

CITY OF SOUTH BELOIT
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
May 4, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: 5:02 pm, Council Chambers, City Hall by Mayor Fitzgerald

ROLL CALL: Present & answering to roll call were Commissioners Adleman, Morse, Prentice, and Mayor Fitzgerald.
Absent: Commissioner Hedrington
City Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski was present
City Administrator Sonya Hoppes was present
City Clerk Megan Reff recorded the minutes
Department Heads in attendance:
Police Chief Adam Truman
Fire Chief Brian Kunce
Waste Water Superintendent Jeff Reininger
Street Superintendent Steve Haas
Community Development Director Shawna Henthorn

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Fitzgerald and recited by all members present.

INVOCATION: Don Elliott delivered the invocation.

APPROVE AGENDA: Commissioner Prentice made a motion to approve the agenda as revised. Commissioner Adleman second the motion. Voice vote carried the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jeannie Nichols commented that she has concerns regarding the smell and 1200 pounds per year of fish is too much for the community. City Leaders need to be more interested in the businesses that are here now and not push anyone away. This will be a nuisance to our community. She thinks it is a great thing, but she does not think that it belongs in a small community next to schools, churches, residences and restaurants and it belongs in a more industrial area or a rural community.

Jennifer Elbrichi commented that she has been through the whole process with her son, Adam. They've made the fish amino acids in her house. There has never been any smell. She is confused about the concerns for the smell.

Marge Bertomolvy commented that she does not believe that a regenerative fish fertilizer factory would be a good use of this property in the middle of the city among homes, churches, the library and many food establishments. What benefit will it be to the City? How many jobs would be created by this business and at what wage and benefits? Does this facility fit into the City's comprehensive development plan? Is this an effort to appear open to new businesses without regard to any benefits or detriments to the community. Has any effort been made to find a more sustainable location for this facility. How can they say there is no odor when all available information indicates that there is an odor associated with fish fertilizer factories. Where will the waste be composted? Eventually there will be waste. Is it composted here? On the property? Will requirements for state licensing and EPA regulations be met? Is Adam associated with any industry and trade organizations?

City Clerk Megan Reff read a statement from Vickie Butzler. She is a member of St. Peter's Church and the parish council and is unable to attend tonight's meeting. She asked that the Council vote down the proposal for the fish fertilizer plant between the church

building and the apartments located west of the former Berg Building. While this area is industrial, it is also an area of family homes, apartments, and her church and the activities that are provided there. The approval would be detrimental to anyone living near or participating in any event at her church due to odor and question.

Patty Ladue commented that she did not see the agenda online and she did not know anything about the meeting at 4:30 p.m. until she was home. City Clerk Reff advised that the agenda was posted online and is now showing on the right side of the website due to it being the second half of the year. Ma. Ladue inquired about the name of the gas station that is on the corner of Shirland and South Bluff. She advised if she was coming in to get gas she wouldn't stop there because there is no sign.

Alisha Peterson commented that she is the owner of the Dari Ripple and she has a big concern about what's happening. One is the smell, she has baby children all of the way up to adults that come out to her place. Who is going to monitor it? Mayor Fitzgerald advised that the City will monitor the smell. She is worried about wastewater. Mayor Fitzgerald advised they are not pouring anything in the sewer. She advised that there are things that come off of the fish, lead, mercury. Her main concern has to do with the environment. She thinks it could be in a better area out further away.

Ihla Tinder commented that there have been two calls to the Fair Oaks Nursing Home by the Fire Department and she has made calls back to the Fire Department to find out results and not only to the Fire Chief but to the inspector. She has to this day not heard anything. She would like to know when she can contact the Chief or the Fire Inspector because the nursing home is telling her she can no longer have a humidifier in her son's room because of whatever reason. Chief Kunce advised that he would call her tomorrow and that they are still going through the codes and regulations to be sure that they are telling her the legal answer for both sides. She also advised that she owns a property on Hemenway, her neighbors put up three beautiful mailboxes and she wants to know that if something happens to them that she is not responsible for maintaining the property around the mailboxes and if the weeds grow around the mailboxes, who is going to have to cut them down? Is the City going to come up and write her a ticket.

Mayor Fitzgerald commented that former South Beloit Fire Department Captain Bruce Hedrington passed away and spent his whole life in fire service.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on April 20, 2026. Commissioner Morse second the motion. Voice vote carried the motion.

REPORT OF OFFICERS:

1. Finance
Commissioner Adleman made a motion to approve the claims to be paid from April 18 – May 1, 2026 in the amount of \$334,639.91. Commissioner Morse seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
2. Attorney Report: - None.
3. Reports:
City Administrator Report and Staff Quarterly Report
 - City Administrator Sonya Hoppes provided an update to Council regarding Congressman Darin LaHood's visit to the City where he presented the City with \$750,000.00 for the Lift Station 1 Project on South Bluff. City Administrator Hoppes

advised that she attended year two of a three-year program for Illinois Public Service Institute.

- Chief Adam Truman provided a quarterly update to the City Council regarding the police department statistical data and training update. A full evidence audit was completed by Detective Reed and Officers Ruska and Rameriez and all items were accounted for. The Department received \$31,000 through the ILETSBE camera grant that will offset the cost of Axim body worn cameras and storage. Several members of the Police Department spoke with fifth graders from the Junior High School regarding law enforcement.

Accounts & Finance-Commissioner-Ryan Adleman
Public Health & Safety-Commissioner-Ken Morse
Streets & Public Improvements-Commissioner Brian Hedrington
Public Properties-Commissioner-Courtney Prentice
Mayor-Tom Fitzgerald

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Presentation from Chief Brian Kunce of Unit Citations regarding the incident that occurred on April 23, 2026. Chief Kunce advised that the Fire Department had a difficult incident that took place on April 23, 2026, where crews responded to the incident within 2 minutes and began initiating medical care within 1 minute and extricating the child from underneath the car. There was a positive outcome. Chief Kunce recognized the crew for their quick actions and presented Unit Citations to Lieutenant Mike Lowe, Firefighter/Paramedic Zachary Hawkins and Firefighter/EMT Colin Dunkin.
2. Chief Brian Kunce presented a Smoke Detector Program to the Council stating that if the fire department is on a medical call and they notice that a smoke detector is missing or they receive a call from a resident requesting assistance they can help get smoke detectors into those homes. Chief Kunce advised that he was pro-installation of the smoke detectors because if you drop one off, how long will it be before it is installed. Chief Kunce advised that the program could be funded with grants and donations. Commissioner Morse advised that he did a similar program when he was with the Fire Department in the early 2000s and he supports the program and is pro-installation. Attorney Laura Goding advised the Council of the legal concerns over liabilities, for installation you could address the liabilities through having residents sign a waiver in order for it to be installed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and/or Motion Items:
 - a. Discuss/Approve a Request for a 20th Anniversary Party road block off from Same Wind Riders Motorcycle Club on June 12, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and on June 13, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. at South Beloit Businessman's Association, 525 Washington Street. Commissioner Morse made a motion to discuss/approve a Request for a 20th Anniversary Party road block off from Same Wind Motorcycle Club on June 12, 2026 and June 13, 2026. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Lynette Holden spoke with the council about the proposed event. They plan to invite other motorcycle clubs in the area to participate and have food truck vendors, bike contests, merchandise vendors, a meet and greet. Lynette Holden advised that they did not plan on having security at the event, unless they have to have them and they can get security if they need it. City Clerk Reff advised the council regarding about the background research into the event and explained the permits that would be needed in addition to the approval from Council. Ms. Holden advised that they are expected 100-200 people at the event. Ms. Holden advised that they have secured hotel rooms in the area for the event as well. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
 - b. Discuss/Approve Request for possible reduction of fines in the amount of \$43,500.00 pertaining to a Findings, Decision and Order entered on September 20, 2023, against the Estate of Ernest Heard and Jeremy Heard for the property located at 1921 Spencer Court. Commissioner Morse made a motion to discuss/approve Request for possible reduction of fines in the amount of \$43,500.00 pertaining to a Findings, Decision and Order entered on

September 20, 2023, against the Estate of Ernest Heard and Jeremy Heard for the property located at 1921 Spencer Court. Commissioner Adleman seconded the motion. Attorney Sosnowski presented the matter to the Council and advised that this matter started as a code enforcement violation regarding sand and gravel placed on the property for construction of a driveway with a driveway application and construction of a secondary structure that was not permitted and was built over the property line onto the neighbor of the property Tammy Olson's property. A Findings, Decision and Order was entered in 2018. It proceeded to litigation in order to gain compliance and ultimately it resulted in a permit for partial demolition of the accessory structure being approved in 2022. A final decision and order was entered in favor of the City in the amount of \$43,500.00. No payment was made and a Memorandum of Judgment was recorded against the property. With interest the total amount owed to the City is \$53,764.81. Since that date Ms. Olson has become the legal administrator for the Ernest Heard estate and has taken on the cost of her own money to take care of probate administration costs paying real estate taxes on the property, and taking care of other expenses in relation to the code violations. Request if the City would agree to waive the entire memorandum of judgment so that the property can be placed for sale and get back on the tax roll. Alternatively, if the council is not willing to agree to a total waiver there is a request that the amount be reduced to what the city's costs have been and become the fine that would then sit on the property until the property is sold. Attorney Sosnowski advised that the total of half of the fine amount and total costs incurred would be \$24,257.31. Community Development Director Shawna Henthorn advised that the property is in compliance. The taxes owed for 2023 and 2024 are still outstanding in the amount of \$6,747.68. Tammy Olson spoke to the council regarding the situation and advised that she has been a prison in her house and was not able to mow her lawn without harassment for the past 8 years. She advised that the estate is in debt well over \$200,000.00. Attorney Sosnowski advised that the City's outstanding costs would be \$5,250.20 including recording costs. Commissioner Adleman would like to recover all costs that the City has incurred on this property for legal fees, court costs, and staff time. Tammy Olson advised that she just wants to sell the house get her money back and move on and advised that depending on how much the City is able to lower or remove the lien then that will allow her to determine how much money she can put into the house in order to get it on the market and become whole. Commissioner Prentice advised that he agrees with Commissioner Adleman. Commissioner Morse made a motion to settle the Findings Decision and Order in the amount of \$7,500.00 which would be a lien on the property until the property is sold. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Prentice. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.

- c. Discuss the possible amendment to Chapter 86, Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places, Article V, Driveways Section 86-190 Specifications. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to discuss possible amendment to Chapter 86, Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places, Article V, Driveways Section 86-190 Specifications. Commissioner Morse seconded the motion. Mayor Fitzgerald advised that he initially was against gravel on the driveway but is in favor of reclaimed asphalt as an allowed material for driveways. Streets Superintendent Haas advised the council that the Streets Department is using reclaimed asphalt to fix large potholes in the alleyways of the city. Community Development Director Hawthorn advised that a permit is required to make sure that the dimensions is not getting larger at all if they are just maintaining the driveway. If there is new material, then full permit is required and a permit fee is required. No vote was recorded a new ordinance will be prepared for the next meeting for approval.
- d. Discuss/Approve Ordinance Number 2913 Approving a Special Use Permit to Allow for the Production of Soil Additives and Amendments and Wholesale Distribution Thereof in the Commercial Retail (CR) Zoning District for the Property Located at 290 Elmwood Avenue, South Beloit, Illinois. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to Discuss/Approve Ordinance Number 2913 Approving a Special Use Permit to Allow for the Production of Soil Additives and Amendments and Wholesale Distribution Thereof in the Commercial Retail (CR) Zoning District for the Property Located at 290 Elmwood Avenue, South Beloit, Illinois. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Roll call vote

showed 3 ayes by Commissioners Adleman, Prentice and Mayor Fitzgerald, 1 nay by Commissioner Morse and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.

- e. Discuss/Approve Resolution Number 6703 Approving an Agreement with Fehr Graham to Prepare Final Engineering Plans for Permitting and Construction of Neighborhood Park Improvements at Nature at the Confluence. Commissioner Morse made a motion to Discuss/Approve Resolution Number 6703 Approving an Agreement with Fehr Graham to Prepare Final Engineering Plans for Permitting and Construction of Neighborhood Park Improvements at Nature at the Confluence. Commissioner Adleman seconded the motion. Brandon Boggs advised the council that the City was awarded the OSLAD grant and this will kickstart the project. Engineering expenses are reimbursable through the OSLAD program, but they are capped at 15.25 percent and on the \$1.2 million dollar project \$183,000.00 is reimbursable to the City through the OSLAD Grant. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- f. Discuss/Approve Resolution Number 6704 Approving a Settlement Agreement with Frederick Weiss. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to Discuss/Approve Resolution Number 6704 Approving a Settlement Agreement with Frederick Weiss. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Attorney Sosnowski went over the terms of the settlement agreement to the council. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- g. Discuss/Approve Authorizing the City of South Beloit to Issue a Request for Bids for the 2026 MFT Streets Project. Commissioner Morse made a motion to Discuss/Approve Authorizing the City of South Beloit to Issue a Request for Bids for the 2026 MFT Streets Project. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Brandon Boggs advised that they are ready to seek bids where they will advertise for 10 days for bids and place on a future council agenda for approval of the lowest bidder. Brandon Boggs advised that the total improvements are currently a little bit under the expected budget, but will have a better idea once the final bids come back. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- h. Discuss/Approve Wastewater Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Jeff Reininger. Mayor Fitzgerald advised the council that these agreements are for a protection for department heads that work for the City and allows for severance pay for department heads if they are terminated without due cause. Attorney Sosnowski advised that the agreements do not change State Statute. City Council would still be able to remove department heads and give the right to a hearing and a right to severance if they are terminated without just cause. Commissioner Adleman advised that this was a compromise to entirely changing the form of government and keeping a continuity of trying to get things done for the City. Commissioner Adleman made a motion to Discuss/Approve Wastewater Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Jeff Reininger. Commissioner Morse seconded the motion. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- i. Discuss/Approve Streets Superintendent Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Steve Haas. Commissioner Morse made a motion to Discuss/Approve Streets Superintendent Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Steve Haas. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- j. Discuss/Approve Police Chief Employment Agreement between the City of South Beloit and Adam Truman. Commissioner Morse made a motion to Discuss/Approve Police Chief Employment Agreement between the City of South Beloit and Adam Truman. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Attorney Sosnowski advised that this agreement is different from the other department head agreements because Chief Truman has ascended through the ranks of the rank and file of the South Beloit Police Department, Chief Truman would have the ability to return to the last held rank prior to becoming the Chief of Police with the Police Department. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- k. Discuss/Approve Community Development Director Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Shawna Henthorn. Commissioner Morse made a motion to

Discuss/Approve Community Development Director Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Shawna Henthorn. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.

- l. Discuss/Approve City Clerk Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Megan Reff. Commissioner Morse made a motion to Discuss/Approve City Clerk Employment Agreement Between the City of South Beloit and Megan Reff. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- m. Discuss/Approve the hiring of Pedro Roman at a rate of \$15.00 per hour as a Part-Time Parks Seasonal Employee. Commissioner Morse made a motion to Discuss/Approve the hiring of Pedro Roman at a rate of \$15.00 per hour as a Part-Time Parks Seasonal Employee. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Streets Superintendent Haas advised that this would add to the part time seasonal help. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.
- n. Discuss/Approve the hiring of Cameron Meister at a rate of \$15.00 per hour as a Part-Time Parks Seasonal Employee. Commissioner Morse made a motion to Discuss/Approve the hiring of Cameron Meister at a rate of \$15.00 per hour as a Part-Time Parks Seasonal Employee. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion. Roll call vote showed 4 ayes and 1 absent by Commissioner Hedrington.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 6:23 p.m. on motion made by Commissioner Prentice, Council approved going into Executive Session. Commissioner Adleman seconded the motion. The Purpose of Executive Session is to:

1. Review closed session minutes including semi-annual review of closed session minutes pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) of the Open Meetings Act.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION:

At 6:39 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Roll call showed all members previously at the meeting at the onset of the meeting.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURN:

At 6:39 P.M. on a Motion by Commissioner Adleman, seconded by Commissioner Prentice. Voice vote carried the motion.