

**Board of Directors  
Bluefield, West Virginia  
February 25, 2014  
6:00 p.m.**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in regular session February 25, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas Cole, Vice-Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith, Directors Chuck McGonagle, Ellen Light and Michael Gibson; also attending were Interim City Manager Dennis Dillow, City Attorney Brian Cochran, Chief Financial Officer Ken Mulkey and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey.

Mayor Thomas Cole welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A slide show recognizing distinguished women from West Virginia was presented prior to the meeting in acknowledgement of Black History Month.

**Invocation and Pledge**

The invocation was given by Reverend W. D. Hasty; pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Bluefield, West Virginia. Vice-Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

The minutes from the February 11, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved with a motion by Vice -Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith and second by Director Ellen Light.

Before the discussion item section of the agenda, Mayor Cole thanked Police Chief Dillow, on behalf of the City Board and the Citizens of Bluefield, for taking the position of Interim City Manager.

Interim City Manager Dillow stated he appreciated the opportunity.

**Discussion Items**

Interim City Manager Dennis Dillow gave the following reports:

- A letter from Nick J. Rahall, II was presented to the City Board stating the Post Office located on Federal Street will not change operating hours. There is no guarantee that shortened hours might not be proposed in the future.
- The new Veterans Administration mobile health clinic, located outside the Herb Sims Youth Center on Stadium Drive, held its ribbon cutting ceremony February 18. Veterans and dignitaries celebrated the 38ft mobile patient clinic (MOC) that will provide primary care to approximately 1,200 veterans living in Mercer County and the surrounding area.
- The Winter Warmer held on February 22 in the Depot District Downtown was a great success. The Beautification Commission presold a record number of tickets. This is their largest fundraiser of the year and was enjoyed by all those who attended. Mayor Cole stated this was a great fundraiser for the Beautification Commission and having fundraisers such as this event allows

this commission to do wonderful projects for the City of Bluefield. Mayor Cole said this commission does a phenomenal job.

- Josh Cline, the Redevelopment and Planning Director, has been asked and has agreed to be the Assistant City Manager. Chief Dillow thought that Mr. Cline's knowledge of the city and involvement in city issues, it would be to his benefit to have Mr. Cline's assistance as the city moves forward.
- Public Works was recognized for the effort and dedication they have shown this winter. These workers have been out in record low temperatures and snowfall. Bluefield has had almost 40 inches of snow to date. The Board and citizens thanked all those employees at Public Works for their dedication.
- Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith visited the Mercer County Early Learning Center last Thursday for President's Day. Teacher, Patricia Taylor and her students sent a poster of the class signed by the students and a thank you card to be presented to Vice Mayor Smith.

Vice Mayor Smith spoke about her experience at the Early Learning Center and how excited she was to participate in the celebration of President's Day. Vice Mayor Smith said she was greeted with several dignitaries such as George Washington, Nancy Reagan and Abraham Lincoln. Vice Mayor Smith ate lunch with the children and each child enjoyed picking something special from a treat bag. It was a wonderful experience and very much enjoyed by all involved.

### **Action Items**

Director Michael Gibson made a motion giving authorization to the City Manager to pursue legal action against the Ramsey School Bar, Inc. for outstanding fees and taxes; second by Director Chuck McGonagle. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Attorney Brian Cochran stated a new date needs to be set for the Home Rule Application to meet the requirements for a legal notice. A legal notice must be published thirty (30) days prior to the Public Hearing. The City Board will consider a new date during the executive session.

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

Director Ellen Light stated the sell out show at the Bluefield Arts Center, *Back to Vegas* was a huge success. Director Light thanked the public for their support and encouraged citizens to get involved in city events. Director Light will be attending a meeting for the renewal of vows between Bluefield, WV and Bluefield, VA. Director Light will report on plans and activities. Director Light said she was very proud of the Sanitary and Street Departments for all of their hard work during the recent bad weather.

Director Chuck McGonagle expressed his condolences to the family of *Gene Bailey Caudill* who passed away Friday, February 24, 2014. Mr. Caudill established and ran his own plumbing business, Caudill Plumbing and Heating. Director McGonagle stated Mr. Caudill was one of the "kindest and most honorable men" he had ever met. Mr. Caudill provided a service to the Citizens of Bluefield for a long time, he was active in many organizations and he served his country in the Marine Corps.

Director Mike Gibson had no report.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith thanked Danielle Taylor, Josh Cline and Bobbi Kersey for the PowerPoint presentations for Black History Month that have been shown prior to the last two board meetings. Last month the slide show was on notable African American Men from West Virginia and tonight the slide show was notable African Women, spotlighting local citizens. Vice Mayor Smith said the Winter Warmer was outstanding and very inviting.

Mayor Cole reminded citizens of *Lunch with the Mayor*, an informal meeting at noon to share ideas and feedback concerning the City. To schedule lunch call Josh Cline at 304.327.5568. The Winter Warmer was a huge success. Mayor Cole stated "lots of kudos" to the Beautification Commission. In addition, Mayor Cole thanked David's at the Club and Grant's Supermarket for their support in making the Winter Warmer a success. Mayor Cole commended the staff in regard to the interim situation. Many staff members are doing "double duty" and it is appreciated.

### **Public Comment**

Blaine Braithwaite, Executive Director of the South Bluefield Neighbor Association, discussed the following:

1. A petition to make sure costs of the West Virginia American Water Company associated with the chemical spill in Charleston, WV are accounted for separately from their normal accounting records, and to ensure that residents in Bluefield are not affected by the potential increase. Mr. Braithwaite requested that a petition stating to keep local water customers from incurring costs associated with the recent spill be placed at City Hall for citizens to sign. The Board said a copy of the petition could be placed.
2. SBNA power point presentations: Recommending Strategy/Ideas for Today and Tomorrow, Bluefield "Renaissance" A Vision for Our Community's Revitalization and Concept Paper – Operating Our Own Cooperative was left for the Board to review.

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

1. Thanked the City Workers for all their hard work during the bad weather.
2. Eleven streets should be maintained by the State Road Commission. During the recent bad weather, Bluefield Avenue and Princeton Avenue were scraped and treated by the state. Mr. Riley encouraged the board to request that the State Road Commission help with other state roads.
3. Would like to see only evening board meetings. There are two disadvantages in continuing the noon Board Meeting: (1) parking conditions (2) breaks the day in half. Mayor Cole stated that a count of the number of people in attendance is being recorded and the subject will be revisited.
4. Sidewalks going up Bluefield Avenue were among the last places plowed. A suggestion was made that a blade be purchased by the city and/or businesses

that could be attached to a four wheel ATV to help clear sidewalks. Mayor Cole stated that idea is being considered and would like to have something in place for next winter.

Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to move into executive session to discuss personnel matters and would return to announce a new date for the Public Hearing regarding Home Rule and to adjourn; seconded by Vice Mayor Barbara-Thompson Smith. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

### **Executive Session**

Mayor Cole stated the board had discussed a new date for the public hearing for the City of Bluefield's Municipal Home Rule Pilot Program Phase II application.

Director Ellen Light made a motion to hold the public hearing for the Home Rule Pilot Program Tuesday, April 1, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room at City Hall; seconded by Director Chuck McGonagle. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Michael Gibson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Director Chuck McGonagle. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

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Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

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Thomas J. Cole, Mayor