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

October 8, 2019 – Noon

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Mayor Ron Martin, Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Peter Taylor, City Manager Dane Rideout, City Attorney Colin Cline, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Director Robb Williams and Director Matt Knowles were absent.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Mayor Ron Martin called the meeting to order.

Public Comments:

Art Riley thanked Public Works for the great job they did painting the curbs and parking places in the downtown area. CASE of West Virginia and the Downtown Merchants will sponsor the Christmas Parade on December 14th at 1:00 pm. The theme this year will be The Grinch. The route will be the same as in years past and will begin at the old Goodyknooz Drug Store, located on the corner of Bland Street and South Street. Mr. Riley said the parade is for the enjoyment of the citizens of Bluefield.

Deloris French asked for an update on the Grant Street Bridge. Mayor Martin said there was not an update. Ms. French asked who the grant writer was for the City. City Manager Rideout said Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer wrote most of the grants. City Ambassador Marie Blackwell wrote some of the grants, but the task of grant writing is spread among several employees. Ms. French requested that a committee be formed and the city begin writing a grant for the city’s funding of the Grant Street Bridge. Mr. French stated the privately owned church building, the former Thelma’s Hotel, should be secured as an historical area. Many famous people stayed at the hotel. She felt the city had lost a lot of the historical value and should strive to preserve the history of the area. Ms. French requested a proposal from the city at the next meeting stating intentions for grant writing towards the bridge.

Presentation

Marie Blackwell presented grant awards from the Community Foundation of the Virginias to the Fire Department (fire hydrant flags), Police Department (vehicle petitions) and Parks and Recreation Department (lane lines for the pool). The total for the grant awards was for $10,189.00.

Minutes

Mayor Ron Martin requested a motion to approve the minutes for the September 24, 2019 Board of Directors meeting. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to approve the minutes from the September 24, 2019 Board of Directors meeting was unanimously approved.

Action on New Business

Mayor Martin requested approval of approval to of First Reading of an Ordinance to transfer the Elks Building to the Bluefield Economic Development Authority. City Attorney Colin Cline stated the city acquired the Elks Building and replaced the roof. The city subsequently created an organization called the Bluefield Economic Development Authority which has statutory authorities to deal with properties that the city does not have. This Board requested an ordinance authorizing the transfer the Elks Building to the BEDA by retaining a lien against such property in the amount of the City’s costs incurred in acquiring and maintaining such building ($82,000). Community and Economic Development Director Spencer stated the BEDA would then create a request for proposals (RFP) to seek proposals from developers. Mayor Martin asked if the BEDA was prepared to take over the insurance and utilities. Community and Economic Development Director Spencer said there had been some discussion concerning the BEDA remaining a part of the city for a period of time. The Elks have requested that certain items be preserved for historical reasons and are making arrangements to remove the items. The elk on the outside of the building will remain. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to approve the First Reading of an Ordinance to transfer the Elks Building to the Bluefield Economic Development Authority, pending information discussed concerning insurance was unanimously approved and so ordered.
Mayor Martin requested approval to reappoint Harold Wells to the Bluefield Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, to expire October 9, 2024. City Manager Dane Rideout stated Executive Director Cindy Preast, for the Public Housing Authority, requesting Mr. Wells reappointment. Ms. Preast stated Mr. Wells had served on the board since 2007 and continued to be an asset through his participation. He is knowledgeable of the agency and federal and state laws by which the board governs. Combined with his understanding of general business practices he is an excellent member. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to reappoint Harold Wells to the Bluefield Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, to expire October 9, 2024 was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Martin requested approval to reappoint Gary Boyce and Dan Shortridge to the Bluefield Zoning Board of Adjustments, to expire October 9, 2024. City Manager Dane Rideout stated this is a five-member board and four of the positions have expired. Member Gary Boyce and Dan Shortridge have expressed a desire to remain on the board. Member Bill Nabors will expire as a member in 2021. City Manager Rideout stated this board was working towards some zoning corrections inside the city and highly recommend these two members to be reappointed. City Manager Rideout stated he has requested recommendations for the two vacant positions. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to reappoint Gary Boyce and Dan Shortridge to the Bluefield Zoning Board of Adjustment, to expire October 8, 2022 was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

Mayor Martin requested approval of recommendation from the Bluefield Planning Commission to approve an application from AMERCO Real Estate Company to amend the previously Kendall Plaza PUD. City Attorney Colin Cline stated a PUD is a special type of zoning that allows an area to be developed in specific areas. The structure was originally in one parcel but later amended into two parcels to accommodate Tractor Supply. U-Haul of West Virginia is interested in purchasing the Kmart building for a showroom, retail sales, truck rentals, and indoor and outdoor storage facilities. The business will create approximately fifteen jobs, generate additions sale taxes for the city and county. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the request. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to approve the recommendation from the Bluefield Planning Commission to approve the application from AMERCO Real Estate Company to amend the previously Kendall Plaza PUD was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

**Action on Accounts**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the September Financial Report. At the close of September 2019, the 3rd month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled $3,501,540 (36.11%) of the projected amount of $9,695,846. Expenditures totaled $2,856,225 (18.70%) of the projected budget of $15,272,161.

In September, we received the anticipated increase in the monthly Ad Valorem Tax with the receipt of both the August real estate/personal property tax and the public utility tax. Receipt of two of the three lease payments for Mitchell Stadium were received in September. The quarterly sales tax distribution should arrive within the next couple of weeks.

Premiums for workers’ compensation and property /liability insurance were paid in September totaling $71,175. A new snow system vehicle was purchased for $57,601. The annual contract for the police body cameras and data storage was renewed for $444,501. **Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved approval of the September Financial Report was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

**City Manager Report Dane Rideout**

- Princeton Community Hospital’s acquisition of Bluefield Regional received official approval on October 1st.
  - City Manager Rideout stated he had provided the Board with internal updates and strategic goals and objectives from all the departments. The city had to make changes with the sale of the hospital and Intuit/Alorica.
- Huge thank you to Gail Satterfield, the Beautification Commission, and all the volunteers that made Oktoberfest a success. They had a record attendance and a record fund raising event. The event takes a great deal of planning and discussions are underway for next year. The flowers throughout town, landscaping and other projects that help make our city a great place to live, work and play are made possible through these events. We appreciate all their hard work and dedication.
- The Trails and Ales Challenge was held on September 28th in conjunction with Oktoberfest. Thank you to all the sponsors.
- Leaf pick up has begun. This is part of the stormwater plan. Bagged leaves will be collected sooner than loose leave. Please use the Fix It and remove all rocks and limbs.
- Milling and paving of certain streets will begin next week.
• We are about to auction the old Public Works building. The proceeds will go towards a new salt bin. City vehicles will now purchase gas with a fleet card from local gas stations. The Fire Department will purchase diesel based on quality.
• The AEP audit is complete after two years. Had a meeting yesterday and discussed the financials. An audit had not been done for years. New agreements will be signed based on the findings.
• City Park is officially closed to vehicular traffic so Public Works can begin setting up for the annual Holiday of Lights.

Report of Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer
Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer presented two video/slideshows. The CREATE Opportunity Resource Guide and Opportunity Zone Prospectus are available on the city website (www.cityofbluefield.com) under the economic tab/resources. Several workshops are available:

• October 17th: Entrepreneur to Entrepreneur (Meet the Millennials) @ the Arts Center / 4:00 pm – 6:30 pm
• October 24th: Marketing and Facebook @ the Arts Center / 8:00 am. Jamie Null, with the Mercer County CVB, will be teaching the classes. Learn how to avoid mistakes that could deter customers and cost dollars. Free Class
• November 7th: Facebook: The Demographics, Insights, and Future @ the Arts Center / 8:00 am. Jamie Null, with the Mercer County CVB, to learn how to read the insights, find target audience, and the tools needed to know for the next Facebook shakeup.
• November 7th: Meeting for businesses: The Intuit/Alorica Effect @ the Arts Center / 6 pm. Speaker Diane Lupke
• November 30th: Small Business Saturday

Community and Economic Development Director Spencer requested approval of pay application #10 (final) to Danhill Construction Company for $19,099.95. This will close out this grant. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to approve the of pay application #10 (final) to Danhill Construction Company for $19,099.95 was unanimously approved.

Adjournment
Mayor Ron Martin requested a motion to adjourn. Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith moved to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved and so ordered.