

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA
April 24, 2012**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session April 24, 2012 at 6 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 April 10, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Pete Sternloff and seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Linda Whalen advised that the first agenda item was "Clean Sweep" and opened the floor to citizens wishing to make comments regarding the program. Mayor Whalen advised that public comments would be limited to three (3) minutes.

Art Riley representing Downtown Merchants said that "Clean Sweep" allows our citizenry to clean out their garages and yards, thus giving us a clean city that we can be proud of.

Mr. Riley commented that the interest on the money from the sale of the hospital would more than cover the cost of Clean Sweep. Mr. Riley also mentioned the increase in garbage fees by the City two years ago.

Mr. Riley stated that the City Code provides for free garbage pickup authorized by the City Board if the board chooses, and strongly urged the Board to continue with the program.

Florence Neal voiced support for "Clean Sweep."

Bill Nabors said that he applauded City Manager Merriman for looking to be fiscally responsible, but said that he felt "Clean Sweep" was an essential city service and asked that the program be continued.

Earl Feathers presented numerous garbage bags of recyclable materials and commented on how citizens could help the City save money by recycling, and through this effort, the City could have the Clean Sweep next year.

Pam Jefferies spoke in support of "Clean Sweep."

City Manager Merriman explained that the garbage rate increase two years ago was because the tipping fee at the landfill had become so expensive. Merriman said that since the fee was instituted, the City had purchased two new garbage trucks.

Manager Merriman said he did not support the city using proceeds or interest from the sale of the hospital to pay for Clean Sweep. Merriman said this money should be used for capital improvements and other city improvements.

Director Deb Sarver said she was on the board when "Clean Sweep" was created as a way to beautify the city. Director Sarver said the original goal of "Clean Sweep" was to make a good first impression on those coming to our city.

Director Tom Blevins said downsizing "Clean Sweep" was a result of the city's attempt to decrease spending and to keep our budget in line with the revenue we have.

ACTION ITEMS

City Manager Andy Merriman introduced George McGonagall, President of the Bluefield Baseball Club who presented a request to the City Board for monetary assistance of \$50,000 for the expansion and renovation of the Bluefield Baseball Clubhouse.

Mr. McGonagle said they would do everything possible to return the money to the city as it is acquired through fund raising efforts.

Mayor Linda Whalen said that she wanted to clarify that Bowen Field is city property.

Director Tom Blevins moved for the City to assist in the financing for the construction of the Bluefield Baseball Clubhouse by providing \$50,000 to the Bluefield Baseball Club, seconded by Director Deb Sarver. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

The agenda continued with the approval of a Lease Amendment with Citizens Telecommunications Company of West Virginia. City Manager Merriman explained that this is a lease amendment to a previously approved lease for two parking lots with the fee being increased by three per cent.

Director Pete Sternloff moved for the approval of the lease amendment as stated, seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

The final action item was an authorization for the City of Bluefield to enter into a contractual agreement for the demolition of the Princeton Avenue Parking Garage.

City Manager Andy Merriman advised that additional bids had been solicited for the demolition of the Princeton Avenue Parking Garage since the initial offer from Empire Salvage was not approved at the last board meeting. Manager Merriman said the highest of the four bids received came from S & S Salvage based out of Providence, KY who agreed to completely demolish the Princeton Avenue Parking Garage in 30 days, remove all the steel, concrete, concrete debris and to compensate the City \$35,000. Manager Merriman asked for permission to enter into a contractual agreement with S & S Salvage for the demolition.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to enter into a contractual agreement with S & S Salvage for the demolition of the Princeton Avenue Parking Garage subject to their having adequate bond coverage, insurance and licensure, seconded by Director Tom Blevins.

Director Tom Blevins questioned what would happen with the Flea Market.

City Manager Merriman explained that the flea market could be moved to the freight station, or the Colonial property could be utilized as an open-air market. Merriman said once the demolition is complete the entire area could be used as an open air market, and suggested that Raleigh Street could be closed to traffic and be used for the flea market while construction is taking place.

Director Tom Blevins requested that flea market vendors be surveyed as to whether they would be interested in a covered open-air flea market.

City Manager Merriman asked that the motion on the floor be amended to cover the second highest bidder if the first one is unable to meet all requirements. The second highest bidder would also demolish the garage in thirty days and compensate the city \$10,000.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to amend his motion to cover the second highest bidder as described by City Manager Merriman, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES

City Attorney Brian Cochran advised that the City intends to advertise for bids in the next couple of weeks for the ADA construction project at Mitchell Stadium.

City Manager Merriman advised that research had been done on costs to stub out utilities for possible concessions at City Park. Merriman said that it would cost roughly about \$6,500 to run a water line, sewer line, manhole and electrical.

Director Sarver questioned if the City would be required to advertise for bids for the concessions.

Attorney Cochran stated that he did not think that would be necessary, but would check further into the matter.

Mayor Whalen stated that concession vendors in the park could possibly be given a trial period of one year.

Director Pete Sternloff commented that the Bluefield High School students participating in Student Government Day had a tremendous interest in what was going on in our city. Director Sternloff stated that the students showed concerns with where our city is going, making our city more livable and having solid programs in our Parks and Recreation Department.

Director Mary Frances Brammer welcomed everyone to board meeting. Director Brammer asked everyone to check on elderly citizens who live alone.

Director Brammer asked that the Bedford Street playground be cleaned up and a new basketball goal put in place.

Director Tom Blevins congratulated the Bluefield State Men's Tennis Men's on being WVIAC State Champions.

City Manager Merriman advised that bid openings for the demolition of the Scott Street Parking Garage would be held at City Hall on May 3, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.

Mayor Whalen commented that students participating in Student Government Day wanted more activities in Bluefield. Mayor Whalen advised that about a year ago Bluefield State Architectural Class redesigned the Freight Station with recreation activities for all ages.

Mayor Whalen suggested that a new grant application for that project be re-submitted as the original application was turned down.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Art Riley questioned whether after hearing numerous citizens speak in favor of the Clean Sweep Program, was it still the Board's intention to only do Yard Sweep as opposed to Clean Sweep.

Mayor Whalen advised that it was announced at the last board meeting that the City would only be doing Yard Sweep.

Mr. Riley also questioned if the lead base paint on the Princeton Ave. Parking Garage had been taken into consideration in the demolition project.

City Manager Merriman replied that it had been considered.

Isaac Preston addressed the board with concerns and suggestions regarding moving the flea market. Preston suggested that a more permanent indoor location for the flea market would allow the market to be open year round.

Steve Coleman announced that he had tickets to the Landau Eugene Murphy, Jr. Concert to be held at the Bluefield City Auditorium on Friday, April 27, 2012.

Florence Neal discussed concerns about Flowers Bakery, Kroger and the police department closing. Ms. Neal said that she had attended a board meeting where Kroger had come before the City Board for help.

Mayor Whalen advised that to her knowledge these businesses had never come to the City Board for help. Mayor Whalen further commented that the Bluefield Police department is not closing, and the jail will be used as a holding area only.

Pam Jefferies stated that she was a flea market vendor and said she was saddened to see the parking garage location go.

Bill Nabors requested the City to be sure the firm that would be demolishing the parking garage was properly able to deal with the lead paint on the garage. Nabors said, "There are incredible dangers that can be incurred here."

Ted Curtis questioned the Board why they were considering building a recreation center at the old freight station when the Herb Sims Youth Center was available at Lotito City Park.

Mr. Curtis also asked why the Youth Center was never identified as the Herb Sims Youth Center as it was approved for renaming by the City Board years ago.

Mr. Curtis asked if the Board would request Comcast Cable to include MSNBC in their cable package to customers.

Director Tom Blevins explained that the facilities that were earmarked for the freight station recreation would be totally different than what is available at the Recreation Center.

On behalf of the Bluefield Chamber of Commerce, President Marc Meachum commended and thanked the City Board, City staff and employees for working with the students from Bluefield High School and making Student Government Day a huge success.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER

- 33rd Annual Better Living Show - April 27-28-National Guard Armory
- East River Mountain Town Band Spring Concert - May 1, 2012 - 7:30 p.m. - Bluefield High School Performing Arts Center

Mayor Whalen commended the Bluefield Beautification Commission on the great event they sponsored this past week. Proceeds will go to downtown Christmas decorations.
Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Helen L. Mitchell, City Clerk

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor