

**Board of Directors  
Bluefield, West Virginia  
January 14, 2014  
12 p.m.**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session, January 14, at 12 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas Cole, Vice-Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith, Directors Chuck McGonagle, Ellen Light and Michael Gibson, City Manager Jim Ferguson, City Attorney Brian Cochran, Chief Financial Officer Ken Mulkey and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey.

Mayor Thomas Cole welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Invocation and Pledge**

The invocation was given by Vice-Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith, who then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

The minutes from the December 3, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved with a motion made by Vice-Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith and seconded by Director Michael Gibson.

**Discussion Items**

City Manager Jim Ferguson gave the following reports:

- The City Recycling program under the direction of Mel Saunders continues to set new recycling records. Mel Saunders was recognized for his dedication and passion for the recycling program. Mr. Saunders stated the total weight of the recycled materials collected since the program started six years and two months ago is 985 tons. He expects to reach 1,000 tons by the end of this March. Mr. Saunders gave some examples of why recycling is so important in saving our natural resources. Mr. Saunders thanked the citizens and businesses of Bluefield for their support. Mayor Cole stated that "Mel is Bluefield's recycling program."
- Playground equipment for three of the seven parks was replaced last year and the goal is to upgrade the remaining parks. The City Manager asked Redevelopment and Planning Director Josh Cline to report on recent awards and grants:

Mr. Cline stated the City of Bluefield is committed to completing the Neighborhood Playground Revitalization project during 2014. (a) The June O. Shott Foundation has awarded the City of Bluefield \$46,000 for the Neighborhood Playground Revitalization project. Community Participation Grant monies and grant funding will also be utilized. b) The City of Bluefield is partnering with the Bluefield Area Little League to make improvements to the fields at Lotito City Park. Currently, the Little League organization is working to reinstate their non-profit status with proper credentials. Until these credentials are received, the City of Bluefield will act as a pass through grant agency. The June O. Shott Foundation has awarded the City of Bluefield \$54,000 in grant money to begin

the first of three phases towards little league field improvements (c) The City of Bluefield applied for but did not receive a grant for its 2013 application for city-wide spot demolition.

- Public Works was recognized for their outstanding job during the holiday season. To date, 183 truckloads of leaves have been collected in Tree City USA from October 16 thru the end of December. Public Works will continue to collect leaves. Citizens are asked to bag the leaves and place bags at the curb.
- The Street Department encountered several issues, especially utilities, while replacing sidewalks running from Genoa to Clifford Street. These issues will be addressed when spring arrives. The project is funded by the Federal Highway Administration and the grant is administered by the West Virginia DOH, which has approved a grant extension until May 1, 2014.
- The Parks and Recreation Department would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time and those who made contributions to the Holiday of Lights. Extreme weather conditions and vandalism did not hinder the Holiday of Lights from having a successful season. The contributions received from visitors will be utilized in making improvements and purchasing additional displays for next year. Parks Director, Dwight Godwin reported site planning is underway to install underground wiring.
- The Department of Veteran Affairs confirmed that the rural health mobile clinic will be stationed in Bluefield at the Herb Sims Youth Center beginning Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.
- The City Auditorium is open at noon Monday thru Friday for gym activities. Parks and Recreation has begun a community fitness class on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Yoga and Zumba classes will be starting soon.
- On New Year's Eve, the City of Bluefield had issued \$10,098,522.28 in building permits in 2013.
- The Fire Department responded to 893 incidents in 2013. It received approximately seventy-four (74) call outs per month or 2.5 per day. The City of Bluefield is very proud of Fire Chief Warden and his men.

## **Action Items**

**Mayor Thomas Cole read the following:**

### **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD**

#### **RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE APPLICATION AND CONTRACT FOR WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FUNDS**

**WHEREAS**, \$10,000 in the Governor's Community Participation Grant Program funding was set aside by the West Virginia Legislature for the City of Bluefield of Mercer County to undertake for park improvements in the neighborhood playground revitalization project; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City of Bluefield of Mercer County has applied for funding through the West Virginia Development Office; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Governor's Community Participation Grant Program requires that a local government unit enter into a contractual agreement with the West Virginia Development Office to receive and administer grant funds.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Bluefield Board of Directors of Bluefield, West Virginia, Mercer County, authorize Mayor Thomas J. Cole to execute the said agreement and any other necessary documents on behalf of the City of Bluefield Board of Directors, and that he be empowered to sign the contract and any agreement necessary to obtain these funds.

**Given under our hands this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of January 2014.**

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor

Barbara Thompson-Smith, Vice Mayor

Michael Gibson, Director

Ellen Peters Light, Director

Chuck McGonagle, Director

**Attest:** Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith made a motion to approve the RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE APPLICATION AND CONTRACT FOR WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FUNDS, seconded by Director Ellen Light. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Redevelopment and Planning Director Josh Cline discussed the terms and conditions for consideration of a grant between the City of Bluefield Parks and Recreation Department and Team Safety Driving School. The term of the grant would be from January 14, 2014 through January 14, 2015 with option for renewal. Team Safety Driving School is a defensive driving school that would utilize certain portions of Lotito City Park to teach a defensive driving program. A copy of the agreement is available at City Hall.

Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the park usage agreement, by and between the City of Bluefield Parks and Recreation Department and Team Safety Driving School, seconded by Vice Mayor Barbara-Thompson Smith. Unanimously approved and so ordered

Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to reappoint Rick Taylor to the Sanitary Board for a three (3) year term (Jan. 14, 2014 - 2017), seconded by Director Michael Gibson. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Ellen Light made a motion to reappoint Rebecca Perry and Hal Gusler to the Beautification Commission for a four (4) year term (Jan. 14, 2014 - 2018), seconded by Director Michael Gibson. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Ellen Light made a motion to table the approval of an appointment to the Planning Commission, seconded by Director Michael Gibson. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

## **Reports of Officers, Boards and Standing Committees**

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith wished everyone a Happy New Year. Vice Mayor Smith requested that everyone keep Charleston, West Virginia area in their thoughts and prayers. Mt. Zion Church collected over 100 cases of water and paper goods to take to Charleston. Vice Mayor Smith thanked those who came to the meeting and ended by saying, "let's get this new year started."

Director Michael Gibson wished everyone a Happy New Year and requested the citizens of the Bluefield keep the Charleston area in their prayers. Director Gibson commented on the number of wonderful activities available during the holiday season. Director Gibson said he felt there seems to be "new enthusiasm" among the people in Bluefield. Director Gibson feels it is important to keep this momentum going.

Director Chuck McGonagle congratulated the Bluefield Preservation Society and Bluefield Beautification Commission for the Lemon Drop on New Year's Eve. Director McGonagle said the citizens of Bluefield should be proud of this event and looks forwards to this becoming an annual event. Director McGonagle stated that we had a good crowd and hopes that even more citizens will participate next year.

Director Ellen Light wished a Happy New Year to everyone. Director Light stated she felt this board has now gotten "their feet wet" and is looking forward to an extremely productive year. Director Light thanked all the volunteers who make events happen in Bluefield by giving of their time, talent and money. Bluefield will celebrate its one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary (quasquicentennial) and vows will be renewed with Bluefield Virginia. Director Light said if any citizens have suggestions for the upcoming event to contact members of the Board or Coordinator Sue Jackson.

Mayor Thomas Cole said he wanted to "echo" what the other Board members had already said. Mayor Cole stated the Board has learned a lot in the past few months and are focused on things they would like to accomplish within the City. Mayor Cole said they had been inundated with information. The City Board wants to take that information and direct the information in areas where they can make a difference, improve the City and support revitalization efforts. Mayor Cole thanked those in attendance and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

## **Public Comment**

Judy Silbaugh gave a report on the "Almost Heaven Farmers' Market/Farmer's Winter and Holiday. Mrs. Silbaugh was very emotional as she thanked the citizens for their support, Leland Tucker (manager of Kmart) for summer space and Dwight Godwin for a winter facility. Mrs. Silbaugh stated she truly felt citizens were given the opportunity to shop for "one of a kind" creations, baked goods and homegrown produce. They hope to return next year in the same locations.

Mayor Cole thanked Mrs. Silbaugh and all those involved for their dedication and passion for the City of Bluefield.

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association, made the following points:

- Comcast has modified the television channels in the basic cable package and the community channel has been removed. A request was made for the City to make inquiry into the changes and availability of the community channel, since that channel broadcasts recordings of the regular city meeting. Josh Cline agreed to look into the situation and report back to the board.
- Rental property responsibility and code enforcement issues were discussed. Consideration for additional personnel may be necessary to enforce present city codes for rental inspection. Another consideration suggested for the city would be additional codes/ordinances. A discussion as to Bluefield being a city or town and the concern about possible decline in population and city revenue were also topics of discussion. Mayor Cole said he would like to hire another person to help with code enforcement and would like to review the present codes/ordinances to make sure we are committed to what is now our city's policy.
- Mr. Riley inquired if the city had any applications in for small city block grants. Josh Cline stated the city is in the process of submitting one small city block grant application.
- All citizens and Board Members were wished a Happy New Year.

#### **Announcements and Other**

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith made a motion to adjourn, Director Michael Gibson seconded the motion. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

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Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

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Thomas J. Cole, Mayor