

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

January 24, 2017

NOON

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, January 24, 2017, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Thomas J. Cole, Director Ellen Light, Director Michael Gibson, Director Chuck McGonagle, City Manager Dane Rideout, City Attorney Brian Cochran, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith and Assistant City Manager Joshua Cline were absent.

INVOCATION – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – CALL TO ORDER

Director Ellen Light 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

Director Michael Gibson moved that the minutes of the January 10, 2017, Board of Directors meeting be approved as presented; unanimously approved and so ordered.

Recognition

Police Chief Dennis Dillow introduced Patrolman Kevin Ross and Patrolman Daniel Barker. The two officers graduated December 16, 2016 from the West Virginia State Police Academy. City Clerk Bobbi Kersey administered the Oath of Office to Patrolman Ross and Patrolman Barker.

Police Chief Dennis Dillow presented Patrolman K. L. Lucas and Patrolman K. Ross the Meritorious Service Award. On January 6, 2017, the officers rescued four people from a structure fire. The Meritorious Award is presented to an individual for a highly unusual accomplishment under adverse conditions with some degree of hazard to life and limb or where death or injury to a third party is prevented. Two adults and two children were on the second floor afraid to come out. These two officers went beyond the call of duty during a very dangerous situation.

CITY MANAGER DANE RIDEOUT

Town Hall Meeting; Annual Review is scheduled January 31, 2017, Bluefield Area Arts Center, 500 Bland Street at 6:00 p.m. The City will be presenting the 2016 year-end review and discuss plans for 2017. The Board of Directors, Administration, and all Directors will attend. The public is welcome.

Midway Tunnel flooded again on Tuesday. The City of Bluefield does not own the tunnel or the road that goes through the tunnel. However, the city has provided emergency services. City Manager Rideout is in discussion with Norfolk Southern Railroad and the Department of Highways District 10 on ways to mitigate the problem. Two cars were stalled inside the tunnel due to flooding. City Manager Rideout and City Engineer Tony Wagner have met with the new District 10 manager, Allen Reed. Past District Manager Tom Camden was recognized and thanked for his support and having such a good relationship with the city.

Public Works is working on a massive cleanup operation at the Freight Station. The cleanup is in preparation of construction work that will begin in the next couple of months for the Commercialization Station.

City Hall Treasury Department is moving downstairs. Citizens will have a “one stop” area to pay fees (Treasury Department), permits (Code Enforcement), and Sanitary and Storm Water bills. The police detective agency will relocate to the second floor. IT Specialist Billy Hester was recognized for spearheading the Treasury Department move and keeping our computers up to date.

The City Attorney position and an administrative assistant position is currently being advertised. The administrative assistant will be working with Code Enforcement and the Fire Department. The administrative assistant will become the “live” person to talk with when calling City Hall. For more information on the positions call City Hall or visit www.cityofbluefield.com.

Parks and Recreation is now in Phase II using the Hill Studio plans and a private donation. The facility is now air-conditioned and the windows replaced. Renovations have begun on the locker room. Parks and Recreation was recognized as the only state licensed after school day care program.

Code Enforcement Supervisor Lori Mills and her staff are aggressively pursuing rental properties to make sure buildings are safe, sound, warm and dry. The Building Commission continues to “go after” blighted properties.

Fire Department:

Citizen are encouraged to call our professional firefighters for inspections. This is one advantage of having a professional crew within the city. They are here to give expert advice and aid in preventive measures. There were three (3) fires last night. There were five (5) major fires this month, before the three last night.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer gave the following report:

- Requested three items on the agenda be tabled until the next meeting:
 1. Approval of EDA lien for Commercialization Station.
 2. Approval to extend and amend the current lease with Derek Dodson.
 3. Approval to enter into a lease agreement with Chris Delp.
- Senior level engineering students from Bluefield State College will be doing a site plan project on Exit 1. This area is in the process of being annexed. They will work on possible projects for the future.
- The city has applied for a Flex Grant and a BB & T Grant.
- An Instagram class is tentatively scheduled for next Tuesday at the Corner Coffee Shop. For more information call City Hall or visit www.cityofbluefield.com.

Last year the city submitted an application to the Cool & Connected Program. The city was awarded a technical assistance grant. The grant will be used to evaluate broadband access, affordability, and how and if broadband is being utilized by businesses. The grant could lead to other Federal funding. A group from Smart Growth America that will be in the area and Community and the Economic Development Director would like feedback, so three surveys will be sent out on the internet and social media for businesses, the government, public service sector, and internet providers. He encouraged members of the public who receive the survey to their emails or on social media to participate.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ACTION ITEMS

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the monthly financial summary for December. At the close of December 2016, the 6th month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$5,859,616 (60.52%) of the projected amount of \$9,681,405. Expenditures totaled \$5,488,017 (46.88%) of the projected budget of \$11,707,645. **Director Ellen Light moved to approve the December financial statement as presented; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole requested approval of a two-year lease between the City of Bluefield and the Bluefield Baseball Club. City Attorney Brian Cochran stated his is the same lease that the city has had for years with the Baseball Club. President of the Bluefield Baseball Club George McGonagle stated the Blue Jays were under new management. Mr. McGonagle had hoped to obtain a four- year contract with the professional but they signed for a two-year contract. General Manager Jeff Grey has taken a new position and the new Bluefield General Manager should be announced sometime today. Mr. McGonagle stated renovations are underway at the ballpark. **Director Ellen Light moved to approve the two-year lease between the City of Bluefield and Bluefield Baseball Club; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole requested approval to appoint Dick Johnson for the Board appointed position on the Bluefield Police Civil Service Commission. Mayor Cole stated the Fraternal Order of Police appoints one member, the Chamber of Commerce appoints one member, and the Board of Directors appoints a member to this commission. Not more than two members can belong to the same political party. **Director Chuck McGonagle moved to approve Dick Johnson for the Board appointed position on the Bluefield Police Civil Service Commission; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole requested approval of lease amendment number six between the City of Bluefield and Citizens Telecommunication Company of West Virginia. City Attorney Brian Cochran stated this lease agreement was for Frontier to rent two parking lots owned by the city and agree to a 3% rent increase. **Director Chuck McGonagle moved to approve lease amendment number six between the City of Bluefield and Citizens Telecommunication Company of West Virginia; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Cole requested the next three items on the agenda be tabled as suggested by Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer.

Approval of EDA lien for Commercialization Station.

Approval to extend and amend the current lease with Derek Dodson thru June 2017.

Approval to enter into a lease agreement with Chris Delp - to open a business in the basement of the Wells Fargo Building. **Director Michael Gibson moved to table Approval of EDA lien for Commercialization Station, approval to extend and amend the current lease with Derek Dodson thru June 2017, approval to enter into a lease agreement with Chris Delp - to open a business in the basement of the Wells Fargo Building be tabled; unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Other

Mayor Cole reminded citizens of the Town Hall Meeting – Annual Review scheduled January 31st at the Bluefield Area Arts Center, 500 Bland Street at 6:00 p.m. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Director Michael Gibson moved to adjourn, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Thomas J. Cole, Mayor