

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA
January 8, 2013**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session January 8, 2013 at 12 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Linda K. Whalen; Directors Mary Frances Brammer, Tom Blevins, Deb Sarver and Pete Sternloff; City Manager Jim Ferguson; City Attorney Brian Cochran and City Clerk Helen Mitchell.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

The Invocation was given by Director Mary Frances Brammer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Linda Whalen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

Minutes of the December 11, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Pete Sternloff, seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Linda Whalen discussed that a letter was sent to Attorney Tom Lilly, Owner of the Kroger Shopping Center and Steve Smith, CEO of K-VA-T inviting them to attend the board meeting and discuss a possible solution to the Kroger Food Store building that remains vacant.

A letter was received from K-VA-T CEO Steve Smith declining the invitation because of prior commitments on this date. Mayor Whalen said this matter has been discussed with Tom Lilly who advised that he had requested a meeting with K-VA-T Food Stores, Delegate John Shott, and the Board to hopefully resolve the controversy surrounding the Kroger Store on Cumberland Road. Mayor Whalen said this is not something that we are going to just let remain dormant.

City Manager Jim Ferguson recognized and thanked the Interim Police Chief Dennis Dillow for the great job he has done to date.

City Manager Ferguson extended appreciation to the Shott Foundation on the City's behalf for their support and assistance to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Manager Ferguson extended thanks and appreciation to all staff and volunteers for making the Holiday of Lights a very successful season.

City Manager Ferguson gave updates for the Parks and Recreation Department, Bluefield Transit Authority, Fire Department, Police Department and Public Works.

City Manager Ferguson discussed that residents who might have any remaining leaves, they should be raked, bagged and placed at the curb for pick-up.

ACTION ITEMS

Mayor Linda Whalen read into the record the First Reading of an Ordinance Providing for the Zoning Reclassification of certain parcel of real estate in the City of Bluefield from (RMF) multi family residential district to (R-2) single family residential district by amending the zoning map of the City of Bluefield as

shown on the exhibit hereto attached and declared to be a part of this ordinance as if the same was fully set forth therein.

A motion to accept the first reading of the ordinance as read was made by Director Tom Blevins, seconded by Director Pete Sternloff. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Director Mary Frances Brammer thanked all citizens for attending the meeting. All too often, Brammer said these seats at the city board meetings are empty. Director Brammer thanked citizens for making the city beautiful during the Christmas season and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Director Deb Sarver announced that she is retiring as the coordinator and director of the Holiday of Lights and thanked the citizens who volunteered their help over the past four years. Sarver said, "I was on the commission years ago when it started, and I just want to say that I did this because I enjoy giving back to the city." Sarver thanked all volunteers and city departments for their help.

Mayor Linda Whalen thanked Director Sarver for her work on the Holiday of Lights.

Director Tom Blevins thanked the Fire and Police Departments for their good work. Director Blevins asked that citizens support the sports teams at Bluefield College and Bluefield State College.

Director Pete Sternloff commented on the recent closure of Appalachian Tire Co. and reminded city residents of the need to support existing local businesses.

Mayor Whalen commented that the City is taking a look at key areas in Bluefield to try and stop the decline and make these areas more favorable for housing and business. Mayor Whalen said the City will be taking a serious look at Cumberland Road and what needs to be done there, but the first major street to be addressed is College Avenue. Mayor Whalen said, "What is being seen is single family dwellings being turned into multi-family dwellings, and with that comes landlords that don't take care of their property, and it spreads to the next street and soon the whole city is facing this problem."

Mayor Linda Whalen explained that the Bluefield Transit System is sponsored basically by the City of Bluefield and is also state funded, but it serves all of Mercer County, and a significant portion of McDowell County. The Mercer County Commission and the City of Princeton both contribute to the transit funding, but it is a very small portion compared to what the City of Bluefield has to contribute and McDowell County doesn't contribute anything.

Mayor Whalen said that Bluefield officials plan to make a funding request to the City of Princeton and the Mercer County Commission.

Mayor Linda Whalen reminded everyone that at 6:00 p.m. this evening the Economic Development Team led by Greg Shrewsbury will be presenting their Economic Development Plan for the future of the City of Bluefield.

Mayor Whalen congratulated Cole Cochran, son of City Attorney Brian Cochran on winning the Mercer County Spelling Bee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Art Riley representing the Downtown Merchants Association reminded downtown merchants that sidewalks must be cleaned within 24 hours of snow starting to fall, and secondly that there is "no parking" on Bland Street between midnight and 5:00 a.m. to allow for street scraping.

Mr. Riley commended Deb Sarver on the "Holiday of Lights."

Richard Dillon, city resident offered comments on the empty Kroger building and asked the board to support Food City. Mr. Dillon also said that the new Police Chief is doing a good job.

Resident Charlene Long asked if the City would once again enforce the use of garbage cans throughout the city, as the birds are tearing open the garbage bags.

Citizen Isaac Preston displayed artwork shaped in the design of tree made from unused copper that was taken from the debris of the Scott Street Parking Garage. Mr. Preston stated that the artwork symbolized Bluefield's past and present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER

Mayor Whalen reminded everyone that the Bluefield Beautification Commission is planning for their annual "Winter Warmer" at Cole Harley Davidson on February 16, 2013.

Mayor Whalen commended and thanked Memorial School Principal Becky Perry on several accommodations awarded to the school.

Director Pete Sternloff moved that the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Linda Whalen advised the Board would only return to regular session to adjourn the meeting.

Hearing no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Helen L. Mitchell, City Clerk

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor