

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA  
September 11, 2012**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session September 11, 2012 at 1 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Linda K. Whalen; Directors Tom Blevins, Mary Frances Brammer and Pete Sternloff; City Attorney Brian Cochran, Interim City Manager Patrick McKinney and City Clerk Helen L. Mitchell. Director Deb Sarver was not in attendance.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE**

The Invocation was given by Gene Wyatt, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Linda Whalen welcomed everyone to the meeting. The mayor thanked everyone who participated in the 9/11 Ceremony held at Chicory Square.

**MINUTES**

Minutes of the August 28, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Pete Sternloff and seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer.

Minutes of the Special Called meeting August 30, 2012 were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Pete Sternloff, seconded by Director Tom Blevins.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mayor Linda Whalen welcomed Transit Director Patrick McKinney who is currently serving as the Interim City Manager.

Mayor Whalen announced that the first item of discussion was the potential lease agreement for the Hardy Street Playground.

City Attorney Brian Cochran explained that Elizabeth Vineyard had proposed the leasing of the Hardy Street Playground for a daycare center to the city for their consideration.

Attorney Cochran stated that unless there was someone present at the meeting to speak against the proposed daycare center, that he would recommend that the city begin negotiations for the lease of the property to Ms. Vineyard for the purpose of a daycare center. There was not anyone present to speak for or against the daycare center.

The board unanimously agreed to proceed with negotiations for the daycare center.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Mayor Whalen discussed implementing the WV 457 Retirement Plus Deferred Compensation program for city employees that was previously presented at the last board meeting.

The plan allows public employees to make contributions by deferring a dollar amount of their pay to the plan. These contributions are made on a pre-tax basis each pay period, and any earnings are tax deferred until benefits are distributed.

The WV 457 Retirement Plus Deferred Compensation Plan for city employees was unanimously approved on a motion by Director Sternloff, seconded by Director Brammer.

Mayor Linda Whalen announced that the next agenda item was the hiring of a city manager.

Mayor Whalen advised that after the interview process the name that was being brought before the board for hire was Jim Ferguson. Mayor Whalen said that he is a lifelong resident of Bluefield, WV and has extensive management experience in the business world, and was instrumental in starting the first Hardees Restaurant in Bluefield. Mayor Whalen said Mr. Ferguson has continued with the Hardees organization in management, and is very active in civic organizations and our community.

The board unanimously voted to hire Jim Ferguson as the City Manger on a motion by Director Blevins and seconded by Director Sternloff.

City Attorney Cochran advised that the terms of the contract had been discussed in executive session.

Mayor Linda Whalen asked for board approval for the Fire Department to hold a Boot Drive to benefit the Wade Center.

A motion to allow the City of Bluefield Fire Department to hold a boot drive to benefit the Wade Center was made by Director Pete Sternloff, seconded by Director Tom Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

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

Director Pete Sternloff commented that it was an honor to participate and to see so many Bluefield citizens and first responders at our commemoration of 9/11.

Director Mary Frances Brammer expressed her appreciation and prayers to all police officers, firemen and first responders for attending the 9/11 ceremony.

Director Tom Blevins asked for everyone to remember in their prayers the 304<sup>th</sup> Military Police and their current tour of duty and also our troops who are on active duty.

Mayor Linda Whalen announced that next Monday and Tuesday the Boy Scouts will be in Bluefield at the Bluefield City Park doing their first project with the startup of the Boy Scout camp in Fayetteville. The City Park will be closed during this time.

Mayor Whalen asked that you support the Bluefield Beavers.

Interim City Manager Patrick McKinney expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve as the interim city manger and for the education.

Mayor Whalen announced that Community Relations Director Melanie Farmer has resigned her position. Mayor Whalen thanked Ms. Farmer for her services and wished her the best in her new position.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Art Riley representing Downtown Merchants asked if a public hearing would be scheduled for the Hardy Street Playground.

Attorney Cochran advised that he would check the code regarding this matter.

Mr. Riley asked if it was the intention to finish the sidewalks on the west side of Bland Street.

Mayor Whalen advised that it was the intention to finish the sidewalk project before bad weather, and new sidewalks will continue as far as the grant money allows.

Mr. Riley asked about the demolition project of the Bundy properties on Bland Street.

Attorney Cochran advised that the final order for the demolition of the property had been entered today and hopefully the demolition could begin in November.

Mr. Riley announced that the Bluefield Christmas parade would be held on December 8, 2012.

Mr. Don Gibson addressed the board regarding the East End Playground and the overgrowth of weeds, bushes and trees hanging over and growing up through the sidewalks in the East end of Bluefield. Mr. Gibson asked for the consideration of the board in the removal of this overgrowth and the replacement of sidewalks in this area.

Mayor Whalen explained that the sidewalks and the replacement thereof are the responsibility of the property owners that they are connected to. Mayor Whalen advised that the Board would look into the code enforcement of the sidewalks and brush growing on and over the sidewalks.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Helen L. Mitchell, City Clerk

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor