

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED AT 6:30 PM ON SEPTEMBER 12, 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: Robert Dunlap, Sherrie Hunter, Cody Reedy, Tom Sopher, Bob Canter, and Kevin Price. The following Department Heads were present: Anthony Martin (IT), Chief Ed Wills of BFD, Director of Board of Public Works (BPW) Pam Frey, Chief Code Enforcement Officer Donald Morgan, Chief of BPD Dean Bailey, and Director of Parks & Rec. Leslie Baker. IT Director Bill Kelly attended and participated via WEB-X. ABSENT: Councilwoman Bullock.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 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.

Council dispensed with the reading of minutes from the City Council meeting dated August 22, 2023, 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 Sopher.

Next, The Mayor asked if any member of the public wanted to speak in favor of or opposition to the \$2./hr. across the board pay increase for the Board of Public Works (BPW) that the Mayor was proposing. James Watkins, an employee of the BPW apologized to the Mayor for his behavior towards the Mayor at the last Council meeting. He said he appreciates what the City has done, and is doing, for the BPW. Christina Baisden spoke in opposition to the raise. She said she thinks the employees at the BPW should receive more of an increase than \$2./hr. Justin Potter, an employee of the BPW said he desires more than \$2./hr. for the BPW and thinks the amount of the longevity raises needs to be re-evaluated. He said he isn't against the idea of a merit-based raise.

Next, on a motion made by Councilwoman at Large Hunter and seconded by Councilman at Large Reedy, Council unanimously awarded the bid received from American Airworks for one breathing air compressor system for the City of Beckley Fire Department in the amount of \$45,965.00. This was the only bid received. The bid was incorporated into the August 22, 2023, Council meeting minutes.

Next was the receipt of bids for the milling and paving of a section of Woodlawn Avenue from 2nd Street to Clark Street. The Mayor opened a sealed bid from Southern WV Paving in the amount of \$96,750.00. The Mayor opened a second sealed bid from AAA Paving and Sealing in the amount of \$86,250.00. Both bids will be reviewed by Councilwoman at Large Hunter, Councilman at Large Reedy, Director of BPW Pam Frey and Recorder-Treasurer Billie Trump for possible award at a future Council meeting.

Next was the request for approval for a \$2.00/hr. across the board pay increase for the Board of Public Works (BPW) employees. Recorder-Treasurer Billie Trump said that with the savings the City has from not having to purchase road salt during the winter months, this pay increase is manageable within the City's current budget. The Mayor said originally the City rounded the amount to \$4,000/annual pay increase across the board for the BPW. However, Councilman at Large Reedy suggested that the City offer an hourly raise because the employees at the BPW are paid hourly, not by salary.

The \$4,000./annual increase would have been an increase of \$1.92/hr. However, the \$2.00/hr. increase is the amount being proposed. The Mayor thanked Councilman Reedy's suggestion and work he put in to researching this. Councilman Reedy said that if a BPW employee works 40 hours per week and works 52 weeks a year it's a \$4,160.00 annual increase at a raise of \$2./hr. He said he thinks this needs to be based on hourly pay, not salary. He said if an employee worked 30+ weeks a year rather than 52 the entire \$4,000./annual raise would not be seen. This is another reason he suggested the \$2./hr. raise. He reviewed numbers of the hourly rates of the BPW employees and said that he compared wages for laborers, etc. in the industry (he owns his own construction business) and thinks the \$2.00/hr. raise is competitive. He said health insurance and retirement is offered to the employees plus any dependents they may have on their healthcare plan through the City. He said healthcare coverage in his industry usually isn't offered in the private sector. Councilman Reedy made a motion to approve the \$2.00/hour across the board pay increase for the BPW employees and Councilman Price seconded it. The Mayor said that if an employee of the City of Beckley has dependent coverage the City kicks in another \$4,220.00 from the City to support their health benefits. For single coverage an employee only pays \$50.00 out of pocket monthly for healthcare coverage and \$100.00 out of pocket monthly for family healthcare coverage. Councilman Dunlap thanked the Mayor for reaching out to each Council member individually to educate them on this topic. Councilman Dunlap said nothing Council decides precludes Pam Frey, Director of BPW from making recommendations regarding employees raises, etc. He thanked her for her number of years of service. Councilman Dunlap thanked Mr. Trump for being available this week to answer questions he had. With there being no further comments. Council unanimously approved the pay increase of \$2./hr. across the board for BPW employees.

Next, Mr. File presented and summarized an Ordinance granting an easement to North Beckley P.S.D. through the Lewis McManus Trail. Mr. File said this is the second reading of this ordinance. Mr. File read the ordinance by title, "An Ordinance Granting Easement To North Beckley P.S.D. Through Lewis McManus Trail". Mr. File opened the public hearing. There were no comments. Mr. File closed the public meeting. Council unanimously approved the ordinance on a motion by Councilman Sopher and seconded by Councilwoman Hunter. A copy of the ordinance is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File summarized a resolution for the WV Governor's Highway Safety Program grant from the WV DMV in the amount of \$415,520.00 for the Law Enforcement Liaison Project. The resolution was unanimously passed by Council on a motion by Councilman Sopher and seconded by Councilman Price. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File summarized a resolution for the WV Governor's Highway safety Program grant from the WV DMV in the amount of \$348,500.00 for the WV Lifesavers & Data Tracking & Agency Support Projects. The resolution was unanimously passed by Council on a motion by Councilwoman Hunter and seconded by Councilman Price. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File summarized a resolution for the WV Governor's Highway Safety Program grant from the WV DMV in the amount of \$357,400.00 for the Southern Regional Highway Safety Program. The resolution was unanimously passed by Council on a motion by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilman Dunlap. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

OLD BUSINESS: Councilman Dunlap thanked Mr. File for explaining reasons why Council members may not join department head meetings. Confidential matters regarding employees, etc. may be discussed during these meetings and an employee's privacy cannot be compromised. Councilman Dunlap thanked Mr. Trump for inviting Council members to reach out to him directly with any questions they may have.

NEW BUSINESS: Councilwoman Hunter thanked those in attendance at this meeting that spoke at the 911 memorial service at Word Park Monday.

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 participant's panel. Mary West voiced her concerns regarding drivers speeding on Larew Avenue. She stated her desire for a four-way stop at Earhart Street and Larew Avenue. She said if the City will not put in a four-way stop could it consider putting in speed bumps. She also asked for help getting trees cut down. Tom Moseley asked for help on Hull Street regarding drivers speeding. Jennifer Hensley asked how the money collected from Code Enforcement fines is spent. Coach Parham has concerns regarding the asphalt on Hunter Street needing repaired. He said a garage there creates parking issues. He said a telephone pole is in the way on the corner and Hunter Street needs speed bumps installed. Deloris Kidd complained about the monthly rates increasing at Beckley Garbage. The Mayor directed her to communicate her concerns to the Public Service Commission and explained that Beckley Garbage Company is a privately owned business and is not affiliated with the City. With there being no further comments, Council unanimously approved adjourning the meeting on a motion by Councilman Dunlap and seconded by Councilwoman Hunter. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Mayor

Recorder-Treasurer