BOROUGH OF BELL ACRES
BOROUGH COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2026

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

An **informational Meeting** of the Borough Council of the Borough of Bell Acres was held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, September 14, 2026 due to a lack of a Qurom, at the Big Sewickley Creek Fire Hall, 1850 Big Sewickley Creek Road, Sewickley, PA 15143.

COUNCIL

(X) David Renfrew - President of Council
( ) Brock Meanor - Vice President of Council - excused
( ) Christopher Abell - *excused*
( ) Matthew Horton – *not in attendance*
( ) Charles Kulbacki - *excused*
(X) Gregory Molchen
( ) Michelle Veeck - excused
(X) Kenneth Alvania – Mayor
( ) Sandy Nelko - excused
(X) Robert Max Junker – Babst Calland – via teleconference

Public Comments

Lucy Malarik, 1950 Camp Meeting Road
Mrs. Malarik suggested the municipality consider obtaining a PA system or other type of sound amplification equipment to improve the audibility of meetings. There are times most folks have difficulty hearing what is being said. She noted that the air conditioning, conversations, and the general acoustics of the room can make it difficult to hear speakers, particularly when someone is speaking from a distance or addressing the group.

Julie DiCenzo, 127 Skymark Lane
Sewickley Creek Watershed Festival.
Mrs. DiCenzo stated that the festival will be held at the Fire Hall on Saturday, October 17, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event is a free, family-friendly festival focused on the local watershed and encouraged residents to attend. This event will include environmental speakers, food provided by the ladies Auxiliary, a coffee truck, children's activities, a raffle, and a seed swap. Everyone in the community is invited to stop by and participate in the event.

Georgette Austin, 106 Meta Drive
Mrs. Austin raised concerns about the Port-A-John at the ball fields, noting that it had previously blown over and is not anchored. Mrs. Austin requested that it be secured due to recent storms and suggested moving it from the middle of the field to a less visible location. Mrs. Austin also suggested considering an ordinance requiring screening for long-term Port-A-Johns at public facilities.
Mrs. Austin asked if the municipality could provide Zoom access to meetings so residents who cannot attend in person participate. Mr. Renfrew stated that they would pass along the Port-A-John concerns to the appropriate party and would look into whether Zoom meetings are feasible.

Fire Department Merger Update

Tom Kuny provided an update on the merger of the Leetsdale, Fair Oaks, and Big Sewickley Creek fire departments.
The merger was discussed before an Allegheny County judge on August 24, 2026, and the necessary documents were signed. The new organization will be known as the Quaker Valley Fire District with the official start date of September 24, 2026.

- Beginning October 1, 2026, the three departments are expected to respond to emergency calls together as one fire department under Station 324.
- The target date for completing the transition to one fully consolidated organization is January 1, 2027.

Fire Agreement and Financial Matters

- The draft fire agreement between the Quaker Valley Fire District and Bell Acres Borough remains under discussion. Fair Oaks and Leetsdale have submitted their information, while Bell Acres still needs to provide its comments and proposed changes. Mr. Max Junker, the Borough's solicitor has already provided comments on the agreement.
- Financial arrangements will be addressed after the agreement is reviewed and the Borough's fire protection needs and expectations are clarified.

Insurance and Workers' Compensation

- During the transition, the individual departments may need to maintain their existing vehicle insurance policies until consolidated coverage is established. The possibility of having Bell Acres Borough carry workers' compensation coverage was discussed, with the other municipalities contributing their respective shares.
- Questions remain regarding whether Bell Acres can legally provide this coverage for employees associated with the other municipalities during the October 1–January 1 transition period.

Vehicles and Equipment

- The departments will need to review and consolidate their existing vehicles and equipment. There are currently approximately five engines, and the consolidated department may not need all of them. The possibility of selling an engine and acquiring a different type of vehicle, such as a squad, was discussed. The need for a brush truck was also discussed, particularly for Bell Acres.
- No final decisions will be made until the departments complete a joint review of their equipment, operational needs, and station assignments.
- Mr. Kuny will coordinate with Mr. Buttermore regarding possible dates, and the Borough and fire department representatives will work together to schedule a meeting to resolve the remaining issues.

Bell Acres Municipal Authority Report – Gary Irwin, Chairman

- Mr. Irwin provided an update on the Ball Field pump station project. The Municipal Authority received a $300,000 grant for the project, which will connect the existing sewer line to the new system. The project includes extending the line under the existing driveway and through the ball field between the two retention ponds to the corner of Fern Hollow and Camp Meeting Road.
- A pit will be installed at that location for two pumps that will eventually serve the Hawthorne Acres area. At this time, the Authority is installing the necessary piping and the pit, with the pumps to be addressed later. Steel plates will cover the openings and be secured, and a four-foot fence will surround the area for safety and maintenance access. Landscaping, including shrubs, will also be added while still allowing maintenance vehicles access to the pumps.
- The project is expected to be completed by the end of September, in accordance with the grant deadline. Mr. Irwin stated that he will attend the Planning Commission meeting on September 28, accompanied by an engineer from KLH, to answer questions about the project.
- The Planning Commission has expressed interest in issues such as whether geotechnical drilling was performed and how the pump station will fit into the surrounding area. In response to a question about the size of the new pump station compared with the existing station at Witherow and Camp Meeting Road, Mr. Irwin explained that the new facility will not be as large as that station.
- Mr. Irwin also noted that the Authority obtained the $300,000 grant through another source and expressed appreciation for the funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Palko

Jill Palko
Borough Secretary