A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the City of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was held on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, at noon in the Municipal Building Boardroom. Present were Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith, Director Robb Williams, Director Matt Knowles, Director Peter Taylor, City Manager Dane Rideout, City Attorney Colin Cline, City Treasurer Kelly Davis, Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer and City Clerk Bobbi Kersey. Mayor Ron Martin was absent.

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

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith called the meeting to order.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith stated the PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA CONGRATULATING THE BLUEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM will be read at the January 14, 2020 Board of Directors meeting, due to a scheduling conflict.

**Public Comments:**

**Samuel Harris** asked if Norfolk Southern Railroad takes down the bridge and does not replace the bridge, did the City have a plan? City Manager Dane Rideout stated he is in the process of putting together a task force for the City concerning the Grant Street Bridge. He had reached out to Mrs. French because he would like representation from the East End. The task force will consist of two board members, two residents from the East End, a representative from the Department of Highway, Region 1, and Norfolk Southern. Others members included the City Manager, City Attorney, City Engineer, City Treasurer and the City Clerk. A large part of this bridge is owned by the railroad. There have been conversations with the Director of Government Relations, Drew Marrs and Norfolk Southern WV Representative, Jason Monzel. They are very much aware of concerns regarding the bridge, they have a copy of the inspection report, and are communicating with the Secretary of Transportation. The task force will look at all the options concerning the Grant Street Bridge.

**Richelle Davis** asked for an update concerning the curve on Hardy Street. City Manager Dane Rideout said the city has acquired the property necessary to correct the curve. The City Engineer has developed a plan and dirt should move in the next sixty days. Weather could be a factor. Ms. Davis asked if there was a way to make it safer while waiting for the curve correction, due to the large trucks that travel the road. City Manager Rideout said the road could be closed but he would prefer to meet with the police chief to see what safety measures could be taken. He said he had some concerns approaching UPS, FedEx, mail carriers and other trucks because they could refuse to deliver in the area. Delivery stoppage had happened before and the city needs to be careful what they ask for when placing stipulations on who can and cannot travel on the road. City Manager Rideout said he had made Public Works aware of the area and the need for additional salt during the winter. City Manager Rideout stated he would investigate the area and would be in communication with Ms. Davis.
Ed Tomchin said he had two comments. One concerning Small Business Saturday and why a government body would make taxpayers pay for a private commercial promotion. Second, he stated the city had some very well paid employees.

Minutes

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested a motion to approve the minutes for the November 12, 2019, Board of Directors meeting. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the minutes for the November 12, 2019 Board of Directors meeting was unanimously approved.

Action on New Business

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested a motion for approval of the City of Bluefield 2020 Calendar. City Manager Rideout stated the calendar shows holiday trash schedules, special events, city board meetings and various other important city information. May 12, 2020 is an election day and City Hall will be closed. The meeting will be May 13, 2020 at noon. The calendar is available on the city Facebook page, city website and is posted at City Hall. Director Matt Knowles moved to approve the City of Bluefield 2020 Calendar was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested a motion for approval of the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF A CERTAIN PARCEL OF REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY TO THE BLUEFIELD MUNICIPAL LAND BANK. City Attorney Colin Cline stated this is parcel 96, Map 26 in the Bluefield Corporate District on the lower end of East Ridge Street. A property owner in the area had expressed interest in acquiring the property. In order to do this, the property must be moved into the Land Bank. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF A CERTAIN PARCEL OF REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY TO THE BLUEFIELD MUNICIPAL LAND BANK was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested a motion for approval of the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ABANDONMENT OF CITY OWNED REAL PROPERTY AT THE CORNER OF PARKWAY STREET AND HILLSIDE DRIVE. City Attorney Colin Cline stated there is six-one hundredths of an acre located at the Northwest Corner of Parkway Street and Hillside Drive. The city no longer needs the land for a right of way and the city would like to abandon the property. There is a tree located on the corner of the property that would no longer be the responsibility/liability of the city. The abandoned property will become the homeowner’s responsibility. Director Matt Knowles moved to approve the FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ABANDONMENT OF CITY OWNED REAL PROPERTY AT THE CORNER OF PARKWAY STREET AND HILLSIDE DRIVE was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested a motion for approval of the Public Works Auction. City Attorney Colin cline stated the city advertised the old public works property on Blue Prince Road. There was a public auction on Monday. The winning bidder was Tim Taylor for $175,000. The terms of the auction stated 10% down and closing within sixty days. The salt bin will remain on the property allowing dual locations within the city. Director Robb Williams moved to approve the Public Works auction was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Action on Accounts

City Treasurer Kelly Davis requested approval of the November Financial Statement. At the close of November 2019, the 5th month of the fiscal year, revenue collected totaled $5,922,366
(61.08%) of the projected amount of $9,695,846. Expenditures totaled $5,122,913 (33.54%) of the projected budget of $15,272,161.

The Stated Auditor is currently conducting the annual audit for both the Bluefield Sanitary Board and the City of Bluefield. City Treasurer Davis anticipates he will be here through the remainder of 2019.

Revenues are holding steady with most lines at or above the 50% mark as the city approaches the midway point of the fiscal year.

Invoices have started coming in for the work at Exit 1 and work is progressing on the city’s portion of repairs to the Commercialization Station. The invoice for paving was received in November and will be paid in December ($258,993). At this point, we have overspent our paving budget and will need to revise this expenditure line during the next budget revision. Bowen Field expenditures this month include $128,500 for a new roof on the grandstand. Overall expenditures are continuing to be held to a minimum other than normal operating costs and planned expenditures such as paving and capital equipment.

Two payrolls along with three holidays were paid in November totaling $443,812.

**Director Robb Williams moved to approve the November Financial Statement as presented was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

City Treasurer Kelly Davis stated she discussed the collection list in detail with the Board during the work session. She presented thirty – one accounts for collection for $21,953.71. Before the list goes to collection the names will be published in the paper. A letter was mailed prior to the meeting informing those who needed to make a payment. **Director Robb Williams moved to approve the collection list as presented and authorize City Treasurer Davis to publish the list in the paper was unanimously approved and so ordered.**

**City Manager Dane Rideout**

- City Ambassador Marie Blackwell provided a synopsis of upcoming events, a report on grant funding, and her work as the Veteran Liaison for the City of Bluefield including:
  - Informational programs discussing the history, recreation, events, etc., in Bluefield.
  - Update and events on the Holiday of Lights (www.cityofbluefield.com or city Facebook page).
  - Thanked the following foundations and/or organizations for grant funding: State Farm, WV American Water, REAP, Hugh I Shott and June Shott Foundations, Appalachian Power, Community Foundation of the Virginias Foundations, FEMA-(Assistance to Firefighters Grant).
  - On the board of the Community Veterans Breakfast, Denver Foundation, “care” packages for over 7,000 service members in the armed forces several times a year.
  - Working with City Manager to launch PaYS Partnership.
  - Working with Beautification Commission on Lemon Drop.

City Manager Rideout and the Board of Directors thanked City Ambassador Blackwell for all the things she does to make our City a better place to live, work and play.

- City updates are posted on the city website (**www.cityofbluefield.com**).
- Army PaYs partnership for youth success is a workforce tool. The program is a chance for military personnel to receive marketable skills for possible employment after the Army.  City Manager Rideout will be working with Community and Economic Development Director
Jim Spencer. Bluefield will be the first municipality in West Virginia to participate in this program.

- City Building Inspector Charles Vannatter is working on many project including Exit 1.
- Bay two in the Fire Department collapsed due to water infiltration and decomposed material. The fire truck is being housed at Fire Station #1.
- Public Works is finishing up leaf pick up and preparing for snow events.
- Shout out to Director Candy Sayers and her staff for the smooth transition during the recent move to the new Public Works facility. Matt Perdue and Bradley Dempsey were instrumental as the architects for the Christmas tree on Bluefield Avenue and getting the Holiday of Lights ready for the season. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication. More information concerning the Holiday of Lights is available on the city website.
- IT Specialist Billy Hester not only live streams the board meetings and maintains all computers, but is supervising the new Public Works facility contractors, working on renovations on the Union Street property, coordinating upgrades at Fire Station #3, and overseeing maintenance at the Alliance of the Arts building for the new Innovation Lab.
- Congratulations to Bluefield High School and Graham High School on a successful football season. Parks and Recreation Director Charles Ridlehuber attended the West Virginia State High School Football Championship in Wheeling, West Virginia to gather information concerning hosting the Super Six Championships in 2020.
- Charles Vannatter is the new City Building Inspector. Mr. Vannatter was the Code Enforcement Officer in Wytheville, Virginia and brings a wealth of knowledge to the position. Welcome to the team.
- The Police Department has completed their explorers program and is doing a lot of community policing. (More details and updates on the city website)
- The Fire Department did a mock disaster exercise with the Maples. It was a success! (More details and updates on the city website)
- The city was selected to partner with the fellowship program for the International City Managers Association. There were only ten cities in the United States that were selected.

Report of Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer:

- The 5th Small Business Saturday was a success. Marketing Specialist Rebecca Casey announced the following contest winners.
  - Colette Kiboceaux – free Chick-fil-A, once a week for a year. Jason Reed and representatives from Chick-Fil-A congratulated the winner.
  - Tammy Todd- won a shop small community bag filled with goodies.
  - What I Love About Bluefield Writing Contest
    1st: Seth Cardwell - 2nd: Betty Nash - 3rd: Ryan Heimer
  - Favorite Small Business Facebook Contest
    5th: Imogene and Roses Paper Studio- the owner stated Small Business Saturday had record sales.

- Community and Economic Development Director Spencer showed a short video, by Marketing Specialist Rebecca Casey, on The Power of a Dollar. (available on the city website)
- Free workshops @ Bluefield Arts Center / Third Floor Gallery
  - December 12: How to Get Your Business Seen and Heard on Facebook (8-9 am).
  - December 17: Government Contracting 101(11am – 1pm).
✓ December 19: The Hatfield-McCoy Effect (6:00 pm/ Arts Center Theater)

**Adjournment**
Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith requested a motion to adjourn. **Director Peter Taylor** moved to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved and so ordered.

Vice Mayor Barbara Thompson Smith  
City Clerk Bobbi Kersey