

# CITY OF BLUEFIELD



## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Hello!

We are so pleased to welcome you to the 2019 annual review. This year has brought challenges, opportunities, successes, and, unfortunately, grievous loss. We were saddened in February with the passing of District III Board Member Michael Gibson. The loss of Mike's unique perspective and keen intellect has been a loss to the Board, but we were very fortunate in that Peter Taylor stepped up to fill a vacant seat. Peter brings a wealth of experience and a balanced and reflective approach to problem solving, and we are so pleased that he is willing to serve our City by being a part of this Board.

The mission of this Board and of the administration and departments remains the same – to continue to improve Bluefield so that it is a better place to live, work, play and learn. Each department within the City has a vital role to play in the success of that mission, and a unique set of challenges to the fulfillment of that role. We are extremely proud of the department heads, and all of our City employees, and the skill and dedication they bring to this team. This evening, we invite you to chat with them, ask them questions about their work, and of course, ask questions.

Thank you so much for joining us, and for your interest in, and love for, our City.

Board of Directors, City of Bluefield



Dear City of Bluefield Board of Directors:

I am pleased to present the 2018 Annual report to the City of Bluefield Board of Directors. This is the fourth annual report I have presented during my tenure in compliance with our City's Code of Ordinances and I am excited to report significant progress in many areas of the city.

2018 was a year of exceptional accomplishments and unfortunately a sad time for our city. The loss of District Three Director Michael Gibson was a severe blow to the leadership, vision and in my opinion the conscience of the Board of Directors. Mike was that quiet professional who was, in essence, a modern day Hemmingway and we miss him dearly. We have been extremely fortunate to have Peter Taylor step into the role, bring with him a wealth of experience and new ideas as we tackle the challenges facing our area.

I want to list out a few major muscle movements that fall outside of a specific department or out of our normal projects or events we host each year: I consider these strategic initiatives worth mentioning that are unique to Bluefield and its future.

- **Host City for the ICMA/DoD Pilot Program** – Bluefield was selected to be one of the 10 cities in the United States to partner with a senior fellow in the Department of Defense to showcase our city, share best practices, lessons learned and brief at the national level in Baltimore, Maryland. Our senior fellow was LTC (Ret) GS-15 Will Plumley who is in charge of all military installations in the Republic of Korea and a West Virginia native from Hamlin. This clearly spotlights Bluefield as an up and coming municipality and an organization that is thinking at the enterprise level when tackling challenges.
- **Special Operations Forces and Civil Affairs Team Training** – We continue to partner with Army Special Operations Command and host unconventional warfare training in and around the city. This continues to be an inject into our economy of federal dollars, showcases our city, provides partner training opportunities with our Police and Fire departments and provides our military a premier training venue as they prepare to deploy in support of our Nation's strategic priorities.
- **Exit 1 Development**- Through the tremendous work of Jim Spencer the city was awarded a \$1M dollar grant from the EDA and a matching \$1M dollar grant to build "shovel ready building sites" on the City property at Exit 1. Our long term goal is to develop the site into a multi-use location for possible lodging, retail and commercial use. The Preliminary Engineering Report was completed by E.L. Robinson and determined that approximately "two pads" and 12 acres of usable space could be developed. The city has since awarded a contract for a Hotel Feasibility Study to REVPAR International who will produce a study used to validate the need, pursue funding and hopefully identify a potential developer for the site. It is our hope this will spur growth in the newly designated Opportunity Zone and John Nash Boulevard corridor.
- **FitRec** – The city received a generous donation of the former Community Center on College Avenue. Realizing that fitness and wellness are critical to a city's DNA and that another vacant building in the heart of south Bluefield would have negative ramifications to the property values in the area, the city took on the challenge. Spearheaded by vision of Parks and Recreation Director Charles Ridlehuber and the project management of IT Director Billy Hester, along with a generous donation by the Shott Foundation and over \$400,000 from the city general fund, we now have a state of the art Fitness and Recreation Center that will serve the region for years to come.
- **Storm Water Rate Adjustment** – Clearly the hardest issues elected boards face are rate hikes to critical services provided. Bluefield has an amazing history and unfortunately historic (some say pre-historic) utility infrastructure. As a city over 10,000 in population, we manage an MS-IV permit to be in compliance with the Federal Clean Water Act. While most citizens are not aware of behind the scenes water testing and report submissions to the State and Federal Authorities, they are very much aware of the flooding, failed or failing storm drains and lines throughout the city. Raising rates while

unpopular, the Storm Water Board is now positioned to begin a Storm Water Master Plan, ultimately pursue Bonding to fund a major infrastructure system upgrade and begin a more aggressive rehabilitation of storm drains and lines throughout the city. This is not a quick fix and will take decades to correct, however, this rate increase will move the city in the right direction.

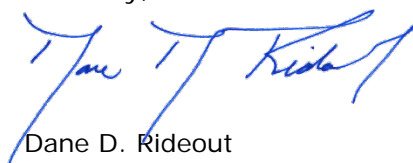
- **New Bluefield Area Transit Transfer Station** - The city, Bluefield Area Transit and the Federal Department of Public Transportation have teamed up to build a new state of the art transit facility across from the Wade Center. This new facility will provide ample space for eight busses, provide a customer facility that is safe, well lit, heated/air conditioned with public bathrooms. Additionally, it will provide a concession area, driver break room, security office and accommodate the Greyhound Bus Service and create a shovel ready pad for future retail development. This is a \$1.5M investment into District 1 and the West end of the city and we expect to break ground in late summer 2019.
- **City Directional Signage** – The Blueprint Community Council partnering with Hills Studio and a grant from the Shott Foundation have revamped a previous study to install directional signage throughout the city. The study is now complete and new signage and information Kiosks are being built. Our hope is to begin installing this signage in phases throughout the city with our initial concentration on the downtown and public parking areas.
- **Other notable projects:** Future Downtown Demolition planning of the 400 Block and Asbestos Testing, LED Decorative Light replacements downtown, acquisition of the former Elks Building and its preservation, Census 2020 certification/training and prep, future project design for city-owned property on Airport Road and natural gas expansion to Exit 1.

Enclosed in this document are reports from the major departments and stalwart employees that make up this tremendous organization. I am extremely proud of what they have accomplished and am humbled at the plethora of activities, projects, and services that they have completed. Our departments are creative, efficient, and manage chaos on a daily basis as they tackle the challenges presented by providing services to 10,000+ residents, over 100+ miles of streets on terrain that very well may be the most challenging in the State. These phenomenal Americans continue to thrive every day with out-of-the-box solutions, positive attitudes, and that unwavering work ethic found in only the most successful of professional teams.

This year I have adjusted the way in which the information is presented. Instead of generalizing data, displaying trends or compiling figures for each section, the following guidance was given to the department heads to let them tell their own story without adhering to a set format: The intent was to "articulate what they have accomplished for the year, capture the salient actions by quarter and then provide me with their vision or goals on what they intend to accomplish over the next 12 months.

It is my belief you will arrive at the same conclusion upon reading the department supervisors' submissions, internalizing their accomplishments and reflecting on the incredible scope of responsibility and services they provide the citizens of Bluefield, we live in an amazing city, ripe with potential and have a bright future ahead of us.

Sincerely,



Dane D. Rideout  
City Manager  
City of Bluefield



## BLUEFIELD AREA TRANSIT

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### OUR MISSION

*Bluefield Area Transit's goal is to provide the citizens of Mercer and McDowell counties with a safe, reliable and dependable public transportation system. Bluefield Area Transit is committed to provide our patrons various routes, schedules and services.*

## FIRST QUARTER

- The beginning of 2018 was met with the excitement of BAT being awarded the Grant to begin the process of creating the new Transfer Station in downtown Bluefield. During the month of January the EOI (Expression of Interest) was submitted to the West Virginia Purchasing Division, for their approval.
- In February the first set of drawings for the Transfer Station were sent to the Executive Director of the West Virginia Division of Public Transit for approval.
- BAT was once again able to play a small role in the lives of our young people in the community; by providing transportation for the Youth Leadership Program. During the first few months of 2018 we transported a group of 28 students to various businesses in the area.

## SECOND QUARTER

- With spring comes Clean Up Day! Bluefield Area Transit provides the transportation throughout the City for the cleanup crews.
- The past several years BAT has provided the transportation for All Together Arts Week; which over the course of two evenings BAT transported patrons to various businesses throughout the City of Bluefield and Princeton.
- During this year's West Virginia Wings and Wheels Car and Air Show, held at the Mercer County Airport, BAT provided a shuttle to transport residents from the WV Armory to the Airport.

## THIRD QUARTER

- The month of July is the beginning of a new fiscal year and along with that comes the West Virginia Division of Public Transit's Annual Conference. This year BAT won the Greatest Passenger Increase award, we transported 216,101 residents in Mercer and McDowell Counties.
- In the transit world one of the top honors is Driver of The Year; our Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Driver, Mike Norris, won this award.





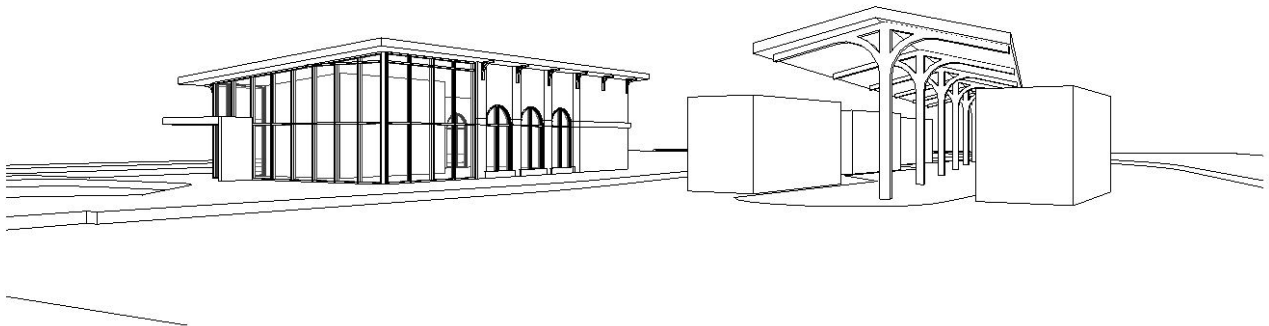
- Keeping up with our proud tradition of being "Nature's Air-Conditioned City" and having the Lemonade Festival Parade, BAT once again participated in the Parade and provided transportation to residents and visitors during the event.

#### FOURTH QUARTER

- CNG Training was held at BAT with representation from the fire department, City and State Police, DOT, and Mercer County Emergency Management. This training was based on the background of CNG and how to respond to any type of vehicle accident.



- October was ushered in with great excitement, we were able to see our preliminary drawings for the New Transfer Station. The ground breaking is set for spring 2019 and the projected completion date will be the spring of 2020.



- In October we donated a bus and a CNG conversion kit to the Mercer County Vocational Center. This decision was made in hopes that the students of Mercer County would be afforded an opportunity to have a hands-on experience with CNG technology.



- Recognizing that transportation services are essential for Seniors, People with Disabilities, Individuals and Families with Low Incomes, and the General Public to access employment, education, health services, and community programs, Bluefield Area Transit hosted the coordination meeting to update the Regional Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. All organizations that are or plan to be applicants for Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 had to attend the meeting.
- Bluefield Area Transit is constantly evolving, whether it be training employees to proficiency, seeking ways to accommodate the residents of Mercer and McDowell Counties, improving our facilities, keeping our vehicles in prime condition, all while meeting our performance bench marks for the West Virginia Division of Public Transit.



Connecting Communities.....Connecting Lives



## CITY AMBASSADOR

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Ambassador for the City of Bluefield is an exciting and exhilarating position where networking opportunities, meeting new people, and promoting the city in a positive light, play an important role. The ambassador is out and about representing the city at social functions, meetings, hosting events, welcoming visitors to City Hall, conducting tours showcasing the city to visitors, schools, and medical personnel, compiling and deploying the city's monthly newsletter, grant writing, and organizing events. The ambassador assists the Community & Economic Development department as needed, the Bluefield Area Transit scheduling trolley reservations, and serves on the board, or is a member of many civic organizations. The ambassador deploys press releases and communicates with local media to promote citywide events, assists city commissions and all departments located within the City of Bluefield, with additional responsibilities as assigned.

### January – March 2018

- Hosted luncheon at Bluefield Area Transit Authority for Community & Economic Development
- Assisted at GBCC Annual Women's Conference
- Submitted 2017 AFG Grant for the Fire Department (2017 grant was held up in the legislature)
- Conducted citywide tours for potential physicians – BRMC
- Organized Annual Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day event
- Submitted "Meet Me at The Park" grant for Parks & Rec
- Submitted and received donation from BRMC for the Fire Department for AED Defibrillators
- Submitted & received grant from the Shott Foundation for Wi-Fi at BAAC
- Submitted & received grant from the Shott Foundation for Fit/Rec Center
- Submitted grant application to Shott Foundation for acquisition of new Public Works building
- Submitted and received grant from State Farm for smoke detectors & carbon monoxide detectors.



*BRMC Presentation  
AED Defibrillators  
Fire Chief Rick Cary & Josh Snow*



*State Farm Presentation Smoke &  
Carbon Monoxide Detectors Fire Chief  
Rick Cary & Brandon Disney*

## April – June 2018

- Conducted citywide tours for potential physicians at BRMC
- Assisted at GBCC Mountain Festival and Festival Pageant
- Assisted at ERMT Town Band concert
- Conducted job site visits for Pike View & Princeton HS at departments located within the city
- Exhibited at GBCC Better Living Show
- Submitted Dog Park upgrade grant
- Submitted REAP grant for recycling
- Submitted State Farm grant for Fire Department for Fire Training Center
- Submitted and received Litter/Demolition grant for Code Enforcement
- Submitted and received CFVA's grants: Fire Department, Code Enforcement & Parks & Recreation
- Submitted and received donation from 84 Lumber for the Fire Department
- Submitted and received grant from AEP for AED Defibrillator for Fire Department
- Submitted and received grant for 2019 NFC (National Fitness Campaign) grant for community outdoor fitness park – Parks & Recreation



84 Lumber Donation to Bluefield Fire Department

## July – September 2018

- Assisted at Lemonade Night at the Ball Park (Bowen Field)
- Conducted citywide tour for potential physician at BRMC
- As part of the ICMA Host City Program, coordinated the host week for our two guests from South Korea
  - \* Lt. Col (Ret) Will Plumley (spent with City Manager and various departments)
  - \* Grace Plumley (conducted tours of the region)
- Organized Military Night at the Ball Park (Bowen Field)
- Assisted at Lemonade Festival & Blues Festival Fireworks Display
- Assisted at reception and ribbon cutting at the Fit/Rec Center
- Co-organizer of "Shine the Light on College Avenue" contest
- Organized 9/11 Patriot Day Ceremony
- Hosted Realtors Luncheon at the Clover Club
- Participated at Career Connections through Mercer County Schools
- Presented and received \$5,000 check from the Mercer Co. Comm for bear proof receptacles
- Check presentation to Chief Cary, Bluefield Fire Department (CFVA)
- Check presentation to Lori Mills, Code Enforcement Director (CFVA)
- Check presentation to Chief Dillow, Bluefield Police Department (CFVA)



Community Foundation of the Virginias  
Presentation Fire Chief Rick Cary, Police Chief  
Dennis Dillow and Code Enforcement Director  
Lori Mills

#### **October – December 2018**

- Exhibited at the Senior Expo with the Fire Department
- Presented and received from the Mercer County Commission \$1,000 for Holiday of Lights
- Assisted at ribbon unveiling for Deb Sarver at the Holiday of Lights
- Orchestrated the HOL unveiling with Dr. Tolliver, Mayor Martin, and the media
- Assisted at Small Business Saturday
- Hosted luncheon for Community & Economic Development (RCBI) at Bluefield Transit
- Assisted with the 5K Challenge at the Bluefield City Park, Holiday of Lights
- Assisted with the annual City of Bluefield Tree Lighting
- Assisted with the GBCC Holiday Reception
- Assisted and participated in the Bluefield Christmas Parade
- Worked Holiday of Lights
- Submitted State Farm grant for Fire Department (smoke & carbon monoxide detectors)
- Submitted 2018 AFG grant for Fire Department (vehicle exhaust systems & radios/pagers)
- Submitted USDA grant for Public Works (garbage truck)
- Check presentation to Parks & Rec Director Charles Ridlehuber (CFVA)

In looking forward to 2019, I envision additional grant funding opportunities, playing a larger role in the responsibilities as City Ambassador, and welcoming an increased number of visitors as our role in the tourism industry expands and the city continues to grow. This city will never be what it once was, but with the vision of the current City Manager and Board of Directors, the city is on an exciting new course of change and growth.

## **CITY ENGINEER**

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The Engineering Department plans, coordinates and assists with maintenance, while partnering with utility companies, and various departments located throughout the city. During 2018, the following jobs have been accomplished.

### **First Quarter: January –March**

1. Worked with Fox and Thompson on inspections of heating units in the Fed Ex building to correct heating issues.
2. Ordered gas valves and an induce draft motor to correct the heating issues at the Fed Ex building. Heating units were repaired.
3. Spent two weeks inspecting and correcting issues caused by extreme cold conditions at the Wells Fargo building; repaired numerous pipefittings and replaced the water meter. Repairs fixed the water issues.
4. Replaced Cobra Head poles for Bland Street that were knocked down.
5. Ordered three (3) decorative poles for the downtown area.
6. In partnership with Fire Chief Rick Cary and his Fire Training Center vision, we designed the proposed fire-training site on the old armory property.
7. Revalidated the Flood Plain management plan for the city appears to be in good standing.
8. In conjunction with Code Enforcement we continue to contact companies regarding information for contractors that have high-rise capabilities to obtain options for the roof of the Law & Commerce building.
9. Coordinated with AEP regarding line switch replacement in the alley between the Bluefield Area Arts Center and the Ramsey School building.
10. Conducted staff visits with teams from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces group.
11. Conducted an inspection at the Law & Commerce and Warlick buildings to determine the condition of these two buildings in prep for demolition.
12. Coordinated and provided historic information for the Planning Commission on the subdividing of the K-Mart and Tractor Supply buildings into two separate parcels.
13. Assisted Parks & Rec on the Fitness & Recreation Center master plan.
14. Worked with the state on the upcoming exercises for the Civil Affairs team.

### **Second Quarter: April – June**

1. Compiled bid packets for the paving at the Fitness & Recreation Center.
2. Worked on estimates for the sidewalk repair at the Fitness & Recreation Center.
3. Worked with various utility companies regarding the clearing of downed trees from roadways.
4. Worked with WV American Water regarding their proposed building at the intersection of Groveland Drive and Media Street.
5. Solicited bids for the HVAC at the Bluefield Area Arts Center building.
6. Solicited bids for the roof of the Law & Commerce building.
7. Assisted E.L. Robinson with the inspection of the Law & Commerce building.
8. Excavated and prepped the lot at the Bluefield Fitness & Recreation Center.
9. Worked with AEP in the city park to repair the power boxes damaged by the storm.
10. Cleaned and installed gabion stone in the ditch line at the grassy field located at the tennis courts along with widening the entrances.
11. Worked with Rucker Construction to install the 18" protection curbing at the Baker's Hill Inn.



12. Installed new conduit and wiring to establish electricity at the grassy field in front of the tennis courts.
13. Worked with AEP to replace four decorative light post downtown.
14. Oversaw the city's involvement in the construction to widen the corners at the intersection of Maryland Avenue and College Avenue.
15. Continued to work on the intersection of East River and College Avenue to rebuild the storm drains and corners in preparation for paving.
16. Solicited bids for the city's paving portion of the streets to be paved beyond the Sanitary Board's paving limits for College Avenue.



### Third Quarter: July – September

1. Paved and milled Maryland Avenue and College.
2. Worked with AEP to upgrade the power at the intersection of Bluefield Avenue and Spruce Street.
3. Demolished the new front entrance pull through at the Fitness & Recreation Center.
4. Coordinated with AEP regarding replacing the top of the power vault in front of Kammer's Furniture Store on Bland Street.
5. Completed the site survey with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces group for an exercise taking place in October.
6. Completed the concrete work and paving project at the Fitness & Recreation Center.
7. Assisted the contractor at the Commercialization Center to resolve issues with the utility companies.
8. Supervised the traffic control plan for the Lemonade Festival. Repaired the electrical problems at the Blues Festival.
9. Met with several contractors regarding possible spoil locations for the King Coal Highway project.
10. Worked with city crews to repair North Mercer Street.
11. Continued to work with the contractors on the buildings that will be raised in the downtown.



#### **Fourth Quarter: September – December**

1. Met with contractors to survey the lighting at Mitchell Stadium that will require extensive wiring and transformer replacements.
2. Hosted a utility meeting for the proposed downtown demolition as well as various projects throughout the city.
3. Completed the crosswalks on College Avenue near the Fitness & Recreation Center.
4. Several sinkholes have emerged in the city. Devised plans to fix the sinkholes with city crews.
5. Met with Bluefield Gas Company and AEP to conduct walkthroughs in buildings proposed for demolition.
6. Coordinated with AEP the locations and hook ups for the new Christmas decorations located on Cumberland Road.
7. Completed the broadband right-of-way validation with Lumus in the downtown area.
8. Continued to work with WV American Water to install new meter services for the Commercialization project.
9. Received estimates on several trees located in the City's Right of Ways,
10. Worked with the WV Department of Highways to repair the stoplights at the intersection of U.S. Rt. 52 and Bluefield Avenue, as well as Federal Street and Princeton Avenue.
11. Worked with AEP to replace the decorative light at the corner of Federal Street and Raleigh Street.
12. Met with the Bluefield Rescue Squad to obtain permission to run an underground transmission line through the Bluefield Rescue Squad property. The request has since been granted.

For the year 2019, the Engineering Department plans to assist in the development of a storm water plan to correct the outdated storm lines, work with the WV Department of Highways on proposed stop light upgrades throughout the city, and to devise a 5-year paving list to integrate this into a public GIS layer for the public and utility companies.



## CODE ENFORCEMENT

It has been a busy year in our department. We are extremely proud of how far our department has come in 2018. We have been able to increase production with less staff (Gerald Steele retired in late 2017). This has been largely due to our hardworking staff and our new iWorq software which streamlines processes and increases efficiency. We have continued to adjust schedules to cover weekends without the use of any overtime pay. This has been effective in stopping unlicensed contractors and unpermitted construction work within the city. It has also allowed us to answer animal calls that occur during the weekends. In 2018 there were building permits issued for over 8.5 million in upgrades, which indicates our citizens and businesses are improving their properties. That is great news!

Violation	Number of Cases	% Change from 2017
Total Cases	1415	16.50%
Weeds Overgrown	385	1.90%
Garbage/Trash issue	379	30.10%
Abandoned Vehicles	122	281.30%
Animal Control	275	44.00%
Other Violations	254	50.30%
Rental/General Building/Downtown Inspections	84	-20.00%
Parking Tickets	550	76.30%
Building Permits	481	6.90%



Code Enforcement received multiple complaints from neighbors about a rundown rental property on Frederick Street. We were able to meet with the landlord, implement an improvement plan and the end result is a home that is in much better condition. This improves everyone's property values!

**First Quarter 2018 (Jan-Mar)**



## **First Quarter Department Statistics**

**292 Total Cases**

**158 Parking Tickets**

**60 Building Permits Issued**

**7 Vehicles Towed**

**51 Animals Taken to the Shelter**

As 2018 began we saw several large construction projects come to fruition. The Devonshire Court project of DCI/Shires Properties built four new townhouses in the city to the tune of \$350,000, which is a much appreciated investment into the city. KFC on Cumberland Road underwent \$150,000 worth of remodeling to the interior and exterior. Applied Technologies on Bluefield Avenue put on a new roof for \$69,000. As for the department in the first quarter, Building Inspector Lori Mills completed CPSI training to renew her certification as a Playground Inspector which qualifies her to inspect playgrounds within the city to ensure they are safe and free from hazard. Building Inspector Mills also worked on a project to assess the condition of the historic Law and Commerce building on Federal St in its entirety. Finally, Animal Control was able to rescue 8 cats and two dogs from a hoarding situation and transport them to the Mercer County Animal Shelter. In 2018 we took an average of 18 animals to the shelter per month.



## **Second Quarter 2018 (Apr-Jun)**

In the spring of 2018, Flowers Bakery gave the interior of their store on Bluefield Avenue a face-lift, a remodeling project that totaled \$166,000. Also, on Cumberland Road, Cumberland Self Storage was constructed for \$300,000, turning a once vacant lot into a new business within the city. Inside the department, the contract to undertake demolitions for the city was placed for bid and awarded to Virginia Asphalt. Also, our department helped with the College Avenue contest that both promoted the wonderful renovations done to the FitRec and encouraged residents of the area to improve their own properties. Being a part of this celebration of community was a nice change of pace from our typical day to day duties.

### **Second Quarter Department Statistics**

**574 Total Cases**

**104 Parking Tickets**

**271 Overgrown Weeds Cases**

**177 Permits Issued**

**2 Cars Towed**

**41 Animals Taken to the Shelter**



### **Third Quarter 2018 (Jul-Sept)**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter we received two grants, one worth \$1300 for Animal Control from the Community Foundation of the Virginias and a \$4000 REEP grant for Demolitions. The Animal Control Grant was used to purchase new protective gloves for each officer, two new cages for animal transport, and 40 new traps to help combat the stray cat population within the city. The grant for Demolitions was used for the demolition of 3 separate structures in city limits. In this quarter citizens and businesses continue to invest in our city. McDonald's on Bluefield Avenue invested \$97,100 on interior renovations adding a new ordering kiosk, Bluefield State College placed a new roof on their library totaling \$797,548 and the Division of Highways began a large project within the city to bring our sidewalks up to ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) standards for \$1,150,000. Also in this quarter Animal Control uncovered a troubling animal abuse case that resulted in the death of two dogs. The individual responsible was arrested and brought to justice. Our department continues to train, educate and obtain certifications for all staff members. In August, Alex Ellison passed the written examination to become a certified Property Maintenance and Housing Inspector through the ICC (International Code Council) and Code Inspector through the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office.

#### **Third Quarter Department Statistics**

**362 Total Cases**

**177 Parking Tickets**

**100 Overgrown Weeds Cases**

**142 Permits Issued**

**1 Car Towed**

**73 Animals Taken to the Shelter**



#### **Fourth Quarter 2018 (Oct-Dec)**

In the final quarter of 2018, the Kennedy Center on Bland Street began remodeling their 8<sup>th</sup> floor apartments, The Historic Bank Lobby on Commerce Street has secured a permit for renovations and is under new ownership and Tiffany Manor replaced 154 windows in their apartment buildings increasing their value by \$197,450. Building Inspector Lori Mills and City Attorney Colin Cline attended BAD training which is an acronym for Brownstone, Abandoned and Dilapidated in regards to buildings and structures. This training was very useful and will prove to be invaluable for future city projects. In this quarter, Code Enforcement began to focus on inspecting buildings in downtown Bluefield, completing inspections in 24 buildings.

#### **Fourth Quarter Department Statistics (Through Dec. 12 2018)**

**186 Total Cases**

**111 Parking Tickets**

**14 Overgrown Weeds Cases**

**103 Permits Issued**

**2 Cars Towed**

**55 Animals Taken to the Shelter**





## Looking to the Future

By the spring of 2019 we will have all 55 of the downtown buildings inspected and evaluated. By July 2019 we hope to have all 37 condemned properties razed and hold owners responsible for the cost of demolition. In 2018 46.7% of demolitions in the city were paid for privately, which is 16.7% higher than it was in 2017. This trend is very encouraging

as we continue to hold individuals responsible for their properties.



Now that all Code Enforcement Officers are certified through ICC and the WV State Fire Marshal's Office, we plan to shift some of our focus onto inspecting the many rental properties we have in our city. Education plays a vital part

in the department being up to date on the latest codes and ordinances. Lori Mills will test in January 2019 for the B2 Commercial Building Inspector certification and then continue to study to obtain the B3 Plans Examiner certification by the end of 2019. Also, all 3 officers in the Code Enforcement Department will soon be certified to test for asbestos in residential and commercial properties.



## COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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According to the International Economic Development Council, no single definition incorporates all of the different strands of economic development. Typically, economic development can be described in objectives. These are most commonly described as the creation of jobs and wealth and the improvement in the quality of life. Economic development can also be described as a process that influences the growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well-being of a community.

The City of Bluefield has been impacted for many years with the economic downturn in the coal industry that Southern West Virginia and the surrounding region has faced. Most of the issues are outside of the city's control, as they are controlled at the state and federal levels. City leadership is implementing a proactive and aggressive approach to plan for the future of the community. A focus of partnering with existing businesses while attracting new business is central to the plan. Other strategies include encouraging entrepreneurship, diversification of the local economy, attracting new industry and constant involvement in workforce development and regional initiatives.

For many decades, the number one export from the Bluefield Region has not been coal, gas or timber, but rather our youth. We have educated and exported many of our children to other regions where they can find better employment opportunities. This trend must be reversed.

In April 2015, the City of Bluefield's Board of Directors created a Community & Economic Development Department (CED). Since then, the CED has taken a three-prong approach to economic growth in the City and region.

1. To support existing business and industry to help them diversify and grow. This is done through a Business Retention & Expansion Program.
2. To cultivate entrepreneurship and innovation, especially through the Commercialization Station.
3. To attract new industry, especially in the "TEAM" sectors. TEAM stands for Technology, Energy, and Advanced Manufacturing.

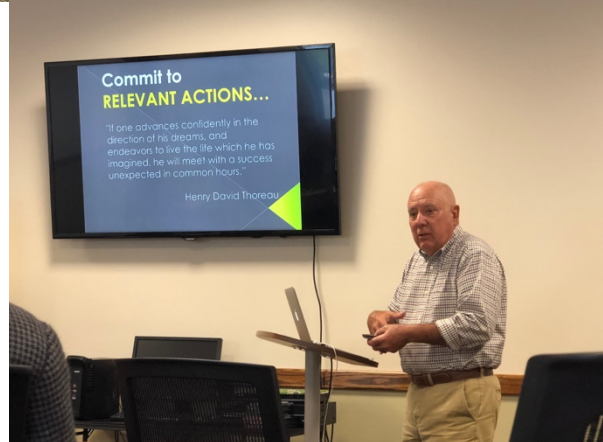
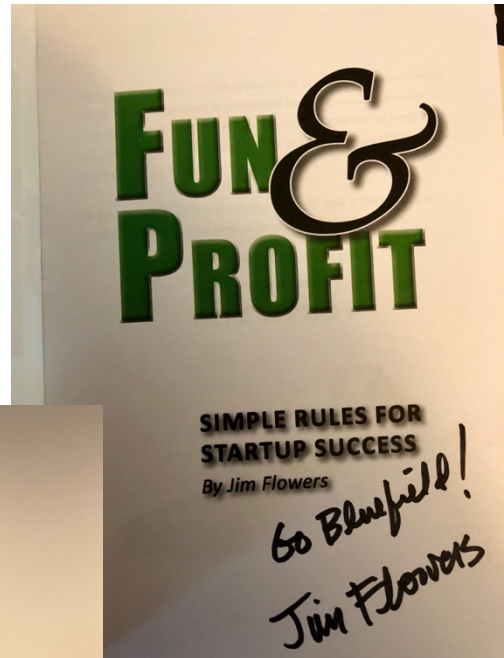
### BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION PROGRAM

Business retention and expansion is a vital part of economic development. While attracting new businesses, it is also important to assist existing businesses with their needs and obstacles. The retention and expansion program will help the community to understand local business needs through relationship building, accurate knowledge, and identifying available sites and facilities for expansion so that businesses stay, grow, and become more committed to the community.

## Training/Workshops

The CED partnered with several organizations, including WV Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Robert C. Byrd Institute (RCBI), and WVU Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), to host various training and workshops for local businesses and individuals. These trainings and workshops include but not limited to:

- WVU MEP Time Management
- WVU MEP Inventory Management/Time Study/Process Evaluation
- Business Fundamentals Workshops with WWSBDC
- RCBI Exporting Training
- RCBI HUBZone Workshop
- Entrepreneurial Training taught by Jim Flowers from VT Knowledge Works
- Opportunity Zone Training



## Marketing

- **Video Marketing Program** – The CED will produce a short marketing video for any business located within the City that are current on their fees and taxes. The service is free to the business and is a partnership between the CED and the business to help them grow. The business can use the video to market themselves while the CED uses the video to market the businesses and the City. Many of the videos are on the landing page of the [www.mybluefield.org](http://www.mybluefield.org) website.
- **MyBluefield App** – The CED applied for and received grants to create the MyBluefield App which went live on August 31 on the IOS and Andriod Platforms. A billboard advertising the MyBluefield App was installed on September 15 on the City's

property on US 52. The goal of the App is to market the City, the local businesses, and events to tourists, local college students, and the region.

- **Expanded Social Media** – With the rapid growth of video marketing and other platforms, the City has grown 49% of its following since last year. In the fall, the CED created a Facebook group for business owners as a way of communication, collaboration, and promotion. The City just expanded the Social Media Platform to include a CED page on LinkedIn.
- **The CREATE Opportunity Resource Guide** is a digital brochure on the [www.mybluefield.org](http://www.mybluefield.org) website and is a resource for entrepreneurs, startups, and existing companies. Hard print copies are available to mail to prospective industries.



## Small Business Saturday

The City participated in its fourth year in Small Business Saturday. The event was started by American Express in 2010 and is held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving to support small businesses. To celebrate the event, the CED had four contests and a pop-up shop in the Historic Bank Lobby. The CED advertised the event with a joint marketing effort with the participating businesses. There were 26 participating businesses, many of whom reported that they had a prosperous day. An appreciation breakfast was hosted at the Bluefield Arts Center for the businesses the morning of Small Business Saturday to kick off the event.

Testimonial - *"This year's Small Business Saturday was a huge success. We had more customers today at Fantastic Finds than we ever had since we opened in 2009. I've heard similar success stories from other downtown enterprises. Thanks for taking the initiative. Keep up the good work."* Quote from Craig Hammond

★ SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY® ★

NOV 24

**CITY OF BLUEFIELD, WV**

YOU'LL ♥ OUR  
UNIQUE SMALL BUSINESSES





## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“Economic Gardening is an **entrepreneurial** approach to economic development that seeks to grow the local economy from within. ... Its premise is that local entrepreneurs create the companies that bring new wealth and economic growth to a region in the form of jobs, increased revenues, and a vibrant local business sector.” (Definition from the ICMA).

- In celebration of National Entrepreneurship Week, the CED hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Meet the Millennials** on February 22, 2018, where over 60 college students and aspiring entrepreneurs met together with 10 business owners to hear about their journey as a business owner. The event was created as a networking opportunity and to pass on lessons learned by existing successful business owners to the next generation of entrepreneurs.
- **Business and Baseball** - The CED set up a booth at the Blue Jays Baseball game at Bowen Field on July 3<sup>rd</sup> to talk to attendees about starting a business and business opportunities in Bluefield.
- **CREATE Opportunity Initiative** – There are sixteen colleges and universities within 50 miles of the City of Bluefield. The CED has been working to establish partnerships with each. One of the goals is to use the “pipeline of talent” from the colleges and universities to attract companies into the area while supporting the existing workforce needs of existing businesses. In 2018, the CED Director and/or staff visited the following campuses for meetings, Bluefield State College, Concord University, Valley College, American National University, VA Tech, and Bluefield College. The CED partnered with the Landscape Architecture Program at VA Tech in January 2018 where 40 students did class projects on development ideas in the City.



- The CED met with the **Emerging Leaders** at Bluefield State College to share services and resources the department offers.

## ATTRACTING NEW INDUSTRY

- **Commercialization Station** Groundbreaking – August 20  
Located at 1642 Bluefield Ave., the Commercialization Station is a 60,000 SF mixed-use incubator focusing on manufacturing. Once renovations are completed early spring of this year, there will be 5 bays, each approximately 8,000-10,000 SF with 17' ceiling height for business incubation. This project is also part of the CED's entrepreneurial efforts.



## Data Analysis

Why is data so important? According to the University of North Carolina's School of Government,

*"Because decision making in the modern world is based on data. Statistical analysis offers the most objective, informed way to analyze a situation and project the impact of different courses of action. This is certainly true for community economic development. Decision makers in both the public and private sectors rely on data to make decisions. Businesses leverage numbers from the Federal, State, and local government agencies, to decide where to invest their resources. From simple population facts to more sophisticated surveys of household expenditures, data is the best way for companies to forecast revenues and costs under several circumstances. These projections ultimately drive all major business decisions. Similarly, government agencies and public leaders utilize data to inform public policy. State and Federal governments often allocate resources according to the population or economic statistics. Regulations and laws dealing with economic development are analyzed using a cost-benefit analyses, which also draw on data. At every level, economic development decisions are driven by numbers. Good data and statistical information helps public and private decision makers to invest in a particular project by shedding light on the project's likelihood for success."*

The use of data in decision making, especially when coupled with the power of a robust GIS, is paramount to planning and forecasting in economic development. The CED has a very qualified GIS Analyst that can now "mine data" through Esri's Community Analyst package as well as other sources. The data can help us develop "cluster analysis" and target markets which can help us market the City in a more professional fashion as well as help us make decisions on which are the best companies to try and attract to the City.

- **Other Grants**

- **FLEX-E Grant** to pay for the services of technology consultants to develop a plan to attract technology companies to Bluefield. The project budget is \$10,500 with \$8,500 being a grant from the State of WV. One of the technology consultants is Ms. Karen Jackson the former Secretary of Technology for the Commonwealth of VA.
- \$1 Million **EDA Grant** for Exit 1 Development
- **AEP Edge Grant** for Marketing **Opportunity Zone**. The total grant award was \$15,000.
- **Capacity Development Grant** for the Blueprint Community Team and updating the Blueprint Plan. The total grant is for \$25,000 from FHLBank Pittsburgh's Blueprint Communities® initiative. The City procured the services of Diane Lupke & Associates to assist with the project. Ms. Lupke was in Bluefield on December 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> to start the project and will return to Bluefield in the next few months to complete the project. *(Ms. Diane Lupke, CEcD, FM, is located in Newton, Wisconsin and has more than twenty-five years of experience in the management of, and program and policy development for, all aspects of community economic development. She has provided technical assistance to more than 75 cities, states, and non-profit organizations regarding governance, strategic planning, market analysis, work force development, job creation, and neighborhood revitalization. Ms. Lupke is an authority on the use of tax credits and other special tools for development).*



- **Opportunity Zone** - The CED took the lead and submitted an application on behalf of the Cities of Bluefield and Princeton and Mercer County for three census tracts. Tracts 23 & 24 were chosen and we received the designation. There are over 8,700 Opportunity Zones in the US. Too often the region does not take advantage of programs like this because many times they are not aware of the programs and their benefits. We have been working to change this by hosting local training events. Our goal is to use the Opportunity Zone as a catalyst for development within the census tracts and attract outside investment into the area.

#### OTHER KEY INITIATIVES/PROJECTS

- In the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, **broadband** is vital for economic growth. The broadband needs to be redundant and affordable. The City of Bluefield received a grant from the Shott Foundation to create a wireless network in the Downtown and along Bluefield Avenue that will have speeds in excess of 1 Gig. The City procured the services of Gigabeam Networks to build the wireless system and the new service will be available in the next few weeks giving customers various choices for broadband service. The City of Bluefield will be the first **Giga-City** utilizing 5G technology in the region.
- **Wayfinding/Signage Study** – The City procured the services of Hill Studio to develop the study. New signage will be installed in 2019 to help tourists and visitors find their way while visiting the City. The Blueprint Communities Team participated in the project.

- Bluefield State College Research & Development Center now hosts a satellite office for the **Robert C. Byrd Institute** which offers services to business in the region.
- Rebecca Kasey was hired full time as the Business Operations and Marketing Coordinator for the CED.
- Jim Spencer was appointed to Mercer County Development Authority in June.
- The CED has hosted consultants and prospective companies in the City in an effort to attract new industry and entrepreneurs. This is an on-going process.
- The **TechConnectWV** is one of the key partners with the CED and is a *“non-profit coalition committed to the advancement of the innovation economy in West Virginia, focused on four technology sectors: advanced energy, chemicals and advanced materials, biosciences, and biometrics. With broad representation from private industry, the public sector, and higher education, TechConnectWV seeks to diversify the state’s economy, promote economic prosperity and create high-paying jobs.”*  
TechConnect has created a Cybersecurity Workforce Committee for the State of WV. According to their West Virginia Cybersecurity Workforce Strategic Initiative Report, *“Job opportunities for cybersecurity professionals are growing significantly, but a large percentage is going unfilled within the United States, particularly within the military and the federal government. Such unfilled positions complicate securing the nation’s networks and may leave the United States ill-prepared to carry out conflict in cyberspace. And, this cyber shortage also poses dangers to critical infrastructure, our health care and banking systems, to governments of all sizes and to business large and small. According to cyberseek.org (2018) in West Virginia (WV) there are currently 872 cybersecurity job openings with a total employed cybersecurity workforce of 2,691. At the national level there are 313,735 total cybersecurity job openings with a total employed cybersecurity workforce of 715,715. These numbers will increase because, according to the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, the field of cybersecurity is projected to grow at a rate of 28% from present to 2026.”*

TechConnectWV hosted a Coding & Cyber Summit in November 2018. The CED Director has actively participated in the Workforce Committee this past year and the Summit. The goal by participating is to find opportunities to attract technology companies to the area.

- Jim Spencer participated and was a panelist at the *Broadband Networks: Tools for Economic Growth and Opportunity*, a conversation hosted by **Microsoft, the Brookings Institution, and Create West Virginia** in June.
- The City had some **new businesses** open in 2018 that received support from the CED. They include but are not limited to; OnPath Graphics, Ladies & Littles Boutique, B’s Honey Baking Company, Ugly Duckling’s Reopening, Imogene & Rose Paper Studio, and No Cages Garage.

*“After starting my graphic design business in 2011, I made the decision in 2016, to move to Bluefield, W.V. to be closer to family. Being new to the area, my business faced challenges in marketing and connecting with the right clients who needed my services. The Community and Economic Development team at the city of Bluefield, namely Jim Spencer, Rebecca Kasey, and Brandon Saddler helped me every step of the way. They provided strategic resources, facilitated business networking opportunities, and lent an ear when I had concerns about my business’s growth. Today, my business is thriving and is on track to sustainable success and the city of Bluefield helped me to get here.”*

*-Ebony Murrell, Owner of OnPath™ Graphics*



## FIRE DEPARTMENT

This year the fire department welcomed a few new faces and we also said goodbye to Captain Richard Hodge and Captain Jimmie Perkins, both 30 year veterans of the department. Below is the annual call-load break down of **1,522** calls for the fire department.

EMS Incidents	739
Fire Incidents	426
Fire Incidents (greater than \$1,000.00 damages)	30
Motor Vehicle Collisions	145
Utilities Incidents	93
Goodwill	119
K-9 Deployment	3

Training provides preparedness and a working knowledge to any situation. When a firefighter enters a building engulfed in flames, they must be prepared to deal with a volatile situation where the fire can react in different ways, travel in different paths or accelerate unexpectedly. These classes/trainings help reduce property damage, reduce the number of injuries, compensation claims and deaths of firefighters and civilians and helps increase the fire department's efficiency and morale. Training fosters teamwork and cooperation.



### ***Training / Classes:***

The Fire Department received training from outside sources, along with the daily “in-house” training. Allowing us to continue to meet the demands of the Insurance Services Office (ISO) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards which requires a yearly 240 training hours per man. Listed below are several of the trainings the department participated in for the year:

### **TRAINING**

Arson Level 1	Bailout
Compressed Natural Gas	Core 1 Rescue
CPR	Driver
EMS Recertification	EMT
Fire Officer Level 2	Firefighter Level 2
Gas Company	Hazardous Material
Hose training at city park	Hydrant testing
ISO-in house	K-9
Live Burn with Bluefield, VA	National Incident Management 300
Norfolk and Southern Safety	Physical Agility Test
Probationer driver training (streets)	Pump Operator Testing
Rope 1 Rescue	Traffic Incident Management

### ***Quarterly Summary***

#### ***First Quarter***

The first quarter of the year was far from being idle. The department responded to several fire calls, consisting of 3 chimney, 2 car, 1 locomotive, 3 electrical, 1 stove, 1 structure and a mutual aid, 104 fire incidents, 219 EMS, and 41 motor vehicle collision incidents. Along with the daily equipment and station maintenance and cleanup, it was a productive quarter. The men orchestrated a successful New Year's Lemon drop to start the New Year off. The department acquired 481 smoke detectors through a grant and distributed to the community.



### ***Second Quarter***

The second quarter was a little calmer with fire responses in the city being 5 fire and 2 mutual aid calls, 92 fire incidents, 134 EMS, and 31 motor vehicle collision incidents. This allowed the department to begin census work, building preplans, hydrant inspections, in-house and bail out training while continuing work on the BFD training site. An exciting second quarter when the \$4,000.00 Petco grant and a grant from 84 Lumber was awarded to us; Chief Cary, Captain Conner and Lieutenant Akers became certified Fire Inspector 1, K-9 and handler recertification was successful along with promotions in the department, as Lt. Miller stepped up as Captain and Firefighter Jones stepped in the position of driver. It was a busy quarter with community involvement as well. The department assisted code enforcement with hanging flyers, provided the public with fire prevention materials, smoke alarms and first aid at the annual carnival, participated in Student Government day, provided a tour of the department to 60 local students and teamed up with CASE and the police department to play basketball with the children at "Project Yes".



### ***Third Quarter***

The third quarter was quite busy with a microburst rain event (4.25" in one hour), fire incidents at a high of 124, consisting of 1 car fire, 1 trash truck fire, 3 fire calls and a mutual aid structure fire, 1 Haz-Mat, 175 EMS and 39 motor vehicle collisions. Although the call load was heavy the department was able to continue with daily maintenance of stations, apparatus's, driver training, pre-plans, hydrant inspections, Gas Company training, in-house ISO training, started Target Solutions and 100 % completion of Census. The department also participated with festivities throughout the city. We joined the community for a Back to School Bash, Block Party and assisted with Lemonade Day, Jazz Fest, and Fireworks with Bluefield Daily, Bluefield State Bonfire, and watering the horse ring. We also were able to support our fellow brothers in the police department with a DUI checkpoint and lend a helping hand to the city in support of work at the FitRec by sanding doors and watering grass at the new beautiful facility.



*"Every successful individual knows that his or her achievement depends on a community of persons working together" Paul Ryan*



#### ***Fourth Quarter***

The fourth quarter has continued to keep the department on their toes. The department has remained active and busy. Responding to 147 EMS, 66 Fire Incidents and 22 motor vehicle collisions. While maintaining the upkeep of both fire stations and equipment we have been able to accomplish 100 % CPR certification, a natural gas class @ Bluefield Transit, complete a bail out training, Core 1 Rescue and Rope 1 Rescue trainings, participated in a live controlled burn with Bluefield, VA fire. The department hosted the annual retiree dinner. In such a short period of the final quarter of the year we were still able to give back to the community by providing fire prevention to all schools and daycares in our district along with many outside of the district, displaying the flag at a local firefighters funeral and Bluefield High School for Veteran's day, assisting Bluefield Police Department with the Explore Program and participating in Kids Safe Camp with CASE.





### **Looking Forward into The Bluefield Fire Department**

Going forward we have some very exciting paths to take. First will be the continuing operations at the fire training site this spring, while we have made some headway here, the weather and increased operations inside the city has slowed progress down. The certified fire inspector program is up and running. This is an all new area for us so we are taking it slow as we learn the ins and outs of this new additional responsibility. The K-9 Arson program is still going strong, Lt Akers continues to train along with Kenndal to keep current certifications as well as build on what he has. Currently we are all Haz-Mat operators but will be doing the training to improve skills and knowledge to become technicians. The most exciting forthcoming path is exploring options to expand our EMS program to run ambulances from our stations. This will be a whole new area of approach, with the increased EMS calls just inside the city district itself and the difficulty we have had in getting proper care to citizens that they deserve, it is time to make it happen. In closing, we continue to improve ourselves to keep firefighters at the department safe along with the citizens and property of Bluefield.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

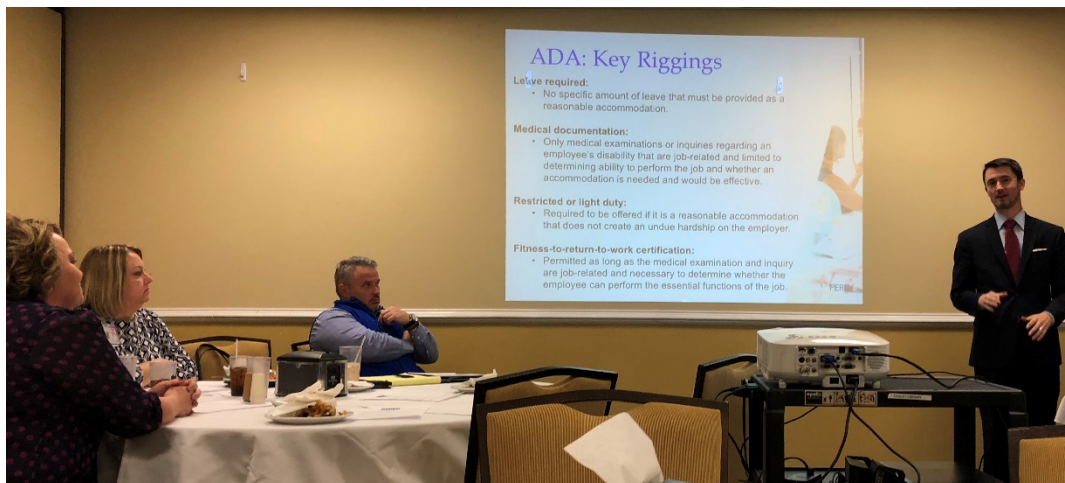
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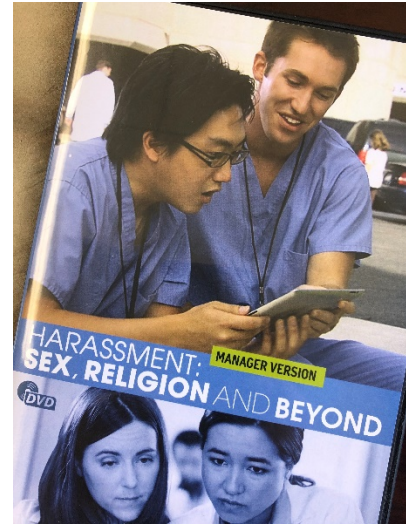
The City of Bluefield Human Resource Department has gone from “paper pushing” personnel files to a more in-depth focus on the needs of the city and the needs of the employees. Recruitment, new hire onboarding, employee benefits, employee wellness, training and development, and legal compliance, in addition to taking part in special projects that are not directly related to human resources has been the direction the city’s human resource department has been taking.

### First Quarter

1. Onboarded 29 part time and 11 full time employees. Advertised and accepted applications for interns to assist with Community and Economic Development programs. Other positions that needed filled were recreation aide, diesel mechanic supervisor, CDL driver / laborer for public works, part time after-school counselor, and multiple vacancies at the FitRec Center
2. Worked with accounting programmers to generate 1095’s to be distributed in compliance with the Affordable Care Act.
3. Serving as President of our local chapter, we organized the SHRM Appalachian Chapter of the Virginia for continuing education for local human resource professionals to include, Taylor Lindsey, Partner, Employee Benefit Consultants, Inc., discussed how to control healthcare costs, David Hite, Professor of Business at Bluefield College, discussed his personal research on the impact storytelling can have on learning and organizational effectiveness, Bill Ford, CEO SESCO Management, discussing wage and hour regulations and job classification compliance, Patricia Neely, Dean for online learning at Bluefield College, discussing what every human resource professional needs to know about online learning.



4. Continuing review of personnel policy and procedures with the city attorney. Consideration of revisions and research.
5. Prepared correspondence for retiree's PEIA changes beginning January 1, 2018
6. Administered Harassment Training for Managers: Sex, Religion and Beyond. In addition to the basic education of what can be considered a hostile work environment, direction was given on heading off developing situations and acting on direct complaints.
7. Performed the annual update of employee records.
8. Worked with after-school care director on coordination and guidelines for after-school counselor interviews.
9. Prepared and presented benefits and employment packages and transition for the Bluefield Community Center employees for those choosing to stay as a FitRec employee.
10. Filing of insurance claims to driver's automobile insurance for city owned lamp posts for those we had information to file a claim against the driver's insurance.
11. Received an overwhelming response of applications for the FitRec positions. Conducted first round interviews for Marketing and Membership Coordinator, Custodian, Membership Attendant, and Wellness Attendant for the Fitness and Recreation Center. Conducted final interviews for the FitRec center and filled vacancies. Will be evaluating effectiveness of staff coverage and make needed adjustments with the temporary hired positions consisting most of college students to be ending in May.
12. Completed Intellicorp FCRA (Federal Credit Reporting Act) training for pre-employment background check compliance.
13. Reviewed the SHRM recommended travel policy and expense reimbursement forms in support of the city attorney evaluating and writing a policy for the city.



## Second Quarter

1. Onboarded 9 part time and 11 full time employees.
2. Open enrollment began April 1 and lasted through May 15. Human resources provided an outreach to each eligible employee for a personal meeting to review individual coverages, discuss options and update information. The one-on-one meetings helped to increase employee interest in using the online benefits system to assist the employee in managing their own benefits. It served as a good reminder to more seasoned employees of benefits they may have declined upon their hire and since forgotten was available. This became a great opportunity to clarify and guide employees in regards to their personal needs for the wide variety of benefits offered by the city. It was well received and proved very beneficial.





3. Conducted a review of current employee member enrollment at the FitRec and provided an outreach to all employees to enroll as a new member or update existing enrollments.
4. Attended the West Virginia Chamber Human Resource Conference. Covered Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Guns in the Workplace, WV Legislative Update, Fair Labor Standard Act Helpful Tips, Substance Abuse, Testing Policies, Medical Marijuana, the Opioid Crisis, and Wage and Hour Compliance. Continuing education for certifications were received.



5. Planning was begun on the "Shine the Light on College Avenue" contest to take place in August. This included creating the invitation letters and voting ballots. The launching for contest participants began with an invitation delivered to every College Avenue address, advertising on WVVA and Radio Active, and a promotion with the Bluefield Daily Telegraph.
6. Proposals and recruitment for the East River Overlook Concessions took place for the upcoming season. In attempting this project it was found that the bears caused a problem for concession trailers to be left overnight and the existing structure was not up to code for health department purposes. The project was tabled, but to begin again by the beginning of 2019.
7. Serving as President of our local chapter for the last meeting of our year, we brought in speaker Bill Ford, CEO SESCO Management Consultants to present case studies on current human resource and employment issues. As always, this provides continuing education for local human resource professionals.
8. We held an election of officers for the SHRM Appalachian Chapter of the Virginias local chapter, with Paula being elected as secretary and myself being elected a second term for the upcoming year. A summer break is taken with educational meetings resuming in the fall.

### Third Quarter

1. Onboarded 11 part time and 10 full time employees. Advertised and accepted applications for CDL driver / laborers, diesel mechanic, certified & probationary police officers and fire fighters, various positions at the FitRec and Parks and Recreation Center and stormwater field technicians.



2. Worked with Saunder's Staffing for part-time temporary laborers to help with the upcoming project deadlines with the Fitness Center, Lemonade Festival, and Beaver/Graham game.
3. Worked with Four Seasons Recovery and the Fellowship Home for clean-up volunteers for August events.
4. The "Shine the Light on College Avenue" contest continued with the recruitment of contestants and prize collections. Media attention was received from the Bluefield Daily Telegraph with an article highlighting both the contest and the renovations being made to the FitRec.



5. Worked with department managers on calculation and processing of COLA increases.
6. Worked with PERS (Public Employee's Retirement System) on employee audits.
7. The facilitation of open enrollment for Washington National Supplemental Insurance Coverages took place. This was done by department to provide a better outreach to employees. In addition, a new product (guaranteed issued life insurance) was offered to all employees.
8. As part of employee wellness we actively recruited employees for the Two Virginia's 5K Challenge. We have now won the traveling trophy in our competition with the Town of Bluefield VA for the past 3 years, since its inception. Many employees were working other events this weekend and could not participate. Moving forward we hope to move this event to the prior weekend to alleviate this conflict and increase employee participation.



9. Review and updating of basic labor law compliance items regarding employee notices.
10. The annual Flu Clinic was held on-site at City Hall and the Public Works Department. We had 25 employees to participate. There were 14 at City Hall and 11 at Public Works. The health department shared that the city was one of the largest flu clinics they hold each year.

## Fourth Quarter

1. Onboarded 10 part time and 5 full time employees. Advertised and accepted applications for various vacant positions both part and full time to include an engineer services / stormwater director.
2. Coordination of AFLAC's supplemental insurance annual open enrollment period for all employees. Several sessions were held to accommodate all employees.
3. Worked with Commercial Insurance Services Safety and Risk Manager to develop a safety training program for employees.
4. Held Narcan training for public works, code enforcement and new officers. Will be equipping public works and code enforcement vehicles with Narcan kits and drivers trained to use them. This is being offered at no cost by Community Connections.
5. Holiday of Lights planning began with human resource focus on recruitment of



gatehouse volunteers and the organization of the ticket booth sales. More signage and volunteer instructions were also developed to help fine tune the operations of the event.

6. Developing content for the human resource section for the new city website.
7. Held safety training for all of Code Enforcement and PW laborers at the transit training facility; covered 23 basic topics. Employee feedback was positive.



8. Ongoing work with Commercial Insurance Services Safety and Risk Manager to develop a safety training program for employees
9. Serving as President of our local chapter, we organized the SHRM Appalachian Chapter of the Virginia for continuing education for local human resource professionals to include, Taylor Lindsey, Partner, Employee Benefit Consultants, Inc., discussed the opioid addiction, Eric Chapman, Cowen Perry PC, discussed requirements and obligations under the FMLA and ADA, Natalie Sanders, JER HR Group, discussed professionalism in the workplace.

10. Organized employee potluck for November 13 at 6:00 p.m. with the recreation center. Employees and families attended. It was a great evening as the kids played in the bouncy houses in the gym and took hayrides for a “sneak preview” through the Holiday of Lights. The weather cooperated and the feedback was positive.



11. Christmas Parade planning and entry recruitment began. Worked with the Downtown Merchants Association to organize the event on December 15 at 1:00 p.m.
12. The employee handbook was reviewed earlier in the year. Now it is being revised on section at a time with input from all departments. It is not to supersede departmental policies, but to establish important policies and practices that are expected in the workplace and to protect the rights of employers and employees.
13. This distribution and tracking of employee Christmas certificates sponsored by Grants Supermarkets and K&K Music was distributed in time for the holiday season.
14. With Paula serving as secretary and myself serving as president of our local SHRM Appalachian Chapter of the Virginias (Society for Human Resource Management). We continue to work with the chapter’s board members to keep a strong presence in the region and an outreach to local businesses in need of human resource support, education, and networking. We have created an alliance with the Chamber of the Two Virginias offering a free membership to their members as well as with our own economic development efforts here in the city for new and existing businesses.
15. Worker’s Compensation Claims Review - Reporting a worker’s compensation insurance claim as promptly and accurately as possible is the first step in controlling insurance premiums. Because injury details are freshest during the 24 hours following an injury, it is important to start the claim process as fast as possible. The insurance company recommends lag time (reporting time) stay within 3 days. We strive to report within 24 hours. From the inception of the policy on 7/1/2018 our lag time is at an **exceptional 1.29 days**. Department Heads are staying on top of reporting this information in record time.

CARRIER	POLICY PERIOD	LAG TIME	TOTAL CLAIMS COUNT
BrickStreet	07/01/15-16	3.23	13
BrickStreet	07/01/16-17	1.20	15
BrickStreet	07/01/17-18	1.47	17
AmTrust	07/01/18-19	<b>1.29</b>	14

This year onboarding is not as much a reflection of excessive employee turnover, but reflective of acquiring the FitRec, internships, and short-term and seasonal employment for college students. Moving forward, the human resource department plans are to focus on

continuing to maintain employee morale and recognizing employee value. We would like to focus on more wellness programs, training programs and providing the employees with a total compensation statement reflecting the investment the city is making in the employees. Providing the employees with a new handbook, education opportunities, and promoting employee engagement initiatives will continue to develop our workforce with the skills and training to further the efficiency of city operations and the professional image we strive to reach as an employer of choice in our region.



## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY / SPECIAL PROJECTS

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Information Technology projects for 2018 include disaster recovery hardware and software, server consolidation, a revamped City website and upgrading or replacing staff computers. Implementing disaster recovery capabilities will help the City remain operational in the event of a catastrophic event. Consolidating our five stand-alone servers into one virtual machine allows for easier, more cost effective management, saves space, uses less energy and helps reduce our carbon footprint. The City's website redesign is well underway, and should be complete in the first quarter of 2019. Upgrading or replacing staff computers on a 3-4 year cycle remains an ongoing goal of the IT department, and this year we brought the Surface tablet into the mix, providing users with better mobility while maintaining full access to items stored on the device.

Most of the focus for special projects was on renovating the Fitness and Recreation Center (former Greater Bluefield Community Center). We began in February with behind the scenes IT upgrades, and by March was starting low-level construction. The facility closed to the public July 2, at which time we started the major renovation. This phase included new LED lighting inside and out, three major sections of roof replacement, fresh paint throughout, HVAC, landscaping, enlarging and paving parking areas, creating a new parking lot entrance and drop-off area, and a complete redesign of the workout area. After eight weeks of renovations, the facility reopened on August 22.

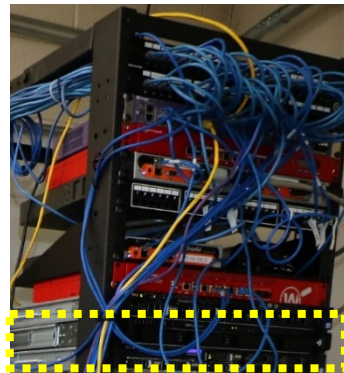


## First Quarter

- Entered into an agreement with aHa! Web design and assembled a design team that will layout the new core website.
- Phase II of converting the overhead lights to LED project, which includes the Boardroom, PD and both fire stations, is complete. Worked with Mike Fitzwater with the AEP "Take Charge" energy efficiency program to submit rebate documents. LED lighting reduces our carbon footprint, cuts operating costs and provides brighter, "cleaner" lighting. We received a rebate of \$2371.00 for phase I of the project
- Replaced 30+ year old HVAC unit that services the HR and Attorney offices
- Met with Jill Harman of *Imagine That* to restart the digital document project. Our initial focus for converting paper documents to digital ones will begin in the Engineering dept.
- Preparing for the upcoming annual review/town hall meeting
- Community Center data dump and prep for official transfer of assets
- Assisted Parks & Rec with Fitness Center; IT items, working front desk, setting up new staff in software, learning / training staff on software, worked with utility companies
- Updated four servers in preparation for server consolidation which is part of the disaster recovery plan
- Prepared two PCs for PD (Sgt. Office & squad room)
- Setup credit card payment option at Fitness Center
- Updated content on existing Website for Code Enforcement
- New server consolidation is complete. All seven servers now part of the virtual environment.
- Replaced one PC at the Fitness Center, and installed an electronic time clock consistent with all others throughout city locations
- Met with four vendors/service providers to discuss options for WIFI service at the Arts Center.
- Scheduled iWorq training on the signs module for Public Works
- Relocated two office areas at Parks and Rec
- Met with the AEP *Take Charge* rebate program to evaluate and discuss converting the lighting at the Fitness Center to LED. Met with AEP, along with their engineer and a lighting rep. to discuss options for types of lights based on usage and occupied spaces (offices, pool, gym), installation, etc.
- Met with LUMOS Engineers to conduct site surveys for the Fitness Center and proposed Rt. 52 site for Public Works to determine how and where their fiber will connect to the facility, as well as the location for the equipment.
- Submitted a proposal for providing WiFi to select areas of the Arts Building.
- Continuing to work with MuniCode (aHa!) web design on the City's website. We are narrowing down details on the main design.



*Stand-alone servers before conversion*



*One machine with 7 virtual servers*

## Second Quarter

- Met with AEP reps, lighting specialist and electrical contractor to discuss interior and exterior lighting options at Fitness Center
- Solicited bids for roof replacement at PD substation and Elks building
- Contacted locksmith to rekey Wells Fargo building at the Federal and Bland entrances; new keys will be distributed to staff as needed
- Designed new parking plan for Fitness Center
- Discussed with Public Works the required prep work we have to do prior to LUMOS running fiber to the Fitness Center and Rt. 52 property
- Setup new PC for City Hall conference room
- Submitted RFP to local paper for painting the fitness center.
- Work has started at the fitness center. Prep work is complete for the LUMOS installation, and Tony and Public Works crew have started on the parking lot and sidewalks on the east end of the facility. The side basketball goals (4) in the gym have been removed, and holes in the walls are repaired. The scoreboard and all related items will be down by the 25<sup>th</sup>. Electrical outlets should be in place for the new scoreboard by April 27
- We have received the census bureau address update information. The FD will be verifying residential addresses for the next several weeks to update the Census data
- Conducted pre-bid meeting for painting at the fitness center; three contractors attended.
- LUMOS prep work is complete for the new Public Work facility; LUMOS expects to have service to the building by the end of May or early June
- New HVAC unit installed and operating properly at the Alliance for the Arts building
- Submitted agreement to Frye Roofing to replace roof at the PD substation
- Met with rep from The Awning and Sign Co. to obtain quote for new awnings at the fitness center.
- Opened painting bids for the fitness center. We only received two bids, both of which were over budget. Rejection letters sent to both bidders. We have narrowed the scope of the project, and will do some of the painting in-house. The more difficult areas, such as the pool and lounge areas will be hired out
- LUMOS has installed fiber at the Rt. 52 Public Works facility, and should complete the installation at the fitness center in the next couple of weeks
- AEP agreement signed for the fitness center lighting upgrades.
- Set up a Microsoft Surface tablet for Economic Development. This will give them the mobility they need, as well as full Windows 10 functionality
- Contacted Bluefield Glass for quote on getting window put in City Clerk's office door
- Thermostats for 2<sup>nd</sup> floor not functioning. Contacted Fox & Thompson to check – replaced shorted out and crossed wiring
- Ordered awning for fitness center
- Trees trimmed at Fitness Center
- Signed agreement with paint contractor for portions of the fitness center
- Met with Cox Security to reset alarm system at the new Public Works facility
- LUMOS installed equipment at fitness center and new public works facility
- Received 8 pallets of lights at the fitness center from AEP



*Fiber & Network Equipment at FitRec*

- Met with reps from Sherwin-Williams to discuss proper primer for pool area and tiled walls throughout the fitness center
- FD making good progress on Census address verification
- Remodel of restrooms at fitness center nearly complete. They are now family changing rooms, complete with shower
- Updated current Website
- Locks at Elks bldg. changed
- AEP removed the light pole on the edge of the East parking lot, and replaced the utility pole on the corner of College and East River
- WiFi Cabling and equipment installed at the Arts Center

### **Third Quarter**

- Working with storm-water crew to determine cause and solution to water drain issue on North side of Municipal building. The drainpipe that collects water runoff from the roof is clogged, causing a flooding issue along the lower floor
- Returning focus to our website, both the current and new. Trying to schedule training for late September or early October. Working with each dept. to help them with the content and layout for their respective sections
- Updating PC's for Public Works and Parks & Rec

### **Fourth Quarter**

- Continuing to work with departments on preparing content, menu items, etc. for new website.
- Coordinated roof work at the Elks. Once completed, the contractor will move to the fitness center to replace the roof over the pool and the section adjacent to the pool.
- Spent the last several days setting up 12 computers in preparation of the all-day web training scheduled for Monday, October 22. Each attendee will have login credentials and access to the training site to add content, create menu items, etc.
- Officially took the lead role this week for the Public Works renovation project on Coal Heritage Rd. Met with Candy, Jonathon and Chris to get up to speed on overall goals and the projects currently underway
- Conducted a walkthrough at 613 Union St. with Chris and Jonathon to assess plumbing, heating and electrical needs. Also met with Window World for quote on replacing all windows. This property was donated to the City as part of the initiative to have a Police Officer live on Union Street.
- Working with PD staff and two local contractors to repair two HVAC units
- Roof replacement at the fitness center (pool and adjacent section) is underway
- Staff training for the new website went well, and all departments are making good progress adding / updating content for their sections. I am working with our developer on minor design changes that, until recently, we did not have access to view. We are also adding new sections for Veterans and global FAQ's
- Our accounting software just underwent a major upgrade, resulting in a completely new user interface, as well as new features and enhancements to several modules
- Work continues at the new public works facility on Coal Heritage Rd. New LED lights are being installed, electrical rewiring is well underway and five gas heaters have been repaired or replaced, with four more expected to be complete within the next couple of weeks
- We removed the large International sign at the facility entrance on Rt. 52 for safety reasons of our trucks pulling out into traffic.





### ***Goals for 2019***

Moving forward, the Information Technology department goals include enhancing the telephone system, improve the process and reduce costs for employee file sharing, look at options for cloud based software and storage solutions, and maximize public access to City information and services online.

Special projects include renovating the new Public Works facility, the concession booth at the overlook on East River Mountain and a property located on Union Street. All of these have a second quarter projected completion date. We are also looking at minor upgrades to the interior and exterior of the Municipal Complex, including landscaping, painting and minor window repair.

## PARKS & RECREATION

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Over the past four years, Parks and Recreation has worked diligently to create an environment that improves the quality of life for Bluefield residents. The addition of the Bluefield Fitness and Recreation Center (FitRec) in 2018 was a big step towards making Bluefield a great place to live, work, and play.

### First Quarter: January – March



- Youth Basketball was very competitive this year with 30 teams in the league. Half of the teams were from Montcalm, Mount View, Princeton and Tazewell.
- The After School Program offered and provided Snow Camps when schools were out for inclement weather.
- Transfer of ownership of Greater Bluefield Community Center (GBCC) took place the first of February. Staff kept the facility open during the transition and began making plans for the renovations that came later in the year.
- Tennis season started in mid-February with Bluefield High School and Bluefield State College practicing daily. Both schools along with Bluefield College held regional tennis tournaments at the tennis courts in City Park.
- CASE Senior Friends Bingo meet weekly throughout the year at the Youth Center and Auditorium for fellowship and a friendly game of bingo.
- MAWA Princeton Wrestling hosted their annual wrestling tournament that brought teams in from around the region.
- The After School Program began using the pool at the GBCC and taking Kid Fit group exercise classes.



## Second Quarter: April – June

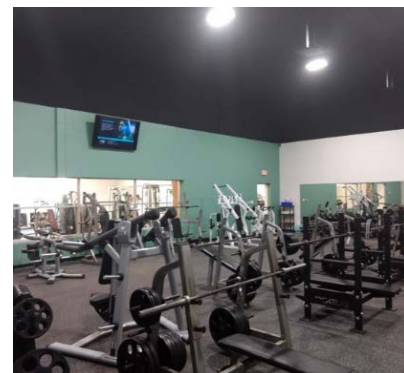
- City Park opened to the public with weekly shelter rentals and special events.
- The Ridge Runner was back in operation after reconstruction of the tunnel.
- The water fountain and fire pits in City Park were repaired.
- At the Trail Cabin in City Park, a bicycle work station was installed.
- High School Students from Bluefield High School attended Student Government Day at City Hall. The City of Bluefield was awarded the Tree City USA Award and recognized as a top TCUSA Urban Canopy Coverage Community in West Virginia
- The Trail Committee began work and completed the work on our new trails off the Thorn Street Trail Head. An additional two miles of trails were added to the existing thirteen miles of trails in City Park, totaling fifteen miles of trails
- Bluefield College Football began their Spring Practices at Mitchell Stadium
- Learn to Swim Lessons were offered at the newly acquired GBCC. Leading up the summer, staff taught 25 youth how to swim
- Pool parties were offered weekly at the GBCC
- The staff implemented a new software called CivicRec that would manage programs, leagues, facilities, and memberships at the GBCC
- The professional staff team was now in place at the GBCC
- Funding was secured to begin capital improvements at the GBCC
- Group exercise classes became a member benefit at the GBCC. More than twenty group exercise classes were added to the class offerings for members
- As preparation for the Mountain Festival began, water and electric upgrades were put in place in the greenspace in City Park
- The Mountain Festival was held May twenty-ninth through June third. Several Mountain Festival events were held at the Youth Center and Auditorium
- The After School Program transitioned to Summer Camp. Specialty Camps were offered for children with the competitive swim camp being the largest specialty camp of the summer!
- The GBCC closed the end of June to begin renovations.





### Third Quarter: July – September

- On July 1<sup>st</sup> the staff moved the GBCC operations to the Youth Center and Auditorium location on Stadium Drive for the renovations to take place while there staff offered everything that was at the GBCC but the pool activities. Additionally, staff continued to provide summer camps for children and accommodated two large reunions. The two churches that met regularly at the GBCC continued their worship services at the Youth Center and Auditorium
- The Two Virginia's 5K Challenge racecourse was USATF Certified to make it one of a handful certified races course in the region.
- Staff began working on Mitchell Stadium to prepare for the upcoming football season
- Bluefield College Football began practice at Mitchell Stadium
- Bluefield High, Graham High, and Bluefield College held scrimmages at Mitchell Stadium leading up the football season
- The Annual Bluefield Shrine Horse Show held July 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> was a big success; according to the Shriners, this was one of the best shows in many years
- Within six weeks, the GBCC renovations were complete. The list of improvements included:
  - Exterior landscaping, paving, and sidewalk repairs.
  - New entry doors, lighting, flooring, window repairs, and painting.
  - New HVAC in the gymnasium and lobby area.
  - Replacement of the roof that had failed in nearly half of the building.
  - Renovation of locker rooms and bathrooms.
  - New strength, cardio, and group exercise equipment.
  - New handicap lift, starting blocks, chemical dispenser, and pool vacuum in the natatorium.
- Summer Camp ended and After School began for children.
- The City of Bluefield staff moved the GBCC operations back to the College Avenue facility on August 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The facility was rebranded with the name change from Greater Bluefield Community Center to Bluefield Fitness and Recreation Center (FitRec).





## THE MOST MEMORABLE WEEK OF THE YEAR:

- August 21<sup>st</sup>, Business After Hours was held at the new FitRec
- August 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held at the new FitRec. Normal hours of operations were resumed at the FitRec
- August 23<sup>rd</sup>, The City of Bluefield staff descended on Mitchell Stadium for the annual stadium cleanup day
- August 24<sup>th</sup>, Beaver vs Graham High School Football Game
- August 25<sup>th</sup>, Third Annual Two Virginia's 5K Challenge
- At the Two Virginia's 5K Challenge, the course record was shattered by Abraham Kiplaget with a time of 14:41:03
- Mitchell Stadium football season was in full swing. Bluefield High, Bluefield Junior High, Bluefield Middle School, Graham High, Graham Junior High, Graham Middle School, Bluefield College Varsity and Bluefield Junior Varsity were all playing games at Mitchell Stadium
- Oktoberfest in City Park on September 29<sup>th</sup> was a big success
- City Park closed after Oktoberfest to start the Holiday of Lights setup



## Fourth Quarter: October – December

- Parks and Recreation partnered with the Bluefield Police Department and other vendors at the FitRec on Halloween. More than 400 children visited the FitRec that evening and saw the facility for the first time since the renovations occurred.
- At the FitRec, group exercise classes grew in attendance. A Masters Swim team kicked off for the first time. Staff kept members motivated to stay active through the holidays with the Holiday Hustle Fitness Challenge.
- Parks and Recreation staff attended the West Virginia Recreation and Parks Annual Conference in Hurricane, WV.
- City of Bluefield staff gathered at the Youth Center and Auditorium for a potluck dinner and a preview of the Holiday of Lights.
- The Holiday of Lights in City Park began on Thanksgiving Day.
- The Fourth Annual Holiday of Lights 5K Challenge was a success again. Out of 122 finishers, Nick Whited from Bluefield, WV and Hannah Altizer from Riner, VA were the top male and female finishers.
- Both Bluefield High School and Graham High School held playoff games at Mitchell Stadium and practiced leading up the State Football Championships.
- For the 2018 football season, there were 42 games and 127 practices held at Mitchell Stadium.
- Staff continued to work on the Mitchell Stadium Lighting Retrofit project that will hopefully be completed by the 2019 football season.
- Meetings with regional architects were made for a City Park/Community Parks master plan.
- Staff began working on a Request for Proposals for a new Mitchell Stadium Scoreboard.
- Both the Annual Train Show and Bluefield Area Shag Society events were well attended at the Youth Center and Auditorium.
- Youth Basketball kicked off with practices at the Youth Center and Auditorium.

- After School continued while providing Day Camp on inclement weather days.
- The year of 2018 closed with the Bluefield Area Shag Society Annual New Year's Bash at the Youth Center and Auditorium.



In 2018, Parks and Recreation made great progress in creating a healthy atmosphere for Bluefield residents, to live, work, and play with the addition of the FitRec. For the year 2019, Parks and Recreation plans to make recreation more of an economic driver for the region through quality programs, tournaments, and the implementation of a City Park/Community Parks master plan.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

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2018 was an exciting year for our Department; we were able to add four new State Certified Police Officers to our department. 2018 was year two in our shift-wide full duty K-9 program, they continue to shine in the ongoing effort to combat drugs and other crimes within the City of Bluefield. We strived in 2018 to become as active as possible with our community, the implantation of the Bluefield Police Explores Program, which is a youth based reading program designed to help young children tackle issues in today's world. Our Police Cruiser fleet continued the upward path of being more modernized by the addition of five new cruisers, saving the department a tremendous amount of money in repair cost, down time and improving officer efficiency/response time. We view 2018 as a successful year in protecting the citizens of Bluefield, we hope you enjoy this annual review of our department.

### 2018 Statistics Q1

- Calls for Service 2334
- Arrest Made 273
- Reports Filed 336
- Citations Written 1604 (944 Warnings)
- Motor Vehicle Accidents 50
- Parking Citations 55
- Fines Collected \$90,122.45

1. Quarter 1 highlights include a generous \$2000.00 donation from N&S Railroad. This donation allowed us to purchase reading materials to promote Drug; Alcohol and Domestic Violence Prevention, that were presented to area schools by our K-9 Teams
2. Patrolman J.D. Hawks completed K-9 training with our newest K-9, Gregg

3. The department began a successful social media campaign by posting, on Facebook, a weekly warrant list of City of Bluefield Municipal warrants. We had over 1900 municipal warrants in hand, in the first quarter we have collected over \$20,000 in back fines and been able to remove 400 warrants from our system in 2018



## 2018 Statistics Q2

- Calls for Service 2771
- Arrest made 256
- Reports Filed 376
- Citations Wrote 2234 (1326 Warnings)
- Motor Vehicle Accidents 41
- Parking Citations 35
- Fines Collected \$60,816.66

1. In Quarter 2, all officers completed their annual in-service training and firearm qualifications
2. Patrolman S.D. Copenhaver and Patrolman B.F. Ingole attended and graduated from West Virginia State Police Academy. The addition of two certified police officers will help our department with coverage within the city for the citizens of Bluefield





### 2018 Statistics Q3

- Calls for Service 2986
- Arrest Made 262
- Reports Filed 346
- Citations Wrote 2153 (Warnings 1276)
- Motor Vehicle Accidents 42
- Parking Citations 31
- Fines Collected \$59,359.85

1. In quarter 3, the Bluefield Police Department was able to successfully police football games for Bluefield High School, Graham High School and Bluefield College, without any major incidents



2. Community Connection of Princeton, WV provided the Department with over 50 Narcan kits for the officers, they also provided training for the kits



3. Our Department was able to purchase 10 new ballistic vests for our officers, thanks to a grant we received from The Community Foundation of the Two Virginias

### 2018 Statistics Q4

- Calls for Service 2875
- Arrest Made 251
- Reports Filed 354
- Citations Wrote 1408 (warnings 784)
- Motor Vehicle Accidents 60
- Parking Citations 53
- Fines Collected \$53,629.61

1. In Quarter 4, our Department is proud that we have two more certified police officers. Patrolman T.M. Beggs and D.L. Bishop are graduated December 14, 2018. We will be sending three new hires to the West Virginia State Police Academy on Jan 14, 2019

2. High School and College football wrapped up and we were able to successfully police all the games without any major incident
3. Bluefield Police Department partnered with Community Connection Inc. to start the Bluefield Police Explorers Group. This is a reading based program designed to help young children make good, safe choices about tobacco use, prescription drugs, bullying and bike safety. Officers with BLF PD met with these kids at our Bland Road Substation to read books and make crafts together. Over 80 children attended the popular program. We will continue the program in the spring of 2019



## Housing Initiative

The City of Bluefield received the very generous donation of a house, located at 613 Union Street, from an anonymous donor. Our intent is for one of our officers to live in the home, and are excited to be part of the Union Street neighborhood. It is our hope that this will help prevent crime and encourage others to renovate and improve the neighborhood.

The department also received a generous donation in excess of \$43,000 to renovate the home, which should be completed by late spring of 2019.



## K-9 Teams

The K-9 Teams are proving to be such a valuable asset to our police force. Pictured below are drugs, guns and money that were taken off the streets of Bluefield with the help of our K-9 officers. They prove their worth on a daily basis by assisting their handlers in tracking subjects, searching and finding narcotics, apprehension of subjects and most importantly officer safety.



## Community Policing Initiative

Engaging with the public is a top priority for the Bluefield PD. We want the citizens of Bluefield to know that we are here, to not only maintain peace, but to help where we can, listen to their problems and build a lasting relationship that will foster community relationships for generations to come.



## Forecast for 2019

In the spring of we hope to have three new State Certified officers return from Basic State Police Academy, this will be beneficial to the citizens of Bluefield by being able to provide better coverage for the city. With a house gifted to the City on Union Street, we intend to have a Police Officer living in the house. We believe this will be a critical component in building relationships with citizens on and around Union, by having 24/7 Police Officer presence. April of 2019 we will begin the second session of the Bluefield Police Explores Program; this is a youth based reading program designed to help children understand complex issues related to today's society.



## PUBLIC WORKS

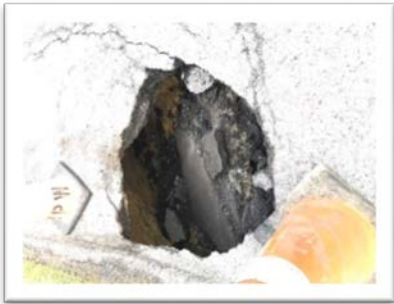
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Bluefield Public Works Department enhances the quality of life in Bluefield by providing outstanding public service. Our staff of dedicated individuals are committed to teamwork, customer service and continuous improvement in partnership with the community. We operate, maintain and improve the City's infrastructure, public right of ways, sanitation, recycling and all City facilities with skill, pride and responsiveness.

I am proud to showcase a few of our accomplishments and illustrate the valuable contributions our Public Works team has made over the past twelve months.

### First Quarter

- Removed all of the Christmas decorations throughout the City and stored for winter, including all of the Holiday of Lights displays. HOL finished out with an impressive 41,970 visitors and \$47,000 in donations.
- Demolished the train tunnel at the Ridge Runner in preparation for new construction.
- Used approximately 1800 tons of salt treating City streets and 3 pallets of bag salt treating City sidewalks in the Downtown area and at City owned properties.
- We repaired a large sinkhole on Heatherwood Road, 11'x 12'x7' in depth. We used 15 tons of Gabion and 8 yards of concrete to stabilize and backfill the hole. The project was completed with a 2" top coat of asphalt.



- We made 8 tons of asphalt to use filling potholes with our Falcon Hot Box during winter months.
- Collected over 1100 tons of garbage and 43.49 tons of recyclables.

### Second Quarter

- Cleaned out a donated house at 1012 Lyndale Avenue and demoed the additions that had been constructed onto the house.
- Dug a new ditch line at the green space across from tennis courts. New drainpipe and gabion stone was placed along the ditch line to aid in draining. New concrete poles were made at both the entrance areas at the green space. Chain placed to keep vehicles off of grass.
- Placed all the mobile speed humps throughout the City for the season. Also, installed numerous asphalt speed humps in areas of high traffic/speed areas. All were painted yellow for easy detection at night.



- PW assisted Beautification with the planting of all the beautiful flowers in pots and containers and the welcome signs entering the City. We watered on a 3 times per week basis. We also changed all winter banners over to the Spring/Summer banners.
- PW weed eats and mows over 75 sites throughout the City limits including all City owned Parks, grounds and properties on a one time per week basis through the mowing season. In addition, PW also mows all City right-of-ways. We did make a new purchase this year and added a brand new Hardee brand boom arm mower to our equipment fleet.
- Re worked the alley behind the Sacred Heart Catholic Church out to Ronceverte Street. New mill was dumped and compacted to make a smoother driving surface.
- Added a Licensed Plumber/HVAC employee to our staff.
- Removed over 8 tons of trash and 100 tires during our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Love where you Live Campaign for Mercer County. We had over 40 volunteers in addition to PW staff.
- Graded and put down new gravel in the parking lot at the Thorn Street trail head.
- Our biggest achievement this quarter was the purchase of the New Public Works Facility at 800 Coal Heritage Highway, the former Heritage International building. This was made possible by the Shott Foundation.
- PW participated in the online auction through GovDeals.com selling out items that were no longer of any use to the City.
- We assisted the storm water crew in making repairs to the infrastructure at the area on College around the Fit Rec by employing two of our staff members for 4 weeks to work alongside of them.
- Increased staff presence at the East River Overlook to twice daily in effort of combating the trash and bathroom cleanliness during the road construction on I77.
- Negotiated a contract with Santek (Tazewell County Landfill) to start disposing our refuse at their location. This will afford the City a savings of roughly \$70,000 annually.
- Collected over 1300 tons of garbage and 50.15 tons of recyclables.
- We used 26.64 tons of asphalt filling potholes and making sinkhole repairs.



### Third Quarter

- Assisted with the renovation project at the FitRec.
- Assisted the Shriners with the use of our bucket truck and one staff member to prepare for the annual horse show. Made water repairs to the water lines at the horse ring.
- In an effort to reduce the landfill charges that we are paying, we have stopped picking up grass bags on regular trash days and are now picking those up in a separate truck that's taking them to an organic dump site and keeping us from paying landfill charges.
- Worked on trimming low hanging trees and branches impeding over roadways throughout the City.
- Poured five concrete pads and installed five new Bear Proof trash receptacles purchased by the Mercer County Commission at East River Overlook.

- We assisted in hosting the Mitchell Stadium cleanup day. We had about 40 volunteers from the Recovery Point Center. We cleaned and made repairs at the Stadium as well as inside City Park and along the family friendly trails. We trimmed and manicured all the shrubs outside the stadium along the parking lot.
- Cleaned out the Freight Station of all City owned property and relocated to the proper departments. Completed demo on Bay 5 and cleaned up all debris. Hauled over 45 tons of trash and debris to the Tazewell County Landfill.
- Negotiated with Southwest Sanitation to start bringing recyclables to their location in Pounding Mill. They will purchase our cardboard, shredded and loose paper at a monthly fluctuating price. They will also install a new cardboard baler at our New PW Facility for our use at no charge.
- Assisted the Beautification Committee in setup of Oktoberfest that was celebrated inside the City Park. Prepared the electrical cords for vendors per their specifications.
- HOL prep work began. Checking bulbs and displays and making sure our supplies are ready for setup.
- Repaired a large road giveaway on North Mercer Street. Installed new gabion baskets in place and new stone. Concrete was poured over top and down through the baskets for stability. The repair was capped off with a 2" layer of fresh asphalt.
- Large road repair done on Sylvia Lane. An issue with the drainage lines and catch basins in that area caused the road to heave up and create an area of total disruption. The area was dug down and new drainage lines and catch basins were installed with assistance from the Bluefield Storm Water crew. After all the underground problems were remedied the area was repaved.



- An area on Tolosa Ext. was repaired at the site of an old city right of way. The bank was collapsing and creating issues for the homeowner. City crews used material from an old jobsite to create a step down embankment to stabilize the area and create a stop berm for the owners who have to maneuver down a very steep grade to get to their driveway.
- We collected 1244.46 tons of garbage and 46.54 tons of recyclables.
- We used 50.58 tons of asphalt filling potholes and paving sinkhole repairs.

#### Fourth Quarter

- Solicited a bid for new lighting at the new PW facility. Helios was awarded the bid and they have started installing the new lights.
- All speed humps were removed for the season. Mobile humps were placed in storage and asphalt humps were broken up.
- Holiday of Lights was setup over a period of 5 weeks. This year we shaved approximately 6 weeks off the setup time from years past. We had a generous donation made by Dr. Tolliver and added approximately 70 new displays. A new entry archway was fabricated and a new cancer awareness ribbon in honor of the late Deb Sarver. We also added as a new feature this year, Santa's Post office. It was located in the green space area and was setup for children to drop off their letters to Santa.
- Boyd alley and the alley off of Hale Street known as Hill Street have been graded and new mill put down.
- All snow equipment was prepared for the winter season. We had two events that required salt treatment this quarter. The first being an ice storm and the second being a major snow storm dropping approximately 15 inches of snow across our community. We have used around 500 tons of salt and cinder mix treating both of these events. Additionally, we have used a pallet of bag salt treating sidewalks around City Hall and the downtown areas.
- Storm water purchased a new Billy Goat leaf vacuum and dump trailer. A steel box was fabricated to house the leaves in the dump trailer. We got off to a very rocky start to our leaf removal season when both of our leaf trucks, being over 25 years old decided it was time to be laid to rest. Our staff continued to remove leaves by hand with rakes and tarps.
- We purchased a very nice, gently used, 8 cubic yard stainless steel salt box and spreader from the Washington County Maryland DOH on the govdeals.com auction site. This box replaced a very old and deteriorated salt box on our mainline truck. This was a substantial savings to the city.
- All Beautifications baskets and planters were emptied and stored for the winter season. All seasonal banners were changed and pole decorations, wreaths and pole wraps for the Holidays were put up. We installed new electrical service for 8 new poles on West Cumberland to put up the additional Poinsettia decorations this year.
- Winterization of water pipes was completed at City Park, Overlook and all other City owned properties.



- New heating was installed in the Commercialization Station, main building and all 5 bays.
- Worked cleanup for football games at Mitchell Stadium. Many weekends we had multiple games and the stadium had to be cleaned twice in one weekend.
- Cardboard baler was installed at the New Public Works facility by Southwest Sanitation for our recycling use. Only cost to the City was the cost to run the three phase power to the unit.
- Constructed a 40ft Christmas tree, along with a new Happy Holiday sign in the green area downtown in front of the Dog Park.
- We collected 1385.39 tons of garbage and 54.3 tons of recyclables.
- We used 53.93 tons of asphalt filling potholes and sinkhole repairs.

## **The Future**

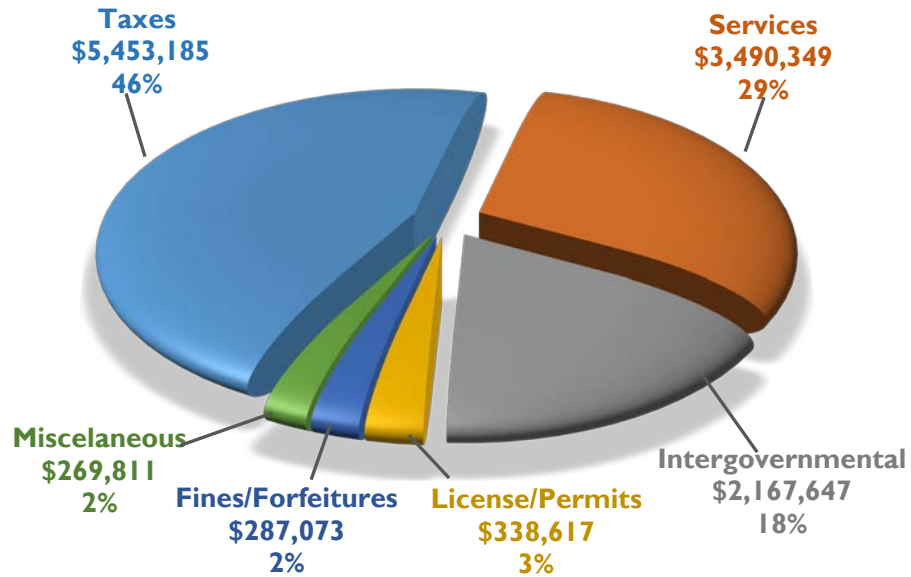
The City of Bluefield Public Works staff looks forward to a challenging and exciting 2019. Some of the goals we are striving to achieve this year include:

- Getting our new facility renovated and moved into before summer.
- Implement a new inventory system to have better control of our assets and inventory.
- Grow our recycling program by making it available to residents outside the City limits of Bluefield, to hopefully reduce dumping inside the city.
- Purchase additional leaf equipment to be better equipped to handle leaf season.
- Succession Planning and Employee Development Initiatives: Continue to provide career path and succession planning for the Public Works Department. Adjust job descriptions and duties as needed.
- Increase Use of GIS/Mobile Technology: Continue to work with GIS representatives to identify and implement ways to utilize GIS technology within Public Works Department with a goal of increasing efficiency.
- Continue to strive for operational excellence, develop a well-trained, equipped, and skilled City workforce to ensure safe, efficient, and effective services as well as being responsive in an emergency.
- Install CB communication devices in all City vehicles. This will allow us to safely communicate with our in-the-field staff as needed.



## TREASURY

### Revenue Collected - \$10,919,815



#### Intergovernmental Includes:

Federal, State & Local Grants - \$124, 250

Foundations - \$1,819,564

Business Organizations - \$33,514

Individuals – 190,319

### Expenditures - \$10,785,246

