

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

October 10, 2017 - Noon

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, October 10, 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association, commended the Board for returning to the agenda format set forth in the Code of Ordinances. The ordinance provides for comments from the audience, on items before the Board for discussion that would be limited to five minutes. This section is at the discretion of the Board. Mr. Riley said it would be greatly appreciated if the Board would exercise that part of the ordinance on a trial basis.

The 58th Bluefield Christmas Parade, sponsored by the Downtown Merchants Association and the City of Bluefield, is scheduled for December 9 @ 1:00 p.m. The parade will follow the regular route. Last year eighty –two units participated and hope one hundred units this year. Area bands are invited to be in the parade.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved that the minutes of the September 25, 2017, Board of Directors meeting be approved, unanimously approved and so ordered.

ACTION ON NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval for the Center for Applied Research and Technology (CART) Proposal Phase II for \$11,000.00. City Manager Rideout stated one of the projects that the City has been exploring is to create a new Transfer Station for the Bluefield Area Transit. Bluefield Area Transit and the Federal Department of Transportation have worked together and received a generous grant from the Shott Foundation to create the Transfer Station. The Transfer Station will be built, on a city owned lot, on Bluefield Avenue across from the Wade Center. This is the first part for the Center for Applied Research, to begin the preliminary engineering report. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved to approve the contract for the Center of Applied Research and Technology Proposal Phase II for \$11,000, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of T&T Fireworks Lease Agreement / Stand and Tent Location.

City Attorney Colin Cline stated each year T&T Fireworks has set up a fireworks stand in the parking lot at Parks and Recreation. They rent the space for approximately three weeks and provide liability insurance. City Attorney Cline recommended approval of the contract. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith said the issue she had with this subject was it is illegal to set off fireworks in city limits. City Manager Rideout commented it is better to authorize the

fireworks within a controlled environment or people will go outside our border to purchase fireworks. It is better to sell legally where the fire and police departments know who is selling, what is being sold and have some control as to who is selling. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the Lease Agreement and Stand/Tent Location with T&T Fireworks, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval to purchase a 4-Ton Falcon Hot Box from Richmond Machinery for a price of \$21,000. City Manager Rideout said the last few years have been frustrating due to the time it takes to get asphalt from the plant to the city. The asphalt cools down and is very difficult to use and some of the asphalt is wasted. When the asphalt plant closes, a cold patch, which is very expensive, must be used and is a temporary fix. The Hot Box allows four tons of asphalt to be kept at operating temperature allowing potholes to be filled any time of the year. This will be more efficient, less labor hours and asphalt can be prepositioned. The purchase of the Hot Box is part of the capital improvement plan. Public Works Director Candy Sayers saved the City \$6,000 by requesting the purchase of the demo hot box. Director Matt Knowles moved to approve the purchase of a 4-Ton Falcon Hot Box from Richmond Machinery for a price of \$21,000, unanimously approved and so ordered.

ACTION ON ACCOUNTS

City Treasurer Kelly Davis reported at the close of September 2017, the 3rd month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$2,985,162 (32.54%) of the projected amount of \$9,173,101. Expenditures totaled \$2,881,285 (25.50%) of the projected budget of \$11,299,600. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith moved to approve the September 2017 monthly financial summary, unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of seventy-six accounts for the October Collections for \$91,442.24. There was a discussion concerning the process to collect delinquent accounts owed to the city. Collections bring in approximately \$2,000 to \$5,000 a month. A list is provided by the collection agency of accounts collected and that be provided to the Board at the next meeting. Mayor Martin voiced concerned over the increased amount and asked if there was a cross correlation between the list presented and those that have already been submitted. City Treasurer Davis said this is a monthly recurring fee so citizens that do not pay have been submitted and if another period passes without payment, they would be submitted again. Approximately three million dollars have been sent to collections. This amount goes back several years. A member of an old Board had directed the collection agency not to file suit, but that has changed. City Treasurer Davis reminded the Board there is a fee associated with filing a lawsuit. Mayor Martin requested a report concerning the collection process and changes that can be made. City Manager Rideout said they would work on a historical analysis and a comparative analysis using other states. Mayor Martin said it would be good to identify if properties are vacant, who is living on the property or if owners are deceased. Director Michael Gibson said as information is being collected, a decision needs to be made as to when an attorney needs to be hired. **Director** Mike Gibson moved to approve the July Collection list, including those that have set up payments, unanimously approved and so ordered.

RECEIPTS AND ACTION ON PETITIONS, RESOLUTIONS OR APPEALS

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of an application by the P.C. Thomas Living Trust to subdivide a parcel of land being designated as Parcel "B" and measuring approximately 8.56 acres, from Tax Map 52, parcel 15, leaving a balance of approximately 10.87 acres, which Parcel "B" is intended to be sold to the Mercer County Board of Education for the expansion

of its educational facilities and which is currently zoned R -1. City Attorney Colin Cline said a Public Hearing was held on October 5 concerning this request. The Thomas Living Trust has land next to Bluefield High School and it was brought before the Planning Commission for subdivision approval. The Bluefield Planning Commission recommended approval of the application. There were concerns voiced about vacant school buildings that have been left by the Board of Education but was not the subject for discussion for this application. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith moved to approve an application by the P.C. Thomas Living Trust to subdivide a parcel of land being designated as Parcel "B" and measuring approximately 8.56 acres, from Tax Map 52, parcel 15, leaving a balance of approximately 10.87 acres, which Parcel "B" is intended to be sold to the Mercer County Board of Education for the expansion of its educational facilities and which is currently zoned R – 1, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Ron Martin read a RESOLUTION FOR SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY.

Whereas, the government of Bluefield, West Virginia celebrates our local small businesses and the contributions they make to our local economy and community; according to the United States Small Business Administration, there are currently 28.8 million small businesses in the United States, they represent 99.7 percent of all businesses with employees in the United States, are responsible for 63 percent of net new jobs created over the past 20 years, and

Whereas, small businesses employ 48 percent of the employees in the private sector in the United States; and

Whereas, on average, 33 percent of consumers' holiday shopping will be done at small, independently-owned retailers and restaurants; and

Whereas, 91 percent of all consumers believe that supporting small, independently-owned restaurants and bars is important; and

Whereas, 76 percent of all consumers plan to go to one or more small businesses as part of their holiday shopping; and

Whereas, Bluefield, West Virginia supports our local businesses that create jobs, boost our local economy and preserve our neighborhoods; and

Whereas, advocacy groups as well as public and private organizations across the country have endorsed the Saturday after Thanksgiving as Small Business Saturday.

Now, Therefore, THE CITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS of Bluefield, West Virginia do hereby proclaim, November 25, 2017, as: *Small Business Saturday*

And urge the residents of our community, and communities across the country, to support small businesses and merchants on Small Business Saturday and throughout the year.

Director Robb Williams moved to approve the RESOLUTION FOR SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of the SECOND RESOLUTION MAKING PROVISIONS AS TO ADDITIONAL COVENANTS RELATED TO THE SEWER SURPLUS REVENUE NOTES, SERIES 2017 OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD; AND MAKING OTHER PROVISIONS AS TO THE NOTE. Executive Director of the Bluefield Sanitary Board Shannon Bailey said this is the

second reading for the 2017 bond. The first bond that was approved, the wording was incorrect. The bank had the Sanitary Board as the co-borrower. State code does not allow the Sanitary Board to be named on the loan. This request cleans up the wording so we can proceed to close the loan. City Manager Rideout stated we are keeping the money inside the state and using a community bank. This is to fix the Maryland and College Avenue issue. Director Michael Gibson moved approval of the SECOND RESOLUTION MAKING PROVISIONS AS TO ADDITIONAL COVENANTS RELATED TO THE SEWER SURPLUS REVENUE NOTES, SERIES 2017 OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD; AND MAKING OTHER PROVISIONS AS TO THE NOTE, unanimously approved and so ordered.

ACTION ON UNFINISHED OR PENDING BUSINESS

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval to appoint Mary Turner and Mike Collins to the Bluefield Planning Commission for a three-year term (October 10, 2017 – October 9, 2020). City Manager Rideout stated commissions and board vacancies are being filled. The Board discussed the application of Mike Collins and Mary Turner at the last working session. Mary Turner brings a wealth of knowledge in her position at CASE and nonprofit organizations. Mike Collins is the principal of Bluefield High School. Director Michael Gibson moved to approve Mary Turner and Mike Collins to the Bluefield Planning Commission for a three-year term, unanimously approved and so ordered.

ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCES

Mayor Ron Martin request approval of the SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE REVISING SECTIONS 6-74, 6-77 AND DELETING SECTION 6-82 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SIMPLIFYING THE BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE, AND ELIMINATING A SEPARATE FEE SCHEDULE FOR PERMITS FOR EXCAVATION WORK. City Attorney Colin Cline stated there was a Public Hearing on this ordinance this morning. The ordinance will reduce building fee permits by reducing the fee for lower cost projects and increasing the fee for higher costing projects. The ordinance makes it easier for applicants to receive permits for projects. Several separate permit schedules have been combined into one. City Attorney Cline clarified that a building permit is necessary for all work, even if no fee is assessed for the particular permit. The ordinance has been available for public inspection. Attorney Cline recommended the ordinance be approved at its second reading at the Board meeting. The next phase in this process will be to look at increasing penalties for those operating without a building permit. Attorney Cline recommended passage of this ordinance. The information will be sent to Municode and posted on the city website. City Manager Rideout said this has been a three – year process. Building Inspector Lori Mills received input from contractors and the State Department. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE REVISING SECTIONS 6-74, 6-77 AND DELETING SECTION 6-82 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SIMPLIFYING THE BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE, AND ELIMINATING A SEPARATE FEE SCHEDULE FOR PERMITS FOR EXCAVATION WORK, unanimously approved and so ordered.

REPORT OF CITY MANAGER

- Excavation work behind Bowen Field has begun along with in kind work from the Town of Bluefield, Virginia.
- City Engineer Tony Wagner has been meeting with contractors for estimates for the corner of Maryland and College Avenue.
- Leaf pick up has started. Normal pick up days are Monday and Wednesday. Please clean drain of any debris, as this is a huge stormwater issue.

- Tractor Supply has recently installed a large propane filling station. This service was not offered in the city before now. Code Enforcement and the Fire Department were instrumental in helping to get Tractor Supply certified.
- Knights Inn is being demolished. The first building is down and the second is almost demolished. Once it is completely down, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer will work to market the property.
- City Attorney Cline, City Clerk Bobbi Kersey and Building Inspector Lori Mills have reworked the Building Commission forms.
- The new sign at Parks and Recreation is up. This was part of the Hill Studio Phase II Design.
- People from the two Virginia's and all over the country participated in the Bluefield Marathon Series held this past Saturday and Sunday.
- Trunk or Treat will be Saturday, October 28 from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- The Holiday of Lights 5K will be Saturday, December 2 at the City Park.
- The Bluefield Police Department received donations from the George Cruise Foundation and the Frank L. Smoot Foundation. Funds will be used for the K-9 Program and equipment for vehicles.
- The Fire Department held a mock fire disaster drill at the Maples.
- Four special operationals lost their lives in Africa in the last 72 hours. They were part of City Manager Rideout's son's unit. These men walked into a complex ambush. Please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers. The unit that is training in Bluefield in November and December had just left that area. We thank our Veterans for their service.

ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS BY CITY MANAGER - NONE

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR JIM SPENCER

- This is the third year for Small Business Saturday. Last year approximately thirty businesses participated.
- Three contests for Small Business Saturday this year
 1. Facebook vote for your favorite small business on Small Business Saturday.
 2. How well do you know my Bluefield? This will start October 24.
 3. Caption This...pictures will be taken and citizens will write captions. Business owners will pick the best caption and that will be entered into a drawing.
- Blue Print Community is meeting and looking at a downtown plan that will be presented at the next meeting.
- September 27 it was released that the State of West Virginia has developed a new plan called West Virginia Forward. We are looking at a possible niche for our city. This includes technology.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Building Inspector Lori Mills reported on the Bluefield Building Commission. Building Inspector Mills said the Building Commission is comprised of Chairman Ron Martin, Fire Chief Rick Cary, City Engineer Tony Wagner, Health Inspector Carl Carter, Member At Large Jeff Disibbio and supporting staff City Attorney Cline and City Clerk Kersey. The function of the commission is to identify and demolish properties that are blighted within the City. The process normally takes ninety days. Since July, four properties have been demolished and currently eighteen structures are ready for demolition. Eight structures are still in the

process, either under a repair order or in the process of a standard order of demolition. The Knight's Inn should be down by the end of the week. Mayor Martin said Ms. Mills is always prepared for the meeting and does a great job.

MICELLANEOUS AND UNFISHED BUSINESS

Marie Blackwell, representing the Community Foundation of the Virginias, presented Fire and Police Grant Awards.

Ms. Blackwell presented a check to Fire Chief Rick Cary for the Bluefield Fire Department to purchase personal protective equipment. The Fire Department was thanked for their service and for all the department does in keeping us safe.

Ms. Blackwell presented a check to Police Chief Dennis Dillow for the Bluefield Police Department to purchase radar equipment. The Police Department was thanked for their service and for all the department does in keeping us safe.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Martin stated how thankful we should all be for where we live. Mayor Martin requested a motion to adjourn. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith moved to adjourn the meeting, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk



Ron Martin, Mayor