

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA  
July 28, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, July 28, 2015 at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas Cole, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Ellen Light, and Director Michael Gibson; City Manager Dane Rideout, Assistant City Manager Josh Cline, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Community Economic Director Jim Spencer, City Attorney Brian Cochran and Director Chuck McGonagle were absent.

**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 July 14, 2015, Public Hearing

Minutes of the July 14, 2015, Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting

Minutes of the July 21, 2015, Town Hall Meeting

**CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT**

**CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH** was thanked for hosting the Town Hall Meeting on July 21, 2015.

**PETE STERNLOFF** was thanked for sharing information discussed at the Town Hall Meeting with the public on *Radio Active*.

**PIPESTEM STATE PARK AND RESORT** begins the Bluefield Tours today with Marie Blackwell hosting the event. Visitors will be in the downtown area and enjoy a Bluefield Blue Jays game. Everyone is encouraged to check out the new soft opening of the myBluefield.org application. This application is a work in progress and is different from the Bluefield City website.

**LONG TERM PROJECTS FOR THE CITY**, are being recognized by outside parties. The Board voted to move forward, at the last meeting, to develop an economic impact study. The King Coal Highway Authority has agreed to allocate \$5,000 in funding towards the study on the proposed economic develop project called “Project Game Changer”.

**DELEGATE MARTY GEARHEART** spent time with City Manager Rideout discussing upcoming projects. It is paramount that Delegate Gearheart carries our voice to Charleston as the city moves forward.

**MS. PAMALA JEFFERIES AND MS. BIGALOW, representatives for the Hardy Street Recreation Center**, discussed concerns about the deteriorating building conditions at the last board meeting. The ladies met with City Manager Rideout, City Engineer Tony Wagner, Building Inspector Gerald Steele, Parks and Recreation Director Charles Ridlehuber and Public Works Director Jr. Beggs to inspect the youth center. Unfortunately the building is beyond the financial scope of what it would take to make it safe and usable. All utilities have been disconnected. The city will demolish the building and build a covered pavilion. The city will also provide off street parking, landscaping and make the area safe for children to play.

**CROSSING GUARD AT WHITETHORN SCHOOL** issue has been resolved. The City of Bluefield has formed a partnership with the Mercer County Board of Education that will allow for the installation of removable speed humps in the school zone area. More removable speed humps will be placed in other target areas to curb speeding issues.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BRIDGE** target date for completion is between September 15<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**POLICE CHIEF DENNIS DILLOW AND CITY ENGINEER TONY WAGNER** met with the Department of Highways to discuss three issues: (1) to make sure the bridge was still on track for a September completion, (2) city has entered into negotiations to discuss, in partnership with Bluefield State College, the long term plan for the street light, and (3) negotiations concerning the Blues Festival, Lemonade Festival and the Criterium Bike Race. Some of the roads will be closed due to the race.

**COMMERCE STREET** now has stamped crosswalks. City Engineer Tony Wagner spent all day Saturday with the company. This is just another piece to the downtown revitalization efforts.

**PUBLIC WORKS** collected four hundred thirty tons of garbage collected this month. Garbage collected this month was more than collected during Clean Sweep. Four hundred and thirty three tons of asphalt has been laid for pothole repairs. Employees are also going after the curb repairs.

**EPA (ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY)** inspection resulted in no citations and only a few corrections and suggestions. Congratulations to Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

**HOLIDAY OF LIGHTS BUILDING** construction should begin August 18<sup>th</sup>. The building is being built with a donation from the Skewes Foundation, which was given years ago.

**CLEAN UP DAY** at the park will be July 30<sup>th</sup> starting at 8:30 a.m. The clean up project is a partnership between Bluefield, WV and Bluefield, VA. The focus will be on Mitchell Stadium and volunteers are welcome.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association**, thanked the Public Works Department and City Manager Rideout for overseeing the clean up and mowing on the east and west sides of town entrances. Mr. Riley invited the public to the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Downtown Merchants Street Fair to be held this Friday and Saturday. Activities include a beauty pageant, down-hill derby, dog show, arts and crafts, a variety of food and much more. A charity auction will be held to benefit the Second Chance for Cats.

**Jim Bailey, representative from the Blue Gray Shrine Horse Show,** expressed his appreciation to the city administration, Public Works department and Parks and Recreation for their hard work in preparing for the 47<sup>th</sup> annually horse show. Mr. Bailey said the park was in great condition and the horse show was well attended.

**Assistant City Manager Josh Cline** reminded everyone of the Bluefield Pet Extravaganza on Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Mayor Cole read a **RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING AUGUST ANIMAL AWARENESS MONTH. Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve August as Animal Awareness Month, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.** Ms. Ginny Hill accepted the resolution.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis stated the first revision of the new fiscal year budget is mandated by the WV State Auditor's Office to revise the fund balance that was estimated in March 2015 to the actual carry-over on June 30, 2015. After year-end closing adjustments and accruals, the fund balance that was estimated at \$1,700,000 in March was actually \$1,475,862, a reduction of \$224,138. In addition, several revenue lines have been adjusted based on final year end performance of last fiscal year, as well as adjustments for the city fee increase that became effective July 1, 2015. Overall the revenue budget increased \$470,500.

The expenditure revision appropriates that \$470,500 increase in anticipated revenue by making several minor changes within the wage lines of several departments. As employees have shifted and settled into the correct departments, the budget must follow suit. However, the expenditure revision primarily adjusts the budget to accommodate the Sidewalk Improvement Program (\$75,000), the MLK Bridge payment (\$310,000), The \$60,000 June Shott Foundation contribution for the Little League field and the funds collected last fiscal year for the Dog Park. In addition, the contingency fund is \$209,216.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of General Fund Budget Revision #1. **Director Ellen Light made a motion to accept General Fund Budget Revision #1, second; unanimously approved, so ordered.**

City Manager Dane Rideout discussed the importance of purchasing police body cameras. He stated that most cities are using technology, like police body cams, to protect the police department, to protect the citizens and to protect the city. It is a documentation piece of evidence that is priceless. The City Board was presented a proposal from TASER International. This would be a five year contract that would include 25 separate units/ body cams and cloud based storage. If new equipment or upgrades becomes available within the 5 year contract, they will be provided, free of charge. The body cams are police activated.

Year one would cost \$19,155.00 and the years to follow will cost \$14,670.00. **Director Michal Gibson made a motion to approve and enter into a contract for body cameras with TASER International and that a policy concerning body cams is implemented, seconded; unanimously approved, so ordered.**

Mayor Cole stated he was seeking a motion to reappoint Martha J. Richardson to the Library Commission. Ms. Richardson's current term will expire on June 30, 2015. **Director Michael Gibson made a motion to reappoint Martha J. Richardson for a five year term (June 30, 2020) to the Library Board, second; unanimously approved so ordered.**

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

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Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

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Thomas J. Cole, Mayor