

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED AT 6:30 PM ON MARCH 9, 2021 IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF BECKLEY CITY HALL.

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

THOSE PRESENT BY WEBEX: Council Members: Tom Sopher, Robert Dunlap, Robert Canter, Kevin Price, Janine Bullock, Sherrie Hunter and Michael Reedy, Police Chief Lonnie Christian, Donnie Morgan with Code Enforcement, Director of Board of Public Works Jerry Stump, and Chief of Fire Department, Ed Wills and guest speaker, Jina Belcher, Director of New River Gorge Regional Development Authority.

THOSE ABSENT: Robert Cannon.

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 March 9, 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 February 23, 2021, copies of which were distributed to each member. Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by Councilman Dunlap and seconded by Councilwoman Hunter.

Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes from the Workshop meeting held March 1, 2021, copies of which were distributed to each member. Council unanimously approved the minutes written on a motion by Councilwoman Bullock and seconded by Councilman Sopher.

Prior to tonight's meeting, Mr. Trump emailed an abbreviated version of the FY 2021/2022 budget which is similar to what will be sent to the State Auditor's office and what will be published in the newspaper. He explained that the budget they were given at the workshop was a comprehensive line item budget which explained how each one of the lines was derived. Mr. Trump asked if anyone had any questions. There were no questions regarding the budget. A motion was made by Councilman Dunlap to accept the FY 2021/2022 budget and seconded by Councilman Price. The motion was passed by unanimous vote. The abbreviated version of the FY2021-2022 budget is incorporated into these minutes.

Mr. File presented an Ordinance for first reading by title only. It is titled AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF BECKLEY TO PURCHASE FROM THE CHURCH OF GOD OF AMERICA REAL ESTATE LOCATED AT 116 AND 118 11TH STREET (LOTS 7,8 AND 9TH BLOCK CENTRAL ADDITION) BECKLEY, RALEIGH COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA. He explained these two lots will be used (in the future) to expand the park that is on Scott Avenue. The price is \$7,600.00 for the lots which is the current market value according to an appraisal by Goldman and Associates of Charleston, WV. The City anticipates receiving federal grant money to purchase these lots. The second reading and public reading will be March 23, 2021. The Mayor stated that this expenditure has been approved for the use of CBDG funds. A motion was made by Councilman Sopher and a second by Councilman Canter. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Councilman Sopher asked how much the City is paying for that property. The Mayor explained that consideration is \$7,600.00. The Ordinance is incorporated into these minutes.

Mr. File presented an Ordinance for first reading that was requested by the Calvary Assembly of God Church. They are going to build an entrance road from their church parking lot to Harper Road and it will cross the end of Reservation Avenue (which is the street off of Sunset Avenue). The church is located at the end of Sunset Avenue. This Ordinance will permit the church entrance road to cross Reservation Ave. and will require motorists to stop on Reservation Ave. prior to entering this entrance road. This will also authorize the placement of stop signs. Those traveling on Reservation Avenue prior to turning on to this entrance road (which has not yet been named) will be required to stop. Mr. File explained and summarized the ordinance and the first reading was by title only AN ORDINANCE FOR THE AMENDMENT TO THE TRAFFIC CONTROL MAP-OTHER THAN PARKING AND TRAFFICE CONTROL FILE-AUTHORIZING THE LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF AN ENTRANCE ROAD CONNECTING THE CALVARY ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH PARKING LOT TO HARPER ROAD AND CONNECTING WITH RESERVATION AVENUE. A motion was made by Councilman Reedy and seconded by Councilman Price and was passed by unanimous voted. Second reading and public hearing will take place March 23, 2021. The Ordinance was incorporated into these minutes.

Next a resolution was presented authorizing the City to contribute \$25,000.00 to the ACC Corp. Summer Youth Program. Mr. File read the resolution in its entirety. The Mayor stated that this contribution is far less than the cost of hiring City employees to do the work. A motion was made by Councilwoman Hunter to accept this resolution and seconded by Councilman Dunlap and was passed by unanimous vote. The Resolution is incorporated into these minutes.

The Mayor congratulated Jill Moorefield on her efforts and for her work on the next Resolution which is A RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT A GRANT REQUEST TO THE NATIONAL COAL HERITAGE AREA AUTHORITY FOR MATCHING FUNDS TO ADD INTERPRETIVE SIGNS ALONG THE LEWIS MCMANUS MEMORIAL HONOR TRAIL. Mr. File read the resolution in its entirety. A motion was made by Councilman Sopher to accept this resolution and seconded by Councilwoman Bullock and it passed by unanimous vote. The resolution is incorporated into these minutes.

The Mayor commended Jina Belcher, Executive Director of the NRGRDA for her effort working on a grant for primarily the downtown Beckley area. Ms. Belcher then made a presentation to Council. The Mayor stated that there is no need for any grant approval or financing regarding the City of Beckley's contribution to this grant at this time. The City is asking Council to approve Ms. Belcher's efforts to proceed with a request for proposals (RFPs). Ms. Belcher explained that she is working on a potential grant for redevelopment planning, potential phase 1 environmental, structural engineering and planning to attract investors or developers to downtown Beckley. In the last two weeks NRGRDA has been contacted by six potential developers/investors regarding their interest in downtown Beckley. A downtown redevelopment master plan is what is needed. Ms. Belcher said this is what Monica Miller had in mind several years ago. Instead of pursuing the grant for the technical assistance dollars, Ms. Belcher reached out to the Mayor for permission to proceed with RFPs for services to do the downtown redevelopment master plan. Two investors have asked for a redevelopment plan, so she thinks that it is timely that we expedite this work now. To do that, NRGRDA will procure and cover the costs to put Monica Miller back on retainer to manage this project. Ms. Miller will be responsible for defining the scope of work, the RFPs, soliciting the RFPs, working with entities and contractors that might want to do the downtown redevelopment master plan. Once the RFP is out to the public for a response, NRGRDA will return to the City and to Council to share those proposals and choose a contractor. Monica Miller will work directly with the contractor along with the City and NRGRDA to craft the master plan. Some of NRGRDA's goals in the plan are identifying walkability from WVU Tech's campus to the bookstore, identifying buildings that need to be torn down rather than rehabilitated and identifying potential housing and residents to go along with some of the storefronts that they are looking at in downtown Beckley and some of the developer's specific interests. The NRGRDA also wants to make sure that the project creates an investable community and investable spaces because they realize that not all the spaces have developer's interest right now. They will also be working with NCDC located in North Carolina which is a community development financing group that helps the developers procure investment for their development. That service is paid for by the developer at the end of the deal. NRGRDA intends on contracting with Monica Miller within the two weeks to start crafting the RFP to put out to the public. Ms. Belcher wanted to share their thoughts and NRGRDA's intentions and let the City and Council know that there is a lot of interest in this area right now and expediting the redevelopment of the master plan is the next step to moving forward in downtown Beckley. Councilman Sopher asked if Monica Miller would have an artist's rendition of what would be left if some buildings would be torn down and if designs of parking lots would be in this? She said yes, part of the plan is to identify the end use of either the building or the space(s) left by the building. Councilman Dunlap asked Ms. Belcher what she envisions the Historic Landmark's role being in the next step of this redevelopment. She said that NRGRDA must be mindful that courthouse square is a historic district and must keep in mind what that looks like in either the demolishing of buildings or the redevelopment of buildings. There is also a role that exists for historic tax credits as part of financing. There is also a role in making sure the integrity of the façade is as close to original as possible. She said they will make sure that they have a representative from the Historic Landmark Commission on the board to insure they are protecting the integrity of courthouse square and are using the tax credits to their highest ability with financing. Councilman Dunlap said that he is glad that she included their involvement. Councilwoman Bullock mentioned that when Monica was previously involved, there was a survey completed and wanted to know if that survey will be used. Ms. Belcher said yes, they are using a regional plan and those surveys are a road map to pull back in those key players that were involved and some of the common themes that were identified as part of that. The Mayor asked her when this may be brought before Council for the

first reading of an ordinance regarding an RFP for the City's support? She said within five to six weeks.

Mr. File read the notice of application from Sultan's Lounge, Inc. to obtain their liquor license. It does not require any approval by Council, simply notification to Council. Mr. File read a memo from Mr. Cannon to Council regarding notice of application. Mr. Trump stated that he has searched the City's archives and there is no business license or any registration for this business therefore Mr. Trump suggests that we hold this application until we are able to verify that they are licensed and able to do business in the city. Mr. File stated that the application will not be submitted until after we receive proper verification. These forms are incorporated into these minutes.

OLD BUSINESS: The City was recently visited by a member of the "Healthy People Healthy Place" Committee by DHHR and presented a certificate, signed by Governor Justice, awarding Beckley a gold status for this award. The City of Beckley was the only City elected for the gold award. The Mayor thanked the support of Council and thanked Active Southern WV for their efforts. The Mayor complimented Jerry Stump and the Board of Public Works employees who engage in walking on the trail at lunch time and for their involvement in the corporate wellness program. He also complimented Beckley Sanitary Board for their involvement in the corporate wellness program and recognized Erin Reed's involvement with the BYPAC Committee. All of these efforts contributed to the City of Beckley being awarded this gold "Healthy People Healthy Place" award. Councilman Sopher asked if New River Drive is close to opening one lane. The Mayor asked Jerry Stump to address the issue. Jerry Stump, Director of Board of Public Works stated that he talked to Nick Akers Monday. They will be pouring concrete for half of the roadway Wednesday and the other half will be poured Thursday. There is a seven-day curing process for the concrete and the guardrail will be installed. Jerry was unable to get a date but agrees with the Mayor that it should reopen within the next two weeks.

NEW BUSINESS: Councilwoman Hunter thanked the Mayor for having the USDA & the Beckley Housing Authority contact Council. The food distribution will be March 19, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Epling Stadium. Councilwoman Hunter welcomed Council to volunteer their help. March 24, 2021 Mountaineer Food Bank will distribute food boxes as well. The Mayor announced that the Raleigh County Health Dept. would appreciate any help with controlling traffic and helping get questionnaires completed for the COVID vaccine this week. Councilwoman Hunter showed a picture of a stone wall that collapsed this afternoon on Woodlawn Avenue. It will be the responsibility of the homeowner to repair. Councilwoman Hunter suggested that if any Council members know of anyone that does stonework, to please pass it along to that citizen. The Mayor asked if this occurred on the 300th block of Woodlawn, she said, "yes". Councilman Dunlap thanked Chief Christian for the presence of increased foot patrol by officers in the City. He appreciates the increase in visibility and accessibility to the public. Councilman Sopher agreed. The Mayor also agreed. He said this brings back memories of Lonnie Price, (Councilman Price's uncle) who was a friendly reminder of public safety. Chief Christian commented that he is glad that the increased visibility of the officers is being noticed. Councilman Price asked when will Black Knight reopen the restaurant? The Mayor explained that a reopening date has not yet been determined. However, the Raleigh County Board of Education contacted Black Knight about the possibility of providing one thousand Easter dinners to their personnel. This keeps people employed and keeps Black Knight's name out to the public. The Mayor stated that finding employees to work at Black Knight has become an issue. It appears there is another round of unemployment checks in the amount of \$300.00 per week that will be coming. This makes it difficult to recruit servers and other wait staff employees at Black Knight. Ms. Baker is concerned about this regarding opening the restaurant for full service. The Mayor stated that Black Knight gets calls daily inquiring as to when the golf course will open. This may be the first full service at Black Knight to reopen. Depending on the weather, this could happen in March.

Ms. Baker and the Director of Recreation for the county combined to hold a disc tournament on the course over the weekend as a fundraiser for the county in the spirit of collaboration with the county. The county plans to construct and run their own disc golf course at Stephen's Lake.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Ronnie Pack thanked the Mayor for the opportunity to speak. She voiced a concern with speeding in her Bowling Addition neighborhood. She stated that she has noticed a little more police presence driving up and down the street but it's not taking care of the issue and there are children that play in this area. Councilman Price mentioned that the long straight stretches on Pine and Orchard are prime drag ways. The Mayor asked Chief Christian if he had any comments. He said that the City has several officers that live in Bowling Addition and are very aware of the amount of traffic there and it is utilized as a cut through type of road. He said that he and Councilman Price have discussed this and they are looking into it. He said this area has been an area for speeding concerns for many years and they will continue to work on it. With there being no other public comments and no other business, the Mayor asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Councilwoman Hunter and seconded by Councilman Dunlap at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor

Recorder-Treasurer