

The Berea City Council met in a regular business session, Tuesday, November 4, 2025.

Mayor Bruce Fraley presiding.

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT: Steve Davis, John Payne, Katie Startzman, Teresa Scenters, Jerry Little, Steve Caudill, Ronnie Terrill

COUNCIL ABSENT: Cora Jane Wilson

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Jerry Gilbert, Shawn Sandlin, Robin Adams, Tommy Horn, Donna Angel, Priscilla Bloom, Amanda Haney, Jason Hays, Susan Helton, Kevin Howard, Nancy Conley

INVOCATION: Steve Davis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Steve Davis

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - OCTOBER 7, 2025

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

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lisa Abbott, Berea

Addressed healthcare and SNAP concerns.

Laura Manges, Berea

Manges wondered if the City of Berea made contributions to the Berea Food Bank. People were hungry and food banks across the country were becoming depleted.

Without objection, Mayor Fraley commented the City of Berea owns and provides the building in which the Berea Food Bank operates and does provide in-kind support for the Food Bank.

Manges asked if notes could be posted on doors when City Council meetings were cancelled.

JOHN G. FEE SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD & JANICE BLYTHE YOUTH AWARD

Sharyn Mitchell, Chair, Berea Human Rights Commission, appreciated the opportunity to make presentations to nominated individuals who had displayed exceptional dedication to promoting human rights within the City of Berea.

The John G. Fee Social Justice Award was presented to Dr. Eef Fontanez, recent retiree of thirty-three years of Education and former Human Rights Commissioner of six years.

The Janice Blythe Youth Award was presented to Ryan Anello, student, Berea Community High School.

PRESENTATION REGARDING TOURISM

As sometimes the City Council gets requests to cut the restaurant tax, Jerry Little, Council Member, City of Berea, highlighted investments the Tourism Commission and Directors had funded with the restaurant tax confirming the value and/or importance of the tax put into the City's infrastructure for tourists, visitors, and citizens to use and enjoy. Beginning 2007, projects supported by the restaurant

tax included the complete design and renovation of the train station, the Pollinator Gardens at the train station, log cabin improvements at the train station, purchased land on Adams Street, purchased the Tolle property on Chestnut Street, purchased the old hotel property in Old Town, the design/remodel for the Berea Gallery & Event Center on Chestnut Street, the design/remodel of pavilion for the Farmers' Market, Mayde Road Shared Use Path, the Way-Finding Sign Project for tourists/visitors, the Indian Fort Trail, splash pad at the pool, Mountain Bike Trail, \$400,000 to help with the rebuild of the City pool, \$137,500 for Pickleball Courts, approximately \$60,000 on the Ellipse Street Shared Use Path, \$215,000 for the Scaffold Cane Shared Use Path, and \$250,000 for the Trailhead Restrooms at the City Park.

Tourism Commission and Directors had done a good job. He was looking forward for the Tourism Commission and Director, while working with the City, to do something big to attract more visitors/tourists and for our citizens to enjoy in the years to come. Other cities/tourism set aside a percentage of tourism revenue on tourist related infrastructure to be able to plan projects without the concern of funding.

Little also shared the idea of Berea College and Tourism working together in creating a park area on Berea College's fifty-acre wooded land on the corner of Mayde Road and the bypass.

Little would like to see a plaque on projects funded by Tourism as the projects were appreciated. Remember, all things start with an idea, then funding, and then construction.

NANDINO CIRCLE STREET ACCEPTANCE

Codes Administrator, Amanda Haney, stated Codes & Planning and Public Works Department had inspected Nandino Circle, consisting of 1200 Linear Feet (LF) for acceptance into City Maintenance. Requested acceptance by City Council into City Maintenance as all deficiencies had been corrected. Street acceptance was for curbs, gutters, roads, sidewalks, stormwater piping and infrastructure, excluding retention pond at the existing apartment complex at the cul-de-sac.

Remaining sidewalks would be installed on vacant lots as duplexes were constructed and certificate of occupancy for each structure would require complete sidewalks to the property line.

Assets to the City were 1200 LF of street on Nandino Circle with total assets to the City of \$480,000.

Caudill motioned; Little seconded motion to accept 1200 LF of streets at Nandino Circle. The City would accept all infrastructure in the public right of way (from back of sidewalk to back of sidewalk) on Nandino Circle for a total asset to the City of \$480,000 to exclude maintenance of detention / retention pond.

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

ORDINANCE #13-2025 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BEREA, KENTUCKY, RELATING TO THE RESTRUCTURING OF FUNDING OF THE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER / ENHANCED 911 SERVICE THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF A WATER METER FEE IN THE INCORPORATED AREAS OF THE CITY OF BEREA. - 1ST READNG

Corporate Counsel, Gilbert, read Ordinance #13-2025 by summarizing.

A Special Called Meeting would be scheduled for Wednesday, November 12th, for further discussion and public comment.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**Nancy Conley, Director, Tourism**

Thanked Councilman Little for highlighting Berea Tourism's partnerships and funded projects.

Visitor Services & Staffing

- To date, had provided visitor services to approximately 12,000 walk-in visitors, mailed 42 requests for information, and answered 1,176 information phone calls.
- Provide comprehensive janitorial and event support services for event rentals.
- Soon to welcome two new employees in the roles of Media Manager and Program Manager.

Berea Gallery & Event Center

- To date, had hosted eleven rentals, as well as City events.

Marketing & Media

- Collaborated with Right Place Media on the fiscal year media and advertising plan.
- Currently developing a mid-year plan with Fox 56.
- Expanded Berea's visibility through targeted advertising, digital campaigns, and statewide media partnerships.
- Increased media recognition, i.e., named one of Smithsonian's fifteen best small towns to visit in the United States.
- Promoted Berea to new and emerging visitor markets, emphasizing arts, culture, and outdoor recreation.
- Installed new artwork on the I-75 South billboard to attract interstate travelers.
- Printed banners with QR codes directing to pages on the visitberea.com website.
- Recently approved as a neighborhood champion for the American Express Shop Small Saturday campaign highlighting Berea small businesses community.

Events & Programming

- Chestnut Street Pavilion Concert Series ran May – October which included ten concert nights.
- The annual L&N Day was held in June.
- Supported the Juneteenth Celebration at the Chestnut Street Pavilion.
- Had a successful Berea Craft Festival with 107 craft vendors, 7 food vendors, and approximately 6,000 attendees.
- Partnered with the Berea Chamber of Commerce on the Spoonbread Festival and with the Kentucky Guild of Artists & Craftsmen Art Market.
- Awarded marketing reimbursements to strengthen local event promotion for the Kentucky Guild of Artists & Craftsmen, Berea Farmers' Market, Berea Celtic Festival and the Levitt Amp Berea Music Concert Series.

Beautification

- Completed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Christmas lighting with a contract in progress.
- Continued working on beautification projects to enhance visitor appeal and community pride.

Grants

- Completed / Submitted final reporting for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Destination Marketing Organization Tranche 2 Grant.

Goals

- Reinstate / Rebrand the LearnShops Program for July 2026.
- Develop a property and asset maintenance plan.
- Develop a Berea Ambassador Program to help strengthen community partnerships and collaboration.
- Follow the City's Comprehensive Plan with a Berea Tourism Strategic Plan.
- Update visitor resource information, map, and brochure.

Priscilla Bloom, Director, Parks & Recreation Department

Requested an overage in the amount of \$7000 for budget line-item #010-6005-56420 (Outdoor Furniture & Fixtures), increasing the amount from \$50,000 to \$57,000. The additional funds were needed to purchase / install three shade structures at the ballpark. The increase was due to recent increases in materials / installation expenses. The structures would complete the project.

Caudill motioned; Terrill seconded motion to approve overage for line item #010-6005-56420, Outdoor Furniture & Fixtures, in the amount of \$7000, increasing the amount from \$50,000 to \$57,000.

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

Jason Hays, Chief, Berea Police Department

Requested an overage in the amount of \$35,000 for budget line-item #010-2005-54520 (Vehicle R&M), increasing the amount from \$30,000 to \$65,000. An original estimate for a vehicle repair(s) increased due to additional damages found. Also, three new officers were hired, several vehicles had been kept in lieu of auctioning off, and maintenance costs had to be included for these vehicles.

Caudill motioned; Payne seconded motion to approve overage for line-item #010-2005-54520, Vehicle R&M, in the amount of \$35,000, increasing the amount from \$30,000 to \$65,000.

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- Thanked everyone, i.e., community members, businesses, departments etc. that contributed to Halloween in the Park. A successful event with over 900 kids in attendance. Great for our community, would like to see a similar event monthly or quarterly that all could come together.

MAYOR'S REPORT / COMMENTS

- Acknowledged Lumber King's grand opening / ribbon cutting last week. Lumber King had been requested by our contractors / builders and was going to be an asset to our community to have supplies in Berea. Pleased to see them in town.

- State of The City Address, hosted by Berea Chamber of Commerce. The event took place at the Berea Gallery & Event Center. A first-class facility. Appreciated the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Staff, Tourism Director, Nancy Conley, Robert Elam, and City Staff who worked to make it a successful event.
- Reminded the public that a certain decorum was required at meetings of our legislative body, i.e., City Council, which was governed by Municipal Order #03-2023, Conduct of Legislative Body Meetings and the responsibility of the Chair to enforce the Municipal Order. Shared Ordinance #03-2023, Section V. Standing Rules, B. Public Comment Requirements, noting business related relates to items discussed on the business agenda of the Council and does not deal with state or national level policy. State or national level comments are welcome to be sent via e-mail to the Council. He stated order would be maintained in the City's Council Meetings with professionalism and respectful comments that would follow the rules.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Caudill Regarding public comment, stated it was important for people to recognize that public comment had been wrestled with several times. At times, comments were made that were inappropriate for a business meeting. You cannot pick and choose but go by the rules that had been set forth, therefore, keeping Council meetings productive and focused on the work of our City. They were a non-partisan body meant to make decisions for our City and citizens. Appreciated Tourism's presentation and the work they had done. Appreciated Little's comments regarding Tourism.

Little Thanked Haney and the Codes Department for helping Lumber King get in and through the Codes process. Thanked Mayor Fraley for professionalism in holding order during tonight's meeting.

Terrill Concerned about tonight's meeting situation and Police Chief finally getting citizen calmed down.

Davis Thanked the public for coming. It was great if you have something to say, as long as it meets the guidelines of the Ordinance or Municipal Order. On the flip side, whatever your feelings are, i.e., national, state, local, if you see someone in need, such as a meal, let's feed them. If you have money to donate to the Food Bank, donate. That's just humanity. Do not forget in the midst of our bureaucratic stuff, at whatever level, they are people, and people are hurting for whatever reason. Remember to reach out to the neighbor that needs to be fed, whether elderly or kids.

Payne Thanked the Human Rights Commission and congratulated winners of the Fee and Blythe awards. Thanked everyone for coming out and speaking. As a member of the Parks Committee, noted improvements to the parks, the 900 trick-or-treaters, the Ellipse Street connector, addition of the shade structures in the park, the massive pool, the pickleball courts, basketball resurfacing, various renovations, 50+ free summer programs, and Trailhead restrooms and concessions project. These were not small things and required a lot of work from City Administration, Park employees, and Public Works employees. Magnificent to see that much growth in our community. In anticipation of a much greater need at the Food Bank due to current events, donations to the Food Bank would be anonymously matched, up to \$10,000, until November 11th. Implored anyone with the ability to give to do so. Those who had needs, the services were there and invited to use them.

Startzman Grateful for the Human Rights Commission and the work they do. Congratulations to the deserving award winners and their commitment to creating an equitable, inclusive, and welcoming community. As public comment was upsetting today, recognized the importance of a quorum and what the Council had set. Although, it was a stressful time, all politics were local, and many people in the community were hurting, the Council's job was limited through the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS).

Hoped that as they continue to serve on Council, they do their best job within the narrow framework of their job to support our community in ways it makes sense.

Scenters Agreed with Caudill's and Little's comments. Was glad for Little's list of what had been done with the Tourism tax over the past years. It was good to bring those things forward, so the community knew what was being done and infrastructure was important. Council was charged with spending collected taxes to provide services the greater community needed. Although they could not be all things to all people, we did live in a very compassionate community. Felt the need to start talking to each other and find some way to overcome the wall of my way or no way, as there were always going to be situations. Appreciated Berea and the people's passions, they were there to do the people's business.

ADJOURNMENT

Caudill motioned; Payne seconded motion to adjourn at 8:02 p.m.

Voice Vote: All ayes Motion carried.

Mayor Bruce Fraley

City Clerk