

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

January 9, 2018 - Noon

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, January 9, 2018, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Ron Martin, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith, Director Michael Gibson, Director Matt Knowles, 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 Comments or Public Discussion:

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Director Michael Gibson moved to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2017 Board of Directors meeting, unanimously approved and so ordered

Action on New Business

Mayor Martin requested approval of a recommendation from the Bluefield Planning Commission for an application by Janeen and Dan Webb to rezone, Tax Map 39, Parcel 299, Lot 13 & 14, Section A, EDRIS Addition know as 2449 Washington Street from R-1 to BH (Highway Related Commercial District). City Attorney Colin Cline stated this rezoning would result in making the last residential property in that area commercial, making it consistent with the other buildings. There is a young law firm seeking to open a business in the space. The lot is located between the dog groomer and ReMax Reality. Mayor Martin asked how the property owners escaped this building not being zoned residential. City Engineer Tony Wagner stated in 1976 or '78 all the property, with the exception of what is now ReMax and the two story red brick was zoned commercial. In 1982, Mrs. Galliet lived in the two story brick and Mrs. Turley lived in the now ReMax building. Mrs. Turley requested rezoning of her property to open a yarn shop. Mrs. Turley appeared before the Planning Commission and the property was rezoned to commercial. Mrs. Galliet's property remained residential. Mr. and Mrs. Webb now own ReMax and the brick building. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved to approve the recommendation from the Bluefield Planning Commission for an application by Janeen and Dan Webb to rezone, Tax Map 39, Parcel 299, Lot 13 & 14, Section A, EDRIS Addition know as 2449 Washington Street from R-1 to BH (Highway Related Commercial District), unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Martin requested approval of a Fire Training Center Land Use Agreement. City Attorney Colin Cline stated the Fire Department needs a training center within the City. Fire Chief Cary distributed information regarding various fire-training structures. The structures would be constructed on land that is part owned by the City of Bluefield and part owned by the West Virginia State Armory (National Guard). Delegate John Shott was instrumental in communicating with Adjutant General James A. Hoyer and their council. An agreement has been reached. The state Armory will allow our Fire Department to use the National Guard's parcel at no cost for five years. Fire Chief Cary said this would be a structure utilized as a

regional training facility. These structures will improve the health and welfare of the firefighters by providing appropriate and beneficial exercises and will lower fire insurance rates (ISO). Director Michael Gibson moved to approve the fire Training Center Land Use Agreement, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Martin requested approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between Bluefield State College Research and Development Corporation and The City of Bluefield, West Virginia. Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer stated he has been in communication with Bluefield State College President Dr. Krotseng concerning the city managing the R & D building. Dr. Krotseng said economic development and higher education go hand in hand and the transition from student to entrepreneurs will be strengthened and felt this was a natural partnership. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer said this partnership would not be competing with the Commercialization Station, which is a "dirty space", but opens up office space that can be marketed for economic growth. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer said if the MOU were approved, there would be a formal agreement signing today at 2:00 p.m. at the Research and Development Center that is open to the public. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Bluefield State College Research and Development Corporation and The City of Bluefield, West Virginia, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Martin requested approval for Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer to apply for a Flex-E-Grant. Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer stated he applied for a Flex-E-Grant last year to do a digital brochure, which will be unveiled at the Annual Review meeting on January 30. There is an opportunity to apply for another Flex-E-Grant. This grant would be used for professional entrepreneurs training and bringing in individuals that would share experience and knowledge as technology entrepreneurs. Mayor Martin read the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION

The City of Bluefield met on the 9th day of January 2018 with a quorum present and passed the following resolution.

Be it resolved that the City of Bluefield hereby authorize Ron Martin, Mayor of the City of Bluefield, to apply for Flex-E-Grant funds, for leadership and/or capacity building activities, on behalf of the City of Bluefield.

Be it also resolved that the City of Bluefield hereby authorize the certifying official Ron Martin, Mayor of the City of Bluefield, to act on its behalf to enter into a contractual agreement with the West Virginia Development Office to receive and administer grant funds pursuant to provisions of the Flex-E-Grant Program, if awarded.

Be it further resolved that the governing body of the City of Bluefield pledge not to exceed \$1,500 in unencumbered matching funds for the project.

Director Michael Gibson moved to approve Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer to apply for a Flex-E-Grant, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Action on Accounts

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the December financials. At the close of December 30, 2017 the 6th month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$6,216,683 (61.52%) of the projected amount of \$10,105,400. Expenditures totaled \$5,297,012

(43.31%) of the projected budget of \$12,231,272. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the November financials as submitted, unanimously approved.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of eighty-four accounts for \$48,866.89 to be turned over to the collection agency. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the November financials as submitted, unanimously approved.

City Manager Report

- College Avenue work will begin again this week or as soon as weather permits. This cold spell has been the lowest sustained temperatures since 1977.
- City Attorney Cline has placed information in Dropbox for Directors to read concerning the 2020 Census. City Attorney Cline researched consequences of dropping from a "Class II" city to a "Class III" city. The West Virginia Code (§8-1-3) assigns cities and towns to a "class" based on population. Citizens were encouraged to complete the population census. Should the population drop to a certain level a Congressional seat would be lost.
- Every city employee had a W2 before the New Year. The Treasury Department was thanked for their hard work and dedication.
- Repairs to a water leak at the Wells Fargo Building are being address by City Engineer Tony Wagner.
- Code enforcement, the Fire Department and Water Company responded to the vacant K-VAT building. They failed to keep the heat on and the sprinkler system ruptured and shut down the water system for the entire complex.
- GIS Specialist Brandon Saddler is a licensed drone pilot. Mr. Saddler has applied to participate in the UAS IPP (Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Pilot Program), with the City, as "Lead Participant" and FAA will enter, if selected, into a Memorandum of Agreement. The MOA, will establish the responsibilities of the parties. CART agrees to cooperate with and to assist and support the city in the discharge of the City's obligations. The UAS Integration Pilot Program is an opportunity for state, local, and tribal governments to collaborate with private sector entities, such as UAS operators or manufacturers, to accelerate safe UAS integration. This is important because Bluefield State College has the number one robotics program and this would be a great partnership.
- Shout out to the four men at Public Works who received a phone call at 3:00 a.m. on Christmas Day to clear the roads and responded. Thank you Scottie Smith, Jimmy Lewis, Matt Perdue, and Terry E. Proffitt. These men worked until approximately 1:00 p.m. clearing and making the roads safe.
- Thank you to Lori Mills, Public Works, Charles Ridlehuber and all the volunteers that helped make the Holiday of Lights a success. Approximately, \$47,000 in donations were collected and this money will be used to pay the electric bill, upkeep and various other items. We had more visitors this year than ever before.
- IT Specialist Billy Hester entered into an agreement with aHa Web design for a new city website. This website will be compatible with other technology.
- Files will be digitized so citizens can go to the city website to conduct research. This will also preserve historical documents. This will be a three to five year project.
- Parks and Recreation has childcare available when school has been cancelled. The day camp is an educational and safe environment. Day camp is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Contact Shannon Lowe at Parks and Recreation for more information.
- The City employees thanked Grants Supermarket and K & K Music for gifting hams and turkeys during the holiday season.

- The Inspection Department under the Supervision of Building Inspector Lori Mills now contacts insurance companies for help with demolitions. Last year \$103,000 was collected in private pay demolitions, a huge savings for taxpayers.
- Thank you, Lecia and Danny Smith, Art Riley, Lori Mills and all the volunteers who have helped make the Ridge Runner a success. The Ridge Runner's tunnel needs to be rebuilt. The tunnel houses the train at night and is in need of a place to work on repairs. Lecia and Danny Smith, Lori Mills, along with other volunteers have been instrumental in getting a donation from a foundation to rebuild the tunnel. Lori Mills stated that eighty-five thousand people have ridden the train since 2011.
- Last week an incident resulted in a fatality. From the time the Bluefield Police Department responded, to the time it was solved, captured, apprehended and charged those individuals, now in Southern Regional Jail, was a twelve-hour period. The Detective Bureau dissected the incident and several raids took place. Our police department participated and it resulted in the capture of those individuals outside the city limits. The department is keeping Bluefield a safe place to work, play and learn. The leadership of Chief Dennis Dillow, the Detective Bureau and the officers are keeping citizens safe. People who come into the City and participate in illegal activity will be caught.
- Fire Department has had multiple fires. Fires have been residential, car and locomotive. Thank you to the Fire Department for the lowering of the Lemon Drop, on a very cold night. Thank you to Gail Satterfield, Beautification Commission and the County Commission that put on a fireworks display on New Year's Eve.
- The public is invited to the Annual Review on January 30 @ the Arts Center on Bland Road. The event will be filmed and a report will be in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph. There will be two major unveilings. Citizens are encouraged to attend the Annual Review and find out where the City was, where the City is and where the City is going. There will an opportunity for the public to ask questions of their public officials.
- Angie Foley, Paula Rose and Marie Blackwell were thanked for organizing volunteers and the Christmas Market at the Holiday of Lights. Mayor Martin thanked all those involved with making the Holiday of Lights such a success. Mayor Martin stated the Holiday of Lights was an asset to the City and to our community. Mayor Martin stated he was out at 7:00 a.m. on Christmas morning and thanked Public Works for their hard work. City Manager Rideout said a more secure shelter structure is needed that can withstand the wind.

Enactment of Ordinances

Mayor Martin read the **FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PROHIBITION OF PARKING ON DEARBORN AVENUE BETWEEN COLLEGE AVENUE AND ALBEMARLE STREET.**

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PROHIBITION OF PARKING ON DEARBORN STREET BETWEEN COLLEGE AVENUE AND ALBEMARLE STREETS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 40-11(a)(2) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Bluefield, the City Manager of the City of Bluefield recommends an amendment to the Bluefield traffic control map regulating parking on Dearborn Street; and

WHEREAS, the City manager recommends that parking be prohibited on Dearborn Street between College Avenue and Albemarle Street, as described on the attached map; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors finds that the City Manager's recommendation is in the best interests of the City, its residents, and the business located in the area affected; and

WHEREAS, the governing body of the City of Bluefield is the duly elected Board of Directors thereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to West Virginia Code §8-12-5(4), the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, West Virginia hereby amends the traffic control map of the City of Bluefield by prohibiting parking on Dearborn Street from College Avenue to Albemarle Street, as described on the attached map. (Map available in City Clerk's office)

City Manager Rideout stated this area has been on the radar for several years. When cars are parked on the side of the road, emergency vehicles cannot safely turn the corner and many accidents have occurred in this area. Parking lots are available for the apartment dwellers but may not be as convenient. There will be a Public Hearing on January 23 @ 11:30 a.m. at City Hall before the second reading of the ordinance. Citizens who have voiced safety concerns on Facebook and Fix It Bluefield are encouraged to attend, along with those who disagree to voice opinions. Residents affected by the change will be mailed a letter concerning the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing will be posted in the local paper. Mayor Martin requested a motion on the first reading. Director Matt Knowles moved to approve the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PROHIBITION OF PARKING ON DEARBORN AVENUE BETWEEN COLLEGE AVENUE AND ALBEMARLE STREET, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer

- All plans for the Commercialization Station have been submitted to the EDA. The next step is once the EDA approves the plans bids can be advertised.
- Landscape Architecture Assistant Professor C.L. Bohannon at Virginia Tech would like to do a class project in Bluefield. Forty students would participate in a design charrette. Students will travel to Bluefield on January 17. The class would look at the outside of the Commercialization Station and the downtown area. This would be a "new set of eyes" that could offer suggestions and ideas. The results would be showcased at Tech on January 22. A digital copy would be made available to the City and they may come back to look at other areas in the City. This is a good way to give college students real world experience.

Miscellaneous and Unfinished Business

Mayor Martin requested a motion to approve a Donation Agreement with Greater Bluefield Community Center, Inc. City Attorney Colin Cline stated the City has been in discussion with the Greater Bluefield Community Center, Inc. for a couple of months about the possibility of taking over the facility. They have been taking a "deep dive" into their financials to see what money was needed to conclude the transaction and complete their affairs. City Attorney Cline said he now had an agreement to present to the Board for approval. The Community Center is non-profit and has real property, equipment, and things inside of the facility. The agreement states the real property, equipment, other things inside the facility and some cash will be donated to the City. The center had received from a local foundation a grant to install a system for dehumidifying the building's pool area and install American's With Disabilities Act compliant doors. Approximately \$125,000 will come to the city, and be restricted to the pool and door upgrades. The goal will be for the city to assume operations of the facility on February 1. City Manager Rideout stated it is important for the City to maintain the amenities inside the City. People who use the center live in Bluefield. If the

organization continued to do things the way they were doing them, this facility would probably close down in a few years. By an economy of force, bringing it under the insurance umbrella of the City, having an in-house accounting / finance capability, a public works crew that can take care of the maintenance, and fitting into the city's master plan for capital improvements. City officials visited a similar community center in Marion, VA and saw how such a facility could operate and work with the community. Director of Parks and Recreation Charles Ridlehuber said his department plans to "create value" at the community center with new programs. His department has the personnel and expertise necessary for operating such a facility. His staff is excited to make the center an amenity Bluefield can be proud of and maintain the property values that surround the center. Director Matt Knowles stated the center in Marion reached out to the community, not only through their hospital but also through the different demographics. Director Knowles stated they (Marion facility) had programs to meet the needs of their citizens and that is why they were succeeding. He felt Parks and Recreation Director Ridlehuber and his staff could replicate the same and the area will benefit. Director Robb Williams said the City has spent a lot of time to make sure the community center would be at least a revenue neutral long-term facility. Director Michael Gibson moved to approve a Donation Agreement with Greater Bluefield Community Center, Inc., unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Martin stated State Farm Representative Brandon Disney had a presentation for Bluefield Fire Department for \$6,000 Fire Safety and Prevention Grant. Mr. Disney stated State Farm appreciated everything the Fire Department does and was very happy they could help. Chief Rick Cary said the donation would be used for smoke detectors and other safety prevention items. Chief Cary said they would purchase safety material from local business and make it available to citizens. These items save lives and many citizens are using alternate sources of heat now and especially during the cold weather. Chief Cary thanked Marie Blackwell for helping with the grant writing. For question about obtaining a free smoke and /or carbon monoxide detector, contact the Bluefield Fire Department.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Ron Martin, Mayor