

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED AT 6:35 PM ON JANUARY 12, 2021 IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE BECKLEY CITY HALL.

THOSE PRESENT: Mayor Robert R. Rappold, Recorder-Treasurer Billie Trump, City Attorney William File III, Secretary Susan Miller, Bill Kelly, Director of IT, Amy Evans, Assistant Director of IT.

THOSE PRESENT BY WEBEX: Council Members: Tom Sopher, Robert Dunlap, Kevin Price, Janine Bullock, Sherrie Hunter, Michael Reedy, Bob Canter, Police Chief Lonnie Christian, Director of Board of Public Works Jerry Stump and Fire Department Chief Ed Wills.

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Because of the ongoing concerns of the coronavirus, and the health and safety of the Council Members, the City of Beckley employees, as well as the public, this regular Council meeting for January 12, 2021 is being held via WebEx Event. The public will have access to join the meeting either from their computer, or by phone, using the weblink or phone number provided the day of the meeting on the city's webpage at Beckley.org or the city's Facebook page.

The Mayor reminded the public that they will be able to make comments when invited to do so by either pressing \*3 on their phone and their call will be taken in the order it is received, or if viewing by computer or tablet, raising your hand by right clicking your name and choosing "Raise Hand".

Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the regular Council meeting dated December 22, 2020, copies of which were distributed to each member. Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilwoman Hunter.

The Mayor suggested that the vacancy on the Board of Zoning of Appeals (BZA) be filled by Noah Kapp. The vacancy is due to Brad Wartella moving out of city limits. Motion to appoint Noah Kapp to the BZA was made by Councilman Dunlap and seconded by Councilman Price and unanimously passed by Council.

**OLD BUSINESS:** The Mayor gave an update on the New River Drive project. Workers were operating a backhoe and excavator on site there today. The amount of water in the channel after a rainstorm was as high as the roadway. Removal of the water has been the ongoing project since the holiday break. The workers hoped to get the box culvert set in this week however, additional foundation work must be done first.

The Mayor congratulated Councilman Dunlap and Dr. Kristi Dumas for the Beckley Success Closet which helps those in our community with attire to wear when seeking employment.

Councilman Reedy voiced his concern over the length of time the New River Drive project has/is taking and asked if there is anything the City can do to help the Beckley Moose due to their loss in money coming in on a weekly basis and also possibly help the daycare center on New River Drive. Councilman Reedy stated that he is on the Board at the Moose and his father is the Administrator of the Moose. The Mayor stated that the City cannot offer B&O tax reductions to the Moose. The Mayor stated he is a Moose member and wishes there was something the City could do to help, but the City cannot give any special attention to one business over the other businesses in the City.

Councilman Price asked if there is an update on the traffic light situation uptown. The Mayor reported there is one new traffic signal on the corner of Neville & Leslie C. Gates that is blinking warning as of today which was the result of a faulty piece of equipment installed prior to the current construction work. The subcontractor for DOH said that to replace the defective equipment piece, assuming they could find the old parts would probably not be worth the expense. The Mayor stated that in his opinion, the most problematic traffic light issue is the one on Prince Street and N. Kanawha. He stated that the subcontractor for the DOH is back at work, working at night on the traffic light. We have not yet been given a tentative completion date.

Councilman Dunlap thanked the Mayor for his acknowledgement on the Beckley Success Closet (which accepts women's and men's clothes). He stated that they offer career counseling and resume production. They will be accepting clothing donations on January 18, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Councilman Sopher thanked Secretary, Susan Miller for the emails she sends to Council with all the attachments being easily accessed. Councilman Sopher also stated that on Scott Avenue, Willie Taggart has cameras around his house and observed a car running down the street without a driver and noticed a lady trying to get into her car. Chief Christian stated that Corporal Whitt and a new officer were there, and the new officer was able to safely catch up with the car and gain access to it. The Mayor thanked Willie and the officer involved for their hard work.

Councilman Price suggested that the City try to utilize New River Park throughout the winter. Perhaps a drive through park of lights for the holidays and an ice-skating center. He also suggested a splash park there in the summer. The Mayor stated that this is a great idea and is certainly worth looking into. The Mayor stated that the Coal Town Christmas and the old dinky rail engine drew in a lot of traffic and was a success. The Mayor stated that the City has ideas about extending the Edison Lights that were around Word Park and the gazebo, and, ideas to possibly enhance some alleyways.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** William Laxton with Laxton's Auto Repair & Wrecker Service called to discuss getting more support from the City for wrecker calls in the City. Mr. Laxton stated that Laxton's Auto Repair & Wrecker Service falls into rotation just like all the other wrecker services that are not in the City. Mr. Laxton stated that his business is looking to expand their facility but are not sure if they will stay within the city limits or not and would like to see more support from the City with calls for wrecker service. The Mayor stated that he has met with Mr. Laxton regarding this a couple times in the past and stated that EOC honors the request that everyone makes when they call EOC. If it is an emergency, the Mayor stated that the officer on the scene can contact Laxton's. However, the City does use the EOC rotation. In response to Councilman Reedy, the Mayor said Councilman Price is on the Board at EOC. The Mayor asked Councilman Price to talk to the EOC Board about Mr. Laxton's concerns.

With no further public comments, the motion for adjournment was made by Councilwoman Hunter and seconded by Councilman Price.

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Mayor

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Recorder-Treasurer