

**REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BLUEFIELD, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
April 24, 2018 - Noon**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, April 24, 2018, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Matt Knowles, Director Robb Williams, City Manager Dane Rideout, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer, City Attorney Colin Cline, and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Mayor Ron Martin 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.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith called the meeting to order.

Public Comments or Public Discussion

Art Riley, representing the Downtown Merchants Association, requested the Board of Directors and Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer to consider more advertisement for the City of Bluefield. There are one hundred and twenty two thousand cars a week pass Bluefield within ten miles. Mr. Riley said eighty percent do not know that Bluefield is here because there is no signage. He encouraged them to start early with a rack card to go in the rest areas telling of area attractions. Mr. Riley stated the Community and Economic Development should have funds or a budget for advertising. He commented the virtual technology used to promote Bluefield was great but there was no substitute for a hard copy that says, "Come to Bluefield" we want you here. The demolition is twelve to eighteen months away but we need to utilize everything we have in the meantime.

Marsha Platnick, Bluefield resident, stated she had voiced concerns several months ago about the City taking over the Community Center pool. She stated her concerns were ill founded. Parks and Recreation Director and his staff have done a great job in meeting the needs of the swimmers and those in need of therapy. The lifeguards are extremely professional and the Fitness Center is organized.

Approval of the Minutes

Director Robb Williams moved to approve the minutes from the recessed March 27, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting and the Public Hearing for Lay the Levy (April 17, 2018) was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Director Robb Williams moved to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Action on Accounts

City Treasurer Kelly Davis presented one hundred forty three accounts to be turned over to collections for accounts in city fees totaling \$98,175.97. City Treasurer Davis requested approval to submit the accounts over to the city collection agency. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the March collections as submitted was unanimously approved.

City Manager Report

- Congratulations to Parks and Recreation Director Charles Ridlehuber and his staff for the great job they are doing at the Fitness Center. Classes are full and the building is clean, safe, and everything is well organized. Improvements are taking place on a daily basis.
- The I-77 project is a good thing for Bluefield. The construction will be an inconvenience but Governor Jim Justice's Roads to Prosperity program is an investment (approximately 27 million dollars of infrastructure) that will benefit our city, region and state. There will be traffic issues and emergency vehicles have a plan of action. Feedback and suggestions are welcomed from the public.
- Thank you Frye Roofing and JC Robinson. When the police substation was opened, private donations and foundations mostly paid for half of the roof to be replaced. There is now a leak and Frye Roofing is going to replace the other half, charging only for materials. This will be a substantial savings to the City. We appreciate our businesses supporting us.
- There are several bids being advertised for various activities around in City. These bids are possible due to foundation and grant money. Things are happening and the City is moving forward. City Clerk Kersey was thanked for her organizational and scheduling skills on a daily basis.
- Public Works continues pothole repairs. Citizens are reminded to use the Fix It App to report problems, such as potholes.
- The Recreation Department continues the after school program with elective classes in swimming and karate. They have formed a partnership with Mercer Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Students enrolled in the after school program will visit the facility to read and visit with residents. The center now offers Child Watch during the Group Exercise Classes at the Fitness Center. Allie Campbell is now certified to teach lifeguard classes. The City Park is now open to vehicular traffic and the Ridge Runner is up and running. The water is on now and the bathrooms will be open when someone rents a shelter in the park or when there is a special event. The City hosted the Bluefield College Spring Football Game last weekend.
- The Fire Department received a \$4,000 grant from PetCo Foundation. The money will be used to care for K-9 Kendall, the department's arson dog. Kendall works with departments throughout the region.
- Speed humps will be placed in certain areas in two to three weeks. Two speed humps will be placed on College Avenue.

Action on New Business

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested approval of the SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY NEAR BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA. City Attorney Colin Cline stated the parcels contain structures designed for the housing and maintenance of large mobile equipment, office space and adequate space for the storage of salt and other bulk commodities used in the operations of the Public Works Department. A minor boundary adjustment will be made to extend the city limits to incorporate the property within the city. Cole Properties, LLC and Cole Truck Parts, Inc. have jointly proposed to sell such parcels to the City of Bluefield for a total price of \$350,000 and the transaction will be fully funded through grant money. City Attorney Cline recommended approval. Director Robb Williams moved for approval of the SEOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY NEAR BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA was unanimously approved and so ordered. The transaction should close on April 30, 2018.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, requested approval of a contract with CART, Inc. City Manager Dane Rideout stated the Center for Applied Research and Technology (CART) is

part of a partnership with Bluefield State College. Several years ago, City Manager Rideout requested money to fund the packaging of the Comprehensive Plan. Data has been collected but the plan has not been executed. There is now two jump drives full of documentation and CART will assist in putting the ten-year document together (2018-2028). This will be the vision for the City and foundation input will be incorporated, ties into the Commercialization Station and all future projects. Director Matt Knowles moved for approval of the contract with CART, Inc. was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested approval of contract renewal with Tammy Lynn LLC. City Attorney Colin Cline stated this is the billboard on Exit 1, which is located on City property. The billboard pays a revenue of \$1,500 a year. The City controls what can be advertised on the billboard and has a right of refusal, should something open up. At some point, this could be a place to advertise Bluefield. This structure can be removed in the event it no longer fits into the development plan. City Attorney Cline recommended this contract be renewed. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the renewal contract with Tammy Lynn, LLC was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer.

- The pre-bid conference for the Commercialization Station will be May 2, 2018. Bids will be opened and read aloud May 23 at 2:00 p.m. at City Hall.
- The City agreed, several months ago, to participate in the CGI video series. This is a free service to the City. They are working to get sponsors for a live, learn, and play concept for the City. They will produce four or five videos that will be used to market the City and will be here on May 23.
- The West Virginia Small Business Development Center will offer a free Business Fundamentals workshop 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, April 30. The workshop will be held at the Bluefield State College Research and Development Center, 704 Bland Street, on the fourth floor. The workshop will cover what entrepreneurs need to know to start a business.
- A power grant will be submitted on May 1, for a workforce training towards cyber security.
- Bluefield State College Research and Development Center is now offering virtual tenants. There are three packages: bronze (\$50 a month), silver (\$100 a month), and gold (\$150 a month). These packages will be available for businesses that need a professional space to conduct meetings. If someone has a home based business, entrepreneurs can have access to a conference space, training and mentoring. For example: the bronze package includes two (2) hours of conference room space, a couple of hours of mentoring, and access to the ADC business coach. The goal is to help small businesses grow into full time tenants. Bluefield State College President Dr. Marsha Krotseng said this is way another manifestation between the City and the College partnership. Dr. Krotseng felt this would be another opportunity for economic development to grow.

Miscellaneous and Unfinished Business

Art Riley asked when the next signage meeting would take place. Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer stated Hill Studio is doing their evaluation. A new meeting date has not been set for them to return.

Due to Election Day being on Tuesday, the next Board Meeting will be held on Monday, May 7.

Student Government Day will be Monday, May 7.

City Hall will be closed on Tuesday, May 8.

Adjournment

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested a motion to adjourn. Director Matt Knowles moved the meeting be adjourned. Unanimously approved and so ordered.

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson-Smith