A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED AT 6:30 PM ON FEBRUARY 13, 2024, 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, Kevin Price, Robert Dunlap, Tom Sopher, Sherrie Hunter, Bob Canter, and Cody Reedy. The following City employees were present: Director of IT Bill Kelly, Anthony Martin (IT), Chief Coughlin of BFD, Board of Public Works (BPW) Supervisor, Mike Bolen, Chief Code Enforcement Officer Donald Morgan, Chief of BPD Dean Bailey, Director of Parks & Recreation Leslie Baker. ABSENT: Director of Board of Public Works Pam Frey.

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 the minutes from the City Council meeting dated January 23, 2024, copies of which had been distributed to each member.

Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by Councilwoman Bullock and seconded by Councilman Price.

Next was the awarding of the bid for the demolition of 1114 Harper Road (the former Pagoda Motel.) Councilwoman at Large Hunter said five bids were received ranging from $248,405. to $68,863. The lowest bid was from Empire Salvage & Recycling, which has performed other similar demolitions in the City with satisfactory results. Council unanimously approved the award of bid to Empire Salvage & Recycling in the amount of $68,863.00. on a motion by Councilwoman at Large Hunter and seconded by Councilman Price. The bid is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File presented a resolution by title, "A Resolution Approving An Intergovernmental Agreement Between The City of Beckley, And The Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority". Mr. File said this is an annual agreement allowing the City to work with the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority through the County Commission. It authorizes the City to dispose of waste from the demolition of abandoned buildings. Mr. File said the City is not immediately billed for the waste. Instead, if the City collects money from the owner of the property being demolished, the City then pays the Solid Waste Authority. The Mayor asked if there were any questions regarding the resolution. Councilwoman at Large Hunter recused herself from the vote. Council unanimously approved the resolution on a motion made by Councilman Sopher and seconded by Councilman Price. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File presented a resolution by title, "Resolution Of The Common Council Of The City Of Beckley To Permit The Open Burning Of Vegetation." Mr. File stated that this is a bi-annual resolution which takes place in the spring and in the fall and sets the times residents may burn leaves, etc. Mr. File read paragraphs one through four of the resolution. The Mayor asked if there were any questions regarding the resolution. There were no questions. The resolution was unanimously approved by Council on a motion by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilman Sopher. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File presented a resolution that authorizes the Mayor to enter into a Community Facilities Grant Agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development in which the City will receive $139K to be used for the purchase of a snowplow, excavator, and bulldozer. The Mayor explained that the heavy equipment will be utilized by the Board of Public Works. The Mayor asked if there were any questions. There were no questions. The resolution was unanimously approved by Council on a motion by Councilwoman at Large Hunter and seconded by Councilman at Large Reedy. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File presented a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into the attached First Amendment to the Professional Services Contract (July 22, 2022) with Urban Design Ventures, LLC, in which they assist the City in the administration of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Mr. File said this resolution allows the City to commit up to $25K towards the pool redevelopment study for a new aquatics center. The Mayor said Director of Parks and Recreation Leslie Baker sent Council members an email today outlining some of the goals of this study. He said the two swimming pools in the City are over fifty years old and have lasted longer than expected. The Mayor asked if there are any questions regarding the resolution. There were no questions. Council unanimously approved the resolution on a motion by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilman Sopher. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File presented a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Division of Administrative Services, Justice, and Community Services Section from the U.S. Department of Justice for the purchase of surveillance cameras to be used by the Beckley Police Department in the amount of $24,055.00. The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions. Councilwoman Bullock asked where the cameras will be installed and if it is public information. Chief Bailey said these cameras will be utilized by the police officers. There were no other questions. Council unanimously approved the resolution on a motion made by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilman Reedy. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File presented a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with WGI, Inc. in the amount of $98,765.00 for WGI, Inc. to provide professional consulting services to the City in preparation of the City's 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Mayor said that the City's Grant Administrator Angela King is here and asked her if she would comment on this resolution. Angela said three bids were received which were opened during a recent Council meeting. WGI, Inc. is a company based in North Carolina and was the least expensive of the three bids. She said the City and WGI, Inc. will work together to formulate a plan for the City for the next ten years. She said the public is welcome to be involved and attend all the public meetings that will be held, and surveys will be given. She said the public meetings will be advertised. The Mayor thanked Angela King and Chief Code Inspector Donald Morgan for their work in getting to this stage. The Mayor asked if there were any questions. There were no questions. Council unanimously passed the resolution on a motion made by Councilman Sopher and seconded by Councilman Price. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

OLD BUSINESS: The Mayor said that he emailed Council today regarding the property at the Pinecrest Industrial Park. The City has been contacted by the Veterans Administration (VA) (which is currently working on constructing a nursing facility for the VA). The original piece of property where the groundbreaking was held is fairly flat and located directly above the Beckley Little League fields. However, the engineer for the VA determined that even though this is a great site, it is not large enough to accommodate a one-story facility which is what the VA prefers. The Mayor said that there is another piece of property (above the Dr. Pepper plant) which is where the VA prefers to build. Recorder-Treasurer, Billie Trump said changing the site location for the VA may require some extra things from the State. The State will help the City with an access road opening up access to the Pinecrest Industrial Park. The proximity of the new location would not require the relocation of the sewer force main, a multimillion-dollar project, for the property to be developed. The State would put a parking lot over the force main, so it isn't compromised. This nursing facility would create approximately two hundred jobs. This may be a sixteen-million-dollar project for which the City would receive B&O taxes. Mr. Trump said he thinks it is a great idea, as did the Mayor who complimented Mr. Sam Rich with Thrasher Engineering for his development and hard work on this project. The Mayor said two hundred jobs will be regular full-time jobs at the facility and it will provide an additional seventy-five to one hundred part-time jobs. Councilman Dunlap asked when the Workshop regarding the City Manager's job description will be. The Mayor said that this will be discussed during the Executive Session portion of this meeting. Councilman Dunlap said he met Mich Lehman who is the replacement for Corey Lilly (hired as the City's new Outdoor Economic Director). Councilman Dunlap said he thinks it was a great idea hiring Mitch and thinks he is terrific.

NEW BUSINESS: Councilwoman Bullock shared that the Wright Hunter Cemetery is nominated for consideration to be placed on the national register of historic places. The meeting to make the determination will be on Wednesday February 21, 2024, in Charleston, WV at 1:00 p.m. She invited others to come. It will be at the State Historic Preservation Office. The Mayor told Councilwoman Bullock that the City is offering to reimburse her for travel expenses. Councilwoman Bullock thanked everyone who has helped her with this project. She said a link to join virtually is available. She said Dr. Stuart, President of WVU Tech, will be at Heart of God Ministries this Sunday at 3:00 as the keynote speaker. She said that this is Black History Month and she wanted to recognize two former Council members, Madrith Chambers, and Lorraine Seay. The Mayor congratulated Councilwoman Bullock for the nice ad she had in the newspaper today. Councilwoman at Large Hunter congratulated Councilman at Large Reedy for his basketball team winning the championship.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mary West spoke in opposition to the Streetscape Project that the WV DOH and WVU Tech recently hosted a meeting about. She requested that a surveillance camera be installed on Larew Avenue to help with speeding drivers. She thanked Angela King for her work on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. Rose Hick (a resident of Bradley, WV) spoke in opposition to the Streetscape Project. She made several recommendations on

changes to City streets. Danielle Stewart said the City needs to hire a Director of the Human Rights Commission (HRC). She said the HRC has received so many complaints lately (including complaints regarding the situation at the Raleigh County Circuit Clerk's Office) and it is more than the volunteers can handle. She said she understands that the WV DOH and WVU Tech are responsible for the Streetscape Project. She said she asked the WV DOH for a traffic study which she has yet to receive. She opposes the Streetscape Project. She is in favor of moving the utilities. Kris Kincaid said she is passionate about making sure the City has a warming center. She suggested that the City reconsider demolishing the former Pagoda Motel and consider making it and other structures housing for the homeless.

She suggested that the City adopt a Housing First Program. She thinks the City should adopt the same regulations as the County allowing for tiny homes.

The Mayor asked if there were any comments online. 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. Michael Smith called. He said that the Code Enforcement office should help tenants who are living in poor conditions with mold and roaches.

At 7: 04 p.m. Council unanimously approved exiting the regular session of the Council meeting and going into Executive Session regarding pending litigation on a motion made by Councilman Dunlap and seconded by Councilwoman Bullock. The Mayor said Council will go into Executive Session regarding pending litigation. No votes will be taken, and no decisions will be made. Council unanimously approved exiting Executive Session at 7:12 p.m. on a motion made by Councilman Sopher and seconded by Councilman Price.

Council unanimously approved entering back into regular session at 7:13 p.m. on a motion made by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilman Dunlap. There were no further comments. Council unanimously approved adjournment on a motion made by Councilman at Large Reedy and seconded by Councilwoman Bullock. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

_____ _____

Mayor Recorder-Treasurer