

## **Hilbert takes steps to acquire old Bel Brands building**

*By Ed Byrne, The Brillion News, Sept 18, 2019*

The Hilbert Village Board met in closed session on September 10, then took action on two different items discussed. One was the future of the white elephant at the corner of Chestnut and Eighth Streets, just south of Civic Park. That's the old cheese storage warehouse, which is owned by Bel Brands and has been vacant for several years.

Bel Brands USA wants to sell it to the village at a price favorable to taxpayers, and the purchase took a step forward when the village board voted to contract with Cedar Corporation to handle the purchase. Cedar Corporation has been the village's resource on development issues.

It will require funding from the state Department of Administration's block grant program for blight removal.

"We are also doing the initial work on setting up an environmental TIF district," Village Administrator Dennis Duprey said. "We are going to find out if we can set up [that] TID."

That's what the City of Brillion is doing as a part of its restoration of the Brillion Iron Works property. Duprey said the Bel Brands site has much less contamination than does the old BIW property. Bel has extended the offer, allowing the village to purchase the property, until August of 2020.

### **Settlement**

The village board also voted to end a dispute with businessman Todd Thiel. The village had paid for help to get a state grant for Thiel to restore a vacant building at Eighth and Main and turn it into an upscale convenience store.

Thiel got the grant approval, but abandoned the project when the village refused to provide any of its funds for the project.

The village sued to recover the costs it had in getting the state grant. The suit sought \$6,493 from Thiel. He countered with an offer to pay the village \$4,600, and the village board agreed to that amount.

The board's decision requires village attorney Andy King to approve the out-of-court settlement.