

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA
March 13, 2012**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session March 13, 2012 at 12:00 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 Andy Merriman; City Attorney Brian Cochran and City Clerk Helen L. Mitchell.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

The Invocation was given by Gene Wyatt, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Linda Whalen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

Minutes of the February 28, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Mary Frances Brammer and seconded by Director Deb Sarver. The minutes of the Special Emergency Called meeting on March 5, 2012 were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Pete Sternloff and seconded by Director Tom Blevins.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

City Manager Andy Merriman discussed that there was some foundation cracking on the playing surface of the tennis courts. Manager Merriman advised that an agreement had been reached with the company that did the work on the courts, and a recommendation for the expenditure to repair the tennis courts will be presented at the next board meeting.

City Attorney Brian Cochran stated that negotiations had been ongoing with Vasco and a reasonable settlement had been reached. Attorney Cochran advised the cost would be approximately \$40,000 to repair the courts and the city's responsibility would be \$15,000.

ACTION ITEMS

The agenda item regarding an Economic Development Director for the City of Bluefield was cancelled for this meeting and no action was taken.

City Manager Andy Merriman read into the record the First Reading of an Ordinance providing for the Zoning Reclassification of a Parcel of Real Estate in the City of Bluefield from (R-2) Single Family District to (BH) Business Highway 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.

Manager Merriman advised that this property was located on Grassy Branch, and the zoning reclassification had been approved by the Planning Commission.

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 PROVIDING FOR THE ZONING RECLASSIFICATION OF A PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE IN THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD FROM (R-2) SINGLE FAMILY DISTRICT TO (BH) BUSINESS HIGHWAY 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.

WHEREAS, Steve Hall submitted an application to the City of Bluefield to rezone property shown on Tax Map 46, Parcel 148 (3 lots) lots 16, 17 & 18 Sec 6, Cumberland Heights, address being 2819 Grassy Branch, Bluefield, from R-2 to BH for a proposed commercial radiator shop in an approximate 50' x 42' pre-engineered steel metal building.

WHEREAS, this property is Bounded on the North by Tax Map 46, Parcel 149, Lots 14 & 15, Sec 6, Cumberland Heights and Tax Map 46, Parcel 158, Lots 5 & 6, Sec 6, Cumberland Heights, owners being Jimmie C. and Irma Howington. Bounded on the East by Tax Map 46, Parcel 159, Lot 7, Blk 6, Cumberland Heights, owned by Jeffrey N. and Dawn Lester, Tax Map 46, Parcel 160, Lot 8, Sec 6, Cumberland Heights, owned by Jeffrey N. and Dawn Lester c/o Sheila Pennington and Tax Map 46, Parcel 160.1, Lot 9, Sec 6, Cumberland Heights, owned by Jeffrey N. and Dawn Lester. Bounded on the South by Tax Map 46, Parcel 161, Lot 10, Sec 6 Cumberland Heights, owned by Alvis B. and Kella Coleman and Tax Map 46, Parcel 147.1, Lot 0.70 AC Grassy Branch, owned by D and R Automobile Truck Repair. Bounded on the West by Grassy Branch Road.

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, February 29th, 2012, the Planning Commission of the City of Bluefield, sitting as the Zoning Commission of said City, held a public hearing upon and thereafter made its recommendation to the Board of Directors of said City that this property be reclassified and rezoned as (BH).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY West Virginia, IN REGULAR SESSION ASSEMBLED AS FOLLOWS:

That the property shown on Tax Map 46, Parcel 148 (3 lots) lots 16, 17 & 18 Sec 6, Cumberland Heights, address being 2819 Grassy Branch, City of Bluefield, is hereby reclassified and rezoned from R-2 to BH for a proposed commercial radiator shop in an approximate 50' x 42' pre-engineered steel metal building.

FIRST READING: March 13, 2012

SECOND READING AND ADOPTION:

FILED:

RECORDED:

Mayor

City Clerk

City Manager Andy Merriman, as he does each year listed the priority projects for the City of Bluefield. This information is forwarded to Region I Planning & Development Council. Listed in order of importance, the priorities are as follows. These were voted on and unanimously passed on a motion by Director Tom Blevins, seconded by Director Pete Sternloff.

1. Transportation (air, rail, highway, water, public transportation)
2. Community Facilities & Service (water, sewer, neighborhood improvements, libraries, recreation, public safety, solid waste)
3. Economic Development (travel and tourism, industrial development, small business development)
4. Environment and Natural Resources (flood prevention, land use)
5. Housing
6. Human Resources (health, education, child development, aging)
7. Energy
8. Government

Category priorities as related to the community were as follows:

1. Colonial Intermodal Facility Project
2. Demolition/Residential
3. Scott Street Parking Garage Demolition

City Manager Merriman introduced Bluefield Sanitary Board Attorney James Kelsh who presented to the Board the sewer rate increase ordinance for the Bluefield Sanitary Board.

Attorney Kelsh explained that the Sanitary Board presented a rate increase in January but the ordinance was withdrawn prior to the second reading. Kelsh said, "The new ordinance will address the same problems as the prior ordinance but in a different way."

Kelsh advised that if the first reading of the ordinance is passed, there will be public hearing and second reading on March 27 with the new rates going into effect on May 12.

Kelsh explained that the Sanitary Board is not meeting its coverage requirements on its bonds, and it needs to implement a rate increase to bring its revenue in compliance with its bond obligations. Kelsh advised that the project at the Ada treatment plant has been scaled back from \$2.9 million to approximately 1.5 million.

Kelsh explained that this rate increase would implement a 16 percent across the board rate increase to the customers, but that would only increase the Sanitary Board's revenue by 8 per cent due to the loss of large industrial customers.

Kelsh said, "This rate increase if adopted would increase the minimum bill charge by \$2.40 per month, increasing the average monthly bill from \$14.98 to \$17.38." The average household using 4,000 gallons per month would see its monthly bill increase by \$4.80 to a total of \$34.76.

Kelsh explained this is a one-step increase of 16 percent and this ordinance will bring us immediately in compliance with our bond coverage requirements.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to adopt the rate increase as presented by the Sanitary Board, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. After discussion, the motion was unanimously approved and so ordered.

The agenda continued with an appointment to the Fine Arts Commission.

A motion to appoint Elaine Jessee to a five-year term on the Fine Arts Commission was made by Director Tom Blevins, seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Manager Andy Merriman read into the record a Resolution authorizing the City of Bluefield to enter into a supplemental agreement with the West Virginia Department of Transportation for the replacement of the Martin Luther King Bridge.

Manager Merriman explained that the city's obligation of the project is \$310,000 to go towards our match to replace the bridge with the total cost of the project to be \$6.1 million.

It was discussed that the original cost of the project was to be \$1.5 million.

Mayor Linda Whalen commended city officials on keeping the city's share of the bridge project at \$310,000.

City Manager Merriman said the project is still eight months away from bidding, and that alternate routes are being worked out for traffic while the new bridge is under construction

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

The final action item was the retirement of employee Novelda Pritchard. A resolution of Retirement was presented and read into the record by Mayor Linda Whalen.

**RESOLUTION OF HONOR
NOVELDA PRITCHARD**

WHEREAS, On Friday, March 16, 2012, Novelda Pritchard will retire from the City of Bluefield after 37 years of service to the citizens of Bluefield; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Pritchard began her career with the City of Bluefield in April of 1975; and

WHEREAS, During her 37 years of service, Ms. Pritchard has been a dedicated and loyal employee in the Treasury Department of the City while working for Nine City Treasurers and Six City Managers; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Pritchard is admired by her fellow employees for her integrity, trustworthiness, dependability, and her dedication to her family, her church, and to her community through her public service to the citizens of Bluefield; and

WHEREAS, through her responsible work in the Treasury Department, Ms. Pritchard has been an integral part in keeping the City fiscally sound; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield acknowledges and appreciates Ms. Pritchard's many contributions through her work in the Treasury Department to our City and to the citizens of which she has faithfully served.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield wishes Novelda the best in her retirement and thanks her for her commitment and service to the citizens of the City of Bluefield; Her wisdom, knowledge, and dedication will be greatly missed.

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor

Dr. Tom Blevins, Director

Mary Frances Brammer, Director

Deb Sarver, Director

Pete Sternloff, Director

Attest:

Helen Mitchell, City Clerk

Mayor Linda Whalen spoke on behalf of the Board and extended thanks and gratitude for a job well done. Mayor Whalen commended Ms. Pritchard for her loyalty and faithfulness for the past thirty-seven years in her job.

Mayor Whalen invited everyone attending the meeting to please join in refreshments honoring this occasion when the meeting adjourns.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Director Mary Frances Brammer thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Director Brammer wished the Bluefield Beavers luck in the upcoming tournaments.

City Manager Andy Merriman gave updates on the bidding process on the Scott Street Parking Garage.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Art Riley representing Downtown Merchants congratulated Ms. Pritchard on her retirement.

Mr. Riley asked if the public hearing date for the Sanitary Board rate increase had been set.

City Manager Merriman advised that the public hearing date was set in the ordinance for 5:00 p.m. on March 27, 2012.

Mr. Riley announced that the Ridge Runner would be opening on Sunday, April 1 and would be open on Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Steve Froy and Kathy Burch addressed the board regarding an ad that was published in the Daily Telegraph on May 24, 2011 asking for local vendors to sell food and drinks in the park. Ms. Burch stated that they had contacted the City of Bluefield and the Town of Bluefield regarding opening a concession stand in the park and was of the understanding that they would be allowed to open a concession stand near the Ridge Runner, but was now being advised that this might not be possible.

City Manager Merriman advised that the concern of fairness to everyone was the issue, and generally, it would be open to everyone in the City to submit a proposal. Manager Merriman said a decision would then be based on the assessment of the proposals.

Manager Merriman advised that the ultimate decision must be made by the City Board in deference to the investment that the Ridge Runner Committee has made.

Attorney Norris Kantor commented on the Sanitary Board rate increase and the demolition of the Martin Luther King Bridge.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER

- The GBCC Annual Women's Conference – March 20 - 9-4 p.m. - David's at the Club.

Helen L. Mitchell, City Clerk

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor