

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
April 12, 2016
NOON**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, April 12, 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, City Attorney Brian Cochran, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey.

PRELIMINARIES – CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith introduced Student Vice Mayor Dominick Buzzo. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the meeting and Student Vice Mayor Dominick Buzzo led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Mayor Thomas J. Cole called the meeting to order and welcomed Bluefield High School students, for Student Government Day. Mayor Cole introduced Student Mayor Jeremy Thompson. Students spent the day job shadowing in respective departments and attended the regular scheduled Board of Directors meeting. The following students participated: Student Mayor Jeremy Thompson, Student Vice Mayor Dominick Buzzo, Student Director Catlyn Lucado, Student Director Matthew Belcher, Student Director Katelyn Gordon, Student City Manager Aramus Wimmer, Student Assistant City Manager Amber Russo, Student City Attorney Tyler Easley, and Student City Treasurer Zoe Nicewander. Other participants included: Student Police Chief Ashton Shaw, Student Building Inspector Colyn Pennington, Student Fire Chief Abby Atwell, Student Parks and Recreation Director Robbie Harris, Student Code Enforcement Supervisor Virginia Helton, Student Transit Authority Director Yamya Martin, Student Public Works Director Megan Beggs; Student Park Workers: Doug Bailey, Andrew King, Rayan Lankford; Student Police Officers: Camilla Deeb, Seth Silcox; Student Fireman Emaleigh Gallinger, Student Public Works Worker Brenden Wehrle, and Student Transit Worker Mariah Smith. Mayor Cole introduced Bluefield High School Teacher Justin Gilbert and Bluefield High School Student Teacher Derek Hinkle.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Student Director Katelyn Gibson under the direction of Director Michael Gibson made a motion that the Board of Directors minutes from March 22, 2016 be approved as presented, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Student Vice Mayor Dominick Buzzo under the direction of Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion that minutes of the Town Hall Meeting, March 29, 2016 be approved as presented, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

PRESENTATION

Mayor Cole presented Mr. Dave Shield with a Certificate of Appreciation for his service as Chairman of the Planning Commission. Mr. Shields stepped down from the position of chairman at the February 2016 Planning Commission meeting. Mayor Cole stated Mr. Shields was appointed to the

Planning Commission on January 31, 1984 and has been acting chairman since August 3, 1993. Mr. Shields is a successful business man and a community leader. The Dave Shields Company was incorporated in January 1974 and Mr. Shields received the highest award given by the General Accredited Appraisers Association in 1994. Mr. Shields has served on the Fireman's Civil Service Commission, Director on the City Board and Mayor of Bluefield from August 1994-1995. Mr. Shield's stated he loved the City of Bluefield and he will continue to help in whatever capacity needed.

Director Chuck McGonagle recognized Ms. Courtney Davis, multimedia journalist at WVVA. Ms. Davis is moving to Statesville, NC. The Board of Directors and citizens of Bluefield wish Ms. Davis the best in her new endeavors.

Bluefield Professional Firefighters Local 347 presented a power point presentation and video. Fireman Matthew Pettrey, President of Local 347, stated it was important for members of the Bluefield Board of Directors to reevaluate current staffing levels at the Bluefield Fire Department. The request follows the city's ISO (Insurance Services Office) inspection that the city's ISO rating could be lowered. A complete copy of the power point is available at the city clerk's office. City Manager Dane Rideout stated there has been no change or downgrade in the city's ISO rating. Comments today were from union representatives that were providing a "guess" based on a projected rate from an inspector. The city has not had an inspection in eighteen years and the city has a window of six months to make corrections before any final ISO rating is decided upon. City Manager Rideout stated all areas will be evaluated: equipment, personnel, documentation and funding. The recent decision by the city board to raise fire fees will in return help to raise funding for a new fire truck. We are doing things safely in the city and issues will be addressed with recommendations.

Police Chief Dennis Dillow recognized Court Clerk Crystal Graham for her service. Ms. Graham also manages the dispatchers, collection of fines, handles all citations, and has an audit every year. Every citation must be accounted for and since Ms. Graham took over the position in 2008 only one ticket, out of thousands in a year, has been outstanding. Student Police Chief Ashton Shaw helped present the Certificate of Recognition to Ms. Graham.

Fire Chief Rick Cary stated he took great pride and honor in introducing Captain Jimmie Perkins. Captain Perkins is a twenty-eight (28) year veteran of the Bluefield Fire Department. He joined the department in 1998, made lieutenant in 2010, and captain in April 2016. City Clerk Bobbi Kersey administered the Oath of Office for Captain Jimmie Perkins. Captain Perkins received his captain's pin and pinned by Student Fire Chief Abbey Atwell

CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT

City Manager Rideout recognized Adam Goodman, Charles "JJ" Holley and Shawn Worley from Public Works. A letter was read written by an employee at Dr. Stevens stating the three men recently assisted an elderly resident who fell along the road on his way to their office. The men pulled over the garbage truck, two stayed with the individual and the other went for medical assistance. These individuals showed a great deal of character and Dr. Stevenson's office was very appreciative of their kindness.

City Engineer Tony Wagner is evaluating all the city streets. He is going street by street looking at conditions, the width, the length, last time it was paved, last time it was milled and how the street is affected by utilities. This will all be entered into a GIS data base. City Engineer Wagner is also working at the new police substation

Public Works reported the asphalt plant is now open and pothole repair has begun. East River Overlook cleanup day was a success. Delegate John Shott worked at the overlook and has been active in all of the volunteer community functions.

Parks and Recreation renovations are almost complete. The city is sponsoring the semipro Mountain Mayhem football team. The next game will be with Southern Maryland Gladiators on April 16th at 7 pm. Saturday, April 23rd at noon there is a CITO (Cache In, Trash Out) event and an ongoing Couch-to-5K training to get citizens ready for a 5K run. The park officially opened on Friday, April 1st and the Ridge Runner on Saturday, April 2nd. Please call the Recreation Center (304.327.2401 ext. 2445) or visit www.cityofbluefield.com for more information on events and activities.

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. Twelve houses are ready for demolition and seven are scheduled to start today. Building Inspector Gerald Steele is overseeing the new police substation. Director Chuck McGonagle has donated over \$16,000 in man power towards the project. J.C. Robinson, from Frye Roofing, has also given of his time and expertise.

Police Department has had 698 calls for service last month, 90 arrests and a total of 446 citations (289 warning citations).

Fire Department responded to 31 fire incidents last month, 3 incidents with more than \$1,000 in damage and 45 total calls for service.

National League of Cities Service Line Warranty Program flyers will soon be mailed. This program picks up where the Sanitary and West Virginia American Water stops coverage in the event of a line or drain problem, inside or outside, at a residence. The program is endorsed by the City of Bluefield.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR JIM SPENCER stated the City received a grant from American Electric Power for a new economic development website. The website will be available in two weeks and it will have a virtual business directory with an interactive map. There has been a lot of interest in the Commercialization Center located at the old Freight Station, on Bluefield Avenue. If a person has an idea or product to manufacture, the Commercialization Center is the starting point. We want to create jobs in our community. The next step is a grant from Appalachian Regional Commission for some renovations, as there are several engineers interested in the Commercialization Center. We need to procure an engineer to estimate the cost for funding. Director Spencer has met with ARC and EDA on a state level concerning the grants. Proposals are due on Friday. Last, there has been a discussion concerning a Farmer's Market. Director Spencer recommended that WVU's extension office study what would be the best location and look at other opportunities (such as canned products). We need to work together as a community. Director Spencer stated he was not sure the community could support three markets in three different locations (downtown, south Bluefield, and K-Mart). There is a network of farmers that we need to reach out to and find our niche. The Board requested that Director Spencer meet with the WVU's extension office and report back to the Board with recommendations.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association stated there was a meeting of the

Merchants tonight and they would have a detailed plan for a Farmer's Market. Mr. Riley asked if the Bluefield Fire Department had a written mutual agreement with Bluefield, Virginia. City Manager Rideout stated it was a verbal agreement. Mr. Riley expressed his disappointment in the attendance at the recent Town Hall Meeting at the Herb Sims Youth Center. Mr. Riley stated the presentation by the Bluefield Sanitary/Stormwater Boards was excellent and very informative. Mr. Riley encouraged more citizens to attend and more advertisement of the meeting. Mr. Riley asked if signage was included in the upcoming budget and City Manager Rideout stated money had been designated for signs.

Sherri Seal, Bluefield Citizen, shared a personal and emotional story concerning the care, compassion, and dedicated service of all fire, police and emergency responders.

ACTION ITEMS:

Student Mayor Jeremy Thompson, under the direction of Mayor Thomas Cole, read a resolution observing Arbor Day 2016.

RESOLUTION TO OBSERVE ARBOR DAY 2016

WHEREAS, in 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and this holiday, called Arbor Day was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and

WHEREAS, Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world because trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cutting heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife, and

WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products, and trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and are a source of joy and spiritual renewal, and

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield has been named a Tree City USA designee for thirteen years for responsible care of its natural landscape,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the City of Bluefield Board of Directors, do encourage all citizens to observe Arbor Day 2016 on April 29, 2016 and urge them to care, maintain, and when able, plant trees on their property.

Given under our hands this the 12th day of April 2016.

Student Director Katelyn Gordon, under the direction of Director Ellen Light, made a motion to approve the Resolution to Observe Arbor Day 2016, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Urban Forester Andy Sheetz, from the West Virginia Division of Forestry, presented the City of Bluefield with a Tree City flag. Only seventeen cities have been recognized as a Tree City USA status and this will be Bluefield's fifteenth year. Students planted a Dogwood Tree earlier in the day for Arbor Day.

Student City Treasurer Zoe Nicewander, under the direction of City Treasurer Kelly Davis, submitted for approval General Fund Budget Revision #3. The third revision to the General Fund Budget increases estimated revenue by \$635,019. The revision reduces the beginning fund balance by \$60,977 for prior year adjustments. The revision also estimates an additional \$7,600 in taxes; an additional \$60,000 in fines and

forfeitures; a reduction of \$19,800 in license and permits; an additional \$22,398 in charges for service; an additional \$602,849 in grants, contributions and other intergovernmental receipts; and an additional \$22,950 in miscellaneous revenues. The total increase in anticipated revenue is \$635,019; thereby, increasing the overall General Fund Revenue Budget to \$11,465,760. **Director Michael Gibson, made a motion to approve the General Fund Budget Revision #3, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Student City Treasurer Zoe Nicewander, under the direction of City Treasurer Kelly Davis, submitted for approval the March financial statement. At the close of March 2016, the 9th month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$8,279,345 (88.48%) of the projected amount of \$9,357,815. Expenditures total \$7,880,709 (72.76%) of the projected budget of \$10,830,741. **Student Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the March financial statement, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole read the **First Reading of an ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO EXECUTE A DEED GRANTING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD SANITARY BOARD, GRANTEE, PARCELS OF REAL ESTATE SITUATED AT BLUEFIELD AVE., IN THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA.**

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield owns Lots 1, 2, and 3, Section 158 along Bluefield Avenue, and more particularly described in that certain Deed from Skyline Motors, Inc., unto the City of Bluefield, a West Virginia municipal corporation, dated August 24, 2014 and recorded in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Mercer County, West Virginia, in Deed Book No. 1009, at Page 206; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield declares this property as surplus, and that it has no need for such property in comparison to the benefit to the City by this conveyance; and

WHEREAS, the Board further declares that there is a demonstrable need for such property by the Sanitary Board to be able to perform services for the benefit of the citizens of Bluefield; and

WHEREAS, in the event that the Sanitary Board should cease using the property for the benefit of the citizens of Bluefield, the property shall automatically, by operation of law, revert to and vest in the City, and the Sanitary Board shall thereafter have no right, title, or interest therein or thereto; and

WHEREAS, the duly elected governing authority of the City of Bluefield is the Board of Directors thereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, WITNESS THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCE:

Pursuant to West Virginia Code §§ 8-11-3(6) and 8-1-5a et. seq, and Section 3-5 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Bluefield, the City of Bluefield hereby Ordains that the City is authorized to execute a Deed to convey the real property described in the deed attached hereto to the Bluefield Sanitary Board, without consideration.

City Attorney Brian Cochran stated this ordinance is based on a Home Rule Ordinance, Article 3, Section 5, Code of Ordinances of the City of Bluefield, that allows the City to transfer this property to another nonprofit entity without going through the auction process. The City is donating this property to the Bluefield Sanitary Board. In order to do this, there must be three findings from the Board: (1) declare it is surplus property of the City, (2) declare the Sanitary Board has a need for this property to perform services for the citizens of Bluefield, and (3) contain language in the deed that in the event the Sanitary Board ceases at any time to use the property for the benefit of the citizens of Bluefield the property reverts back to the City of Bluefield. The Board would be voting to authorize the Mayor to execute a deed transferring this property from the City of Bluefield to the Bluefield Sanitary Board. There will be a second reading. **Director Michael Gibson made a**

motion to authorize the City Attorney to execute a deed and the Board follow the three findings as stated by the City Attorney. Attorney Cochran made an amendment stating the City Attorney would not execute the deed but the Mayor is given authorization to execute the deed. With no further discussion the motion was unanimously approved.

OTHER:

Assistant City Manager Josh Cline reminded everyone of two upcoming dates:

1. April 18th and April 26th – Public Hearing for Small City Block Grant – 11:45 a.m.
2. April 19th – Lay the Levy at 9:00 a.m.

The Mayor and Board expressed how impressed they were with the Bluefield High School Students that participated in Student Government Day. The Board wished them well as they continue their education, in Bluefield or abroad, and encouraged them to return to Bluefield to work and live.

City Clerk Bobbi Kersey was thanked for organizing Student Government Day. Mayor Cole thanked Student Government Day sponsors: Greater Bluefield Chamber, First Century Bank, First Community Bank and the Bluefield Area Arts Center.

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

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor