

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
September 12, 2017 - Noon**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, September 12, 2017, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Ron Martin, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith, Director Matt Knowles, Director Michael Gibson, Director Robb Williams, City Manager Dane Rideout, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, City Attorney Colin Cline, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey.

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 Ron Martin called the meeting to order and thanked everyone present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved that the minutes of the August 22, 2017, Board of Directors and Public Hearing meeting be approved, unanimously approved and so ordered.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association, stated at the last meeting the Board approved the lien for the Commercialization Station but when will the public start seeing activity. Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer said the Federal Government controls when they approve the plan. There are a few things that are still being “tweaked” by E.L. Robinson but everything should be submitted by the end of the month. He does not want to submit the plan and then have to make modifications. City Manager Rideout said he felt it would still take at least sixty days to clean out the Commercialization Station.

Audie Walker, Bluefield citizen, voiced a concern about a ticket he received from the Bluefield Police Department. Director Michael Gibson suggested Mr. Walker should contact the court to confirm his court date, go to court and state his case.

CITY MANAGER DANE RIDEOUT

Street Paving has begun. City Engineer Tony Wagner is overseeing the street paving and is doing a phenomenal job. City Manager Rideout encouraged citizens to drive Mountain View to see improvements. Other streets will be paved but the weather may slow down the process. Parkway has received a leveling course or temporary coat due to utility company plans later. City Engineer Wagner has been overseeing concrete work due to water infiltration at the Recreation Center. Thank you to Gail Satterfield, the Beautification Commission and David Hardin for their work on the city owned parking lot across from First Presbyterian Church. The parking lot is scheduled for pavement by the end of the week. The stonework used in the parking lot was repurposed from demolition areas.

Public Works is planning for leaf and snow removal. Equipment is being tested; salt is ready and has been ordered for next year.

Code/Building Inspection continues demolition. The Knights Inn and nine other properties are ready for demolition. Code Enforcement has opened another ninety-two cases. The City has been working towards reevaluating and simplifying building fees for the past two and a half years. During the work session, the Board was presented with a simplified analysis of building fees for citizens. At the September 25 meeting, the Board will

present the first reading of an ordinance for the purpose of simplifying building permit fees and eliminating a separate fee schedule for permits and excavation work. If the ordinance is approved at the meeting, a Public Hearing will be scheduled before the October 10 meeting. The public is encourage to attend.

Human Resource Director Angie Foley continues to compile and submit information for insurance, unemployment and various other requests.

Parks and Recreation Department held the Second Annual Two Virginias 5K Challenge. Congratulations to Mike Jones and Rebecca Vest who won as the overall male and female runners.

Bluefield Police Department Patrolman John Murray, Patrolman Kenny Wright, and Patrolman Forrest Ingole were congratulated and welcomed as new hires on the police force.

Bluefield Fire Department had six fire incidents with more than \$1,000 in damages. City Manager Rideout had distributed a picture of the hill that the fighters had to pull the fire hose up when answering a call on Fulton Street. Our landscape is proof positive as to the work and dedication of our emergency professionals.

Mayor Steve Williams of Huntington, West Virginia will be in Bluefield on October 17. Elected Mayor Williams has gained recognition for a number of initiatives such as new recreational and riverfront facilities, retail development, and research and development facilities. He gave a speech at the Municipal League and many of the issues facing Huntington mirrored Bluefield. Mayor Williams was born in Bluefield.

Public Works Director Candy Sayers, one of the few female public work directors in the state, has begun several new initiatives. One example is when the trash is taken to the dump the three-man crew rode to the landfill. Director Sayers is now having trucks that go past public works on the way to the landfill drop off two crewmembers. The men are assigned duties instead of sitting in a truck for an hour.

K-VA-T agreement has been signed. Thank you to Attorney Brian Cochran for his legal expertise and Mayor Tom Cole and the past Board of Directors. In the negotiations there is a section concerning a grocery store. K-VA-T agreed they would not put a grocery store in the building for two years. They can put a retail store in the building and a grocery store can locate in another building, just not the old Kroger building. This way a grocery store could open without the competition or threat of another grocery store opening. After two years, the agreement will be revisited. The owner of the shopping plaza and K-VA-T are perusing the location for a retail store. We are all working together.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer reported the following:

- Amazon is looking for a metropolitan statistical area with more than one million people. Existing buildings of at least 500,000+ sq. ft. In addition, a green-field site of approximately 100 acres certified or pad ready, with utility infrastructure in place. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer said there was an article in the paper concerning Amazon. He will send something but does not feel we meet the requirements. Citizens are encouraged to read the RFP @ AmazonHQ2 RFP.
- Senator Manchin and Senator Capito have approved the apps grant. This tool will make communicating with tourist and millennials easier and more available.
- A new and improved City website is available. Brandon Sadler and Rebecca Kasey have been working on new digital marketing and GIS techniques. We now have a story map for sites and buildings. Ms. Kasey has completed a walking tour on two of the buildings, allowing information to be sent quickly and efficiently.

Mayor Ron Martin read a **PROCLAMATION OBSERVING SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK**

WHEREAS, the City of Bluefield recognizes suicide as a statewide public health problem, and suicide prevention as a statewide responsibility, and designates September 10 through September 16 as "Suicide Prevention Week" in Bluefield, West Virginia. This week overlaps World Suicide Prevention Day that is recognized internationally and supported by the World Health Organization. The 2017 National Suicide Prevention Week is September 10 through September 16, and

WHEREAS, suicide is now the 11th leading cause of all deaths in the state of West Virginia, and the second leading cause of death among people from the age of 15 to 34, and

WHEREAS, in the United States, one person completes suicide every 13.7 minutes, and

WHEREAS, in the United States there are on average 121 suicides per day, and

WHEREAS, in the United States, 22 Veterans per day take their own life, and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 5.4 million people in the United States are survivors of suicide (those who have lost a loved one to suicide), and

WHEREAS, 50.8% of people who die by suicide use a firearm, and guns stored in the house are used for suicide 40 times more often than for self-protection, and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide works against suicide prevention by discouraging persons at risk for suicide from seeking life-saving help, and further traumatizes survivors of suicide, and

WHEREAS, statewide suicide prevention efforts should be developed and encouraged to the maximum extent possible, and

WHEREAS, a great many suicides are preventable; and

WHEREAS, the American Association of Suicidology, which is dedicated to reducing the frequency of suicide attempts and deaths, as well as easing the pain of survivors affected by suicides of loved ones, through educational programs, research projects, intervention services, and bereavement services, urges that we take the following action:

- a. Recognize suicide as a national and state public health problem and declare suicide prevention to be a statewide priority;
- b. Acknowledge that no single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities;
- c. Encourage initiatives based on the goals contained in the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention;
- d. Promote awareness that suicide is a public health problem that is preventable.

NOW, THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield does hereby designate September 10 through September 16, 2017 as "National Suicide Prevention Week" in the City of Bluefield, West Virginia.

Given under our hands this the 12th day of September 2017.

Director Michael Gibson moved to designate September 10, 2017 through September 16, 2017 as “National Suicide Prevention Week” in the City of Bluefield, West Virginia, unanimously approved and so ordered. Marie Blackwell and Heather Bennett were presented a copy of the Proclamation. The Mercer County Out of the Darkness Walk will be held Saturday September 16, 2017 in Chicory Square, Downtown Bluefield, WV. Registration is from 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm with the event beginning at 6:00 pm. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas who is a Clinical psychologist, Inspirational speaker, Award winning advocate and Author. Following the program, the walk will begin at approximately 6:30 pm. There will be food, music, a special ceremony, an auction and more. The event is open to the public.

ACTION ITEMS

City Treasurer Kelly Davis reported that at the close of August 2017, the 2nd month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$1,949,523 (21.25%) of the projected amount of \$9,173,101. Expenditures totaled \$1,954,925 (17.30%) of the projected budget of \$11,299,600. **Director Michael Gibson moved to approve the August Financial Statement, unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Ron Martin requested a motion to approve the Board of Directors meeting change the Tuesday, September 26, 2017 to Monday, September 25, 2017. Director Robb Williams had requested the change due to a conflict on Tuesday. **Director Michael Gibson moved to change the Tuesday, September 26, 2017 Board of Directors meeting to Monday, September 25, 2017, unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval to accept donations of Stovall Property. City Attorney Colin Cline stated the City was approached by Carol Georgis, owner of Stovall Real Estate, LLC, to acquire by donation approximately 38 parcels of property. If approved, the City would relieve Stovall Real Estate, LLC of any obligations concerning street fees, approximately \$214 per parcel. Some of this property could be “key” for future economic development and would protect the property from becoming blighted. Three of the properties have rental houses that are currently occupied. At least two of the rental agreements will be terminated and the houses will be demolished, due to their condition. City Manager Dane Rideout said some of these properties along with those purchased earlier would be used for future economic development. Some of these properties will be turned into green space, for example Carolina Avenue. There are some properties, if owned by the city, which could legally be offered to citizens. For example, if the city owns an empty lot, the lot could be divided and deeded to the two homeowner for off the street parking. This has become a public safety issue and it would help our emergency vehicles. The city spends a great deal of time and effort when properties are bought at tax sales and owners do not keep up the property. It was recommended that the City accept donations of the Stovall Property. **Director Michael Gibson moved to accept donations of approximately 38 parcels from Stovall Property, unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Ron Martin stated the next agenda item was approval of a flusher truck purchase agreement between the City of Bluefield and the Bluefield Sanitary Board for \$150,000. City Treasurer Kelly Davis said the Bluefield Sanitary Board approached the City about the City purchasing a flusher truck and leasing it back to the Sanitary Board. The City is currently leasing a backhoe and sweeper truck to the Sanitary Board. The flusher truck lease would be for a term of five years at a monthly lease of \$2, 655, the loan amount would be \$150,000 with a payback to the city of \$159,329. The money would be taken from the

Rainy Day Fund and the monthly payment would go back into the Rainy Day Fund. Executive Director of the Bluefield Sanitary Board Shannon Bailey said the flusher truck is a large vehicle that has a pump on the back with a hose. The flusher truck is used seven days a week. This vehicle is used to keep all the sewer lines in the city and outlining areas flowing. The Sanitary Board has two flusher trucks, one is a 1993 and one is 2004 model. City Manager Rideout stated the Sanitary Board has given approval to pursue two options: a lease option with the City or accept a proposal from BB & T. The backhoe (approximately \$60,000) and sweeper truck (approximately \$15,000) are on a five-year lease purchase agreement with the City that began in 2017. **Director Michael Gibson moved to accept the purchase agreement between the City of Bluefield and the Bluefield Sanitary Board for \$150,000.** Mayor Martin said the Rainy Day fund is making approximately 1 ½ % interest and we are looking at 2.4% interest from the Sanitary Board. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith and Director Michael Gibson voted yes.**

Mayor Ron Martin, Director Robb Williams and Director Matt Knowles opposed. The motion failed. Mayor Martin said his opposition was due to the City taking 10% of the Rainy Day Fund and tying it into a piece of equipment for five years. The City already has two pieces of equipment that we are currently leasing. He felt a safer course would be for the Sanitary Board to use the option proposed by BB&T Bank. Members who voted in opposition stated they would have voted in favor had BB&T not been another satisfactory option.

Mayor Ron Martin moved for approval of **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOLUTION PROVIDING PARAMETERS AS TO THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT, DATE, MATURITY DATE, INTEREST RATE, INTEREST AND PRINCIPAL PAYMENT DATES AND OTHER TERMS OF THE SEWER SURPLUS REVENUE NOTES, SERIES 2017 A OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD; AUTHORIZING; APPROVING THE SALE AND DELIVERY OF SUCH NOTES; APPROVING THE FORM OF CERTIFICATE OF DETERMINATIONS AND MAKING OTHER PROVISIONS AS TO THE NOTES. (A full copy of the Resolution is available in the City Clerk's office)** Bond Counsel for the Bluefield Sanitary Board, Attorney John Stump stated this is the fourth of four steps that are required under State law to allow for financing. The purpose of this financing is to pay the cost associated with a couple of projects that are immediately necessary as well as design costs associated with a longer-term treatment plant upgrade project. The prior Board of Directors approved an ordinance that authorized up to two million dollars in surplus revenue notes. This supplemental resolution provides parameters for closing of the financing. The financing was put out to bid and the low bid was First Community Bank. There will be no rate increase tied to this financing but works off the existing rates of the Sanitary Board. This project will be rolled into the larger project. This financing is for a three-year term. The Sanitary Board will be working with the State Department of Environmental Protection to acquire what will be a twenty-year at 3% financing or thirty-year at 1% financing for the longer-term project. By approaching it in this manner, it allows us to incur these costs both from capital, for the project itself design, and then roll these costs into the upcoming financing. City Manager Rideout stated what citizens would visually see is this is the College Avenue / Maryland Avenue intersection problem resolved. Part of this financing will go towards a generator at the West Side Plant and a pump station at Deerfield housing area. **Director Mike Gibson moved to approve the SUPPLEMENTAL RESOLUTION PROVIDING PARAMETERS AS TO THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT, DATE, MATURITY DATE, INTEREST RATE, INTEREST AND PRINCIPAL PAYMENT DATES AND OTHER TERMS OF THE SEWER SURPLUS REVENUE NOTES, SERIES 2017 A OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD; AUTHORIZING; APPROVING THE SALE AND DELIVERY OF SUCH NOTES; APPROVING THE FORM OF CERTIFICATE OF DETERMINATIONS AND MAKING OTHER PROVISIONS AS TO THE**

NOTES, seconded by Director Robb Williams. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Ron Martin moved for approval of a **Resolution for the Payment of Invoices from the Sewer Surplus Revenue Notes, Series 2017 A**. Attorney John Stump stated this loan is on a draw down basis that allows saving on interest expense. As construction occurs, it will be paid off with invoices. The initial payment is brought before the Board of Directors and all supplemental payments will be paid by the Sanitary Board. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith moved to approve the Resolution for the Payment of Invoices from the Sewer Surplus Revenue Notes, Series 2017 A, seconded by Director Matt Knowles. Unanimously approved and so ordered.** City Manager Rideout noted the Bluefield Fire Department and the Bluefield Police Department would be made aware of construction due to safety issues. Construction will begin as soon as possible. Executive Director Shannon Bailey stated residents that would be impacted by the construction would be given prior notice. The project will not be completed but contractors will resume work in the spring. Sanitary and Stormwater issues will be corrected and other utilities will do work while the ditch is open. City Engineer Tony Wagner is working on widening the curve to making it accessible for large trucks.

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of a recommendation from the Library Commission to appoint Josh Cline to fulfill the term of Marc Meachum as the Chamber Representative until June 30, 2019. **Director Michael Gibson moved to approve a recommendation from the Library Commission to appoint Josh Cline to fulfill the term of Marc Meachum as the Chamber Representative until June 30, 2019, unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of a recommendation from the Greater Bluefield Chamber of Commerce to appoint Justin Spracher to the Firemen's Civil Service Commission for a four – year term. **Director Michael Gibson moved to approve the recommendation from the Greater Bluefield Chamber of Commerce to appoint Justin Spracher to the Firemen's Civil Service Commission for a four – year term, unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of a recommendation from the Buildings Commission to appoint Jeff Disibbio as the At-Large Member, per City Code. **Director Michael Gibson moved to approve a recommendation from the Buildings Commission to appoint Jeff Disibbio as the At-Large Member, per City Code, unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of a recommendation from the Police Citizens' Review Board to reappoint Lynden Graham, Randolph Phillips, and Vain Colby for a three-year term. **Director Michael Gibson moved to approve a recommendation from the Police Citizens' Review Board to reappoint Lynden Graham, Randolph Phillips, and Vain Colby for a three-year term, unanimously approved and so ordered.**

City Manager Rideout noted these appointments were ratifying appointments made by organizations as stated in our Code of Ordinances. City Manager Rideout encouraged citizens to become a part of the process and complete an on-line application or call the City Clerk for information concerning various board and commissions and vacancies. Be part of the process; we are looking for members.

REPORTS FROM BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

City Manager Rideout stated this is a new section on the agenda, where representatives from different boards and commissions will now brief the Board of Directors 1 or 2 times a year.

Library Commission Chair Eva McGuire gave a brief overview of what the Craft Memorial Library is doing in the community for the past year. Ms. McGuire said there had been a lot of growth in areas such as the Book Mobile (up 10%) and print items at Craft Memorial (up 9%). She continues to see an increase in e-materials being checked out, as more people are becoming digital. Free downloads (eBooks and audio tapes) are available at <http://craftmemorial.lib.wv.us>, <http://www.facebook.com/craftlibrary> , and <http://wvreads.lib.overdrive.com> . Citizens were encouraged to get a library card so they can utilize all digital material offered at the library. Ms. McGuire discussed various actives such as the coal archives, stuffed animal sleep over, seed library/sustainable gardening, tween book club, local authors/discussion and book signing, Lego club, 3-D printing, book sales, holiday programs and much more. Citizens are invited to come to the library and get involved.

Mayor Martin requested a motion to adjourn. Director Michael Gibson moved to adjourn, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Ron Martin, Mayor