

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
March 13, 2018 - Noon**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, March 13, 2018, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Ron Martin, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith, 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 read a Resolution in memory of Director Michael Gibson and presented a copy to his son, John.

**RESOLUTION OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE
IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL FIELDING “MIKE” GIBSON
OCTOBER 8, 1948 – FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

The Board of Directors, administration, and staff of the City of Bluefield, wish to express our gratitude, respect, and profound sense of loss to Michael Fielding “Mike” Gibson and his son, John.

WHEREAS, on February 27, 2018, Mike Gibson passed from this earth; and

WHEREAS, Mike was a dedicated public servant, renowned attorney, loving father, and his impact on our lives and the life of this City will be felt for years to come; and

WHEREAS, while mere words cannot adequately express our gratitude to Mike, nor our sense of loss at his passing, we offer this proclamation to honor, thank and remember him, and to convey to his son, family and friends our condolences, sympathy, and deep sadness on this somber occasion; and

WHEREAS, our grief is tempered by our firm and certain faith that Mikes’ passing brings him relief from suffering and entry into a world far better than our own.

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the City of Bluefield honors the memory of Michael Fielding “Mike” Gibson, celebrates his distinguished career, and mourns his death.

John Gibson stated that his Dad had found great enjoyment in public service serving on the Board of Directors and as an attorney for the area. Michael shared John’s journey through Bluefield sports in the local schools and always felt a sense of home and community. John said his Dad believed in the growth and development of the City. His Dad wanted to take care of everyone and doing what was best for the City. John hoped the Board would continue progressing that vision forward.

Mayor Martin said Mike would be missed by of the entire City.

Mayor Ron Martin called the meeting to order.

Mayor Martin read a Resolution declaring March 2018 Red Cross Month



American Red Cross
West Virginia Region

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross saw a record-breaking year in 2017 of challenging domestic and international disaster response efforts, responding to six of the largest and most complex disasters of 2017, including back-to-back hurricanes, the deadliest week of wildfires in California history, and the horrific mass shooting in Las Vegas. West Virginia Red Cross volunteers and staff deployed over 250 times in response such large-scale disasters.

WHEREAS, in West Virginia, the Red Cross has a long history of helping our neighbors in need. In the past year alone, they assisted over 1,000 families who experienced a disaster, a majority of which were home fires; they installed almost 8,000 smoke alarms; reached 5,600 people with fire safety information and educated more than 7,000 students in disaster preparedness education through the Pillowcase Project.

WHEREAS, in West Virginia, the Red Cross assisted over 700 military members, veterans and their families, collected almost 40,000 units of blood and educated over 23,000 West Virginians in life-saving-skills courses in the past year.

WHEREAS, March is American Red Cross Month, a special time to recognize and thank the Red Cross volunteers and donors who give of their time and resources to help members of the community. The Red Cross depends on these local heroes to deliver help and hope during a disaster. We applaud our heroes here in West Virginia who give of themselves to assist their neighbors when they need a helping hand.

NOW, THEREFORE, we hereby dedicate the month of March to all those who support the American Red Cross mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies. Our community depends on the American Red Cross, which relies on donations of time, money and blood to fulfill its humanitarian mission.

Executive Director Ms. Courtney Danielle Clark accepted a copy of the Resolution.

Public Comments or Public Discussion:

NONE

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice-Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2018 Board of Directors meeting, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Action on Accounts

City Treasurer Kelly Davis reported that at the end of February 2018, the 8th month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$8,084,310 (80%) of the projected amount of

\$10,105,400 Expenditures total \$6,724,112 (54.97%) of the projected budget of \$12,231,272. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the February collections as submitted, unanimously approved.

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of a contract with DataMax Holdings, LLC out of North Carolina. DataMax will research and identify businesses currently not paying business license and business and occupation tax fees. DataMax will contact each business it identifies and work with them to submit a business license application and pay all business license and business and occupation tax fees and penalties. Data Max will receive 50% of such fees and penalties paid by such business for two years. After twenty-four months, DataMax will release the list to the City. Director Matt Knowles moved to approve the DataMax contract, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Action on New Business

Mayor Martin requested approval to ratify recommendation from the Town of Bluefield, Virginia for Mr. Rick Holman to serve as a Town of Bluefield representative on the Bluefield Sanitary Board. Mr. Holman would fulfill the remainder of Mr. Rick Taylor's term of office, which expires December 1, 2019. City Manager Rideout stated the Sanitary Board is made of five members, two from Bluefield, West Virginia and two from Bluefield, Virginia. The Mayor or City Manager serves as Chair. City Manager Rideout is currently serving as Chair. The Town of Bluefield votes on their representatives and the City of Bluefield approves the recommendation. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the recommendation from the Town of Bluefield, Virginia for Mr. Rick Holman to serve as a Town of Bluefield representative on the Bluefield Sanitary Board, unanimously approved and so ordered.

Mayor Martin requested approval to appoint Community and Economic Development Director James "Jim" Spencer as proxy on the Development Authority of Mercer County. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer said the Development Authority is the economic development branch for the county. The mayor is the appointee but in his absence, a voting proxy could be appointed. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson – Smith moved to appoint Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer as proxy to the Development Authority of Mercer County, unanimously approved and so ordered.

City Manager Report

- Congratulations to Mr. Mike Webb who has been appointed as the new City Manager of Princeton. Mr. Webb had been serving as the assistant city manager. City Manager Rideout said he had been working with Mr. Webb the last two years and he is very knowledgeable in the field and a great individual.
- The City of Bluefield is in the process of writing a bid proposal for an architectural and engineering firm that will provide advice and services for downtown redevelopment. The area is located from the JC Penney building to the Wells Fargo Building. The selected firm will provide a concept for design, include preliminary hazard testing and abatements, obtain necessary permits, removal of debris associated with demolition and various other issues/concerns. This project is funded by a foundation.
- Shout out to the snow crews and public work for keeping our roads and sidewalks clear. Our roads compared to other places this past week had a noticeable difference in their condition. More snow is in the forecast and Public Works Director Candy Sayers and her staff are on it.

- A different type of street marker has been placed on Lynn Street on Bluefield Avenue. City Manager Rideout would like Board and Citizens to drive by and give him some feedback. Cost savings would be half the cost and save on man-hours using a material other than concrete.
- Some potholes have been filled with a cold patch. Public Works must wait for asphalt plants to open. The City is working with District I and reminded citizens to continue using Fix It Bluefield.
- Swim lessons are being offered at the Community Center for after school participants. Starting in April, swim lessons will be offered to Community Center members and non-members. Please call the center for more information. Group Exercise classes have been well received. The facility will be closed for a major overhaul one month during the summer. City Manager Rideout felt citizens will be pleasantly surprised at what they see when the center reopens. The intent is to move equipment to the Recreation Center so no one misses his or her workouts.

City Manager Rideout stated that he was hired by the last Board of Directors. Mike was the quiet member of the Board, but when Michael spoke, everyone would listen. City Manager Rideout said Michael was an ethical person who provided guidance during difficult decisions. Michael had his "back" and City Manager Rideout said he would never forget. Michael was his friend and would be missed. The celebration given in his honor was "awesome". City Manager Rideout said he felt sure Michael was watching over John and was proud of his son.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer

- Today at 4:00 p.m., the proposals from consulting architectural and engineering firms are due. The selected firm will be providing advice and services for the development of land at Exit 1 off Interstate 77 and along the John Nash Boulevard. The consultant will work closely with the City, Region I Planning & Development Council and other professionals on the team. A committee will be formed comprised of the City Manager, the Community and Economic Development Director and two Board members. The members will review all of the proposals and report to the Board. Mayor Martin and Director Matt Knowles will serve on the committee.
- There is a new program in the State called Opportunity Zones. The Governor can determine up to 25 percent of the total number of eligible areas designated as Opportunity Zones. Low-income census tracts are used to determine eligible areas within each state. Governor Jim Justice will have until March 25, 2018 to submit his Opportunity Zone designations. Investors would then invest in the opportunity land tracts and receive tax benefits. Bluefield has submitted three (3) tracts.
 - ✓ Census Tract #20 - Brushfork by Bluefield State down by the Commercialization Station and ends at the R &D Center.
 - ✓ Census Tract #23 – Southern part of Bluefield out John Nash Boulevard, the west of 77 to Princeton. Part of the tract is in Princeton. The application was made on behalf of Princeton and Mercer County.
 - ✓ Census Tract #24 – East side of 77 and land at exit 1.
- Robert C. Byrd Institute will conduct a training class at the Transit Station on exporting.
- The Sales Executive Club is having "Launch Appalachia" similar to the TV Show, *Sharktank*. The event will take place April 5 at Fincastle on the Mountain from 6-9 p.m. Launch Appalachia is a business pitch competition for Southern WV/Southern VA that is open to all innovators. Participants are asked to submit a concept and will then go through a screening process. The top business plans will be selected to give an oral presentation to a panel of judges, who will choose the top three teams to be awarded.

- The Commercialization Station has been approved to go out for bid. The first advertisement will be in the paper on March 21, second advertisement will run March 28. A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be April 12 @ 10:00 a.m. (any contractor interested in project must walk through the Commercialization Station at that time) and the Bid Opening will May 2 @ 2:00 p.m. E.L Robinson will evaluate and make the recommendation. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer has requested that a space be created on the Board Agenda starting next meeting, labeled Commercialization Station Actions.

Miscellaneous and Unfinished Business

City Ambassador Marie Blackwell stated she had attended an informational meeting Tuesday, March 6 at Bluefield State College to garner interest for a Kiwanis Club in Bluefield/Mercer County. The Kiwanis club would work with the Key Club at the high schools, adults and youth activities, to do fund raisers and programs. It will take fifteen members to start a chapter and membership would be \$100 a year. Anyone who joins now will be a member until October 2019 because a chapter is not set up at this time. Bluefield High School Senior Nathan Nichols is a contact person. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer stated he felt \$100 was a small amount to work and support the next generation and leadership. He recommended the City join.

For more information, contact Kellie Laraba: wvformuladistrict@gmail.com and <http://www.kiwanis.org>.

Monday, March 19 is City Clean-up Day. / April 2nd will be a makeup date. Please slow down for workers and volunteers. Exit 1 will be a key target area for cleanup.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Ron Martin, Mayor