

VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD
COUNCIL MEETING
March 26th, 2026

The St. Bernard Village Council Meeting was held on March 26th, 2026, in Council Chambers.

The meeting was opened with a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call showed seven members were present: Mr. Moreton, Mr. Stuchell, Mr. Edwards, Ms. Hausfeld, Mr. Schildmeyer, Mr. Culbertson and Ms. Rytov.

A motion by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Edwards, to dispense with the reading of the last council meeting minutes and approve of the written minutes of the last council meeting. Motion passed 7-0. Minutes stand as submitted.

Ohio First District Court of Appeals, Judge Jennifer Kinsley- Good evening. Thank you so much for having me. I understand that it was not a successful opening day for the Reds, so I think we can say maybe next year. But the sun is shining, so that's a good thing. My name is Jennifer Kinsley. I am the administrative and presiding judge at the 1st District Court of Appeals, and I am here to share some information about our court with the community. After visiting different municipalities throughout Hamilton County, I think this is really a new opportunity to share and collaborate with communities about the courts. I think it's not something that's often done to provide information back to the community about how courts operate and what we do. Most people don't know where the court of appeals is much less what our job entails, so I'm going to give you a little bit of that information today including some of our special programs, data about our caseloads and some budget numbers as well. First, who we are, so the Court of Appeals is made up of six different judges. As I mentioned, I'm the administrative and presiding judge. I sit with five on the judges on the Court of Appeals, and we engage in a very intensive appellate process. The court has jurisdiction to hear appeals from Hamilton County's five different trial courts. What that means is be it a traffic ticket, a divorce case, a complicated civil lawsuit between 2 multi \$1,000,000 companies, a zoning dispute and anything in between. If something went wrong at the trial court level, they can have their case reviewed by us. We hear cases and panels of three randomly assigned judges amongst the six of us, so the computer will determine which three of us sit on any appeal. All three of us look over everything that happened at the trial court level. That means reading the transcript, so the person who is sitting there typing. We read the transcript of what happened in the trial. We read all of the documents that were filed. We look over the physical evidence in the case to make sure that no mistakes occurred. We like to say we are the last stop for justice, and that's because most cases end with us. The Ohio Supreme Court sits ahead of us in the latter, so to speak, and of course in Ohio, but they only hear 70 to 80 cases a year for the entire state. So, what that means is that most cases end in our court. We take our job very seriously and we thoroughly review everything that comes in front of us. We also issue a written decision in every case. So, that means that we explain to the parties why it is that we have reached the outcome that we have so that people can understand our decisions and the community can as well. We are wonderfully served by a broad team of people in addition to the

six judges who work at the court. That includes two staff attorneys who work for each judge. There are also other staff attorneys who work broadly for the court. We have a court administrator and a deputy administrator and several support staff including an IT specialist. We are very appreciative of their efforts and the work that they do. I want to also highlight a few special programs that we have. We offer a free of charge mediation program to parties in civil cases. This means we offer an opportunity before the case is decided by the judge for the parties to come in and meet with a trained mediator and talk through their dispute to see if they can come to a resolution before someone like me makes a life changing decision in their case. Our mediator is able to help people make an amicable decision in over 60% of our cases. We also collaborate with the Hamilton County Help Center that is a special project this is a partnership between the Clerk of Courts office and the University of Cincinnati College of Law. The Help Center provides resources for people who are representing themselves. What we have discovered is that people often find it confusing to initiate an appeal. There are a lot of forms that you need to file, and a lot of steps you need to take, and if you don't do that correctly, you can risk having your appeal being dismissed. The Health Center helps people who are trying to navigate that process by themselves to effectively file their appeals so that they don't essentially lose their appeal before we ever get to see their case. I have found that partnership very meaningful. Last year over 44 people had services provided to them at the appellate level through the Health Center. We also have an incredibly popular internship program. We offer opportunities for students from the high school level to the law school level to come and spend time with us and learn through what we do. For our summer classes coming up, we had over 110 students apply to work at the court. That's the largest number of applications we've ever had. Every year we provide free training to attorneys in the community who want to learn how to sharpen their skills in appeals. That happens in December at the University of Cincinnati. We also regularly host community groups to come and visit the court. We will give you a behind the scenes tour. We'll let you sit at the bench, bang the gavel if you'd like and really spend time seeing what we do. I'd invite anybody who lives in Saint Bernard to take us up on that opportunity. We're on the top floor of an office building, so it's a little bit hard to find us and for that reason, I love to have visitors come and visit and navigate our court. All our judges are also very active members of the community. All of us do something in the community besides being judges. So, I teach at NKU Chase College of Law. Many of my colleagues also teach. They serve on community boards and are also very active in volunteering in the community, and we really like to help people. In terms of our case statistics, I do like to share a little bit of data. So, we are seeing an influx of more and more cases at the Court of Appeals. When I started at the court in 2023, we averaged just under 700 appeals a year. That number just keeps going up. So, in 2024 we had 742 cases. We're still compiling our 2025 stuff, but for 2025 that number was even higher. And based on quarter one of 2026 for this year, it should be higher than that. So, we're inching up to 800 that's really high compared to some of the other appellate courts throughout the state of Ohio. We're measured on a couple of statistics. One is our clearance rate; that's how quickly or how many cases we are getting out the door compared to how many cases are coming. We like to keep that above 100%. Our most recent stat was 103%. Our overage rate; that's how long cases are sticking around. We like to keep that under 30%. I won't detail you with the details of how exactly we calculate that because there's some nuance depending on case type and whatnot. We like to keep that under 30% and so far, we have been doing that successfully. Now a couple budget figures; we like to say we do more with less, and the numbers really bear that out. So, we have two budgetary sources. One is our operating budget. That source of money comes from Hamilton County. Then

we have our salary budget, and that pocket of money comes from the State of Ohio from the Supreme Court. Our human resources costs are much higher than our operating costs. We factor this in per case, so how much we are spending per appeal. In the operating cost, we are spending \$153.35 per case. Compared to other courts around the state, that is incredibly low. The 12th district court, which are the counties that surround Hamilton County, spends \$938.78 per case. We are far below that amount of money. In salary cost we spend \$3,194 per case, which is well under the state average, which is \$3,360 per case. So, we really are working efficiently and as hard as we can on behalf of the people of Hamilton County. We are located at the Taft Court House at 230 E 9th Street. We are in the same building as the prosecutor's office and the public defender's office. We welcome visitors so come anytime. Our court hearings take place on Mondays and Tuesdays and they are also lives streamed. Our website is www.firstdistrictcoa.org. Any questions? Thank you for having me.

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- Thank you, Mr. President. Saturday, April 4th is the Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Vine Street Park which starts at 1 pm for toddlers through 8th grade. Bring the family down for a fun filled time with a vendor's market and get photos with the Easter Bunny with your own camera or phone. Our furry friend, the Easter Bunny, will be traveling around town on Saturday, April 4th starting at 9:30am so make sure you follow the bunny tracker which will go live at 9:15am. It will be published on the village website and both the village and recreation department Facebook pages. The route will also be published as well on the website and Facebook pages and in the upcoming newsletter. Make sure that you have your kids ready and listen for the sirens and pay close attention to the bunny tracker. A huge thank you to our awesome sponsors, St. Bernard Pub, Klosterman Baking Company, City Electric Supply, Next Generation Insurance Agency, Wyoming Air, St. Bernard Garden Club, Kelsey Chevrolet, WOW Window boxes, St. Bernard LaRosa's, St. Bernard Service Dept., Wiedemann's Fine Beer, Immanuel United Church of Christ, and St. Clement Church. Again, you have to love St. Bernard! I would also like to congratulate Thomas Fox on his Mayoral Proclamation where Friday, March 13th, 2026, was declared Thomas J. Fox Day in the Village of St. Bernard in recognition of his 50th birthday. Just in case you didn't know this, Friday the 13th is his favorite movie, and he had a great themed birthday party as well. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Thank you Mr. President. The auditor's office has prepared Ordinance 15 2026. This is the part time salary and hourly rates. A lot of them stayed the same but the ones that we raised due to minimum wage going up to \$11.00. The pool attendants, the craft assistant, the cashiers, the swim team assistant, the swim lesson assistant and any employee hired before January 1st, 2005, for the fitness center. I presented these at the COW, and I ask for it to please be passed tonight. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- No report.

Treasurer, Mr. Kathman- No report.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Wendling- Thank you Mr. President. On March 17, I spoke with Pam Witmer, the Vice President of Governmental Affairs with UGI Energy Services. She

provided the following update to operations at the Synthica plant. She reports that they continue to draw down and clean-out the material at the bottom of all the tanks. Clean Harbors is being used to remove the material that remains in the mesophilic tank. Superior Environmental Services is removing the remaining material in the DAF and biological tanks. They anticipate that each of these processes will take a few weeks to complete. Ms. Witmer plans to attend a council meeting once the tanks are completely drained, cleaned, and a comprehensive plan for the restarting of the plant has been developed. You will find in your mailboxes a memo detailing the results of the energy aggregation of RFPs issued by Energy Alliances on behalf of the Village. In short, Energy Alliances recommends that we set a not to exceed price of 10.599 cents per Kilowatt/Hour and a term not to exceed 24 months with a supplier. They report that this recommendation remains below projected Duke default rates and provides rate stability during a period of rising wholesale and capacity costs and avoids locking the Community into an overly long term at a time when long range pricing remains uncertain. I have a phone conference scheduled for tomorrow morning with a representative from Energy Alliances to discuss the process going forward. Finally, we have engaged NKOL to provide information technology support for the Village. We are currently transitioning our IT systems to our new provider. This will soon include migration to our new domain which will be stbernard-oh.gov You will be provided with a new email that reflects the new domain. Your old email address will continue to work, but you are encouraged to utilize the address that is attached to the new domain. I will let you know when this is scheduled to occur. In the interim, please let me know if you experience any issues, so that I can secure support. This concludes my report.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- Absent. No report.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance, Mr. Moreton- Thank you, Mr. President. The next Community Connect is scheduled for Thursday, April 2nd at 5:30PM at 5 Star Mediterranean on Vine Street. All those who live, work, or shop within the Village are encouraged to attend to share any celebrations and concerns as they relate to the Village. I want to thank Judge Kinsley for her insightful presentation tonight. Understanding the services our courts provide and how they go about serving the people of our First District, makes us more capable public servants - so again thank you to Judge Kinsley. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Service, Mr. Stuchell- The Waste Collection Fee for February 2026 shows that \$25,314.56 was remitted to the Village. As part of the Waste Collection Report for the month of February 2026, the Service Department completed the following:

- Spotted 16 dump trucks at residences.
- Spotted 15 dumpsters at residences.
- Hauled 140.6 tons of garbage to the landfill.
- Hauled 21.4 tons of recyclable material to Rumpke Recycling.
- Recycled 4,840 lbs. of scrap metal.

As a reminder, please mark your calendars for the upcoming Clean Up St. Bernard Day, which will be held on April 18th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. All participants are asked to meet in the lower-level parking lot of City Hall before the event begins. Trash bags, gloves, and garbage

pickers will be provided for all volunteers. To wrap up the event, there will be a grill-out down at the pavilion to thank everyone for helping make our community a cleaner place to live. Whether you participated in the cleanup or not, all are welcome to attend. Lastly, the Service Department is still accepting applications for seasonal employment. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age and possess a valid driver's license. Applications are available for pickup at City Hall and will be accepted until all positions are filled. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Public Improvements, Mr. Edwards- Thank you Mr. President. There was no need for a Public Improvement Committee Meeting, but I would like to report on this month's St. Bernard-Ludlow Grove Historical Society Program on March 16th. This month's program was on Twentieth Century Cincinnati and was presented by Joe Warkany of the Cincinnati Museum Center. It was a great program touching on numerous topics such as transportation, redevelopment of the Riverfront and the Westend, how this redevelopment led to migration to the suburbs, corruption in City of Cincinnati Government in the early 1900's. This and so much more. Every month's program is entertaining and informative, and all are welcome. Meetings are always on the third Monday of the month at 7pm in The Main Hall of the Municipal Building. Meetings are free to members and only 5 dollars for non-members. Worth every penny. Thank you, Mr. President. This concludes my report.

Service, Ms. Hausfeld- Thank you Mr. President. Tonight I have the police and fire department reports for February 2026. Here is the police activity report for last month. For the month of February, the Police Department had 505 calls for service resulting in 381 contacts. There were an additional 359 other services/details that were not necessarily called in by the public. These calls for service included: 21 Total Criminal Offenses resulting in 64 Criminal Arrests, 43 Traffic Citations, and 68 Traffic Warnings. They responded to 20 accidents as well, four of which involved injuries. This is a reminder that the Police & Fire Benevolent Golf Outing is rapidly approaching. It will be held on Saturday, May 16th at Winton Woods. If anyone is interested in participating, sponsoring a hole, or volunteering to help at the event, please contact Chief Simos or Chief Young at the Safety Center. That completes the police department report. The Fire Department report for February 2026 is Fire Incidents: Structural Fires 9, other fires 5, vehicle fires, 1 auto accidents 4, hazmat incidents 0, service calls 6, fire alarms 14, CO alarms 4 EMS assists 6, for a total of 49 incidents. Mutual aid given was zero. EMS Incidents: Transports 51, non-transport 20, for a total of 71. Mutual Aid Given 13 and mutual aid received was one. All personnel completed Obstetrical & Neonatal Care Training with Dr. McMullan. Chief Young, Captain Goecke & Lieutenant Smith attended the Big Box Workshop. This class is Firefighting Strategies for large buildings and warehouses. Chief Young, Captains Schutte, Goecke & Sicking, Lieutenants Fogel & Meister and Fire Marshall Lett attended Incident Safety Officer Training hosted here at the fire department, 20 other area Officers attended this training as well. Thank you, that concludes both of my reports.

Laws, Contracts and Claims, Mr. Schildmeyer- Thank you Mr. President. The last Laws, Contracts and Claims meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. We have not set a date for the next meeting, but we do plan on setting it with the next week or two. Once we set that, I will let Heidi know so she can add that to the website. On the agenda, will be to review language to the existing charter. Thank you, that concludes my report.

Marketing, Mr. Culbertson- Thank you Mr. President. I Am Coffee will be celebrating 8 years in the community on April 1st. Please stop by and help celebrate this occasion. I'd also like to wish our clerk, Caroline, a happy 29th birthday yesterday or somewhere close to that. That concludes my report.

Business and Industry, Ms. Rytov- No report.

Committee of the Whole, Ms. Stegman- Thank you Mr. President. The minutes for the last meeting were submitted March 24th, and I have no communications this evening.

ORDINANCE NO. 11, 2026

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ON CERTAIN PROPERTY TO REIMBURSE THE VILLAGE FOR THE COSTS OF CUTTING, TRIMMING, AND REMOVING HIGH GRASS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to suspend with the 3rd reading of Ordinance 11 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to adopt Ordinance 11 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 12, 2026

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ON CERTAIN PROPERTY TO REIMBURSE THE VILLAGE FOR THE COSTS OF CUTTING, TRIMMING, AND REMOVING HIGH GRASS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Culbertson, to suspend with the 3rd reading of Ordinance 12 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to adopt Ordinance 12 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 13, 2026

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ON CERTAIN PROPERTY TO REIMBURSE THE VILLAGE FOR THE COSTS OF CUTTING, TRIMMING, AND REMOVING HIGH GRASS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Culbertson, to suspend with the 3rd reading of Ordinance 13 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Culbertson, to adopt Ordinance 13 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 14 2026

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTIAN
ORDINANCES AS PART OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED
ORDINANCES OF ST. BERNARD, OHIO, REVISING THE TRAFFIC AND GENERAL
OFFENSES CODES TO COMPLY WITH STATE LAW, AND DECLARING AN
EMERGENCY

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to suspend with the 3rd reading of Ordinance 14 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to adopt Ordinance 14 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 15 2026
FIXING THE COMPENSATION OF THOSE PART TIME AND CERTIAN APPOINTED
EMPLOYEES OF THE VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD, AND DECLARING AN
EMERGENCY

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to suspend with the 3rd reading of Ordinance 15 2026. Motion passes 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to adopt Ordinance 15 2026. Motion passes 5-0-2 abstentions by Mr. Schildmeyer and Mr. Culbertson.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- At this time, does anyone on council have anything under old business? New Business? Is there anyone in the audience wishing to address council?

Laura Jennings, 214 Bank Ave.- I hope I do not bore you because I want to talk about a tree stump. When I bought my home in St. Bernard about 4 years ago, Ludlow Place abuts the back of my property. In this area, there is a huge tree stump that is about 3 feet in diameter. I cannot pull into the back of my property unless I go around and into the neighbor's property. I was told when I bought the house that this was a big dead tree and the village could not determine whose property it was on, the village absorbed the cost of cutting the tree down. Unfortunately, now there is a big stump. I had some fencing done two years ago and had my property surveyed and discovered this stump is maybe 1/6th on my property. The rest of it is on someone else's property. I took these pictures, if you would like to look at them. The part that is circled in green is the stump. There is a little pink ribbon that is the corner point of my property. So, if you follow the line of the point of my property, you can see that there is only a small amount of this stump that is on my property. Ludlow Place dead ends into the back of my property. I believe that is the village's property. So, I wish to clear out the back of my property, and I am asking council to determine with your resources whose property this is on. Stump grinding is expensive, I would like some help, financially, in the grinding of this stump. Again, I want to know who it belongs to, because it doesn't totally belong to me, and if I can get some assistance in paying to have this stump grinded so I can use the back of my property. Mr. Paul came out and looked at it when he was here. He told me if I choose to park a car there, it has to be on concrete or gravel. I do not drive any longer because of my eyes, but I drive this scooter. Me and the priest from St. Clemont drives his, and I was at Wendy's one day, and I heard the girls in the background ask

me if he was my husband. I said no, he is not, but I do know who he is. Anyway, I have had issues with people parking at the end of Ludlow Place and because of that stump, I could not get my scooter out to get anywhere. So, please if you can find out who owns the property that the majority of this stump is on and if I can get some financial assistance in paying to have this ground out.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Wendling- We will be happy to come out and take a look at it for you. I cannot make any guarantees as to what we can or can't do with it. You said you had a survey done; do you have a copy of that survey?

Laura Jennings, 214 Bank Ave.- I do but not with me. But the pink ribbon is the corner of my property.

Safety and Service Director, Mr. Wendling- If you could gather a copy of that survey for us, we could take a look at that as well. We will try to figure out how we can assist. I know that Council on Aging does offer assistance with these types of issues, so we can help you find some resources. You can give a copy of the survey to AJ Schweier. He is right behind you.

The next Committee of the Whole will be Thursday, April 9th, 2026, at 7:00pm in Council Chambers.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passes 7-0.

Meeting is adjourned.