

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA
February 12, 2013**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session February 12, 2013 at 12 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Linda K. Whalen; Directors Tom Blevins, Mary Frances Brammer, Deb Sarver, 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 January 22, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Pete Sternloff, seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

City Manager Jim Ferguson introduced and welcomed City Treasurer Kenneth Mulkey.

City Manager Ferguson announced that it was his honor to introduce Lt. Dennis Dillow as the new Chief of Police.

Manager Ferguson said the City did not have to conduct a nationwide search to find a professional, qualified leader that was capable of leading our Police Department, because we were fortunate enough to already have that individual within our police department.

Manager Jim Ferguson said, "It is with great honor today that I have this privilege of presenting you with the chief badge and to appoint you to the Chief of Police position of our department. I know you will wear this badge with pride and that you will continue to abide by the oath that you took as patrolman in 1990, and that you will bring great honor to our department and to our city."

Lt. Dillow is a Bluefield native and since joining the department, has risen through the ranks until he was named Chief of Police, said Ferguson.

Chief of Police Dennis Dillow introduced new Police Officers, Justin Harris, Matthew Hatfield, Joshua Bish and Kenneth Adams.

City Clerk Helen Mitchell administered the oath of office to the new police officers.

Fire Chief Jeff Warden introduced newly hired Firefighter Matthew Pettry.

City Clerk Helen Mitchell administered the oath of office to Firefighter Pettry.

City Manager Ferguson discussed upcoming community development activities.

Mayor Linda K. Whalen gave the following State of the City address.

In a previous city update I spoke of phases that communities and organizations go through. For cities, at any given time various parts of the city are either in a state of decline, recline or incline. As a little explanation, decline is characterized by complacency and a focus on the past. Recline is focused on the routine, and the present, incline focuses on restarts and is innovative, vision driven and innovative. We believe, on so many levels, Bluefield is now a city in incline and always working to restart the other areas. We are dressed for success and we believe on the tipping point for new beginnings for Bluefield.

How did we arrive at this point? Let me recap some of the happenings of the last few years. Without a doubt one of the strongest assets of our city are the volunteers who step forward and take actions to move our city forward. Our Beautification Commission continues with projects that create an atmosphere that encourages opportunities for economic development. We have inviting entrances to our city, a wonderful new entrance to our great city park asset, flowers, banners, sculptures and we constantly hear people talk about now taking visitors to see our beautiful downtown. Our city staff continues to work with our Beautification Commission, Arts Commission, Merchants Association and our Chamber of Commerce to provide events and activities not only for the enjoyment of our citizens, but opportunities for tourism. One of our newest and very successful events is the Beautification Commission's WV Winter Warmer, happening this weekend. We believe we are creating an environment inviting to the creative class—the economic wave of our future.

Further, in our downtown we are in the engineering and architectural phase of our Colonial Intermodal Project. We expect this to complete in the spring and we will be making another trip to Washington to meet with Congressman Rahall and his staff to continue to look for additional funding to further this project. We were very fortunate that Commissioner Paul Mattox agreed for the WV Dept. of Transportation to allow state tax credits to be used for the required 20% match on this project. We will be completing our Bland St. sidewalk project in the spring and will continue to apply for grants to extend this sidewalk work.

In many areas of our city we have had restarts which we believe is positioning us for incline.

Most importantly, we have Jim Ferguson as our new City Manager. In his four months here Jim has accomplished much. He constantly exhibits great leadership skills, makes thoughtful business minded decisions and thoroughly investigates situations. He has innovative ideas, and most importantly he loves Bluefield. He is our Team Blue leader.

Although, we have many great city workers, with excellent department hires, Jim is putting in place leadership in each department that creates an atmosphere for positive growth.

Our Police Chief Dennis Dillow brings leadership skills that include a desire to make our police department the best it can be. He is currently working with our schools on an Emergency Planning Procedure. He is also, committed to efficient operation of our jail, hence aiding the entire law enforcement community.

Our new Fire Chief Jeff Warden brings a skill set that includes the ability to operate an all paid fire dept efficiently, and safely, while understanding the constraints of a

small city. Very thankfully, he has been able to keep our #3 Fire station on Cumberland Road open since his promotion to chief.

Since the retirement of Dallas Fowler, City Engineer Tony Wagner has accepted the additional role of interim director of public works. Tony has continued to move this department forward doing the always good job they do with very limited resources. In addition to performing their regular duties, the department in the past several years, has demolished well over 500 houses. Their plan is to have the demolition of over 100 houses now on our demolition list completed by 2014.

In the past two years, the city has been able to purchase with the money from the hospital sale, desperately needed equipment for our police, fire, public works and maintenance depts.

Our new Recreation Director Dwight Godwin and his assistant Chawn bring expertise, relationship personalities and vision to our Parks and Recreation Department. We now have a programming plan in place that includes recreation for the entire population based on community input. Also, the formation of a parks and recreation advisory board is in the near future. Our parks and recreation department continue to oversee 13 parks and a lot of activity. We recently applied for and were awarded money to provide playground equipment to four parks and an additional grant to start the renovation of our recreation center. Our tennis courts are the best in the area and also, have great use all year round. We continue to operate a very busy stadium, which is used by our entire region, as is our city park. Our Ridge Runner continued to set ridership records and is a wonderful example of what happens when our community volunteers and the city work together. Our trails, as always, continue to have a lot of activity as does our entire park. We again had a very successful Holiday of Lights, which also, offers a variety of benefits to our entire region.

Our Transit Department continues to be one of the best in the state and is fast approaching 200,000 riders each year. Again, this is a Bluefield led system that benefits our entire region. Our transit system includes routes in Princeton, Athens, McDowell County and even into Bluefield, VA. With connections from our transit system, our residents can now go to Bristol on public transportation. Director Patrick McKinney has worked with the WV Department of Highways to secure funds for a new transit building and after our many years of looking and planning, work has now begun on our new facility located on John Nash Blvd. We have also been successful in annexing that property into our city limits.

We continue to be very appreciative of all the work our City Attorney Brian Cochran, does for us. Brian has been such a go to since his employment with us, and even in the past year once again filled in as a very capable city manager. We are very confident in the advice and wisdom that he imparts with his job.

Our Code Enforcement Department led by Lori Mills continues to be very aggressive and expends all efforts to enforce city ordinances that protect the welfare of our citizens. In an attempt to protect property values we are evaluating zoning in different areas of our city, and as a result, with the help of our planning commission, we have rezoned College Ave. We intend to be very aggressive in enforcing city ordinance that protect the quality of life for all. Additionally, over 523 building permits were issued this year.

Our Finance Department is now being led by Kenneth Mulkey, our new City Treasurer. We are most appreciative of our finance department staff, which did not miss a beat while we searched for our new treasurer. Ken is a CPA who brings years of experience to this position and additionally he has returned home after living away for several years.

We have continued to work with Bluefield State on several projects. Most recently, we have hired an exchange student on a part-time basis to work with our code enforcement dept. Her part time clerical work has enabled us to have a much higher rate of enforcement. In the past we also worked with Dr. Don Bury and his architectural dept to help us with some demolition engineering problems and also, planning for our freight station. His architectural class designed a plan inside and out for the station which we then submitted for a 1 million dollar plus grant. Although, we were not successful in securing the grant we are forging a great relationship with our college. Our new economic development plan includes new opportunities to make Bluefield State a greater force in our city and downtown in particular. In fact, as part of this committee, we now have a student led group working with the city board and people from our community to make this happen.

Another very significant positive was the hiring of Greg Shrewsbury as our Economic Development Director. Although Greg was with us for a short time, very important accomplishments took place. Greg was able to bring together a group of very dedicated, innovative, motivated individuals that formed our Economic Development team. They have developed an economic development plan for the city which includes commerce, recreation, downtown, and industrial. The city board is very supportive of this citizen led initiative. Greg continues to lead this group, and several opportunities are already in the process of happening... Jim will lead the formation of a new Bluefield Business Association. Because there is power in numbers we are forming this group to include all business, while still supporting the smaller divisions that might like to work together. A report developed by this group is available from the city. In a year when we have had some very unfortunate business closings and a downturn in our countries economy as a whole, we continue to be optimistic. Our Economic Development group is a good example of not looking back to what we were, but building on our heritage with new innovative ideas. We continue to pursue new businesses for our community, and to date have a couple of very promising opportunities. We are also, very excited about the newly formed BPS, a 501C-3 consisting of a group of people interested in redevelopment of our downtown. To promote all of our city activities, we hope to have our much needed new web site up and running soon. I hope you have seen our new Team Blue PSA, the result of work between Jim and Greg.

Another very positive opportunity led by Greg for Bluefield, is our designation as a Blueprint Community. This involves business people from our community working with our city manager and board members, and HUB staff to further develop and implement our economic development plan. Being a participant in this program opens up financial opportunities for economic development

A word of gratitude to Helen Mitchell our city clerk who has worked so very diligently during her time in this position to get and keep all of our records and information in order. She is our record keeper and we appreciate her very conscientious work and loyalty to this city, as we do Angie Foley in the records that she keeps for all of the workers in the city.

As a board we continue to be involved in the local and state activities. We take an active role by serving on the boards of the Greater Bluefield Chamber of commerce, Region One Development Authority, MCEDA, MCCVB, WVWORK Force. We are also members of the WVML and as mayor I serve on the board of directors and on the legislative and by laws committee. I was also selected by Governor Tomblin to be the WVML representative for the Governor's legislative Committee on Substance Abuse. This committee is submitting to the governor the recommendations to fight drug abuse which he will submit for legislative action.

There is so much opportunity to become a part of making Bluefield the best we can be. Are you going to be part of the problem or part of the solution? We can all sit back and criticize and be negative about where we live—that's easy to do—we will never be perfect. Why not become a member of Team Blue. Buy local, use your talents for good, and offer encouragement to those you see volunteering. Participate in activities in your city. Team Blue—Make It Yours.

ACTION ITEMS

Fire Chief Jeff Warden presented to the Board the Annual Reports of the Police and Fire Department's Pension Fund and drawdown of state funds FY/2012. The drawdown from the state for Policemen's pension was \$199,022.63 and the Firemen's pensions were \$210,734.36.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to accept the Police and Fire Department's Annual Reports and the pension drawdown of state funds as presented, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

In other action, the Board voted unanimously on a motion made by Director Tom Blevins, seconded by Director Pete Sternloff to approve Payment #6 to Swope Construction Company in the amount of \$267,621.3 for the demolition of the Scott Street Parking Garage.

The Board voted unanimously on a motion for a change order for the Scott Street Parking Garage to add \$16,692.00 to the contract of Stafford Consultants, Inc. on a motion made by Director Sternloff and seconded by Director Tom Blevins.

City Manager Jim Ferguson read into the record the Second Reading of an Ordinance Authorizing the Annexation of County Route 290/4 and Parcels 26 and 26.1, Tax Map 28, Beaver Pond District, Owned by the City of Bluefield and the Bluefield Area Transit, into the corporate Territorial Limits of the City of Bluefield.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to approve the first reading of the ordinance as read, seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ANNEXATION OF COUNTY ROUTE 290/4 AND PARCELS 26 AND 26.1, TAX MAP 28, BEAVER POND DISTRICT, OWNED BY THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD AND THE BLUEFIELD AREA TRANSIT, INTO THE CORPORATE TERRITORIAL LIMITS OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield petitioned the Mercer County Commission for Annexation of CR 290/4 and Parcels 26 and 26.1, Tax Map 28, Beaver Pond District, by Minor Boundary Adjustment on August 29, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the City and the Bluefield Area Transit requested that their property, located at John Nash Boulevard, and being the same real estate conveyed to the City of Bluefield and the Bluefield Area Transit by Deed by Steven K. Harry and John H. Shott, Co-Executors of the Estate of Charles A. Hurst, Deceased, be annexed into the corporate limits of the City; and

WHEREAS, the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, has authorized the annexation of CR 290/4 into the corporate limits of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Mercer County Commission held three properly Noticed Public Hearings on the proposed annexations on October 9, 2012, December 11, 2012, and January 8, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Mercer County Commission approved the above described annexation at its January 8th, 2013 meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, WITNESS THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCE:

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield hereby ordains:

- 1) CR 290/4 and Parcels 26 and 26.1, Tax Map 28, Beaver Pond District, are hereby annexed into the corporate territorial limits of the City of Bluefield.
- 2) This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon its passage and recording by the City Clerk.

First Reading: January 22, 2013

Second Reading and Passage: February 12, 2013

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor

Attest:

Helen Mitchell, Clerk

City Manager Jim Ferguson asked for Board approval for the purchase of two police cruisers to be purchased from the Coal Severance Fund in the amount of approximately \$60,000.

Director Mary Frances Brammer moved to approve the purchase of two police cruisers from the Coal Severance Fund, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

The agenda continued with appointments to the Bluefield Beautification Commission.

A motion to appoint Betty Nash and Vickie Harris for a 4-year term to the Beautification Commission was made by Director Pete Sternloff, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Manager Jim Ferguson advised the last agenda item would be an Executive Session to discuss personnel.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Director Pete Sternloff commented on the relationship between the City and Bluefield State College. Director Sternloff advised there is a task force which is chaired by students from Bluefield State that meets once monthly to discuss things that will bring Bluefield State students and faculty closer to being a stronger part of the City of Bluefield.

Director Sternloff advised that Bluefield was one of the sixty communities in West Virginia that had the honor of becoming a Blueprint Community.

Director Sternloff commented that the city would soon be choosing a company to develop the City's new, very interactive, high end web site.

Director Mary Frances Brammer thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Director Brammer congratulated Police Chief Dennis Dillow on his appointment, and newly hired firefighter and police officers.

Director Brammer asked for support for the Bluefield Beavers and wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

Director Deb Sarver commented that she has a lot of confidence in the newly appointed department heads and said she felt the City has the right people in place. Director Sarver congratulated and thanked the employees for being here for the City. Director Sarver commented that Tony Wagner was doing a great job with snow removal.

Director Tom Blevins asked for support for Bluefield State College.

Director Blevins commented that the Board has hired seven new major positions (department heads), and thanked the newly hired team for doing exceptional work.

Mayor Whalen asked for the support of the community to get behind the city staff and to realize what a wonderful community we live in.

Mayor Whalen commented that the City is continuing to work on finding a new grocery store to fill the vacancy created by Kroger.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Art Riley representing Downtown Merchants commented on the great work with snow removal.

Mr. Riley congratulated Police Chief Dillow on his appointment.

Jerry Perdue, member of the Student Government Association at Bluefield State College addressed the Board regarding Governor Tomblin's request to the state legislators to cut 7.5 per cent from the WV Higher Education budget.

Mr. Perdue asked for the City Board's help in writing and petitioning the state regarding these educational cuts.

Doreen Dimes, resident of the WV Manor discussed parking concerns of the residents of the manor.

Mayor Whalen advised that the City is currently working through the details of the parking for the residents of the Manor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER

- "Vaudeville Las Vegas" - Summit Theatre - February 15, 16, 17 - February 22, 23, 24
- "Driving Miss Daisy" -The Ramsey Auditorium - February 23 - February, 28; Matinee - Feb. 24
- "Black History Month" - Bluefield State College - February 5th thru 27th
- "WV Winter Warmer 2013" - February 16, 2013 - Cole Harley Davidson - 2-7 p.m. Sponsored by Bluefield Beautification Commission

Director Pete Sternloff moved that the Board retire into Executive Session only to return to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Director Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Hearing no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Helen L. Mitchell, City Clerk

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor