

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA  
October 13, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were 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 and Economic Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Mayor Thomas J. Cole was 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.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Upon motion and second the following minutes were approved without correction:

Minutes of the September 29, 2015, Town Hall Meeting

Minutes of the October 7, 2015, Special Called Meeting

**COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DIRECTOR JIM SPENCER** introduced four new businesses:

1. Travis Harry, owner of Big Whiskey BBQ will open inside of the existing Bluefield State College building. Mr. Harry stated the business began over a year ago as a mobile unit and opening a full service restaurant was the next step. The restaurant will feature a southern style of barbecue while also offering local craft beer, sauces and rubs. Mr. Harry thanked President Dr. Marsha Krotseng, Mayor Thomas Cole, Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and many others for working closely with him during the planning of the new business. He hopes to have the restaurant open for business by December.
2. Beth Christopher, owner of Blue Mountain Mercantile will be opening on the first floor of the old Wells Fargo Building (320 Federal Street). The store will carry high end arts and crafts and select pieces of upscale furniture and furnishings. She said the store would also carry soy candles, hand-crafted soap, and many other items. She hopes to open by the end of October or early November.
3. Derek Dodson, owner of Autonomous and Radio Controlled Equipment will open in the old freight station and will specialize in radio-controlled lawn mowers. The machines are equipped with a camera that transmits a high definition live feed to a television or mobile device so that operators can mow any kind of lawn or slope safely and efficiently. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer played a video showing one of the radio-controlled lawnmowers cutting grass. Mr. Dotson has filed for a provisional patent for the lawn mowing system. Mr. Dotson is part of a new program that is being developed in the City of Bluefield to advance entrepreneurial growth in our region. Economic Director Spencer would like for the facility (freight station) to become a commercialization center and operate like an incubator for other entrepreneurialism. ARCE will be located at 1642 Bluefield Avenue and plans to open by April 2016.
4. Community and Economic Director Jim Spencer said with the help of the Bluefield Preservation Society the new Blue Spoon Café will be opening soon in downtown Bluefield.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith and Board Members welcomed the new businesses and wished them success in their endeavors.

## **CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT**

**Assistant City Manager Josh Cline and Community and Economic Director Jim Spencer** were thanked for their dedication to the City of Bluefield. The city wants new business and these men have formed a personal working relationship with each of the new businesses and existing businesses.

**Special Meeting** minutes that were approved concerned the Stovall Estate and other property that was auctioned. The City of Bluefield is looking into the future for property that can be developed for economic or expansion of areas, such as the City Park. Other properties could be used as green spaces and would increase property values. Purchasing various properties allows the city to “clean up” undesirable conditions. Approximately fifty four acres were purchased on the north side for future development.

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge** re-dedication celebration was a success. The re-dedication was in partnership with several of the local churches and Bluefield State College. Mr. Isaac Newton Farris, nephew of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, was guest speaker and given a key to the City of Bluefield. Rev. James Palmer and Rev. Garry Moore were thanked for their participation in the special event. City Manager Rideout stated this bridge is the last of the bridges on the Heartland Corridor to be raised in height. This was a joint endeavor between the federal, state and local government, in partnership with Norfolk Southern, to allow the corridor to run double stacked containers. City Manager Rideout said this was a strategic upgrade because the future of this city is centered on the railroad.

**Happy Birthday** to the United States Navy as it celebrates 240 years. Thank you to all the men and women who serve in our armed forces.

**Department of Transportation** is holding an informational public workshop at Bluefield High School on October 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. During the workshop, the WVDOH and other transportation officials will be seeking input on the proposed mix of projects (i.e. expansion, resurfacing, transit, etc...). The public is encouraged to attend. This is very important to our region and for citizens to be a part of their government.

**Leaf pickup** began today. Citizens are encouraged to request leaf pick up on the *Fix it Bluefield* application located on the city website ([www.cityofbluefield.com](http://www.cityofbluefield.com)). Do not put leaves in the street and please do not put rocks or tree limbs in the pile of leaves.

**Pothole** repair will last approximately two more weeks.

**Bluefield City Park** is now closed to all vehicular traffic due to setting up for the Holiday of Lights. There will be a new display this year that was voted on by the citizens.

**Code Enforcement** did an in depth inspection at the Relax Inn and yielded several serious infractions. Three more houses are now ready for demolition and another six to eight houses are expected to be added.

**IT Specialist Billy Hester** has been working with Kelly Davis and intern Haley Robinson on redesigning the front of City Hall to make it more customer friendly and more welcoming.

**Recreation Department** will be hosting the Appalachian Series Marathon at the City Park on October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The Recreation Department will partner with several local businesses for

Trunk-or-Treat on Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup> in the City Park. The Holiday of Lights 5K will be on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m.; participants can register as an individual or a team of five.

**Police Department** is taking donations for two canine units to help assist with drug and criminal activity. The city has two officers already qualified to work with canines. Anyone wishing to donate should contact Chief Dennis Dillow. New body cameras are being used and officers have been trained. The information is stored in the cloud if needed for future reference.

**Fire Department** is involved with area schools educating students on fire safety, fire protection and fire (smoke) detection. The department has responded to six fires this month.

**Community and Economic Director Jim Spencer** requested the Board declare November 28<sup>th</sup> as Business Appreciation Day in the City of Bluefield. The reason is to give a “thank you” and recognize all the businesses. Director Michael Gibson asked that Bluefield State students be invited to the events. Director Spencer stated Assistant Manager Cline and Marie Blackwell are helping with events for the Appreciation Day and more details will be disclosed closer to the event. Director Ellen Light made a motion to declare November 28, 2015 as Business Appreciation Day in the City of Bluefield, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association,** asked or stated the following:

- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge opening was wonderful. The City and those who worked on the dedication are to be commended.
- This was the most encouraging board meeting he had attended in the past twenty five years.
- Are parking regulations now being enforced? City Manager Rideout said the parking warning period ended today. Tickets will be given to those individuals who that go over the two hour time limit. There is a designated parking area for Bluefield Area Transit for the West Virginia Manor, due to safety reasons. This area is not a parking spot and individuals will receive a ticket. Signs have been ordered and are on the way.
- Will the signage in parking lots be clearly marked? City Manager Rideout said signage in parking lots needs to be revisited and there may be a possible ordinance change.
- What happened to the building that was to be built to house the lights for the Holiday of Lights at the City Park? City Manager Rideout stated the contractor that won the bid did not have a Virginia license and has not been able to obtain a Virginia license. The contract was cancelled and the bid process was reopened. Bids will be opened on October 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.
- The Christmas Parade will be December 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Anyone that would like to enter the parade should contact Angie Foley at City Hall or Christine at the Landmark.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis reported at the close of September 2015, 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$2,837,402 (32.31%) of the projected amount of \$8,782,952. Expenditures totaled \$2,640,781 (25.74%) of the projected budget of \$10,258,814. Budget projections at the end of September are 24.99%. Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the September financial report, seconded; unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis provided documentation to approve eighty seven (87) accounts for collection. Director Michael Gibson made a motion to send the accounts to collections, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith read the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO EXECUTE A DEED TO RICKY WILLIAMS TO CONVEY A PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE, CONTAINING APPROXIMATE 7500 SQUARE FEET, MORE OR LESS, SITUATED IN THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA KNOWN AS LOT 4, SECTION 681, 2412 PRINCETON AVENUE, FOR A PRICE OF \$6,000.00.

City Attorney Brian Cochran stated this was a parcel of land that the City purchased in 2010 or 2011, after a city vehicle ran into a structure. The structure was demolished and the property was auctioned. Mr. Williams was the high bid at \$6,000.00. Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO EXECUTE A DEED TO RICKY WILLIAMS TO CONVEY A PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE, CONTAINING APPROXIMATE 7500 SQUARE FEET, MORE OR LESS, SITUATED IN THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA KNOWN AS LOT 4, SECTION 681, 2412 PRINCETON AVENUE, FOR A PRICE OF \$6,000.00, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith read the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO ACCEPT THE TRANSFER OF REAL ESTATE. Assistant City Manager Josh Cline stated the City of Bluefield has been working with heirs of the Goodwin Estate to purchase and have a gift donation for property located on John Nash Boulevard. This property is adjacent to the Bluefield Transit property. This property can be used for economic development. The property appraised for \$450,000, and its present owners, the heirs of the late Ward A. Goodwin and Lucille Goodwin, have offered to contribute \$190,000 of this amount to the City of Bluefield and to accept a less than market value consideration of \$260,000 for the remainder of the consideration. Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to approve the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO ACCEPT THE TRANSFER OF REAL ESTATE, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested approval of Storm Water Street Sweeper Bid Recommendation. City Manager Rideout stated the Storm Water Department is in need of a working street sweeper. Steve Duffy received three bids and has recommended a RAVO 5 series street sweeper. One of the main objectives for the new street sweeper truck was purchasing a smaller machine but one that could pull the hills. This machine was demonstrated and has the equipment, power, and safety features needed for our terrain. The last sweeper was purchased by the Board through the sale of the hospital. Storm Water has been making payments back to the City. Storm Water would continue to make payments to the City until the new RAVO is delivered. When the RAVO is delivered the old sweeper would be paid off in full and then the City will refinance the new RAVO. City Treasurer Kelly Davis stated if the Board approved borrowing from the Financial Stabilization Fund, the loan agreement should indicate the payments are to be payable to the City of Bluefield Stabilization Fund so that the repayment would have to go to the Rainy Day Fund instead of the General Fund. Director Michael Gibson asked whether this purchase would include a trade in of the current machine. Steve Duffy said yes and that they are getting more than they anticipated. Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the Storm Water Street Sweeper Bid Recommendation with the proviso it is borrowed from the Financial Stabilization Fund so that repayment would be returned to the Rainy Day Fund at 3% interest, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith read a Resolution Authorizing the City of Bluefield to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Beth Christopher. Community and Economic Director Jim Spencer requested an amendment to the lease agreement stating the \$500 a month payment be extended to six months instead of four months. Director Spencer had discussed the change during the earlier

Board work session. Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing the City of Bluefield to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Mary E. Christopher with the amendment of a monthly payment of \$500 being extended to six months, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith read a Resolution Authorizing the City of Bluefield to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Derek Dodson, d/b/a Autonomous and Radio controlled Equipment, LLC. With no further discussion, Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing the City of Bluefield to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Derek Dodson, d/b/a Autonomous and Radio controlled Equipment, LLC.

Director Michael Gibson 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