

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

**May 9, 2016
NOON**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Monday, May 9, 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, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Assistant City Manager Josh Cline and City Attorney Brian Cochran were absent.

The meeting began with recognition that Mayor Cole's mother, Carol Ann Cole, passed away Sunday morning after a long battle with cancer. Mrs. Cole was a devoted wife and mother that supported two Bluefield mayors (Paul and Tom), businessman and gubernatorial candidate (Billy) and local businessman (Charlie). She was an entrepreneur in her own right and was an ambassador for the City of Bluefield. Carol Cole leaves a legacy of her kindness, grace and compassion towards all. She will be missed by her family, friends and the Bluefield Community. Mayor Cole introduced family friend, Robby Ercoline.

INVOCATION – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – CALL TO ORDER

Robby Ercoline invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the meeting and Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith 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

Director Michael Gibson made a motion that the minutes of the April 26, 2016, Board of Directors meeting be approved as presented, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Ellen Light made a motion that the minutes of the April 26, 2016, HUD Small Cities Block Funding Public Meeting be approved as presented, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.

PRESENTATION

Fire Chief Rick Cary thanked Erin Bailey (Fairmont Division State Farm Insurance Representative), Brandon Disney (Local State Farm Insurance Owner), Brittney Woodington and Desersa Nowlin (Local State Farm Representatives) for their support in acquiring Kendall, an arson dog. Lieutenant Shannon Akers gave background information on Kendall and a presentation. An accelerant detection canine (arson dog) is a dog that has been trained to sniff out minute traces of accelerants that may have been used to start a fire. The Arson Dog Program was established in 1993 through the sponsorship of State Farm. The K-9s and handlers are required to complete a 200 hour (four to five weeks) training program and are then certified upon graduation. Thank you State Farm! City Manager Rideout stated Lieutenant Akers volunteered for this program. Lt. Akers and Kendall are now a team. He is responsible for maintenance, training and care of Kendall.

Executive Director Jamie Null presented the Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) annual update. Executive Director Null discussed improvements to the Mercer County website (www.vistmercercounty.com). A few of the new features include: photo opps, businesses/shops, restaurants, ATV information, events, itineraries, park and trail, family fun, sports, historic sites, activities, and places to stay. Everyone is encouraged to visit the new updated website.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: DANE RIDEOUT

City Engineer Tony Wagner is in communication with District Ten (DOH) concerning the fifty-eight miles of state road inside the city. City Engineer Wagner is taking street bid packages for approximately 2.8 miles of paving or 9 streets. Some streets will be paved and some streets will be milled and paved. Paving more streets is exactly what this Board promised when fees were raised. This will be double what has been paved in the past.

Public Works has been filling potholes but the weather has not been very cooperative. Public Works listed fifteen items on Municibid for auction. Five items have ended and closed out at \$41,960.

IT Specialist Billy Hester has updated online payment options, that include city fees and B & O taxes. In the near future, permits will be available on line.

Parks and Recreation needs help from volunteers for the Crying Wolf Challenge on Saturday, May 14th from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The park has miles of trails and the trail committee has done a great job, but more volunteers are needed. Park and Recreation Director Charles Riddlehuber continues to update the facilities and everyone is invited to the Herb Sims Youth Center to see the progress and updates.

Code Enforcement is working with a contractor on the next six (6) sites, May 11th -18th, set for demolition. Eight more sites will be demolished once asbestos testing is completed.

New Owner, for the Cumberland Road Car Wash. The owner is working to make improvements and will reopen soon.

Police Department had seven hundred eighteen calls for service, seventy- two arrests, four hundred fifty-seven citations with two hundred eighty-three of the citations as warnings. Many of the stops are reminders to wear seat belts, slow down, inspection out of date, etc. They also responded to fifteen (15) car wrecks.

Fire Department responded to ten (10) fire incidents. The most visible fire was on Mountain View. The fire was contained to the kitchen and the basement. Fire Department continues fire inspections and educational tours. Lt. Thompson and Fire Fighter Stevenson has returned from Pueblo, Colorado. The two men were trained in what to do and what not to do concerning hazardous materials. Training is sponsored by Norfolk and Southern Railroad.

Election Day is May 10th. City Offices will be closed. For citizens who have garbage pickup on Tuesday but forgot to put it out, a truck will run on Wednesday.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer

1. ***Welcome to My Bluefield*** – new business website will be up and running. The site is a work in progress. If your business is not on the site, contact Community and Economic Development Director Spencer.
2. **Fantastic Friday in Bluefield (4 p.m. to 7 p.m.)** idea was well received by the Downtown Merchants Association and South Bluefield Merchants Association. Fantastic Friday is scheduled to begin on May 20th. Many local citizens are volunteering and anyone who grows produce or is interested in participating should contact Community and Economic Development Director Spencer.
3. **Did You Know-** video will be showing on the Bluefield Transit Buses. Citizens are encouraged to participate and tell local historical information about Bluefield. We need to showcase our area.
4. **A Women's Health Study** conducted by University of Washington will take place later this month. They are going to study two counties in West Virginia.
5. **Commercialization Center** is a place to partner with upcoming businesses. Engineering interviews begin this week.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

NONE

ACTION ITEMS:

City Treasurer Kelly Davis reported that at the close of April 2016, the 10th month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$9,146,431 (90.97%) of the projected amount of \$10,053,812. Expenditures total \$8,754,624 (76.35%) of the projected budget of \$11,465,761. City Treasurer Davis reviewed some of the noteworthy general fund expenditures in April 2016. **Director Ellen Light made a motion to approve the April financial report as presented, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of Resolution for USDA Grant. Lt. Dean Pennington applied for a match grant towards the purchase of police vehicles. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith made a motion to approve the Resolution for USDA Grant, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole read for **approval the Second Reading of an ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO PURCHASE REAL ESTATE**. Mayor Cole stated this is property that was involved in an estate. City Attorney Brian Cochran has secured the final part of this property and this is the second reading for the ordinance to approve of the purchase. **Director Chuck McGonagle made a motion to approve the Second Reading of an ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO PURCHASE REAL ESTATE KNOWN AS THE GOODWIN PROPERTY, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole read for the **approval the Second Reading of an ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO PURCHASE A PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE SITUATED IN THE BEAVER POND DISTRICT, MERCER**

COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA FOR A PRICE OF \$65,000.00. Mayor Cole stated the City of Bluefield and Stovall Real Estate, LLC, have reached an agreement for the transfer of all of that certain lot or parcel of real estate located at or near the intersection of U.S. Route 19 and Grassy Branch cutoff, assessed as eighty-four and seventeen one-hundredths (84.17) acres and designated on the records of the Mercer County Assessor, Beaver Pond District, as Map 26, Parcel 174, for purchase of \$65,000 paid by the City of Bluefield to Stovall Real Estate, LLC. Issues concerning the City's ability to sell this property due to unknown property boundaries have been discussed. **Director Michael Gibson made a motion to approve the Second Reading of an ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD TO PURCHASE A PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE SITUATED IN THE BEAVER POND DISTRICT, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA FOR A PRICE OF \$65,000.00, second; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole stated the Board has had a lot of discussion concerning staggered election terms. At the beginning of the discussion they felt elections should coincide with the primary and general elections. However, after research and input from citizens, the consensus is to hold staggered elections on odd years separate from the national elections. Communication is very important and the Board wants input from citizens. The goal is for local leaders not to get lost in the mass of candidates running during primary and general election and not to have five new representatives start at the same time, in the event of a clean sweep. The public needs to be clear who they are voting for on a local level. Mayor Cole stated the Board has voted on two motions: 1) staggered election term and 2) to move elections to coincide with the national/state election. Mayor Cole stated that the Board would have to rescind instructions directing the City Attorney to move elections to coincide with the national election. **Director Ellen Light made a motion to rescind her motion instructing the City Attorney to have local election coincide with national and state elections, but to have staggered elections.** Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith stated she still believed that sometime a "clean sweep" is necessary for the Board of Directors. **The motion to instruct City Attorney Brian Cochran to have local elections coincide with national and state elections was unanimously rescinded and approval directing the City Attorney to draft a proposed charter amendment relating to staggered election dates and terms was unanimously approved.**

OTHER:

Mayor Cole stated it was discouraging that the local Kmart is closing. Mayor Cole said he has spent a large amount of time reaching out to Kmart and city officials are contacting potential vendors or businesses that may consider taking over the lease. Mayor Cole said he had heard that with every problem lies an opportunity and this could be an opportunity.

The City Board, City Administrators, City Staff and Employees and the citizens of Bluefield expressed their condolences to Mayor Cole and his family on the loss of his mother.

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

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor