

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
JUNE 23, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas Cole, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Ellen Light, and Director Chuck McGonagle; City Manager Dane Rideout, Assistant City Manager Josh Cline , City Attorney Brian Cochran, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, Community Economic Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Director Michael Gibson was late due to a business obligation.

INVOCATION – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Mayor Thomas J. Cole called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon motion and second the following minutes were approved without correction:
Minutes of the June 9, 2015, Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting

PRESENTATION

Code Enforcement Specialist Lori Mills presented Robert and Ginger Myers with the *Best of Bluefield Award* for the month of June. Code Enforcement Specialist Mills stated this award is given for homes that “stand out” in the community and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Myers for going the extra mile in their neighborhood. Mayor Cole said code enforcement is very important and thanked the department for their work on behalf of the whole Board.

OATH OF OFFICE

City Clerk Bobbi Kersey administered the Oath of Office to Jacob D. Hawks, who is beginning work as a new officer for the Bluefield Police Department.

RECOGNITION

Mayor Cole read a **Resolution of Appreciation** for Melanie Kersting, an international student from Germany, who is completing her internship at City Hall on June 26, 2015. The Board of Directors thanked Melanie for her commitment and service to the citizens of the City of Bluefield. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith presented Melanie with the new Chicory Christmas Ornament. City Manager Dane Rideout thanked Melanie, on behalf of the city staff, for her phenomenal work at City Hall. Bluefield State College and the City of Bluefield are partners in the international student program.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT

IT SPECIALIST BILLY HESTER continues to work with all departments to make adjustments to the ShoreTel phone system. Over 15,695 calls including inbound, outbound and internal have been processed since June 18th. City Treasurer Kelly Davis and Mr. Hester are working to provide on line payments available for monthly billing cycles.

CITY ENGINEER TONY WAGNER

Commerce Street has been paved and the gas piping has been fixed. The next step will be to stamp the crosswalks and striping the parking. A computerized solar meter parking system is being discussed. City Engineer Wagner is now working on the next fiscal year paving project. With the city fee increase, approximately ten streets will be paved instead of the three and a half streets that were paved this past year.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

One hundred forty tons of asphalt has been utilized in paving the alley that connects Logan and Madison Streets. Over several hundred tons of asphalt has been used to fill multiple potholes and curbs are being upgraded. The city is responsible for mowing fifty five properties. A new water line is being installed at Parks and Recreation. City Manager Rideout thanked Public Works employees for their help with the clean up after the Second Chance Concert. Public Works has begun a pilot internship program for high school students. The program is for fifteen and sixteen year olds, working less than thirty hours a week for minimum wage. The city hopes to expand the program to Parks and Recreation next year.

CODE ENFORCEMENT has demolished five houses that have been approved by the Buildings Commission. Demolition began on June 5, 2015. Citizens have reported on *Fix it Bluefield* one hundred fifty five overgrown grass areas. The city has hired an independent in house contractor to cut grass and then property owners will reimburse the payment. Over one hundred eighty seven building permits have been issued through May. Permits totaled value is eleven million dollars and fees collected forty two thousand dollars.

O'REILLY'S

Construction almost complete and opening planned for July 25th.

MEINEKE CAR CARE

Final inspection will take place this week and they will proceed with a city business license.

BOXWOOD NURSING HOME

Construction is on schedule and opening planned for mid-October.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Police Department is in the process of advertising/accepting applications for probationary officers and physical tests will be given this Thursday.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Katana Mullens has been hired as the Director of Youth Development. Director Mullens will focus on developing an after school program and other youth initiatives for the community. Thirteen camps are being offered this summer. Mickey Pellillo and Walter Shroyer with the Trails Committee

were thanked for their volunteer work. They have been marking trails, planting flower beds, and replacing doggie station dispensers at the City Park.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DIRECTOR: JIM SPENCER

- Two proposals have been submitted to two developers. A template has been developed to help market the city. Thank you to Melanie for her hard work.
- Businesses are encouraged to complete the *My Bluefield* form that is available on the www.cityofbluefield.com website and is a free service to all businesses located in the City of Bluefield. The website is a way for all local businesses to showcase their goods and services. Director Spencer requested that businesses go to the city website, click on the business tab and complete/submit the form under *My Bluefield* to him. The directors will go on line once thirty or forty businesses have completed the form.
- Looking at ways to attract the ATV population into the downtown area.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Charles Blankenship, Citizen, said he appreciated the city and having a fire and police department. He stated he did not want a fee increase but understood why an increase was necessary. Mr. Blankenship thanked the Sanitary Board for solving a problem that he reported and their professionalism.

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association:

- Asked if the revenue raised from the fees would be used to purchase a fire truck and if one person was going to be hired to target the collections. City Treasurer Kelly Davis stated that she has a designated staff person for collection of past due accounts (fees). Director Ellen Light later stated that the subject of collections is discussed every meeting and that everything legally possible is being done to collect outstanding money owed to the city.
- Chicory Square Concerts will begin at noon. Everyone is invited.

ACTION ITEMS

Mayor Cole requested City Manager Dane Rideout review the Sidewalk Improvement Incentive Pilot Program. City Manager Rideout stated as part of the Board's theme of "Enhancing Property Values", a sidewalk improvement incentive pilot program will help citizens. If approved, a "Rainy Day Fund" provided by the city would offer a cost-saving, simple solution to target dilapidated sidewalks and curbs by coordinating all aspects of the demolition and construction process, ultimately increasing property values and improving the appearance of the city. Citizens can pay the total amount or pay over a thirty six month period. Sidewalks are the responsibility of a property owner but the responsibility of who, what, and how to would be turned over to the city. Director Ellen Light **made a motion to approve the Sidewalk Improvement Incentive Pilot Program not to exceed \$75,000, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.** Mayor Cole stated he thought this was a great "out of the box" idea. City Treasurer Kelly Davis stated this would be in next year's budget (July 1, 2015).

Mayor Cole read the **Second READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND PART II, CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, CHAPTER 2, ADMINISTRATION; ARTICLE III, FINANCE AND TAXATION; DIVISION 2, SPECIAL CHARGES FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES; SUBDIVISION II, FIRE PROTECTION, AS SET OUT HEREINAFTER BY THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTIONS 2-169 AND 2-172 AND THE ENACTMENT OF SUBSECTION (C) OF 2-172; AND BY THE AMENDMENT OF SUBDIVISION III.**

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion the **Second READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND PART II, CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, CHAPTER 2, ADMINISTRATION; ARTICLE III, FINANCE AND TAXATION; DIVISION 2, SPECIAL CHARGES FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES; SUBDIVISION II, FIRE PROTECTION, AS SET OUT HEREINAFTER BY THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTIONS 2-169 AND 2-172 AND THE ENACTMENT OF SUBSECTION (C) OF 2-172; AND BY THE AMENDMENT OF SUBDIVISION III,** second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Cole read the **SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND PART II, CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD; CHAPTER 6, BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS; ARTICLE IV, VACANT STRUCTURES, AS SET OUT HEREINAFTER BY THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTIONS 6-601(a)(1); 6-102(a) and (b); 6-103; 6-104; 6-105; and 6-106(a); and AS FURTHER SET OUT HEREINAFTER BY THE ADOPTION AND ENACTMENT OF SECTIONS 6-101(a)(2),(3) and (4); 6-102(c) and (d); 6-106(b); and 6-107.**

Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to approve the **SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND PART II, CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD; CHAPTER 6, BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS; ARTICLE IV, VACANT STRUCTURES, AS SET OUT HEREINAFTER BY THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTIONS 6-601(a)(1); 6-102(a) and (b); 6-103; 6-104; 6-105; and 6-106(a); and AS FURTHER SET OUT HEREINAFTER BY THE ADOPTION AND ENACTMENT OF SECTIONS 6-101(a)(2),(3) and (4); 6-102(c) and (d); 6-106(b); and 6-107,** second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

*This ordinance will take effect on August 1, 2015.

Mayor Cole read the **First Reading of AN ORDINANCE ENACTING CHAPTER 3, SECTION 3-8, PROVIDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES.** Assistant City Manager Josh Cline stated the current state code hinders the selection process when selecting a firm for a project. Following state code, the city must advertise and then select three firms that are best qualified to perform the desired service. Currently the city must take one offer at a time. If the most qualified firm has the best bid, but is not immediately decided on first, the process is repeated or a less attractive offer is accepted. The proposed Home Rule change would allow the city to negotiate/hire the most qualified and cost saving firm. City Attorney Brian Cochran stated that once this process begins any project, in the future, less than a half million dollars the city does not have to rebid. This is the same model used in Charleston, West Virginia. **Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to approve the First Reading of AN ORDINANCE ENACTING CHAPTER 3, SECTION 3-8, PROVIDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES,** seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Cole read a **RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE CONTRACT FOR THE WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FUNDS.** The first grant funding was for \$1,000 to purchase a new server and other technology upgrades. **Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to approve a RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE CONTRACT FOR THE WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FUNDS for a new server and other technology upgrades, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole read a **RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE CONTRACT FOR THE WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FUNDS.** The second grant funding was for \$1,000 for the City of Bluefield to purchase equipment for the Bluefield Fire Department.

Director Ellen Light **made a motion to approve a RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE CONTRACT FOR THE WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FUNDS for the City of Bluefield to purchase equipment for the Bluefield Fire Department, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.** A Public Hearing will be July 14, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. before the second reading.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith **made a motion to go into executive session to discuss the purchase of property and to return to take action.**

Upon returning, Director Chuck McGonagle **made a motion to authorize City Manager Dane Rideout to enter into a sales contract on the Goodwin Family Property on John Nash Blvd.** City Attorney Brian Cochran stated if the City enters into the agreement it would have to be approved by the Board. The City would have an ordinance to purchase the property with two readings and a Public Hearing. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Director Ellen Light made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor