

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
August 25, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, August 25, 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

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 August 11, 2015, Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting

PRESENTATION

Mayor Thomas J. Cole read a Resolution recognizing the 1965 AAA West Virginia State Football Champion Bluefield Beavers.

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the 1965 AAA West Virginia State Football Champion Bluefield Beavers

WHEREAS, the Bluefield Beavers football team under the direction of Coach Merrill Gainer were the 1965 AAA West Virginia State Football Champions, and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of 1965 season Coach Gainer said of the team “we are green and lack overall size” with only eight lettermen returning, the largest back weighing 175 pounds, the largest experienced lineman weighing 166 pounds, and the starting quarterback playing on the kick-off return team the previous year, and

WHEREAS, at the end of the season the green team became the dream team with an 11-0 season, 318 points scored against opponents with only 19 points scored by opponents across the eleven games, and the first team defense having only one touchdown scored on it in the entire season, and

WHEREAS, Scholastic Coach Magazine reported that as far as state champions are concerned the 1965 Bluefield High School State Champions were ranked number two in the nation in points surrendered and the backfield was the fourth smallest in the nation, and

WHEREAS, Coach Gainer’s record was 87 wins, six losses, and one tie after the 1965 season, an almost 94% winning percentage and he was named the West Virginia High School Coach of the Year for the third time in a six-year period, and

WHEREAS, many players received All-County, All-Conference, and All-State honors, and the 1965 defense still ranks as number one in school history allowing only 1.7 points per game, and

WHEREAS, no single player stood out as an individual success in the press clippings from this winning season, but the team was recognized as a unit.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City Board of Directors recognizes this outstanding team, thanks them for their contributions to our community and society, and welcomes them to the City of Bluefield to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their winning season during the 2015 Beaver-Graham Game.

Given under our hands this the 25th day of August 2015.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT was thanked for their hard work and preparation in getting the city ready for the upcoming events on August 29th: Beaver/Graham Football game, Lemonade Festival, Bike Criterium and Bluefield Blues Festival. Paving and pot holes continue to be completed. Over nine hundred and two tons of asphalt has been utilized for paving projects. The stone buildings and bleachers at Mitchell Stadium have been power washed and painting has been completed on one side of the bleachers. Weather permitting, the other side will be painted next week. Director Ellen Light thanked all those who participated in the clean up for the Scott Street Parking area.

CODE ENFORCEMENT Officer Lori Mills has completed one hundred fifty (150) rental inspections and seventeen (17) have been placarded as unfit for habitation and will be referred to Buildings Commission.

ANIMAL CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER Dorian Cox is a new hire. He has been working with ACO on a case that had a house with twenty five cats.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT thanked Steve Duffy and Joey Rose for their assistance in getting the score board at Mitchell Stadium in working order. The USA sanctioned criterium bike race will happen in the downtown area on August 29th. There will be four races and cyclists from around the region will compete for cash prizes. The first race of the evening is the Master 35+ event that will begin at 4 p.m. This is the only sanctioned bike race on the east coast scheduled. Mayor Cole stated Parks and Recreation Director Charles Riddlehuber was instrumental in organizing the bike criterium and was a pro bike rider.

BLUEFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT and the City of Bluefield congratulate Justin Lucas on his graduation from the WV State Police Academy. Routine patrol duties for the City of Bluefield include: 798- calls for service, 525- total citations and 31-vehicle accidents.

BLUEFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT reported the following: 38- Fire incidents (Gardener Street, North Street, Ellis Street fires resulting in more than \$1,000.00 in damages), 16- vehicle accidents, and a total of 70 calls for service. Firemen have also been involved in historic railroad emergency response training.

HARDY STREET RECREATION CENTER has been given a 90 day stay on demolition. City Manager Rideout and Mayor Cole attended a community meeting last week with citizens. Concerned citizens are encouraged to organize and come up with a plan that would be presented to the City Board. This plan should be detailed and include city codes, ordinances, materials and repairs needed, expense, etc.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DIRECTOR JIM SPENCER stated he has been searching information concerning Bluefield on the web. He found on the Department of Commerce website the email address listed for Bluefield was from Comcast. It has been years since the city has used a Comcast address. With the help of Marie Blackwell, those types of misinformation are being corrected. Bluefield was listed as number 43 as a cool place to live. This was based on Bluefield being the “Air Conditioned City” that serves lemonade when temperatures are over 90 degrees, however Bluefield has other events to offer visitors that should be listed. Mr. Spencer has spoken with a gentleman concerning expanding his business. Development of the Cumberland Park area is also a topic of discussion. The residential survey is now on the Bluefield website. Forty eight citizens have responded and a business retention survey will soon follow. Intern Haley Robinson is working on a possible site plan for potential investors. Mr. Spencer noted that Bluefield State is highly under utilized and the city needs to encourage and help our youth so they will remain in Bluefield.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association, asked the following:

1. Are Saturday events going to be published; especially streets that will be open or closed? City Manager Rideout stated Saturday events will be published in the paper (with a map and times), will be on the city website and there will be signage in the downtown area.
2. At one time the Assistant City Manager Cline was working on a booklet with information concerning starting a business in Bluefield. Is that information/booklet available on the city website? Assistant City Manager Cline stated since Community and Economic Development Jim Spencer had been hired they are updating the information. Assistant Manager Cline said there is information on the website for possible business owners. The booklet is available at City Hall.
3. Could the police department be placed on a direct dial? City Manager Rideout said if a citizen has an emergency they should call 911. For routine business, citizens should listen to the phone directory and dial the correct phone extension
4. With the increase in fees, what is the time frame that citizens will see new purchased items? Once ordered a fire truck could take up to a year.

Al Hancock, Bluefield Citizen, thanked the grass cutting crew that cut grass at the Fairview Park on August 18th. Mr. Hancock stated the park looks wonderful. Mr. Hancock stated that a veteran takes his life every 14 minutes and there is a Veteran’s hotline number available (1.800.273.8255).

Pete Formato, Bluefield Citizen, voiced concern about the narrow streets. Emergency, garbage and other trucks traveling the roads and it is difficult with citizens parking on both sides of the street. Mr. Formato suggested the City Board consider looking at this safety issue and possibly making parking on just one side or making one way streets. Mayor Cole they have looked at streets and some changes have been made.

Katie Kidd, Whitethorn Elementary Parent, voiced concerned about losing the crossing guard on Maryland and traffic congestion in the afternoon. Director Light stated that a morning editorial stated several schools allowed their security people to do the same function as a crossing guard. Director Light suggested Ms. Kidd talk to officials at the Board of Education.

ACTION ITEMS

Mayor Thomas J. Cole read a Proclamation observing Suicide Prevention Week.

PROCLAMATION OBSERVING SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield recognizes suicide as a statewide public health problem, and suicide prevention as a statewide responsibility, and designates September 7 through September 13 as “Suicide Prevention Week” in Bluefield, West Virginia. This week overlaps World Suicide Prevention Day that is recognized internationally and supported by the World Health Organization. The 2015 National Suicide Prevention Week is September 7 through September 13, and

WHEREAS, suicide is now the 15th leading cause of all deaths in the state of West Virginia, and the leading cause of death among people from the age of 15 to 24, and

WHEREAS, in the United States, one person completes suicide every 13.7 minutes, and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 5.4 million people in the United States are survivors of suicide (those who have lost a loved one to suicide), and

WHEREAS, 50.8% of people who die by suicide use a firearm, and guns stored in the house are used for suicide 40 times more often than for self-protection, and

WHEREAS, an increase in the overall suicide rate in our country was seen in 2009, representing a change in the recent pattern of stability or slight declines, the suicide rate for those 15-24 years old has more than doubled since the mid-1950s; and the suicide rate remains highest for adults 75 years of age and older, and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with mental illness and suicidality works against suicide prevention by discouraging persons at risk for suicide from seeking life-saving help and further traumatizes survivors of suicide, and

WHEREAS, statewide suicide prevention efforts should be developed and encouraged to the maximum extent possible, and

WHEREAS, an organization such as the American Association of Suicidology which is dedicated to reducing the frequency of suicide attempts and deaths, and the pain of survivors affected by suicides of loved ones, through educational programs, research projects, intervention services, and bereavement services urge that we:

- a. Recognize suicide as a national and state public health problem and declare suicide prevention to be a statewide priority;

- b. Acknowledge that no single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities:
- c. Encourage initiatives based on the goals contained in the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention
- d. Promote awareness that suicide is a public health problem that is preventable.
- e. Develop broad-based support for suicide prevention.
- f. Develop and implement strategies to reduce the stigma associated with being a consumer of mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention services.
- g. Develop and implement community-based suicide prevention programs.
- h. Develop and implement community-based suicide bereavement support services.
- i. Promote efforts to reduce access to lethal means and methods of self-harm.
- j. Implement training for the recognition of at-risk behavior and for the delivery of the effective treatment.
- k. Develop and promote effective clinical and professional practices.
- l. Increase access to, and community linkages with, mental health and substance abuse in the entertainment and news media.
- m. Improve reporting and portrayals of suicide behavior, mental illness, and substance abuse in the entertainment and news media.
- n. Promote and Support Research on suicide and suicide prevention.
- o. Improve and expand surveillance systems for suicide behavior.

WHEREAS, a great many suicides are preventable;

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, City of Bluefield Board of Directors do hereby designate September 7 through September 13, 2015 as “National Suicide Prevention Week” in the City of Bluefield, West Virginia.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion to approve the RESOLUTION FOR 2015 MERCER COUNTY OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMMUNITY WALK, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered. Mayor Cole presented a copy of the resolution to Heather Bennett, co-chair of the West Virginia Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and to Marie Blackwell, coordinator of the “Out of Darkness” walk at Lotito Park on September 12th.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis reported at the close of July 2015, the 1st month of the new fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$1,145,246 (13.04%) of the projected amount of \$8,782,952. Expenditures totaled \$895,091 (8.73%) of the projected budget of \$10,258,814. On July 31, 2015 the budget is 8.33%.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis discussed the annual report of policemen's and firemen's pension and relief funds to the Municipal Pensions Oversight Board for approval. This report is required by WV Code §8-22-19(d) (1) (B) and §8-22-22a (a).

Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the Police Pension Annual Report, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the Fire Pension Annual Report, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Michael Gibson made a motion to reappoint Claude Morgan to a three year Sanitary Board position, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Ellen Light made a motion to reappoint Gail Satterfield to a four year Beautification Commission position, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Thomas Cole stated that Dr. William Merva had presented an application to the Planning Commission to subdivide two parcels of land. Assistant City Manager Josh Cline stated the Planning Commission had approved the subdivision so Dr. Merva could have better access to his property and construct a driveway entrance from Spring Garden to the back of his property.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion to approve an application by William A. Merva to subdivide 961 Spring Garden Drive, for the purpose of providing two parcels of land, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Cole introduced a request to approve an expense item for the Mitchell Stadium parking lot. City Manager Dane Rideout this expense is part of this year's budget for work in the park area. The funds were to be used to upgrade the softball field. Unfortunately the paving and striking of the Lotito Parking lot is a more pressing matter. The city does not have the money to repave the parking lot. City Manager Rideout recommended Public Works do some milling and paving on the worst areas. The main focus will be on the triangle area closest to Mitchell Stadium and put an asphalt sealant on top. This should give between 5 to 7 years to develop a course of action for the future. Two bids were received: AAA Paving for \$24,695 (includes striking of parking spaces) and Professional Asphalt Services for \$22,500. City Manager Rideout wants local business Professional Asphalt Services hired. He would like the funds for the softball field to be moved to the more pressing issue; the parking lot that is used year round. The striking of the parking lines will be done at an angle and will be painted white. **Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the contract to Professional Paving to sealcoat parts of Mitchell Stadium parking lot.** City Attorney Brian Cochran stated the action on the agenda was for budget funding. If passed the way it is written on the agenda, the City Manager can enter into a contractual agreement not to exceed \$25,000.

Director Ellen Light amended her motion to approve up to \$25,000 to sealcoat parts of Mitchell Stadium parking lot, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Attorney Brian Cochran stated that Bluefield High School and Graham High School, have submitted a proposal to operate the concession stand at Mitchell Stadium and this year the city will have a formal contract. The cost for all concessions for the 2015 football season (August 14-December 31, 2015) will be 20% of the total gross proceeds of all sales, payable by the concessionaire to the City in weekly payments.

Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve a lease agreement with Bluefield High School Band Boosters and Graham High School Band Boosters to provide concessions at Mitchell Stadium, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Cole introduced a proposed contract with Alpha Media at Mitchell Stadium. City Manager Dane Rideout stated this is a one year contract with Alpha Media at Mitchell Stadium. Alpha Media is a professional advertising agency. Next year the City would like to do its own advertising and funds would be put back into the facility.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion giving the City Manager authorization to accept the proposal of Alpha Media regarding Advertising Contract, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Michael Gibson made a motion to move into executive session to discuss a legal matter; only to return to adjourn.

Upon returning to the Board of Directors Board Room, Director Ellen Light made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor