by the Missouri Legislature last year. SB5 reduced the cap on police revenue a City can bring in from 30% to 12.5% of their general revenue for municipalities within St. Louis County. The authors of SB5 expressed via media that the intent of the Bill was to protect offenders who receive multiple tickets for various law violations. However, the effect of SB5 does not refund money to those offenders, but rather forces the municipal courts to forward any funds in excess of 12.5% on to the State. Although Bel-Nor has historically raised less than 12.5% of its revenue from court and traffic fines, there are other elements of the Bill that will have a negative effect on Bel-Nor.

Bel-Nor joined 12 municipalities in a lawsuit contesting the constitutionality of SB5. We in the lawsuit have contested SB5 on the grounds that:

- It is unconstitutional for the state legislature to have two different caps on court revenue, one for St. Louis County and another one for the rest of the state. The lowered cap for St. Louis County is a direct attack on North County with the intent of dissolving all predominantly black municipalities.
- The Hancock Amendment in the Missouri Constitution makes it unlawful for the Missouri Legislature to provide mandates for a governmental entity without also providing the funding to implement those mandates. The changes listed above, among others required by SB5 are unfunded mandates, and thus a violation of the Hancock Amendment. We joined this lawsuit because of these Constitutional violations as well as the fact that SB5 has a disparate impact on municipalities where the majority of the residents are People of Color.

The judge at the Circuit Court level agreed with our contentions and struck down much of the language in SB5. The Court determined that the cap on revenue from tickets and court fines must be uniform throughout the State. Therefore the current cap on court revenue is 20% for all municipalities. The Court also found that our Hancock Amendment claim was with merit and therefore the State can not force us to make certain changes to our policing without also funding those changes. The State has decided to appeal the Court's decision and we will update you on the status of the appeal in the future as more information becomes available.

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## **MESSAGE FROM THE FORMER MAYOR**

- Kevin Buchek, Former Mayor of the City of Bel-Nor



Thank you for entrusting me with the administration of The Village (City) over the past eleven years. We have encountered many challenges and changes and many more will be faced in the coming years. I have often stated that I would not step down from my post until I found a qualified successor. I could not think of a Bel-Nor resident more competent and capable to continue the work than our current Mayor. She is intelligent, sensible and dedicated to the job. I feel comfortable that our city is in good hands. I made the decision to resign the post due to the time constraints caused by my growing business. I will still volunteer to serve the city when I can but I can no longer give the time required to serve as your mayor. Thanks again for all of you have supported me over the years. Please pass that support on to our new Mayor.

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NEIGHBORHOOD GARAGE SALE,  
SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2016!  
Sales begin at 8am.



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FROM STEPHANIE KREIS, ALDERPERSON, Ward 1

As part of the city's continuing efforts to maintain and preserve our street trees, we recently began the process of pruning major deadwood, i.e. branches 2 inches in diameter or greater, from each of our 700+ street trees. This project will take several years to complete.

We began by contracting with Gamma Tree Services for 10 days of pruning work. The work was completed in March, during which time they examined every tree on Clearview Dr., Audrain Dr. and Moniteau Dr., as well as those in the area surrounding the Clearview entrance. A significant amount of deadwood was removed, improving not only the appearance, but also the health of the trees. Pruning has the additional benefit of improving air circulation in the tree canopy making the tree better able to withstand strong storms like the ones we have been experiencing this spring.

A collateral benefit of this effort was the information regarding issues with several trees that was not obvious from ground level observation but which was provided by the tree service based on their position high in the trees. These trees have been identified for removal. The cost of removal has been included in a TRIM grant proposal the city has submitted to the Missouri Department of Conservation.

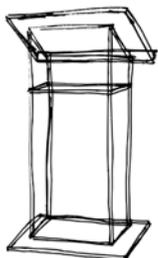
Our budget constraints mandate the pruning work will have to be done over a multi-year period. Please note it is the City's intention that every tree in the public tree lawn area (between the sidewalk and the street) will be assessed.

If anyone needs a tree for their sidewalk easement please contact the Village Hall and leave your address and phone number.

Finally, as you have probably noted, Mark Potter is hard at work on the islands and in patching potholes. Please be mindful of his safety when driving near him as he works.

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING-CITY OF BEL-NOR

A public hearing will be held before the Board of Adjustment at Bel-Nor City Office, 8416 Natural Bridge Road, on **Wednesday, June 15, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.** The item for hearing is a request for a new restaurant sign at 8406 Natural Bridge Road.

All interested parties will be heard at this time.

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## FROM JAN NELSON, ALDERPERSON, Ward 2

After being sworn in as alderperson in May, I have spent several days walking the neighborhood inspecting our sidewalks to identify which pads need to be replaced. This ongoing process will begin with the worst sections first and will take many months to complete depending on Community Block Grant Development funds. With the many walkers in the neighborhood, it is important to the safety of our residents. While walking, I have noticed many houses that are in need of mowing their grass. We ask that residents and landlords keep the yards mowed and also, that everyone keep the curb areas free of debris. This helps keep our neighborhood looking well maintained, and allows water to flow freely into the sewers when it rains. We have many dogs in the neighborhood and have an ordinance that requires owners to curb their pets to the area between the sidewalk and street and pick up after them. Thanks in advance for helping keep Bel-Nor a great place to live.

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## FROM BILL HOOK, ALDERPERSON, Ward 2

In the short time since winning election to the new City Board of Alderman I've become more aware of how complex an operation it is to run even a small municipality like ours. We all owe a debt of gratitude to our employees, Police Department, and elected officials past and present for working so hard to keep Bel-Nor running smoothly. And of course we have to recognize all our friends and neighbors who work hard to maintain their property and support the City by participating in events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, the Street Dance, Santa's visit to the gazebo, etc.

Here are a few issues I believe are priority for us to address in 2016 and beyond:

- Maintaining compliance with evolving state laws post-Ferguson
- Clearly recognizing our financial situation and working on means to improve it
- Improving our communication by taking advantage of new technologies
- Reconstituting our welcoming committee and the recognition of new residents
- Keeping a close eye on the health of Normandie Golf Course under UMSL's ownership
- Attracting new businesses to the City
- Putting together a City calendar to give residents time to plan to help or attend at an event

Once again thanks to all our loyal residents and employees - please join us at our monthly meetings the third Monday of each month at 7:30 to learn how you can be a part of maintaining our City's health and well being.

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### STAY IN TOUCH AND SAFE

- ◆ Stay in touch with neighbors using Nextdoor at [belnormo.nextdoor.com](http://belnormo.nextdoor.com).
- ◆ Remember to lock cars and doors to prevent crime. The police non-emergency phone number is 314-381-2971. Feel free to call if you have concerns that are not emergent. Call 911 for emergencies.

### DOG TAGS

Pets that are permanent residents or foster pets must be registered with the City Hall. To do so, please bring a copy of your dog's updated vaccination record to the City Hall along with \$3. This is an annual requirement.

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## FROM CONRAD PHILIPP, ALDERPERSON, Ward 1

The City Annual Exterior Inspections started May 9, 2016 and will run through August 27, 2016. This is in accordance with the City of Bel-Nor Exterior Housing Code. The housing codes we enforce are designed to promote health and general welfare of the inhabitants of the city by establishing minimum standards for exterior maintenance of building, lawns, bushes, driveways, and walks that are the responsibility of the property owner. This code provides minimum exterior standards covering the maintenance of walls, foundations, roofs, steps, porches, hand railing, windows, doors, screens, accessory buildings, property addresses, dead and decaying trees, and tree stumps. Driveways shall be paved and maintained in good repair, free of safety hazards.

After your home has been inspected, you will receive an exterior inspection report indicating any violations. Please correct these violations by the date indicated for completion. If you need additional time to correct cited violations, please contact the City Clerk at 314-381-2834 or write a letter and send it to the City Hall at 8416 Natural Bridge, 63121. The Housing Code serves to preserve the integrity, pride, and value of all of our properties and City as a whole.

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### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Here are some new activities/events that may be possible in our community if there is interest in bringing the basic ideas to life. Please contact Christina Buchek at [christinabuchek@gmail.com](mailto:christinabuchek@gmail.com), or call 314-973-8866 if you would like to become involved in one of these undertakings.

- Monthly meet and appreciate event with our Police Officers
- Bel-Nor Bike Ramble
- Application Completion to become a Tree City USA
- "Neglected curbside" clean up crew
- Bel-Nor Chimes delivery volunteer crew
- Bel-Nor Street Dance

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### WHO MAKES BEL-NOR A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE? Miss Jackie does!

Miss Jackie has lived in Bel-Nor for many years and was recently observed sweeping the area between the street and the curb near her house for hours. She also cleans debris around the island in front of her home often. She is always ready to smile and greet her neighbors when she sees them arrive home. Miss Jackie brings back the over-the-fence-conversations of days gone by and is one example of what makes our city such a fantastic place to live.



Here's to you, Miss Jackie!  
We applaud you for making Bel-Nor  
all it can be!

# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Date of Notice: June 10, 2016

The City of Bel-Nor will hold a public hearing to discuss the allocation of \$20,000.00 in Community Development Block Grant funds, which will become available after January 1, 2017. The public hearing will be held at 7:30pm on June 20, 2016, at 8416 Natural Bridge Road, Bel-Nor, MO 63121.

To further its commitment to fair and equitable treatment of all citizens, the City of Bel-Nor has enacted and/or enforces the following:

*A Fair Housing Ordinance* prohibiting unlawful discrimination against any person because of race, sex, color, religion, disability, familial status or national origin;

*A Policy of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability* in the admission or access to, or employment in, its federally assisted programs or activities;

*A Policy of Equal Opportunity to Participate in Municipal Programs and Services* regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, familial status, national origin, or political affiliation;

*A requirement for bidding on CDBG activities that promotes* employment opportunities created by HUD funding and that these opportunities be afforded low-income community residents and business.

If you would like information regarding the above policies or if you believe you have been unlawfully discriminated against, contact the following municipal official or employee who has been designated to coordinate compliance with equal employment opportunity requirements referenced above.

Diana Krosnicki, City Clerk  
NAME/TITLE

8416 Natural Bridge Road, Bel-Nor, MO 63121  
ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP

314-381-2834 ext. 100  
PHONE

If you are a person with a disability or have special needs in order to participate in this public hearing, please contact Diana Krosnicki no later than June 17, 2016.

For More Information Call:  
314-381-2834 ext. 100 VOICE  
1-800-735-2466 TDD  
1-800-735-2466 RELAY MISSOURI VOICE  
1800-735-2966 RELAY MISSOURI TDD

**Equal Opportunity Employer**