

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA
August 13, 2013**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session August 13, 2013 at 12:00 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Tom Cole; Vice Mayor Barbara Smith; Directors Chuck McGonagle, Ellen Light and Michael Gibson; City Manager Jim Ferguson; City Attorney Brian Cochran; CFO Ken Mulkey and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey.

INVOCATION / PLEDGE

The Invocation was given by Gene Wyatt, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice Mayor Barbara Smith.

MINUTES

Minutes of the July 23, 2013 meeting were approved with corrections on a motion by Director Ellen Light, seconded by Director Michael Gibson.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- City Manager Jim Ferguson reported that the City Auditorium gymnasium floor is 97% complete and should be finished by the end of the week. This project is the result of a grant obtained from the Shott Foundation. Manager Ferguson said there had been some discussion for the need of a protective gym floor cover system. The City Board's packets contained two estimates obtained on different fabrics that could be rolled out for events at the auditorium and then stored. The installer, Huffman Company recommended a high grade matting floor covering. City Manager Ferguson said the City needs to take into consideration this matting would have to be stored on several carts, there would be need for a storage area for the carts/matting, and the additional cost. City Manager Ferguson asked the Board to consider the following:
 1. What material should be purchased to protect the gym floor? Two options at this point (1) a high-grade fabric or (2) a matting material.
 2. Who will be responsible for the maintaining the floor covering?
 3. Not to purchase any protection as the old gymnasium floor did not have a protective cover.

Director Michael Gibson suggested that we not buy anything at this time and make sure the tables/chairs are having proper protection necessary for a wood floor. Mayor Cole recommended that the Board check to see that table legs and chair legs are properly covered with proper protective covering. Mayor Cole shared a concern about the laying down /taking up and storage of a floor covering. The Board will consider this matter after more deliberation.

- City Manager Jim Ferguson stated that Commerce Street is now a one-way street. The Ordinance providing for a traffic change was passed and adopted by the Board of

Directors on June 11, 2013. City Manager Jim Ferguson stated several construction projects have started in downtown. The Bluefield Preservation Society, with the aid of the Shott Foundation, is in the process of erecting ten Sheppard hook streetlights and adding awnings to the downtown Depot District. Several sidewalks have been demolished due to the new electrical wiring being installed by AEP. It is an opportune time to pour the foundation necessary for the new awnings. The Granada Theater is being prepared for a concert on August 31. A lot of things are going on in downtown Bluefield. Due to construction, Federal Street has a No Enter sign and Scott Street now has a No Left Hand Turn sign. Raleigh Street is still a two way street and is the best way to get to Commerce Street. Citizens can go down Princeton Avenue and turn up Scott Street and make their way Commerce Street. If traveling Scott Street in the opposite direction, there is a no left turn so citizens must continue or make a U-turn. Mayor Cole stated he would like the Board to look into the no left turn decision and if it is appropriate for the traffic flow.

ACTION ITEMS

Director Ellen Light made a motion to reappoint Zoning Board of Adjustments Members: Roy Pruett, Jonna Looney and Douglas Hayes for a three year term (August 2013 – 2014); seconded by Director Chuck McGonagle. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Smith made a motion to reappoint Buildings Commission Members: Carl Thomas, Jr. and Doris Irwin; seconded by Director Michael Gibson. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Mike Gibson made a motion to reappoint Mel Saunders to the Fine Arts Commission for a five-year term (August 2013 – 2018); seconded by Vice Mayor Smith. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Director Ellen Light thanked the citizens of Bluefield for giving her the opportunity to serve. Director Light stated she wants to serve everyone in Bluefield to the best of her ability. Director Light said she hoped the citizens of Bluefield would call her with comments, concerns and suggestions.

Director Chuck McGonagle thanked the citizens of Bluefield for their support in electing him to serve on the Board of Directors. Director McGonagle stated he looked forward to the challenges the new Board may encounter but felt this Board could do some good for the Citizens of Bluefield.

Vice Mayor Barbara Smith thanked the citizens of Bluefield for entrusting her with the position to represent them. Vice Mayor Smith stated she is looking forward to making and helping others to make the Bluefield we used to know the Bluefield we want to know.

Director Michael Gibson thanked the citizens of Bluefield for electing him to the Board of Directors. Director Gibson stated that he would like to see the Board visit individual neighborhoods. Director Gibson would like the visits to be announced in advance so citizens can discuss problems and concerns in individual neighborhoods.

Mayor Tom Cole stated that his presence at the Board meeting was very "surreal." Mayor Cole said he was honored to have the support of the citizens of Bluefield and certainly has the "best interest" of Bluefield at heart. He also thanked the Members of the Board of Directors for their confidence in selecting him as Mayor. Mayor Cole acknowledged his parents who were in attendance. Mayor Cole said it was a privilege to follow his father, Paul Cole, who served as Mayor of Bluefield for thirteen years. Mayor Cole hopes to do he can half the job as his father, who he respects so deeply. Mayor Cole said he does want this Board to be available to the Citizens of Bluefield and does want feedback from the citizens

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Art Riley, representing he Downtown Merchants, reported the following:

1. Thanked the Board Members for running and serving the community
2. Thanked the Citizens of Bluefield and the City Administrators for their attendance at the 15th the annual street fair. It was a success and everyone had a good time.

Mr. Al Hancock, an Air force military retiree, requested that the City of Bluefield be a "veteran friendly" city. Mr. Hancock suggested signs or billboards advertising Bluefield as a veteran friendly city. Mr. Hancock also proposed a community get together or gatherings at the park to recognize area veterans.

Dr. William White requested the Board to appoint a citizens committee to investigate a situation involving the Bluefield Rescue Squad and the Bluefield Fire Department. Dr. White presented the City Clerk Bobbi Kersey with a copy of a letter that he read to the City Board outlining the sequence of events involving five instances where he requested assistance for his stepfather. Sam Pennington, administrator of the Bluefield Rescue Squad, said he was aware of only one of the five complaints mentioned by Dr. White. On the day in question, the Rescue Squad was contacted by Jan Care but did not have a crew available to assist. Pennington stated the Rescue Squad tries to keep at least one advance life support team on station in the event of an emergency call. Jan Care is the state's largest ambulance service and has a contract to provide transports to the Veterans Administrations Hospital in Beckley. The Bluefield Fire Department is not equipped to transport patients nor does it have the medical equipment. Mr. Pennington invited Dr. White to come to the Rescue Squad and review copies and tape recordings of the disputed calls.

Mr. Doug Conley, a disabled veteran who lives in the Opera House Apartments, expressed a concern about a breast cancer fund raising concert that took place at Chicory Square this past Sunday. Mr. Conley stated the music was extremely loud and some of the content of the music was profane. Mr. Conley also stated that, had an ambulance been needed, access was blocked due to the concert. Director of Parks and Recreation, Dwight Godwin, said he

approved the permit for the concert. Mayor Cole said the Board would look into the process for having an event scheduled in the downtown area and requested Director Godwin attend the next informational meeting to discuss the matter further.

Mr. Dan Brewer, a business owner in downtown Bluefield, questioned plans for a new streetlight in an alley that would block access to his property. Mr. Brewer also expressed concerns about restricting traffic to one way on Commerce Street and planned parking designs. Mayor Cole suggested that Mr. Brewer speak with City Manager Ferguson after the meeting to see if his issues and questions can be resolved. Mr. Brewer said the upper level guttering at the City Auditorium, where the American Legion holds its meetings, needs repaired and asked for the City's assistance.

Mrs. Charlene Long, a resident of Union Street, encouraged the new board members to visit the various neighborhoods in the city, as suggested by Director Michael Gibson. Mrs. Long presented the board with a list of people that are failing to maintain their property on Union Street, several being real estate companies. Mrs. Long expressed a concern about some of the drug houses and is in hopes the new Board can do something about the activities taking place on Union Street.

Bluefield Virginia, Mayor Don Harris extended an invitation for a renewed working and improved communication relationship between the two Bluefields. Mayor Harris is excited and hopes that the two cities can work together on many projects in the upcoming years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER

Mayor Cole expressed support for the ongoing renovations to the old Granada Theater. He stated he is excited with the potential for the Granada Theater.

Mayor Cole thanked the previous Board for their service and dedication to the City of Bluefield.

Lemonade Festival will be August 27. The City will have a parade (5:00 pm) and many other events are scheduled. The public is invited to attend.

Director Michael Gibson moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vice Mayor Barbara Smith. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Hearing no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor