

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
MARCH 22, 2016
NOON**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas Cole, Director Chuck McGonagle, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Ellen Light, and Director Michael Gibson and City Manager Dane Rideout, Assistant City Manager Josh Cline, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. City Attorney Brian Cochran 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.

Mayor Thomas Cole called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion that the minutes of March 8, 2016 be approved as presented, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT

The Board of Directors, City Manager Dane Rideout, Assistant City Manager Josh Cline, City Officials, City Directors and other administrators attended a naloxone demonstration with U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito at the Bluefield Rescue Squad this morning. Naloxone is a medication used to block the effects of opioids, especially in overdose. Shawn Contrell, Bluefield Rescue Squad Chief of Operations, provided the training. Sam Pennington was thanked for hosting the event. Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer was meeting with Senator Capito at the Freight Station and briefing her on turning the freight station into the Bluefield Commercialization Center.

Public Works has been very busy. Trimming of the bushes at Mitchell Stadium has been completed. Spring clean-up of street markers, sidewalks and signage will continue until complete.

East River Clean Up will be March 30th at the top of the mountain overlook. This is part of the *Mercer County Love Where You Live* campaign. Trash will be picked up, old bushes will be removed and new sod will be laid.

Parks and Recreation renovations continue at the Herb Sims Youth Center. Congratulations to the Mount View Knights and the Bluefield Bulls for winning the youth basketball championships. Adult basketball will begin April 4th and registration for various specialty summer camps will begin April 1st. Please call the Recreation Center (304.327.2401

ext. 2445) or visit www.cityofbluefield.com for more information.

IT Department has added an option on the phone system so citizens can now speak to a live person. Citizens must still listen to the auto directory.

Code Enforcement is being very aggressive in getting after blighted properties. Over 150 houses have been demolished.

Police Department has four (4) new vehicles due to Lieutenant Dean Pennington receiving a USDA Grant and foundation money. K9 Ace is now fully qualified. On his first traffic stop, Ace found a quarter pound of marijuana. Ace and Thor will be out in force throughout the city. A successful operation concerning prostitution on Bluefield Avenue resulted in the arrest of three prostitutes and six johns. The city will continue publishing arrests in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph.

Pot Holes will be addressed as soon as asphalt plants open. Bland Road and road Route 19 is part of the thirty miles of state road in the city. The city is actively in communication with the State Highway Department. Please use *Fix It Bluefield* to report pot holes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Karen Stickle, Southern Conservation District and the West Virginia Conservation Agency presented a handout and discussed the responsibility for protection of structures by supporting the Operation, Maintenance & Repair Program and funding for Brush Creek Site 9a. A copy of the handout is available at the City Clerk's office.

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association, stated the Bluefield Commercialization project is going to be a great thing for the City of Bluefield. Approximately four years ago, Bluefield State did a study on the architect and structure of the building and that information may be of value in the project. The Downtown Merchants in partnership with Frontier will hold their clean up and window wash on May 1st. Mr. Riley also thanked the City for correcting the phone system.

Al Hancock, Bluefield citizen, thanked the Street Department/Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Department for doing a fantastic job. Parks and Recreation has been working on area playgrounds and Public Works did a great job with the snow removal.

Mark Davis, Local Artist, stated he is having a difficult time finding a location to rent for teaching and producing art. Mr. Davis is finding small spaces with little parking and very high rental rates. Mr. Davis would like to rent a place that is approximately 2,000 to 2,500 square feet. Mr. Davis wants to stay and work with the City. His contact number is available with Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer plans are to take the old Freight Station and make it into a Commercialization Center. This would be a place for invention / ideas and change them into marketable items. Director Spencer stated he had met with Appalachian Regional Commission, last week, and EDA on funding. Director Spencer thanked Senator Shelley Moore Capito, City Administrators and other attendees who

participated in the demonstration at the Freight Center.

ACTION ITEMS:

City Treasurer Kelly Davis submitted for approval the fiscal Year 2017 General Fund Budget .The City of Bluefield projected FY17 budget is \$10,121,623. The revenue projections are 6% less as compared to the revenue projections for December 31, 2015. The projections for the FY2017 do not include any grant funding or outside contributions; as these will be added during the mandatory revision in July 2016 after we roll into next year. The operating expenses for FY2017 are 3.35% more as compared to the operating expenses on December 31, 2015. City Treasurer Davis is paying attention to the budget struggles at the State level and preparing for how that will impact the city going forward. The new budget has provided for an increase in Worker's Compensation and property and liability premiums. At this time the budget does not provide for any increase in PEIA. The PERS contribution rate has decreased from 13.5% to 12% in the coming year. The FY2017 continues to set aside \$10,000 for the sidewalk improvement program. It provides funding to renovate the 3rd floor public restrooms, 4th floor lighting upgrades and some additional AV equipment for the Board Room. The new budget provides for a \$100,000 contribution into the Fire Truck Fund, \$200,000 to be set aside for the field turf replacement and an additional \$100,000 in Street Department equipment. The contributions to outside agencies remain unchanged with \$36,000 to the Bluefield Baseball Association, \$2,000 to the Bluefield Baseball Club for Go Green Night, \$65,000 for BAT, \$30,000 to Alliance for the Arts, and \$90,000 to Craft Memorial Library. Upon approval by the Board, the FY2017 General Fund Budget will be submitted to the State Auditor for final approval. Over the next two weeks, the budget will be advertised as a Class II legal notice in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph. Today's meeting will remain in recess until April 19th when the Board will reconvene to Lay the Levy; after which, the property tax rates will be submitted to the State Auditor for certification to the Mercer County Assessor. City Treasurer Davis noted the City of Bluefield Financial Stabilization Fund is projected to be \$1,425,643. It is anticipated that the carry over fund balance at the end of Fiscal Year 2016 will be \$1,367,263. The transfers from the General Fund for the Sanitary Board lease payments plus interest are projected to be \$58,380. The Financial Stabilization Fund is a reserve fund available only by Board action and is used primarily to bridge budget shortfalls. **Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2017 General Fund Budget for submission to the State Auditor, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis submitted for approval of the City of Bluefield Coal Severance Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2017. The Coal Severance Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 is projected to be \$32,725. It is anticipated that the carry over fund balance at the end of the Fiscal Year 2016 will be \$6,700 and the Coal Severance Tax receipts plus interest will be \$26,025. The Coal Severance Fund has been historically dedicated to purchasing police vehicles and it was recommended that this practice continue for Fiscal Year 2017. Upon approval by the Board, the FY2017 Coal Severance Fund Budget will be submitted to the State Auditor for final approval. **Member Ellen Light made a motion to approve the City of Bluefield Coal Severance Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2017, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested the Board approve a time for a public hearing to Lay the Levy on April 19th. The budget is approved by the Board at this meeting but this meeting stays in recess until the 3rd Tuesday in April. The date is set by statute but the time is at the discretion of the Board. Lay the Levy is the approval of the tax rate. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a**

motion to hold a public hearing to Lay the Levy at 9:00 a.m., second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval to submit ninety (90) accounts as presented for March collections in the amount of \$57,915.27. **Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the ninety accounts for March in the amount of \$57,915.27 be sent to collections, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

OTHER:

Mayor Cole recognized Dave Shields for his dedication to the City of Bluefield, his participation on the Planning Commission and his community service. Mr. Shields resigned from the Planning Commission this week.

Craig and Ansel Ponder were recognized for their athletic abilities. These brothers have represented Bluefield with professionalism during their college studies and at Bluefield High School.

Town Hall Meeting on March 29th at the Herb Sims Youth Center. The topic will be an informational overview on *Bluefield Sanitary and Stormwater*. The Town Hall meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. The public is invited.

Bluefield High School Student Government Day will be April 12th at City Hall.

Director Ellen Light made a motion to recess the meeting, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor