

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED
AT 6:31 PM ON APRIL 12, 2022, IN COUNCIL
CHAMBERS.

THOSE PRESENT: Mayor Robert R. Rappold, Recorder-Treasurer Billie Trump, Secretary Susan Miller, IT Director Bill Kelly, Assistant IT Director Amy Evans. Council Members: Cody Reedy, Tom Sopher, Bob Canter, Kevin Price, Sherrie Hunter, Robert Dunlap, and Janine Bullock. The following Department Heads were present: Director of Board of Public Works, Jerry Stump, HR Director Shirley Trotter, Chief Christian of Beckley PD, Deputy Chief Dean Bailey of Beckley PD, Captain Morgan, Chief Code Officer, and Parks & Rec. Director, Leslie Baker. ABSENT: City Attorney, Bill File. Guest Speaker Scott Hill Director of Theatre WV. Guests also included Troop Leaders and Boy Scouts with Troop 1993. Cucumber and Company was present.

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 members, Department Heads and the public joined the meeting either in Council chambers or by WEB-X 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.

Troop Leaders and Boy Scouts with Pack 1993 lead The Pledge of Allegiance. Council dispensed with

the reading of minutes from the regular Council meeting dated March 12, 2022, copies of which had been

distributed to each member. Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by

Councilman Price and seconded by Councilman Dunlap.

Council unanimously approved the promotion of Deputy Chief Dean Bailey to Chief of Beckley PD on

a motion by Councilman Reedy and seconded by Councilwoman Hunter. The Mayor complimented Chief

Lonnie Christian, Deputy Chief Dean Bailey, and Detective David Allard for graduating from the FBI

Academy.

Council unanimously approved the promotion of Detective David Allard to Deputy Chief of Beckley PD

on a motion by Councilman Sopher and seconded by Councilman Reedy.

Scott Hill, Director of Theatre WV, addressed the Mayor and Council requesting up to \$15,000.00 to build

a theatre version of Coalwood WV circa 1960 on the Grandview stage, complete with Homer Hickam's

boyhood home, OLGA the coal mine, Big Creek High School classroom, Elsie Hickam's famous rose

garden fence, plus a couple of other locations needed to completely tell the story of the Rocket Boys of

McDowell County. These funds would also be used to bring Coalwood to life with dramatic period piece

costumes which are needed to take theatre goes back to the 1960's WV coal town. Mr. Hill stated that

supply chain issues could impact the cost. The Mayor complimented Theatre WV for how they contribute to

WV and thanked them. The Mayor will request a resolution to present to Council at the next Council

meeting to contribute fifteen thousand (\$15,000.00) dollars to Theatre WV.

OLD BUSINESS: The Mayor said that the deed transfer for the WJLS building was consummated yesterday.

The Hive has expressed interest in leasing this space and pending grant approval they would like to renovate

the space. The Mayor asked Leslie Baker, Director of Parks and Recreation, to give an update on the life-

guard situation. She said that details regarding the agreement with USA Pools will be finalized soon and she

hopes to get this item on Council's next agenda. She said that sixteen people took the lifeguard prerequisites

through the YMCA, but no one has signed up for the certification class. The Mayor said that the City of

Beckley is not in the swimming pool business to make a profit. It offers access to swimming pools to serve

the citizens of Beckley and will continue as the City can afford it. The Mayor said that this program may

have the potential to break even. Leslie said that the City is still in need of people to work the concession

stands and administer admission tickets for entry to the pools.

Councilman Reedy asked if the cost of \$16,000.00 is the cost of maintenance for New River Pool only and

does it include chemicals for the pool. Ms. Baker said that chemicals and items for the concession stand are

purchased separately in bulk locally and the \$16K is for New River Pool only. Councilwoman Hunter asked

if the slide is ready for use. Ms. Baker said that it needs inspected by the state. She said that the State of WV

Dept. of Labor considers the water slide in the same category as a carnival ride which requires no one less

than eighteen years old to work at the slide.

Councilwoman Hunter asked how many concession stand

workers are needed. Ms. Baker said that she would like to have three ticket takers and three concession stand

workers. Councilwoman Hunter asked if a discount is available for those interested in both the New River

Pool and New River Park. Ms. Baker said yes. Ms. Baker said that admission rates for the pool have not

increased in ten years, and they may be considering an increase but have not yet decided. The Mayor said

that the total revenue from admission to the pools and concessions in 2016 was \$143,000.00 and the total cost

for operating the single pool at New River Pool was \$143,000.00. Ms. Baker clarified that 2016 was the year

the City made \$83.00 from providing access to the pool. The Mayor asked for continued prayers for

Christian Martin, Councilwoman Hunter's grandson who is in a battle with a very serious illness.

NEW BUSINESS: The Mayor said that Tuesday, May 10th is Election Day and he requests Council

consider cancelling the meeting. Council Chambers in City Hall will be used as a voting precinct that day.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Kimberly Burks and Latasha Williams spoke about the death of Kim's son, Quantez

Lamer Burks asking the Beckley PD and the Mayor for answers. The Mayor said that the case is in

litigation and the City is not allowed to discuss anything that is in litigation. Thomas Parham asked for an

update on the flooding project involving Hunter, Hagar, & Hartley Streets. The Mayor explained that the

planning stages for the project are underway and the City hopes to get grants to help with the cost of this

project. This is the first project on the list pending the proposed rate increase of Sanitary/Sewer &

Stormwater rates and/or the award of grants. Mr. Parham asked if Police Officers are prohibited from joining

hate groups. Deputy Chief Bailey said yes. Kevin Reedy spoke voicing his concern regarding the timing of

the rate increase due to price gouging and inflation. He feels like now is not the right time to increase rates.

The Mayor clarified that a new building for the Beckley Sanitary Board (BSB) is at the bottom of the list and

the City was able to negotiate a good price on the lot on New River Drive out of foreclosure. The Mayor said

that the request for the rate increase is not to build a new BSB building. The Mayor stated that the City of

Beckley is prohibited by law from intermingling City of Beckley funds with BSB funds. The Mayor

explained that there has not been an increase in the Sanitary/Sewer system for seven years. There hasn't been

an increase in Stormwater rates in fifteen years. The Mayor stated that the cost of the Hagar, Hartley,

Pinecrest, Beckley Little League project is included in the rate increase. Doug Epling asked if the

business/commercial rates would increase. The Mayor said yes. Mr. Epling said that these increases affect

people on fixed incomes a lot. Jim Peterson said that Beckley lost one of its best citizens when it lost Sharon

Dempsey. He suggested that New River Park Pool be named in her honor. The Mayor said that Sharon will

be honored. The Webelos Pack 1993 thanked Council and the Mayor for allowing them to attend. Senator

Roberts stated that a dental/oral health care bill (up to \$1,000.00 per fiscal year) was passed for Medicaid

recipients or individuals that make up to 138% of the federal poverty level. The Mayor announced if anyone

wished to speak by phone or by computer they could do so. The Mayor announced that May 14, 2022, is the

1st Annual Bill Withers Festival. A City event called Sweet Treats will be held the morning of the event.

Amy said that no one was signed up online for public comments. Councilwoman Bullock thanked Board of

Public Works Director, Jerry Stump, Deputy Chief Bailey, and Chief Code Enforcement Officer, Donald

Morgan. She asked for prayers for the hurting mother, Kimberly Burks, who spoke earlier during public

comments. With there being no further business to discuss the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m. on

a motion by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilwoman Bullock.

Mayor
Recorder-Treasurer