

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED AT 6:33 PM ON MAY 9, 2023, IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIA WEB-X.

PRESENT: Mayor Robert R. Rappold, Recorder-Treasurer Billie Trump, City Attorney Bill File, and Secretary Susan Miller. Council Members: Janine Bullock, Robert Canter, Robert Dunlap, Cody Reedy, Tom Sopher, and Kevin Price. The following Department Heads were present: Director of IT Bill Kelly, Assistant Director of IT Amy Evans, Anthony Martin (IT), Captain Parsons with BFD, Director of Board of Public Works (BPW) Pam Frey, Chief Code Enforcement Officer Donald Morgan, and Chief of BPD Dean Bailey.

ABSENT: Councilman Canter.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The public had the option to join the meeting either in person 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.

The Mayor invited Girl Scouts from Troops 3532, 32547, and Boy Scouts from Troop 3, along with the Boy Scout Leader of Troop 3, Dr. Fernald to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Council dispensed with the reading and approval of minutes from the City Council meeting dated April 25, 2023, copies of which had been distributed to each member. Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by Councilman Sopher and seconded by Councilman Dunlap.

Next, the Mayor opened the only bid received for the price of asphalt, concrete, stone/abrasives/sand, and reinforcement rods. The bid was in the amount of \$101.25/ton for Base II or P&L I, \$107.00/ton for Wearing I, \$144.00/ton for Curb Mix, and \$144.00/ton for Tennis Mix. Southern WV Paving, Inc. was the only bidder.

Next, the Mayor opened a bid for the paving and milling of N. Oakwood Avenue and Sheridan Avenue. The bid was from AAA Paving & Sealing, Inc. in the amount of \$150,000.

Next, the Mayor opened a bid for the paving and milling of N. Oakwood Avenue and Sheridan Avenue. The bid was from Southern WV Paving, Inc. in the amount of \$266,344.00 All bids will be given to Mr. Trump Recorder-Treasurer, Pam Frey Director of Board of Public Works (BPS), Councilwoman at Large Sherrie Hunter, and Councilman at Large Cody Reedy for possible award at a Council meeting in the near future. The bids are hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, the Mayor said Council was previously provided a copy of a letter from Mr. David Price, Superintendent of Raleigh County Board of Education (RCBOE) requesting a contribution of \$120,000.00 from the City for the completion of Beckley Stratton Elementary School. The Mayor stated that he, Councilman Dunlap, Councilman Sopher, and Councilwoman Bullock recently toured the state-of-the art facility. Councilman Dunlap, Councilman Sopher, Councilwoman Bullock, and Councilwoman Hunter commented on several aspects of the school including the overall design of the school, the gymnasium in which the City's summer basketball programs may be conducted, the STEM Lab, a playground that will be built, the fencing to be installed encasing the property, eighty security cameras to be installed, how well thought out the space is which will be utilized for performances with the cafeteria having adjoining walls to it, the memory tiles to be placed in the cafeteria, the access to internet and cable, and what a great school it will be for the students. The Mayor said Mr. Price was supportive of the City's summer basketball programs continuing in the gymnasium at this school. Councilman Price commented that the \$120,000.00 request from the RCBOE to the City is close to the amount of the B&O taxes derived from the construction and the City isn't required to reduce the B&O on this project. The Mayor said, in his opinion, this contribution shouldn't be compared to the B&O rate and should not be considered a reduction in B&O taxes. The Mayor said the City is collecting the full B&O that is due from the contractor. Council approved the contribution of \$120,000.00 to the RCBOE for the completion of Beckley Stratton Elementary School on a motion made by Councilwoman Hunter and seconded by Councilwoman Hunter on a 5-1 vote. Councilman Price voted against the contribution.

Next, Council unanimously approved a motion authorizing Councilman Sopher to send a letter to the RCBOE requesting the RCBOE gift a parcel of property to the City. Superintendent Price had requested a letter from the City. Mr. Trump and Mr. File previously reviewed the proposed letter explaining the City will utilize this property (consisting of three acres) to create an overlook to Cranberry Creek and the Cranberry Creek Bridge located at the Clarence W. Meadows Memorial Blvd. The overlook will be a handicap accessible public access place. Councilman Sopher explained that this project coincides with the Piney Creek mission to create a trail connecting to the New River. The motion was made by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilwoman Bullock.

OLD BUSINESS: The Mayor thanked City Events Director Jill Moorefield and Councilwoman at Large Sherrie Hunter for coordinating the National Day of Prayer. He thanked Leslie Baker, Director of Parks & Rec., and Beckley PD for their work at the Exhibition Coal Mines when Brad Paisley and his father visited. The Mayor said he and Councilwoman Bullock attended a City Branding meeting hosted by Outdoor Economic Development Director (OEDD) Corey Lilly and Destination by Design (DBD). He said Corey did a great job. Councilman Price joined the presentation online and asked if it was recorded. If so, he would like everyone to have access to watch the presentation. The Mayor announced an upcoming Workshop which will be Monday, May 15, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. He said potential

items for discussion include food trucks and panhandlers. He said a separate Workshop regarding Stiffler Drive may need to be scheduled for May 22, 2023. Councilwoman Bullock thanked the Beckley PD for the arrests made thus far regarding the recent shootings. Chief Bailey said more arrests should be forthcoming. Councilwoman Hunter said she spent the day at Code Enforcement and thanked them for hosting her and said it is great to have Code Enforcement and Municipal Court in the same location. Councilman Reedy said Beckley PD won the first annual Battle of the Badges fundraiser basketball game. Councilman Sopher asked for an update on the situation regarding opening the swimming pools this season. The Mayor said the City is hopeful to open New River Park Pool on June 5th, but it is likely Black Knight pool will not open this year. The Mayor said that some of the lifeguards may be college students which means they may need to return to school before Labor Day. The New River Park pool typically closes soon after Labor Day. Councilman Sopher said “Coffee with a Cop” at McDonalds was a great community involvement event and hopes to see more. Chief Bailey said more community outreach events will be taking place at two other housing developments.

NEW BUSINESS: Councilman Dunlap said there is a walking tour along with an art installation between his office and City National Bank. Five businesses currently participate in the program, “Inside Out.” Danielle Stewart with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and Marie Bechtel with Legal Aid helped start this in the City. The program addresses social issues, the disparity of income, and how that disproportionately affects some incarcerated individuals. Councilman Dunlap encouraged the public to stop by one of the five participating businesses to view the artwork. Mr. Trump said they also have a display inside the WJLS building which the City owns. Councilwoman Hunter said Friendship Automotive Group volunteered to help out with a litter sweep in the City. Councilwoman Bullock said “Sweet Treats” event is May 13th and the youth group from New Hope Baptist Church, “God’s Squad”, will be singing at noon. Councilman Sopher asked if the parking lot on Earwood Street and the one on Neville Street will be completed by the end of the summer. The Mayor said yes. Pam Frey, BPW Director said as soon as Stormwater approves, the BPW will proceed with the work.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The Mayor announced if calling in by phone dial *3 to raise your hand. If connected by computer: Click the hand icon” on your Participants panel. Mary West shared her concerns regarding drivers speeding on Larew Avenue. Mary said there are trees she is concerned about that are on the City’s property. She said the trees may soon fall and need attention. She said signage is needed in the area to help deter speeding. Councilwoman Bullock asked Pam Frey, Director of BPW if the alley way Ms. West is referring to has been evaluated. Pam said there are two trees there and the trees would need to be worked on by a contractor. Girl Scouts Alexa Bierie (Troop 35392) and Jasmine Arriola (Troop 32547) gave a presentation for a Civil War Project. Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority has a drop box for unused flags. A Flag Retirement Ceremony location is needed. The Girl Scouts is asking for a donation of

\$6,500.00 to use toward supplies and a location at Wooton Park. On Friday, May 12th at 7:00 p.m. a Flag Retirement Ceremony will be held at Wooton Park. The Mayor said he can authorize two hundred fifty dollars. However, anything exceeding that amount requires Council's approval. He asked the Girl Scouts to send him a letter requesting the amount he is authorized to make, and he will ensure they receive at least two hundred fifty dollars. Dr. Fernald, Troop Leader for Troop 3, (the only Boy Scout Troop in Beckley) had his scouts introduce themselves and asked for the community's support of Boy Scouts. Councilwoman Hunter said there is no tipping fee to dispose of formerly used flags at the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority. Tina Pannell, President of Juneteenth, said the Juneteenth Festival will be June 16 at New River Park. She asked for financial help and support from the community. Danielle Stewart said the Raleigh County Family Support Center is hosting their next event June 7th from 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Back To Summer Bash will be at the Community Transformation Center. Danielle said it would be nice if Beckley FD would have a fire truck on site for the kids and if BPW could have a piece of heavy equipment on site for the kids. Danielle said balls to play sports with and art supplies will be given away. This will help kids have something to do throughout the summer. Danielle asked that items be donated for two hundred fifty kids. Councilwoman Hunter said the second Friday of each month Mountaineer Food Bank will be at Epling Stadium. Upon inquiry by the Mayor, Anthony Martin (IT) said no one signed up online or by phone to make public comments.

With there being no further comments, Council unanimously approved a motion to adjourn which was made by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilwoman Hunter. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Mayor

Recorder-Treasurer