

**Board of Directors - Minutes
Bluefield, West Virginia
January 13, 2015
12:00 noon**

The Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia met in a regularly scheduled meeting January 13, 2015 at 12 noon, in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas Cole, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Directors Ellen Light, Chuck McGonagle and Michael Gibson; City Manager Dane Rideout, Assistant City Manager Joshua Cline, City Attorney Brian Cochran, City Treasurer Kelly Davis and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey.

Mayor Thomas Cole welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Invocation and Pledge

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

The minutes from the December 9, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved and so ordered.

Presentation

City Manger Dane Rideout recognized and thanked Matt Perdue and Nick Harrison for giving of their time, energy and countless hours to make this year's Holiday of Lights a success. These men are part of a newly formed maintenance team in the Public Works Department, under the supervision of Director Junior Beggs.

City Manger Dane Rideout recognized and thanked Patrolman Kenneth Adams for cases solved in the Bluefield Police Department. City Manager Rideout stated Patrolman Adams is phenomenal at his job, exhibits excellent work ethic and is a nice man all around. City Manger Rideout said he wished he could "clone" Patrolman Adams and appreciates his dedication in making Bluefield a safer place to live.

Discussion Items

City Manager Dane Rideout discussed the following city updates:

- The City of Bluefield has a partnership with Bluefield State College and the city now has three interns working for the city on various projects such as research, data, grant writing and technology.
- One hundred and one (101) structures have been demolished over the past fiscal year. Building Inspector Gerald Steele and his team were recognized for "getting after" dilapidated properties.
- A town hall meeting will be held on March 31; the place will be announced at a later date. Representatives from Triton Corporation, the Department of Highways District 10 and City Officials will discuss plans concerning the Martin Luther King Bridge. This will be an opportunity for citizens to ask questions and voice concerns.
- Public Works is in the process of taking down the Holiday of Lights. To date, one hundred and twenty four loads of leaves have been removed and three hundred miles of snow have been cleared. Public Works continues to collect special trash

- pickups and work on alley maintenance.
- Charles Ridlehuber was introduced and welcomed as the new director of Parks and Recreation and will begin on January 19, 2015. Currently Mr. Ridlehuber is the director of operations at the Four Seasons YMCA in Tazewell, VA and an adjunct faculty member of Bluefield College.
- Kevin Fleming is now the Deputy Director of Public Works. Mr. Fleming will work closely with the fire and police departments to enforce parking issues related to public safety.

Mayor Cole discussed the proposal that was advertised for upgrading the phone system at City Hall. Mayor Cole read the bids that were received:

1. RICOH - \$55,354
2. Communications Consultants - \$56,302
3. Advanced Networks Systems - \$73,403
4. Frontier - \$87,074

Mayor Cole requested a motion to accept the proposed bids, so that City Manger Rideout and his team could move forward with analyzing the data and presenting a recommendation to the Board. **Director Michael Gibson moved to accept the presented proposed bids and to authorize City Manager Rideout and his team to examine the bids and compare information making sure the proposed bids are compliant with the advertisement. Unanimously approved, so ordered.**

Assistant City Manager Josh Cline stated that he and City Manager Rideout had met with the owners of Lin Electric located on Bluefield Avenue. The owners are interested in donating the property to the city. There has been a clean up of the property by the EPA. The city will continue a conversation with the EPA to ensure that the site is environmentally clean, with the expectation of taking ownership.

Public Comments

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchant's Association, made the following comments:

1. Who owns the tank farm on Bluefield Avenue and is anything being done towards clean up? Mayor Cole stated this is something code enforcement could look into and there is new state legislation in West Virginia that deals with storage tanks.
2. Do we have a final report from Parsons Brinckerhoff? Assistant City Manager Josh Cline stated that due to the holidays he has not had a chance to follow up but will have a report for the next meeting.
3. Thank you to everyone that volunteered for the successful Christmas Parade.

Mr. Tony Papa introduced himself and discussed the process used after proposed bids for the new telephone system for the Bluefield Municipal Building were received.

Mr. Papa: "My name is Tony Papa. I own and operate Communications Consultants, a West Virginia company, doing business for over thirty-five (35) years. I am also an employee of Bluefield State College and do all of their telecommunications and networking. I also maintain every school system in Mercer County. I'm glad to see that the board read the bids out loud since they did not open them publicly. If I heard right I was the low bidder."

Mayor Cole: "No, RICOH was \$55,345."

Mr. Papa: "Who is RICOH?"

Director Ellen Light: "The office machine people, R-I-C-O-H, RICOH."

Mr. Papa: "I am a West Virginia Company so based on that I have a West Virginia bidder preference which I plan to invoke. I don't know of anybody at the city level that is qualified to evaluate all bids. You know the bid specs were a little sketchy as the dates were wrong, when to present them and when not to present them and stuff like that. Billy attempted to in the previous bidding. He did clarify the date that one of them was due. This is the second time these were bid and neither one of them open to the public, so we didn't know until today what the bids were. At least I didn't. I have a letter from Mike Swatts, from Frontier that said they had lost the bid. I had a meeting with Dane, the city attorney and Billy on the 5th of January at one o'clock. The girl from Frontier had met at eleven o'clock and was told they did not get the bid. I showed Tommy the letter from Mike Swatts. The only thing I ask you guys to do is do the right thing. If you read the paper this morning people who don't follow the rules-you gonna get caught. So, I would like for you to follow the rules for bidding. Told Dane when I met with him that I'm glad he was here, a lot of good things happening and I did not like how we operated the bid."

Director Michael Gibson: "Mr. Papa what do you feel the city did improperly with the bid process?"

Mr. Papa: "Well, the bid process when they were turned in should have been advertised for opening and not opened behind closed doors, Mr. Gibson. They were not properly opened. That leaves a lot of speculation for a lot of things. To erase that speculation everything should be out in the open. I expressed that to the attorney and to Dane. I work for Bluefield State and we accept a lot of bids. The bids are sent in two forms. One is sent to purchasing and one to the chief financial officer. No collusion, nothing, no paper or pens. This leaves no speculation, no ethical speculation or things like that. Everything is above board. Everybody sees what everyone does."

Director Michael Gibson: "Do you have the perception or suspicion that there were some improprieties in the process other than failing to open the bids publicly?"

Mr. Papa: "There is always suspicion when you don't do things above board."

Director Ellen Light: "Have we awarded this bid"? We have not awarded this bid yet. Mr. Papa. If you should be awarded the bid would you be willing to get a Bluefield City license"?

Mr. Papa: "Absolutely – as I'm sure every other vendor here didn't have a city license until they are awarded the contract. Maybe Frontier does but I feel sure RICOH doesn't. Yes, I would get a city license. That is not a problem. I have a state license and I have insurance and I meet all your other requirements. But that is not what I'm addressing here today. I hope there are no improprieties, Mike, but to alleviate doubt in the future, everything should be in the open and published. I'm sure this is not the first time the city had bids. I don't know how they handled them in the past, I was uninvolved. I'm sure bids are supposed to be open. I've got some regulation I've sent Tommy and a few others on the way they should be handled. I thank you for your time."

Mayor Cole: "Thank you, Tony."

Veteran Al Hancock requested the Board's help to ensure the mobile Veteran's clinic remains in Bluefield. Mr. Hancock stated the city leaders that once kept him informed have been voted out of office and he just wants to make sure the clinic is permanent. Mr. Hancock said he has spoken with Princeton Community Hospital about space for a permanent facility and

suggested that the former dialysis center next to Bluefield Regional Hospital, that is now vacant, could be used as a permanent location. City Manager Rideout said he had friends with senior positions in the Veterans Administration and would make some calls. Mayor Cole stated that as long as there was good utilization of the clinic it would remain. Mr. Hancock said that was true but the population has decreased and this is an issue he wants to "stay on top of."

Citizen Pete Sternloff spoke about the importance of neighborhood associations. The Downtown Neighborhood Association is very active and meets at 7:00 p.m. the first Monday of every month at the Chamber of Commerce. He would like some of the Board members and city administration to attend the meetings. Mr. Sternloff requested the Board revisit the time for the Board of Directors meetings. Mr. Sternloff would like to have one meeting (work session and board meeting) in an open session.

Alan Light, Chairman of the 2014-2015 Hoops Shoot sponsored by the Bluefield Elks Lodge, thanked the Board for allowing the event to be held at the Bluefield Parks and Recreation Department's Herb Sims Youth Center on January 6. Mr. Light thanked the recreation department's employees, Chawn Martin, Shannon Oliver and Lekeisha White for their service. As a token of appreciation, a donation was made to the recreation department.

Action Items

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the sixth month financial report. **Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the sixth month financial report, second; unanimously approved so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval to send delinquent accounts to collections. The City Treasurer stated she had presented a list of delinquent accounts during the morning work session. **Director Michael Gibson made a motion to send delinquent accounts to collections, second; unanimously approved so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the Annual Report of the Police Pension. **Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the Annual Report of the Police Pension, second; unanimously approved so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the Annual Report of the Fireman Pension. **Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the Annual Report of the Fireman's Pension, second; unanimously approved so ordered.**

Mayor Thomas Cole read the **SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFEILD, BY MAYOR THOMAS J. COLE, TO EXECUTE A DEED GRANTING ABBS VALLEY PIPELINE, LLC TWO PARCELS OF REAL ESTATE CONTAINING A TOTAL OF 2.65 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, SITUATED IN BEAVER POND DISTRICT, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA FOR A PRICE OF \$75,000.00.**

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield purchased two parcels of real estate, containing 2.65 acres, more or less, situated in Beaver Pond District, Mercer County, from Louise P. Johnston, by deed dated June 18, 2008, and recorded in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Mercer County, West Virginia, in Deed Book No. 925, at Page 397; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield declared this property as surplus, having a value of more than \$1,000.00; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield, pursuant to West Virginia Code § 8-12-18(b), conducted a public auction on November 19, 2014, after proper notice of this auction was advertised as required by law; and

WHEREAS, Abbs Valley Pipeline, LLC submitted the high bid of \$75,000.00 during this auction; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield agrees that the purchase price of \$75,000.00 represents the fair, adequate, and just compensation for the said property; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, WITNESS THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCE:

Pursuant to West Virginia Code §§ 8-11-3(6) and 8-12-18(b), the City of Bluefield hereby Ordains that Mayor Thomas J. Cole is authorized to execute a Deed and to convey the real property described in the deed attached hereto to Abbs Valley Pipeline, LLC, for the purchase price of \$75,000.00.

First Reading: December 9, 2014

Second Reading and Passage: January 13, 2015

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor

Attest: _____
Bobbi Kersey, Clerk

Mayor Cole requested approval of a residential lease agreement between the City of Bluefield and Bobbie Wright for a six (6) month period, beginning February 1, 2015 thru July 31, 2015.

Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to approve a residential lease agreement between the City of Bluefield and Bobbie Wright for a six (6) month period, second; unanimously approved so ordered.

With no further business, Mayor Cole adjourned the meeting.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor