

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
July 14, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, July 14, 2015 at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas Cole, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Ellen Light, Director Michael Gibson 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.

INVOCATION – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – CALL TO ORDER

Elder John Hale representing the Shiloh Temple of Keystone 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 23, 2015, Public Hearing
Minutes of the June 23, 2015, Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting

RECOGNITION

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith recognized Employee James Minter for his thirty four (34) years of service to the City of Bluefield. James began working for the City of Bluefield July 20, 1981. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith stated that Mr. Minter's work ethic and friendly personality made him a "star". Mr. Minter was wished the best and will truly be missed by the administration, staff, and citizens of Bluefield. Police Chief Dennis Dillow presented Mr. Minter a plaque for his service to the City of Bluefield.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BRIDGE completion has been delayed until mid to late September. City Manager Rideout has reached out to the Mercer County Board of Education and Bluefield State College to minimize impact during the school year.

CITY ENGINEER TONY WAGNER is near completion to open bids on street paving. With the city fee increase the city will now have the capability, as long as gas and asphalt prices remain the same, to repaving the city every thirty seven years instead of seventy years. The plan is to put out bids for nine streets for paving. Industry standards suggest a city should be paved every twenty five years. More paving will take place this calendar year and in the spring of 2016.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT continues to mill and pave pot holes. Over five hundred fifty (550) tons of garbage has been collected in June. Paving projects are on going and repairs have been made on the following streets: Ridgecrest Road, Cliffmont Avenue, Longview Avenue, and

Heatherwood Road. The right of way mower has been repaired. City Manager Rideout reminded citizens there are several roads in the City of Bluefield that are owned and should be maintained by the State. Public Works employees are mowing some of the state roads due to the overgrown condition.

CODE ENFORCEMENT has demolished five (5) structures last week, two (2) more structures pending and five (5) or six (6) ready for demolition in July. Citizens are using the *Fix it Bluefield* application to report high grass. To date approximately eighty (80) cases are open for city code violations regarding grass. The city continues to enforce the pit bull ordinance. Animal Code Enforcement Officer Heather Christian is picking up unregistered pit bulls three to five times a week. Certified State Playground Inspector Lori Mills has completed all playground inspections to industry code. The city will prioritize playground needs based on Ms. Mills's final report.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT has offered thirteen camps this summer. There are three specialty camps scheduled in July: fitness, football and British soccer. Art camp and swim camp had great participation and very were successful. On July 30th, the Public Works Department from Bluefield, WV and Bluefield, VA will combine efforts for a clean up day at the City Park. Clean up will begin at 8:00 a.m. and volunteers are welcome.

BLUEFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT had two firemen, Captain McKenzie and Lieutenant Conner, attend the *Crude by Rail Emergency Response* class offer by Norfolk Southern Railroad in Pueblo, Colorado. The fireman learned subject matter expertise in event the city would have a catastrophic event involving tanks. The men will be valuable in coordinating efforts with federal, state, and local government. The City will be hosting with Norfolk Southern hands on training for all emergency responders, Mercer and surrounding counties later this month.

TOWN HALL meeting will be at Christ Episcopal Church on June 21st at 6:00 p.m. The topic will be the January –June 2015 Six Month Review. The public is invited.

Dr. Garry Moore has invited the City of Bluefield in a joint celebration with his congregation when the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge is dedicated. Dedication plates were removed before construction and will be replaced at the opening. Dr. Moore hopes a member of the King family will be present for the opening of the bridge.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DIRECTOR JIM SPENCER stated he had been discussing bus service between Bluefield, WV and Pipestem Resort State Park concerning a joint venture. Bluefield Transit runs to Athens, WV but will expand to Pipestem. The city is looking at bundling a tour with guests staying at Pipestem. Tours would include events such as: Blue Jays Baseball, Garden Gate Home Tour, Lemonade Days, Ridge Runner and Blues Festival. A large screen video has been placed in the Transit Bus that visitors can watch on the way to Bluefield. We need to market our area. When people ride the Transit Bus they will be given and will wear a myBluefield.org bracelet. Local merchants will then be able to recognize tour guests. Lodging Manager Dale McGlothlin and Superintendent Dave Caplinger attended the meeting and feel this is a win-win venture. Marie Blackwell will help coordinate the tours. Community and Economic Director Spencer stated he was requesting permission to enter into an agreement with Pipestem State Park for the joint venture. **Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to enter into an agreement with Pipestem State Park for the joint venture, second; unanimously approved so ordered.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Code Enforcement Officer Lori Mills stated the City is going to have a Bluefield Pet Extravaganza on Saturday, August 15th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Lotito City Park Shelter #2. Events will include: Free dog wash by City of Bluefield employees, Rabies vaccinations (\$8) and other vaccinations by Veterinary Associates, Micro-chipping (\$15) by Mercer County Animal Shelter, Mercer County Dog Tags (\$3) and City of Bluefield Dog Tags (\$5) and an adoption event by the Mercer County Animal Shelter. Hot dogs and bake sale items to benefit A.L.I.V.E. Animal Rescue will be available. Everyone is invited to attend.

Ms. Pamela Jefferies and Ms. Bigalow, representatives for the Hardy Street Recreation Center, discussed the deteriorating condition of the recreation center. The ladies stated this is a city owned building and requested that the city help their community. Mayor Cole suggested that the neighborhood association submit a proposal of issues, concerns and possible solutions. Building Inspector Gerald Steele said the power is being shut off; the roof is in very bad shape and the building is not safe. Mayor Cole said a meeting with administrators, directors and the neighborhood association would meet and come to a decision. The Jason Thompson Recreation or Hardy Street Recreation Center may be beyond repair but other options are available.

Dolores French, Bluefield Citizen, stated, as best she remembers, Willie and Rebecca B. Perry were the first to have a Neighborhood Association meeting in their home. The Neighborhood Association was an out growth of the East End community on Wayne Street. Ms. French stated she was also present to applaud Mr. Minter, a member of her church, on his retirement. In conclusion, Ms. French requested that Ron and Gail Satterfield be recognized for their time, efforts, and are valuable members of this community. Mayor Cole said the board has discussed highlighting a business of the quarter and he the board will revisit the idea.

Willie Hunt, Bluefield Citizen, asked if the police were still patrolling the north side. Mr. Hunt said he was told that the police would be on duty 24/7 during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge construction. Chief Dillow stated police are on patrol but he does have to pull officers on emergency calls. Mr. Hunt inquired about the long grass but understood the mower had now been repaired. Mr. Hunt stated there was a pot hole on Sussex Street that needed to be filled.

Pete Sternloff, Bluefield Citizen, request the financial statements each month be added to the city website. Mr. Sternloff also suggests the board meeting be posted on *You Tube* or another media outlet.

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association, stated that he understood some of the roads were state owned but first impressions of the city were important and if the city could help with those areas it would be great. Mr. Riley reminded citizens of the Downtown Merchants Street Fair. Food, crafts and vendors will be centered around Chicory Square on July 31st and August 1st. Everyone is invited.

ACTION ITEMS

City Treasurer Kelly Davis reported at the close of June 2015, the twelfth month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$9,378,489(109%) of the projected amount of \$8,604,489. Expenditures total \$9,451,012 (89.53%) of the projected budget of \$10,556,039. City Treasurer Kelly Davis

requested approval of the twelfth month financial report. **Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the twelfth 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 Chuck McGonagle made a motion to send delinquent accounts to collections, second; unanimously approved so ordered.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the first revision to the Coal Severance Fund which adjusts the estimated fund balance of \$10,000.00 fund balance to \$6,616.00 a decrease of \$3,384.00. The expenditure revision decreases the Police Capital Equipment line by the same amount to keep a balanced budget as required by State Code, in the amount of \$44,626.00. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion to approve Revision #1 Fiscal Year Coal Severance Fund Budget, second; unanimously approved so ordered.**

Mayor Cole read the title of the SECOND 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 5G process when selecting a firm for a project. This is a lengthy process with room for negotiations. The proposal to the Home Rule Board was to streamline the process and save time, money, and energy for the City of Bluefield. **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. This ordinance is effective upon passage.**

Mayor Cole stated that Mr. Dayhaw, a resident on Whitethorn Street, was requesting permission to utilize the unimproved and unopened right of way at Reid Avenue to put a driveway. Mr. Dayhaw stated this property is owned by the city but is unused. His property borders on the west side of the property and the Sexton family is on the other side. They are the only two property owners involved. Mr. Dayhaw would like to fill in approximately 25 ft. of the property and make his back yard to his garage level. City Manager Rideout and City Engineer Tony Wagner walked the property and this property is not used. This would get cars off the road and would improve property value. **Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve permission to utilize the unimproved and unopened right of way at Reid Avenue to put a driveway at 1400 Whitethorn Street, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

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

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor