

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

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session November 13, 2012 at 12 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Linda K. Whalen; Directors Tom Blevins, Mary Frances Brammer, Deb Sarver and Pete Sternloff; City Manager Jim Ferguson; City Attorney Brian Cochran; Chief Financial Officer Claude Crigger and City Clerk Helen Mitchell.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

The Invocation was given by Director Mary Frances Brammer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Linda Whalen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

Minutes of the October 9, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Director Pete Sternloff and seconded by Director Mary Frances Brammer.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Marie Blackwell, Executive Director of the Mercer County Convention & Visitors Bureau presented the annual report for 2011-2012 and reported there was local growth in the tourism industry. Ms. Blackwell said there was an increase in lodging tax collections this past year, which translates to an increase in visitors. Ms. Blackwell said that an even greater increase was anticipated with the addition of the newest Hatfield-McCoy Trail, the Pocahontas Trail and the arrival of the Boy Scouts in 2013.

Ms. Blackwell reported to the board that for the fiscal years 2011-2012, the hotel and motel tax generated \$353,652 from Mercer County, \$69,721 from Bluefield and \$3,820 from Princeton for a total of \$427,193. Revenues generated from the lodging taxes are spent on advertising via print media, the Internet and social media to promote Mercer County outside of Southern West Virginia.

City Manager Jim Ferguson reported to the board that he and Economic Director Greg Shrewsbury had been visiting local businesses in the community.

Manager Ferguson congratulated Human Resources Director Angie Foley on being named Ruritan of the year.

City Manager Ferguson advised that work was progressing on the Scott Street Parking Garage and weather permitting the project will be completed by January 2013.

Manager Ferguson gave updates on demolition, paving and sidewalk projects in the city.

City Manager Ferguson announced that Tony Wagner has been named the Interim Public Works Director.

Manager Ferguson reported that 18,811 citizens were served by the Bluefield Area Transit during the month of October.

Manager Ferguson announced that the Parks and Recreation Department were coordinating with a local dance club to offer a series of dance programs in January. The city basketball program will begin in December and the staff estimates there will be one hundred youth participants involved in the program.

City Manager Ferguson announced that the City of Bluefield is the recipient of the 2013 Recycling Grant Award in the amount of \$20,543 from the WV DEP.

ACTION ITEMS

Mayor Whalen advised that the Fine Arts Commission had submitted the names of Allison Forlines, 2926 Oak Grove, Bluefield, WV 24701 and Holly Colobro, 1200 Heatherwood Road, Bluefield, WV 24701 to be appointed to the Fine Arts Commission for a term of 5 years.

The board unanimously voted to appoint Allison Forlines and Holly Colobro to the Fine Arts Commission for 5-year terms on a motion by Director Sternloff and seconded by Director Brammer.

Mayor Linda Whalen announced that November 18-24, 2012, Thanksgiving week be proclaimed as Christian Heritage Week in the City of Bluefield, WV, and asked all local churches to participate by reading the following proclamation to the congregation on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Mayoral Proclamation
in harmony with
Christian Heritage Week in West Virginia
November 18-24, 2012
as proclaimed by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin

WHEREAS, the week of Thanksgiving marks the twenty-first consecutive *Christian Heritage Week in West Virginia* observance; thus continuing a tradition of annual proclamations beginning with Governor Gaston Caperton in 1992 thru 1996 and continued by Governor Cecil Underwood from 1997 thru 2000, Governor Bob Wise from 2001 thru 2004, Governor Joe Manchin from 2005 thru 2010 and Governor Earl Ray Tomblin in 2011 and 2012; and,

WHEREAS, 142 mayors from 105 cities, town and villages throughout West Virginia have proclaimed *Christian Heritage Week* since 2001; and,

WHEREAS, local churches are asked to participate with relevant Sunday school lessons, sermons, patriotic song services, youth programs and prayer meetings;

NOW THEREFORE, Let it be known that ***November 18-24, 2012***, Thanksgiving week, is hereby proclaimed as:

Christian Heritage Week
in the
City of Bluefield, West Virginia

and I invite all citizens to join in this local event each in their own way.

by: _____
Mayor

date _____

The agenda continued with a second lease extension for Wells Fargo to extend their lease until April 2013.

Director Sternloff moved to extend the lease for Wells Fargo as stated, seconded by Director Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

The final agenda item was the approval of payment application #3 to Swope Construction Company in the amount of \$211,980.41 for the Scott Street Demolition Project.

Director Sternloff moved to approve payment application as read, seconded by Director Blevins. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES

City Manager Jim Ferguson announced that the Fire Station on Cumberland is open and staffed.

Director Sternloff advised that he and Greg Shrewsbury attended the Create WV conference in Charleston, WV. Director Sternloff said that Create WV is an organization that is devoted to helping cities learn to bring the creative economy to their area.

Director Sternloff recommended to the board that they revisit the previous Chat N' Chew sessions in the future in order to get citizen input regarding economic development.

Director Sternloff announced that Greg Piccolo, Blues Entertainer will be performing at East River Arts tonight at 7:00 p.m.

Director Mary Frances Brammer thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Director Brammer thanked City Manager Ferguson and Greg Shrewsbury for keeping everyone posted regarding things going on in the city. Director Brammer reminded everyone to say something good about the city.

Director Tom Blevins thanked Marie Blackwell for her presentation.

Director Blevins said there are many things starting to happen in a very positive manner around the city, and two of the positive things were the hiring of City Manager Jim Ferguson and Economic Development Director Greg Shrewsbury. Director Blevins thanked Deb Sarver and her volunteers for their hard work behind the scenes with the Holiday of Lights.

Director Blevins thanked all of the volunteers doing work in the city that are behind the scenes, code enforcement employees and all city employees who go about their jobs on a daily basis for the good of all.

Director Deb Sarver announced that the Holiday of Lights will open on Thursday, November 22, 2012. Director Sarver advised that the train will not be running during the Holiday of Lights as was stated in the newspaper, but instead it will be the trolley.

Director Sarver advised that there was a possibility that the two Bluefield's would be on a television show called America Rivalries Challenge. This show will be hopefully sold and aired on the USA network.

Mayor Whalen congratulated the newly elected representatives to the state.

Mayor Whalen reminded everyone to support local businesses.

Mayor Whalen commended and thanked all city commissions who have given of their time to keep the city running.

Chief Financial Officer Claude Crigger reminded and encouraged citizens to utilize the automatic payment plan for their city fees.

Mayor Whalen thanked the Fire and Police Departments for their dedication and hard work.

City Attorney Brian Cochran thanked and recognized little league coaches and players for winning three little league football championships.

Attorney Cochran also wished the Bluefield Beavers luck as they travel to Clarksburg this weekend.

Mayor Whalen congratulated the Bluefield Beavers soccer team.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Art Riley representing Downtown Merchants wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Riley asked the status of the Bluefield Area Transit's new building and reminded everyone to take part in the two upcoming public hearings.

Mr. Riley reminded everyone to attend the Downtown Christmas Parade on December 8.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER

- November 17, 2012 - Holiday Shopping Extravaganza at the Historic Commercial Bank Bldg. - vendors will be on site selling goods and holiday gifts
- November 22 - December 31 - Holiday of Lights Festival at Bluefield City Park. Sun.- Thurs. 6 – 9 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. - 6 – 10 p.m.
- December 8, 2012 - Downtown Christmas Parade - 1 p.m.

Hearing no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Helen L. Mitchell, City Clerk

Linda K. Whalen, Mayor