



## **City of Bluefield, West Virginia Boards and Commissions**

The City of Bluefield Board of Directors is in need of the experience and vast knowledge of its civic-minded citizens. If you have wanted to be a voice for the city and help guide its growth and future, serving on a city board or commission is one of the most effective ways to participate in your local government. These groups provide guidance and recommendations regarding policy, service, and education to the governing board. Positions are appointed by the board after a thorough review of the applications. To apply, please complete the required Boards and Commissions Application. This can be found along with a description of the duties and purpose for each board/commission at [www.cityofbluefield.com](http://www.cityofbluefield.com) under the "Government" tab on the homepage. A copy of the application can also be acquired from City Clerk. For more information, please call 304.327.2401 ext. 2407.

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*Note: This information serves only as a general information resource and interest-generator versus a definitive summary of all our boards and commissions. All meetings are public meetings held in open session according to the Open Governmental Meetings Act. They are generally conducted in the Conference Room or Board Room at City Hall, 200 Rogers Street, Bluefield, West Virginia.*

## **Policy on Boards & Commissions**

### **Purpose**

The City of Bluefield provides for continuous citizen input and advice through a wide variety of board and commissions. Some of these are advisory in nature to the Board of Directors, while others have distinct responsibilities that are established by law. The Board of Directors encourages citizens to participate in their local government by volunteering to serve on these boards and commissions.

### **Application for Appointment**

A description of all City boards is contained in this handout. This document is available in the City Clerk's Office and on the city's webpage: [www.cityofbluefield.com](http://www.cityofbluefield.com).

A completed application is required for consideration of an appointment to a City board or commission.

In most cases, the City Board will require an interview process prior to appointment. All appointments will be made in a meeting of the City Board. Discussion and consideration of appointments and interviews will also be held in open session.

Once an application for an appointment has been filed with the City Clerk, it is placed on a resource list and remains active for a one-year period. At the end of that period of time, applicants will be contacted by the City Clerk to see if they wish to seek other opportunities on city boards or to renew their application.

Applicants are strongly urged to attend several meetings of the board or commission prior to applying and/or appointment to a board or commission.

### **Qualifications**

Appointees to boards and commissions shall be residents of the City of Bluefield, unless otherwise specified or provided for by law, ordinance, or Board of Directors action establishing said board or commission, or in the rules or by laws of said board or commission, approved by the Board of Directors. Current board/commission members' positions will be grandfathered through their current expiration date.

In matters where an intergovernmental board has independent governing authority (by law, by agreement, or other enabling authority), and where not prohibited by law, at least one of the city's appointees shall be a current member of the Board of Directors. Such an appointment allows the Board of Directors to be a part of deliberation and decision-making on matters of regional importance that impact the City of Bluefield.

No citizen shall be eligible to hold concurrently more than two Board of Directors appointments to standing boards or commissions; this limitation shall not apply to ad hoc committees appointed by the City Board.

Efforts are made to represent the diversity that we have in our community on all boards, and criteria for appointments may be established to achieve appropriate diversity, except that preference shall be given to appointment of residents of a specific area of town for which an ad hoc or advisory committee may be appointed.

An oath of office (or affirmation) is required for some boards and commissions. Where applicable, newly appointed board members will take and sign an oath of office or affirmation following their appointment. If a board member enters on the duties of his or her office before taking, subscribing and filing the oath of office, he or she may be removed from office.

### **Terms**

A term of service on all City boards and commissions shall be three years unless provided by law, by agreement, or other enabling authority.

A length of service on all boards and commissions shall be limited to two full consecutive terms (plus any unexpired term to which a member is appointed). After two consecutive terms, a mandatory term of rest must be taken before the individual can apply for a board or commission once again.

A member shall serve until the expiration of their term or until such time as a successor is appointed, whichever occurs later, unless otherwise provided by law, by agreement, or other enabling authority.

Reappointment to a second term is not automatic and will be based on circumstances to be determined by the Board of Directors in each individual case.

### **Attendance**

Appointees to boards and commissions are expected to attend all meetings possible.

Any appointee, who fails to attend at least 75% of the regularly scheduled meetings of a board or commission within a twelve (12) month period, may be removed by the board or commission or the Board of Directors.

The board secretary shall be responsible for reporting on attendance the City Clerk through the minutes of the meeting.

Attendance provisions are not imposed upon liaison members but are in effect for citizens serving as appointed regular members on a board or commission.

### **The Board at Work**

Each board or commission receives its charge from the City of Bluefield, West Virginia Code of Ordinances or resolution establishing the board.

The City Board of Directors may, from time to time, ask a board or commission to consider specific items not in conflict with existing laws.

The chair, working with the City Clerk, shall file and post copies of the minutes on the city website.

The Board of Directors may appoint a member of the Board of Directors as liaison to a board or commission. The Board of Directors member is entitled to receive all agendas, minutes, and other correspondence and is eligible to attend all meetings of the board or commission including closed sessions. The role of the liaison shall be to serve as a direct communication link between the Board of Directors and the board or commission, and not to play an active role in the deliberations of the board or commission. The liaison shall notify the board or commission of long-range issues and projects under consideration by the Board of Directors which would be of interest to that board or commission and shall likewise advise the Board of Directors of such matters under consideration by the board or commission.

Each board or commission shall make a semi-annual report to the Board of Directors outlining their activities in addition to periodic updates.

From time to time, training sessions for board and commission members may be provided through city staff and other organizations. The Board of Directors encourages members of boards and commissions to take full advantage of these opportunities.

No board or commission member who is not present at a meeting shall be allowed to vote by proxy.

The board or commission will comply with the Open Governmental Meetings Act.

The board or commission should provide the City Clerk with its schedule of regular meetings with the predetermined time and place. The schedule will be revised only in accordance with legal requirements for notice.

In order to conduct official business at a regular or special meeting, a quorum of the board must be present. In the absence of a rule, by-law, or statute providing otherwise, a quorum is more than half of the members of the board, not counting vacant seats. If a quorum is not present at any meeting, the chairperson will postpone the meeting until such time as a quorum can be present, provided legal requirements are met for notice.

### **Conflict of Interest**

No member of a board or commission shall participate in the discussion or vote on any item involving their own official conduct or financial interest.

It is the responsibility of an individual board member to bring to the attention of the entire board or commission any item for which there may be a conflict of interest.

The board or commission may decide if a conflict exists for a member and vote to excuse the member from considering a particular item.

Staff and legal assistance is available to all boards and commissions to help with decisions in this area. Boards and commission may also reference the West Virginia Ethics Commission opinions on these matters.

### **Resignations and Replacements**

Any member of a board or commission who desires to resign shall do so in writing to the City Clerk. This letter is to be addressed to the Board of Directors.

Unless otherwise provided by law, ordinance or resolution, all appointments by the Board of Directors to a board or commission serve at the pleasure of Board of Directors, and may be removed from a board or commission at the discretion of Board of Directors.

Members of boards and commissions should note that they represent the City of Bluefield in their actions and decisions. For those boards and commissions whose members may be removed for cause, cause shall include, without limitation, the following: conflict of interest, failure to attend meetings, conduct, behavior, and other such reasons.

### **Ad Hoc Committees**

The Board of Directors may appoint ad hoc or standing committees to make recommendations regarding particular matters of interest within the City.

The foregoing rules on boards and commissions shall apply to ad hoc committees except where alternate provisions are made by the Board of Directors.

### **Inclement Weather**

If Mercer County Public Schools are cancelled, then any board/commission meeting scheduled for that day will be cancelled.

The chairman of the board/commission will have the discretion of cancelling a meeting in the event of safety concerns when the Mercer County Public Schools have delayed start times. In the event of inclement weather, the chairs of the respective boards or commissions will have the discretion whether or not the meeting is held that day.

## **Boards and Commissions**

### **Municipal Building Commission**

The Municipal Building Commission consists of five members appointed for terms of five years. (Code 1974, §2-45; Ord No. 76-9, 5-25-1976). The Municipal Building Commission meets as business warrants.

The Municipal Building Commission shall have the power to establish bylaws, rules and regulations for its government and operation, and for the use and operation of any building or other facilities, the operation, maintenance, control, improvement, establishment, enlargement, leasing and custody of which might be vested in the commission as is set forth by this division. The commission shall have the full power and authority to do all that is necessary or expedient for the successful operation thereof and for the discharge of the duties and functions passed to it by this division. (Code 1974, § 2-48; Ord. No. 76-9, 5-25-1976).

### **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission shall consist of eleven members, all of whom shall be residents of the city and at least seven of whom shall have been residents of the municipality for at least one year prior to nomination and appointment. (Code 1974, § 23-20; Ord. of 10-17-1978, § 23-20; Ord. No. 85-1, 4-2-1985; Ord. No. 88-12, 2-7-1989; Ord. No. 94-14, 12-13-1994). The Planning Commission meets as business warrants.

The Planning Commission advises the Board of Directors on future growth and development issues that affect the City. The Planning Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors on the comprehensive plan, redevelopment plans, changes in development regulations, requests to rezone property, and reviews preliminary site plans, group housing plans and subdivisions.

### **Zoning Board of Adjustment**

The Zoning Board of Adjustment shall consist of five members appointed for terms of three years. (Code 1974, § 23-23; Ord. of 10-17-1978, § 23-23). The Zoning Board of Adjustment meets as business warrants on the third Thursday of the month at 4:40 p.m.

The purpose of the Zoning Board of Adjustment is to provide for an appointive, fact-finding body which shall, after due deliberation and public hearing, make final decisions on specified administrative matters related to zoning

### **Building Commission**

The Building Commission shall be composed of the mayor, the city engineer and one member at large, to be selected by and to serve at the will and pleasure of the Board of Directors. The director of health or his representative and the fire chief shall serve as ex-officio members of the commission. (Code 1958, pt. 13, art. 17, § 2; Code 1974, § 4-61). The Building Commission meets the fourth Tuesday of the month in the Municipal Building.

The Bluefield Building Commission's purpose is to maintain safe and affordable housing in the City of Bluefield and aid in the revitalization of Bluefield through the removal of dilapidated

structures and by assuring that construction is performed by qualified contractors that meet the adopted building codes.

### **Beautification Commission**

The Beautification Commission shall be composed of twenty members appointed for terms of four years. (Code 1974, § 15-20; Ord. No. 77-1, 3-29-1977; Ord. No. 94-6, 5-24-1994; Ord. No. 2007-1, 4-10-2007) The Beautification Commission meets as business warrants.

The Beautification Commission's purpose is to advise and recommend to the Mayor and Board of Directors such programs or projects as would, in the opinion of the commission, improve the beauty and general welfare of the city. The commission may, at the request of the board of directors, act as a clearinghouse for any beautification projects within the city. (Code 1974, § 15-19; Ord. No. 77-1, 3-29-1977)

### **Historic Landmarks Commission**

The Historic Landmarks Commission shall consist of five voting members, of whom one shall represent the downtown business community; one, historic preservation interests; one, the board of directors; and two, the citizenry at large. Members shall be appointed for three-year terms. (Code 1974, § 23-80; Ord. No. 88-9, 9-13-1988). The Historic Landmarks meets as business warrants.

The Historic Landmarks Commission recommends "historic districts" and "landmarks" for establishment by the Board of Directors; reviews and acts upon proposals for alterations, demolitions, or new construction within historic districts, or for alteration or demolition of designated landmarks; undertakes an inventory of properties of historical, archaeological, architectural and/or cultural significance.

The Historic Landmarks Commission shall also be responsible for a survey of the cemeteries located within the corporate limits of the city. The purpose of that survey shall be to determine the nature, extent, and existence of all burial grounds for the dead within the city, and further determine whether such cemeteries are under the supervision of a governing board, board of trustees, religious congregation, or other responsible entity, and whether funds are provided for their perpetual care and maintenance. Cemetery Commission code: (Code 1974, § 15-51; Ord. No. 94-13, 11-9-1994; Ord. No. 95-7, 12-26-1995)

### **Public Housing Authority**

The Public Housing Authority shall be composed of six members appointed for terms of five years. The Bluefield Public Housing Authority meets as business warrants. Established by a 1962 Board of Directors Resolution, the Bluefield Public Housing Authority takes care of all issues facing public housing in the City of Bluefield. The Bluefield Public Housing Authority purpose is to study and make recommendations concerning the city or county plan in relation to the problems of clearing, replanning, redevelopment, and reconstruction of areas in which unsanitary or substandard conditions exist, and the providing of housing accommodations for persons of low and moderate income.

### **City Tree Board**

The City Tree Board is appointed by the Board of Directors as follows: three members of the beautification commission, the director of parks and recreation, and the county forester. Each

shall serve a one-year term; except for the director of parks and recreation and the county forester, who shall be ex officio. (Code 1974, § 21-11; Ord. No. 93-3, 5-11-1993). The City Tree Board meets the first Wednesday bi-monthly at 5:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building as business warrants.

The Tree Board's purpose is to study, investigate and develop and/or update annually, and administer a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets and in other public areas. Such plan will be presented annually to the city Board of Directors and upon their acceptance and approval shall constitute the official comprehensive city tree plan for the city. The board, when requested by the city Board of Directors, shall consider, investigate, make finding, report and recommend upon any special matter of questions coming within the scope of its work. (Code 1974, § 21-12; Ord. No. 93-3, 5-11-1993)

#### **Firemen's Civil Service Commission**

The Firemen's Civil Service Commission is composed of one member that is appointed by the Board of Directors, one member that is appointed by the Chamber of Commerce, and one member that is appointed by the Fraternal Order of Firemen. Not more than two can belong to the same political party. The Firemen's Civil Service Commission meets as business warrants.

#### **Policemen's Civil Service Commission**

The Policemen's Civil Service Commission meets as business warrants. One member is appointed by the Board of Directors, one member is appointed by the Chamber of Commerce, and one member is appointed by the Fraternal Order of Police. Not more than two can belong to the same political party. The Policemen's Civil Service Commission meets as business warrants.

#### **Police Citizen's Review Board**

The Police Citizen's Review Board is composed of three members who shall be appointed by the Board of Directors, one Board Director, one representative from the police department and the City Clerk. The Police Citizen's Review Board meets every three months for the purpose of reviewing police inquiries or complaints.