

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA  
June 12, 2012**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session June 12, 2012 at 12 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Linda K. Whalen; Directors Tom Blevins, Deb Sarver and Pete Sternloff; City Attorney Brian Cochran and City Clerk Helen L. Mitchell. Director Mary Frances Brammer was absent.

**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 May 22, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Tom Blevins and seconded by Director Pete Sternloff.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Discussion items were the City Auditorium and the Parks and Recreation. Included in the discussion was the large number of citizens who utilize the city's parks and recreational areas and ways to improve them.

Director Pete Sternloff commented that it was very important that the City starts planning and looking at ways to improve and enhance the parks and recreational areas. Director Sternloff said, "Our city park, if you look at the Ridge Runner and what is going on there, it has become a destination for people to come and visit."

Mayor Whalen commented that 1,974 people have ridden the Ridge Runner train during the first ten days of June. Mayor Whalen said the Ridge Runner and the Yakity Yak Playground have made the city park a destination for families and children.

Mayor Whalen advised that a few years ago, the Shott Foundation paid for an architect to re-design the recreation department, and hopefully the board can take another look at that.

Attorney Cochran said the city needed to do whatever they can to improve the facilities at the recreation department.

Attorney Cochran commented that the football program hopefully will be very successful and plans are now being made for a summer basketball league for the kids.

Director Deb Sarver encouraged all citizens to try out the new walking and bike trails. Director Sarver commented that the park was very dear to her heart because she was involved with the Holiday of Lights display. Director Sarver commented that the tennis courts will be repainted in the next few days.

Mayor Whalen said that without volunteers and community support the city would not have the facility that we have.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Mayor Linda Whalen announced that Attorney Brian Cochran had been selected to serve as the Interim City Manager until a new city manager is hired to replace former City Manager Andy Merriman. Mayor Whalen thanked former City Manager Merriman for his services to the community.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to appoint City Solicitor Brian Cochran to the position of Interim City Manager, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Attorney Cochran said that he appreciated the confidence that had been placed in him, and that it was his pleasure to fill in on an interim basis. Cochran said that he would do all he could to help the City move forward during the search for a new city manager.

The agenda continued with a re-appointment to the Craft Memorial Library Board of Directors. Director Tom Blevins moved to re-appoint Carolyn Morhous, 2424 Mountain View Ave., Bluefield, WV 24701 to a five-year term that will expire on June 30, 2017, seconded by Director Pete Sternloff. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Attorney Brian Cochran read into the record the First Reading of An Ordinance Vacating, Abandoning and Annuling a portion of Pine Street, being an approximate 50 Ft. wide and approximately 320 foot long street, and further described as being that portion of Pine Street that lies between Bluefield Avenue and Highland Avenue; All situated in the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia and being more particularly described below.

Attorney Cochran explained that a petition had been filed by Tom Cole of Cole Properties, LLC to close that portion of Pine Street to allow for a new business to be erected on the property.

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

**AN ORDINANCE VACATING, ABANDONING, AND ANNULLING A PORTION OF PINE STREET, BEING AN APPROXIMATE 50 FT WIDE AND APPROXIMATELY 320 FOOT LONG STREET, AND FURTHER DESCRIBED AS BEING THAT PORTION OF PINE STREET THAT LIES BETWEEN BLUEFIELD AVENUE AND HIGHLAND AVENUE; ALL SITUATED IN THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA, AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED BELOW:**

**WHEREAS**, It appears to the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia, that all of that certain tracts or parcels of land, being

- 1) A portion of Pine Street, being an approximately  $\pm$  50 ft. wide and approximately  $\pm$  320 ft. long street, and further described as being that portion of Pine Street that lies between Bluefield Avenue and Highland Avenue Bounded on the North by Bluefield Avenue, Bounded on the East by Tax Map 24, Parcel 109, lots 4-5-6, Sec. 153, Bluefield Avenue, owned by Cole Properties LLC, a 20 ft. wide alley, and by Tax Map 24, Parcel 117, Lot 6, Sec. 171, Highland Avenue and Pine Street owned by Cole Properties, LLC, Bounded on the South by Highland Avenue, Bounded on the West by Tax Map 24, Parcel 103, pt lot 1-2, Sec. 172 owned by Cole Properties LLC, Tax Map 24, Parcel 102, pt. Lots 1-2, Sec. 172, Pine, owned by Cole Properties LLC, a 20 ft. wide alley, Tax Map 24, Parcel 101 S. pt. Lot 1, Sec 154 Pine Street, owned by Cole Properties, LLC and Tax Map 24, Parcel 100, N. pt. Lot 1, Sec. 154, Bluefield Ave. and Pine Street, owned by Cole Properties LLC.

All situated in the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia, and as laid down, designated, and dedicated to public use, is not needed for street purposes or for any other public use or public purpose and that it is proper that the same be Vacated, Abandoned, and Annulled; and

**WHEREAS**, it further appearing that in the interests of the City of Bluefield and of the public generally that the portion of this street described above be vacated, abandoned, and annulled as a public street within said City; and

**WHEREAS**, it further appearing that the property of no person, firm, or corporation will be injured or damaged thereby, and that the owner of all property abutting said tracts and parcels, Tom Cole of Cole Properties LLC, has petitioned the Board of Directors to close said portion of Pine Street; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Bluefield shall retain any and all public utility easements and right of ways lying within the area; and

**WHEREAS**, prior to adoption, a Public Hearing has been conducted and notice of this proposed Ordinance has been properly advertised in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph, a newspaper of general circulation in the City of Bluefield; and

**WHEREAS**, the duly elected governing authority of the City of Bluefield is the Board of Directors thereof.

**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:

**Section 1.** That for reasons hereinbefore set forth, that all of that certain tracts or parcels of land, as described above and situated in the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia, and as laid down, designated, and dedicated to public use, is hereby vacated, abandoned, and annulled and from and after the date of the adoption of this Ordinance, the same shall cease to be a public way or public street within the City of Bluefield.

**Section 2.** That upon the adoption of this ordinance, the City Clerk of the City of Bluefield shall cause a duly certified copy thereof to be recorded in the appropriate deed book in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Mercer County, West Virginia, as evidence of the abandonment of said certain tracts or parcels of land.

**Section 3.** Prior to adoption of this ordinance, Tom Cole shall pay to the City Clerk the cost of this proceeding.

**Section 4.** This Ordinance shall be effective from the date of its adoption.

FIRST READING: June 12, 2012

PUBLIC HEARING:

SECOND READING:

ADOPTION:

FILED:

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Mayor

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City Clerk

City Attorney Cochran asked the Board to set a Public Hearing for the closing of Pine Street for June 26, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. and to have the second reading of the ordinance on that date.

Director Tom Blevins made a motion that a Public Hearing be scheduled for June 26, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. for the closing of Pine Street, seconded by Director Pete Sternloff. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Attorney Cochran asked for Board approval of the purchase of a 2013 Ford Taurus in the amount of \$24,716.00 for the Bluefield Police Department. The funds for the purchase of this vehicle will come from the Coal Severance Fund.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to approve the purchase as stated, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Linda Whalen announced the appointment of Greg Shrewsbury as the City's new Economic Development Director.

Director Pete Sternloff moved to appoint Greg Shrewsbury to fill the position of Economic Development Director for a period of two years with the terms being as were agreed upon by Mr. Shrewsbury and the Board, seconded by Director Deb Sarver.

Mayor Whalen stated that Mr. Shrewsbury is a resident of Bluefield and graduated from Bluefield schools. Mr. Shrewsbury has twenty years of business and corporate experience (West Virginia, Domestic US and International). He is an undergraduate of Bluefield College and a MBA from West Virginia Wesleyan College. Mr. Shrewsbury has Fortune 500 experience with the Clorox Company, which includes roles in operations management, administrative management, communications, public relations and human resources. He had a previous engagement with Work for West Virginia from a private business perspective, and presently has his own consulting business, which focuses on organization development.

Mayor Whalen said that the City looks forward to Greg coming on board, and that he will begin his duties on Monday, June 18, 2012.

Greg Shrewsbury stated that it was a real honor and privilege to work with Bluefield and that he hopes to use his experience outside the state and the United States to make a positive impact in Bluefield.

After discussion, the motion was unanimously approved

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

Director Pete Sternloff commented that he had participated in the recent Honor Flight sponsored by the Denver Foundation which took veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam to Washington, DC to see the their Memorials.

Director Sternloff expressed sympathy for the loss of Blues Singer Nat Reese who died at the age of eighty-eight. Director Sternloff announced that East River Arts will have a "Remembering Nat" program with the times and dates to be announced later.

Director Deb Sarver congratulated Princeton High School on their Baseball State Championship.

Director Tom Blevins commented that Bluefield State College signed two Reciprocity Articulation Agreements with two community colleges (Virginia Western Community, Roanoke, VA which articulates the Business Administration Program) and also signed a memorandum of understanding with the New River and Technical College to deliver the elementary education program to the Beckley/Lewisburg area.

Attorney Cochran reported that the demolition of the Princeton Avenue Parking Garage was ahead of schedule and within a week or two, the demolition will be completed with all materials removed.

Attorney Brian Cochran advised that one of his first duties, as the Interim City Manager was to appoint veteran firefighter Glen Sutphin as the Fire Chief of the Bluefield Fire Department. Attorney Cochran stated that Sutphin has 22 years with the Bluefield Fire Department, 18 years experience as a paramedic and is a registered nurse. Cochran said he is very well qualified in the fire service and also has the experience and years of service serving the citizens of Bluefield.

Mayor Linda Whalen congratulated Glen Sutphin on his appointment as Fire Chief of the Bluefield Fire Department.

Attorney Cochran recommended to the Board to hold off on the proposed closure of the Bluefield City Jail until further review could be done. Cochran said instead of closing the jail, other options could include using it as a holding facility for all agencies or just for our agency.

Mayor Whalen instructed Attorney Cochran to move forward with the plan for further review.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Art Riley representing Downtown Merchants Association thanked the Board for the hiring of an Economic Development Director. Riley said the business community looks forward to working with Mr. Shrewsbury.

Mr. Riley announced that the Downtown Street Fair will be held on August 3-4.

Mr. Howard Candler appeared before the board to personally thank them for their prompt response to his complaint regarding garbage dumping. Mr. Candler also voiced complaints regarding dogs and cats running loose in the city.

Attorney Cochran advised Mr. Candler of the necessary steps to file an animal complaint.

Robert Searle discussed with the board the possibility of urban farm development of vacant lots across the city.

Mayor Whalen advised that she would pass this information along to the Beautification Commission.

Kathy Burge asked the Board if any decisions had been made regarding proposals to provide concessions at Lotito City Park.

Attorney Cochran advised that he will be looking at the submitted proposals.

Susan Buckner addressed the board regarding barking dogs on Vineyard Street. Ms. Buckner advised that it was her understanding a special permit had been issued by the City Manager to allow for more than three dogs, and asked if this special permit could be rescinded.

Attorney Cochran advised that he would check on the permit and get back in touch with her.

Ginny Hill addressed the Board regarding breeder's permits and asked if a committee could be formed for discussion of breeder's permits in the City.

Ms. Hill stated that she did not feel that the spay-neuter ordinance was being enforced. Ms. Hill advised that she was looking into several animal abuse cases.

Ms. Hill complained about motorcycles, four wheelers, cars parked in yards, loud music and fireworks on Union Street.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER**

- June 29, 2012 - Second Chance Rocks the Two Virginias - Mitchell Stadium - Gates open at 4:30 p.m. Concert begins at 6:30 p.m.
- Concerts at Chicory Square at noon on Friday.

Helen L. Mitchell, City Clerk

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor