

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

November 12, 2019 – Noon

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, November 12, 2019, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Ron Martin, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Robb Williams, Director Matt Knowles, Director Peter Taylor, City Manager Dane Rideout, City Attorney Colin Cline, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, 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.

Mayor Ron Martin read a **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA CONGRATULATING THE 2019 BLUEFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL BUCCANEERS FOOTBALL TEAM ON A PERFECT SEASON**

WHEREAS, the Bluefield Middle School Buccaneers have a long tradition of athletic excellence; and

WHEREAS, in keeping with this tradition, the Bluefield Middle School Buccaneers football team coached by Head Coach Buster Large, and Assistant Coaches Preston Wolkoff and Doug Miller, posted a 8-0 record in the 2019 season; and

WHEREAS, these victories included a 22-0 victory on the road at Eastern Greenbrier Middle School, which, prior to facing the Buccaneers on October 17, 2019, had not lost a game since 2015; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership and guidance of Coaches Large, Wolkoff and Miller, the Buccaneers achieved all of these victories with grace, humility and excellent sportsmanship, setting an example for their opponents, their fellow students, and all citizens of Bluefield; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Bluefield are extremely proud of the accomplishments of the Bluefield Middle School Buccaneers football team, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield has determined that the Bluefield Middle School Buccaneers football team is worthy and deserving of praise and recognition.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA:

That the City of Bluefield lauds and honors the Bluefield Middle School Buccaneers football team for its accomplishments during the 2019 football season; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the City of Bluefield hereby declares November 12, 2019 to be Bluefield Middle School Buccaneers Football Day, and presents this resolution to the team in recognition thereof.

Given under our hands this the 12th day of November, 2019.

Coach Buster Large thanked the Board for recognizing the athletes. He stated the team worked very hard and they were all so very proud of the players. His team had an 8-0 season, averaging 52 points a game and only giving up one touchdown. He stated he was proud of his athletes not only on the field but for their academics and behavior in the classroom. Coach Large thanked Principal Miller and his staff. He challenged the team to keep up the good work and work towards playing in the state championship in the future. Coach Large thanked the City Board for their hard work in leading the city. He said it was a great time for Bluefield and many positive things were happening in the city, such as Mitchell Stadium being named Best Stadium in the Nation.

Police Chief Dennis Dillow introduced the newest member of the Bluefield Police Department Patrolman Charles Matthews. Patrolman Matthews grew up in Germany and is bilingual. Police Chief Dillow said they were super proud to have him. City Clerk Bobbi Kersey administered the Oath of Office to Patrolman Charles Alexander Matthews.

Public Comments:

Charkera Ervin inquired if there had been a committee formed concerning the Grant Street Bridge. City Manager Rideout said the plan was to form a committee in the new year. The city is still working with elected officials on options. It would be hard to form a committee without all the necessary information, guidance

and direction to move forward. There is continued communication with Governor Justice, Senator Manchin, the railroad and other officials.

Art Riley reminded everyone the Christmas Parade will be held on December 14th at 1:00 pm. Everyone is invited to participate. The fee is \$25.00. Entries will be accepted for the next three weeks. Mr. Riley stated the parade is a labor of love and wants it to be great. Mr. Riley stated Small Business Saturday would be November 30th. This is a time to celebrate our smaller businesses in downtown and our city. About a year ago, Hill Studio was contracted for signage and a layout designed for the downtown area. Mr. Riley said there is still no signage downtown and asked where the project stood. City Manager Dane Rideout stated the signage plan was still in place. However, the decorative signage is a victim of the budget cuts. There will be regular signage for the new downtown flow of traffic. Mr. Riley asked if there was any progress in renting spaces for the Commercialization Station. Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer replied there is a maker's space that has moved in, Fed Ex is moving from bay three to bay two, and there is someone ready to move into bay three. Two bays are open and the brick section will be used for future phases. Mr. Riley asked if warehousing had been entertained as an operation. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer said if it was a business that could be incubated. There is an online application available.

Allen Siegel stated he was told there were five ways to reach neighborhoods near the Grant Street Bridge. He felt only two ways were adequate, the other ways were longer and harder and would be difficult to use in the winter months. Mr. Siegel discussed a concept in law noted as "an appearance of impropriety". He stated he was not sure of the solution, concerning the Grant Street Bridge, but we all need to be aware of how things are interpreted.

Sheila Brooks requested a copy of the Grant Street Bridge report and a list of the other bridges in West Virginia that need to be replaced. Ms. Brooks said the city needed to contact State Senator Chandler Swope. She felt writing, waiting, and trusting the Governor, concerning the railroad, was not the right approach.

Minutes

Mayor Ron Martin requested a motion to approve the minutes for the October 22, 2019, Board of Directors meeting. **Director Robb Williams moved to approve the minutes for the October 22, 2019 Board of Directors meeting was unanimously approved.**

Mayor Ron Martin requested a motion to approve the minutes for October 22, Public Hearing USDA Grant. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to approve the minutes for the October 22, 2019 Board of Directors meeting was unanimously approved.**

Action on New Business

Mayor Ron Martin requested approval of **Second Reading of an Ordinance Revising 8-2 and 38-24 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Bluefield West Virginia to Provide for Exemption from Business Licensing and Business and Occupation Tax for Venders at Certain Festivals and to Eliminate the Permitting Requirement for Flea Market Sales, Yard Sales, or Garage Sales Held in Residential Neighborhoods.** Director Matt Knowles moved to **approve the Second Reading of an Ordinance Revising 8-2 and 38-24 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Bluefield West Virginia to Provide for Exemption from Business Licensing and Business and Occupation Tax for Venders at Certain Festivals and to Eliminate the Permitting Requirement for Flea Market Sales, Yard Sales, or Garage Sales Held in Residential Neighborhoods. The motion passed 3 to 1 with Director Robb Williams voting against the ordinance.** Director Robb Williams said he did not think it was a good idea because the fee was in place for a reason. The fee is not expensive and the city is struggling for money and every dollar counts. Mayor Martin said he is on several committees and try to solicit vendors to come into the city and it is very difficult. We have given people things to come and that has helped some. While this does not benefit his business, it does bring people to the area which generates B &O taxes and benefits several local businesses, like restaurants and retail shops. The cost of policing flea markets and yard sales is ridiculous. Director Williams stated he agreed with the flea markets and yard sales permits. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith said the issue can be addressed at a later date if it needs to be changed.

City Attorney Colin Cline requested approval of transfer for Parcel 26 – Map 26 to Bluefield Land Bank be tabled. This request should be made by ordinance and will be presented at the next meeting.

City Attorney Colin Cline requested approval of Lease Agreement with TNT Fireworks be tabled.

Action on Accounts

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the October Financial Statement. At the close of October 2019, the 4th month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled \$5,053,207 (52.12%) of the projected amount of \$9,695,846. Expenditures totaled \$3,685,636 (24.13%) of the projected budget of \$15,272,161.

Receipts were up during October as a large portion of the 3rd quarter B & O tax and the 3rd quarter distribution of sales tax were received. The monthly ad valorem (property tax) receipt was substantial as well.

Expenditures are continuing to be held to a minimum other than normal operation costs. There are several large expenditures on the immediate horizon with paving and equipment purchases.

During October, the city purchased 517 Hardy Street and paid for two HVAC units that replaced inoperable units in the Police and Fire Departments. Work is continuing on the former Fed Ex bay in the Commercialization Station, the Union Street house and the new Public Works facility. Two payrolls occurred during October totaling \$454,998. **Director Robb Williams moved to approve the October Financial Statement as presented was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis stated she discussed the collection list in detail with the Board during the work session. She presented thirty – six accounts for collection for \$87,537.00. Before the list goes to collection the names will be published in the paper. A letter was mailed prior to the meeting informing those who needed to make a payment. **Director Robb Williams moved to approve the collection list as presented and authorize City Treasurer Davis to publish the list in the paper was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

City Manager Report Dane Rideout

- City updates are posted on the city website (www.cityofbluefield.com).
- Completed paving twenty streets. Thank you to City Engineer Kerry Stauffer and his team for their guidance and putting things in place during the paving process. Paving was completed in all four quadrants of the city. Communication with utility companies was essential. We did not want to pave a street only to have it torn up for utility repairs. The asphalt plants will probably close down for the season in the next few days.
- Leaves are being picked up. The fastest way for pick up is to bag the leaves. For leaf pick up use the Fix It Bluefield App.
- Residents need to be cautious as to where they park, especially at the bottom of hills and T-intersections. Leave space for snowplows to pass. Vehicles will be towed if they are blocking a street and emergency vehicles and snow plows cannot get through. Remember salt is not effective after a certain temperature and cinders will be used.
- The overlook has been repaired in house under the direction of City Engineer Kerry Stauffer.
- The Fire Department responded to a fire on Cumberland Road on Saturday. No human lives were lost but several pets perished.
- Fire Station #3 is being updated. The fire department has completed most of the demolition and we are now looking at estimates. We will actively seek corporate sponsors to help with renovations.
- USA Today reported the final vote, including both stadiums (El Paso and Bluefield): All fifty states participated and forty-three different countries voted. Many people connected to Bluefield.
- Our K-9 Thor was posted on social media with a bagel. He received thousands of likes and noted was very good media piece.
- Thank you to Grants Supermarket for helping with the Mitchell Stadium celebration Friday. Thank you to the Plumley Family for the terrific fireworks display.
- Bluefield Regional Medical Center held their first Veterans Day celebration and it was a very special event for all the veterans.
- Department Head Update: Fire Chief Rick Cary discussed Fire Prevention Week held in early October. Pamphlets and educational material were distributed during visits to local schools. During Fire Prevention Week approximately 100 fire detectors were given to citizens. Fire Chief Cary was excited about the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant for \$165,000. Part of the grant covered the purchase of updated communication devices: radio enabling the department to communicate across borders with a single device, support its mutual aid agreements, provide communication between members and support joint communication with personnel from other towns. Firefighter Shannon Akers explained and

demonstrated how the pagers work. City Manager Rideout stated part of the grant will be used to cover exhaust systems for both the Central Station as well as for Station 3 on Cumberland Road. City Ambassador Marie Blackwell researched and submitted the three years of material and application that was necessary in receiving the grant.

Report of Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer:

- Diane Lupke, president of Diane Lupke and Associates, Inc. held a seminar last Thursday. She spoke on economic development opportunities due to the Intuit/Alorica. One of the goals discussed was leakage or money being spent in the city because of the Intuit/Alorica effect. An example would be employees visiting local restaurants or contractors using local retailers. Ms. Lupke will be back in Bluefield one more time.
- A free class will be offered on Tuesday, November 19th from 11:00 am -1:00 pm @ the Bluefield Arts Center, Third Floor Gallery. The topic will be “Going into Business First Steps”.
- A writing contest in honor of Small Business Saturday has begun. In 100 words or less tell “What I Love About Bluefield”. Entries must be submitted by 4:30 pm on November 30th. Winners will be announced at the December 10th Board meeting at noon.
- Exit One Update: R K &K Engineering has completed setting the controls for the drone flight and the flight should be completed by December 6th. They have completed the designation of surface utilities. The geotechnical, geophysical, and a draft of the cut and fill analysis is complete. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has requested a phase one architectural study on the property. From evaluations completed, nothing historic is showing. We are going to ask that the study not be mandatory. The cost would be a \$29,000 item to an already tight budget.

Adjournment

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

Bobbi Kersey, City Clerk



Mayor Ron Martin