

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

November 28, 2017 - Noon

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, November 28, 2017, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Ron Martin, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith, 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. Director Matt Knowles was absent.

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.

Reverend James J. Palmer III, pastor for the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, said a prayer for the Bluefield High School Football Team, who were present at the meeting. The Bluefield Beavers are preparing to play for the state football championship in Wheeling Friday night. The Beavers have an undefeated season (13-0). The City wishes the Beavers the best of luck and a safe journey.

Public Comments or Public Discussion

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association

- Thanked Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer, Marketing Specialist Rebecca Kasey, GIS Specialist Brandon Saddler, City Ambassador Marie Blackwell and Intern Allie Campbell for their hard work towards making Small Business Saturday a success. Mayor Martin stated this event has transitioned because of the staff and the involvement of our local merchants. These types of events are beneficial in helping change the City. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer showed the new brochure for the Holiday of Lights that was designed in - house. The twenty-nine businesses that participated in Small Business Saturday are featured in the brochure, *Christmas in MyBluefield*. The goal is to remind people to shop local throughout the year.
- Reminded citizens the Christmas Parade will be December 9 at 1:00 p.m. Entry forms are available on the city website (www.cityofbluefield.com). Entries for the parade will be taken until 1:00 p.m. on the ninth and walk-ins are welcome.
- Local business owner, Hal Gusler, proprietor of the Ugly Duckling passed away Sunday. Mr. Gusler was the essential volunteer. A memorial service will be held on December 10 at the Arts Center.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2017 Board of Directors meeting were unanimously approved and so ordered

Action on New Business

Mayor Ron Martin requested a motion for approval of engagement of Spilman Thomas & Battle regarding a broadband project. City Attorney Colin Cline stated this would be a public/private partnership to bring high-speed broadband access to Bluefield. The hourly rates are consistent with the rates in the industry. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer stated broadband would give the city a wireless network, speeds in excess

of 1 gigabyte and a public hot spot. The City does not want to be in the broadband business so a partnership is needed. There are multiple phases to the project but the first area would be downtown. Bluefield would be the only city in the area with a gigabyte. A grant was received for this project and if needed there are resources for outside counsel. Director Michael Gibson moved to approve engagement of Spilman Thomas & Battle regarding a broadband project was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Ron Martin requested a motion for approval of a donation from Cole Properties, LLC. City Attorney Cline stated Tom Cole would like to donate two properties to the City. The first property is the parking lot across from Portabella's Restaurant. This area could be used for additional downtown parking. The second property is a corner parcel located on Cherry and Highland Avenue. This area could be used for signage and possible development. Director Robb Williams moved approval of donation of two parcels of land from Cole Properties, LLC pending completion of title was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Action on Accounts

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of eighty-three accounts for the November collections for \$73,325.25. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved to approve eighty-three accounts for the November collections for \$73,325.25, unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of General Fund Revision #2. The second revision to the General Fund Budget increases estimated revenue by \$932,299. The revision estimates an additional \$23,879 in taxes; a reduction of \$30,000 in jail fees; an additional \$4,500 in license and permits; a reduction of \$29,080 in charges for service; an additional \$903,500 in grants, contributions and other intergovernmental receipts; and an additional \$59,500 in miscellaneous revenues. The total increases in anticipated revenue is \$932,299; thereby, increasing the overall General Fund Revenue Budget to \$12,231,899. The overall increase in the expenditure budget totals \$932,299, thereby increasing the total General Fund Expenditure Budget to \$12,231,899 and creating a balanced budget as required by State Code. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved to approve General Fund Revision #2, unanimously approved and so ordered. City Manager Dane Rideout said the staff is actively pursuing other people's money. Mayor Martin stated while that sounds like a large number our staff is doing a better job at getting other people's money so that we do not have to use the citizen's money. Mayor Martin said we are also very fortunate that a number of citizens and organizations believe in the staff and the vision for the city and are helping fund special events.

Report of City Manager

- Congratulations to Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and his staff for the great job on Small Business Saturday. All of the merchants were pleased with the foot traffic and felt the day was a success.
- The leaf trucks have been out of commission due to technical and mechanical problems. The trucks and the tag along unit are twenty-four years old. Please continue to use the Fix-It Bluefield App. One truck is now operational.
- Thank you to all the volunteers who have donated their time and support for the Holiday of Lights. This project has been a joint effort with Public Works, the Community and Economic Staff (brochure), Parks and Recreation and Human Resource (recruited volunteers for welcome booth). This year there is a Christmas Market. Refreshments are available every night and the vendors are open on Friday and Saturday.

- City Engineer Tony Wagner is working with a contractor and has now completed the first of three holes behind the tennis courts so eventually lights can be installed at the tennis courts. The next step will be to pour the concrete pads for the bleachers.
- Applications are being taken for interns to assist with Community and Economic Development, a mechanic, snowplow drivers, general labors and 2 part-time recreation aides for basketball season. For more information, contact Human Resource Director Angie Foley at City Hall.
- Shout out to Parks and Recreation for hosting over 55 football games and now playoff games. Saturday at 5:00 will be the Holiday of Lights 5K. Everyone is invited.
- Code Enforcement has demolished five houses and five more properties are set for a standard order of demolition. Code Enforcement is going after businesses that have not renewed their business license.
- The Bluefield Fire Department was attending to an apartment fire on Lewis Street.
- The Bluefield Fire Department, Bluefield Police Department and the City has been collaborating with military organizations. One reason is to show them the area to recruit retired military personnel to reside and live here, second to prepare the men to do what they need to do. It is important for the military to navigate into places unnoticed, especially special operations. There was a military must train and conduct operations for their safety. A military organization was in town last week (10 days) and approximately \$70,000 was spent in our local economy. The next group to train will be three times larger and will greatly affect our economy.
- Monday, December 4th @ 6:00 p.m. is the lighting of the Christmas tree at Rotatory Park on Bland. Mayor Martin stated this event builds each year. There will be singing and hot chocolate. Everyone is invited.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer

- Small Business Saturday has grown due to the joint marketing effort between the City and merchants. This year each business gave \$50.00 and funds from the Economic Department businesses were listed on the radio seventy-five (75) times, had two pencil ads on WVVA and an ad in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph. There were four contests for citizens to enter and the winners were announced:
 - **Sponsor Summit Community Bank – Favorite Small Business Contest**
1st place: Mountaineer Bowling Lane
2nd place: Big Whiskey BBQ
3rd place: The Blue Spoon Cafe
 - **Sponsor New Peoples Bank – How Well Do You Know My Bluefield Contest**
1st place: Amanda Brown
2nd place: Troy Rasnake
3rd place: Melinda S. Testerman
 - **Sponsor First Community Bank – Caption This Contest**
1st place: Tammy Shawn Jackson/ Citizens Building Supply
2nd place: Amanda Matoushek
3rd place: Nancy C. Bogle
 - Ansel Ponder, owner of 3UP2UP, markets for Chick-Fil-A suggested a fourth contest. A meeting was arranged with Manager Nick Cuttingham who agreed Chick-Fil-A at Mercer Mall would be a sponsor and the contest drawing would take place today at 4:00 p.m. To be eligible a person had to spend money in one of the twenty-businesses during Small Business Saturday. The grand prize is Chick-Fil-A one entrée a week for a year. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer thanked all the sponsors and everybody involved.
- This year a marketing brochure for the Holiday of Lights was done in-house by the Community and Economic Development Department. There is a section in the brochure for

those wishing to start a business in Bluefield. A flex grant is being used to develop a digital marketing brochure.

Reports from Committees

Mayor Ron Martin stated the presentation by Lt. Shannon Akers and Fire Chief Rick Cary would be moved to the January meeting due to the Fire Department still working on the apartment fire on Lewis Street.

Executive Director of the Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Jamie Null gave the 2016-2017 annual report. Ms. Null stated there is growth in Mercer County and discussed the importance of marketing campaigns, website updates, digital ads, social media campaigns, professional tourism photos, videos and subject content. Other topics discussed include key performance indicators, hotel bed tax, and mobile usage content. Top states visiting the website included North Carolina (21.3%), West Virginia (19.3%), District of Columbia (18.8%) and Virginia (8.9%). The CVB will invest in a digital campaign show - casing the Holiday of Lights and the Hatfield and McCoy Trails.

A copy of the Annual Report is available at the Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau at 621 Commerce Street, Bluefield, WV.

ADJOURNMENT

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