A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED AT 6:30 PM ON MARCH 12, 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, Assistant Director of IT Amy Evans, Anthony Martin (IT), Chief Coughlin of BFD, Board of Public Works (BPW) Director Pam Frey, Chief of BPD Dean Bailey, Director of Parks & Recreation Leslie Baker. ABSENT: Chief Code Enforcement Officer Donald Morgan.

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 listen by WEB-X from their computer, or listen 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 Workshop dated February 20, 2024, 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 Councilwoman Bullock. Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes from the regular City Council meeting dated February 27, 2024, 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.

Members of the Raleigh County Veterans Museum including Charles Houck, Jeff Lehman, Ron Hedrick, and Brook Chambers attended the meeting in honor of Cornelius Charlton. Mr. Houck spoke in honor of Mr. Charleton and the Mayor presented a proclamation in honor of Cornelius Charlton.

Next, the only sealed bid received for the mowing of various City properties and parks that the Mayor opened during the meeting was from Camp Creek Mountain Maintenance in the amount of $2,020./weekly. Mr. File said that if Council elects, it may award the bid during this meeting tonight. The two Councilpersons at Large can review the bid after the meeting and if it meets all specified criteria, the action of Council will stand. If the bid does not meet the specifications the item will be placed on an upcoming Agenda. Council unanimously approved the bid from Camp Creek Mountain Maintenance on a motion made by Councilwoman at Large Hunter and seconded by Councilman Dunlap.

The bid was given to Recorder-Treasurer

Billie Trump to review with Councilwoman at Large Hunter, Councilman at Large Reedy, and Parks and Recreation Director Leslie Baker. The bid is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Recorder-Treasurer Billie Trump presented the budget for fiscal year July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. He said that the City is required by the State Auditor's Office to submit an annual budget before the end of March. He presented a detailed revenue and cost projection. The summary he shared will be sent to the State Auditor's Office. He said during the Council meeting on July 9, 2024, the budget will likely need to be revised. The budget was unanimously approved by Council on a motion made by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilman Sopher. A copy of the budget is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, the Mayor asked Recorder-Treasurer Billie Trump to comment on the City's finances regarding an across the board annual increase for the Beckley Fire Department in the amount of $2,000.00. Mr. Trump said that the DROP program allows the City to know, in advance when the last day will be for people on this program. During the coming fiscal year there are at least six senior members of the fire department that will be leaving. Entry level employees are hired at less pay. The difference in the salary of the people leaving and salary of the new hires is significant. Mr. Trump has built in a cushion in addition to this in the amount estimated to be around $100K. Councilman Dunlap said there isn't a budget in place for the CM position. Councilman Dunlap asked if the cushion might be better utilized to help pay for a hiring agency, the City Manager's salary, and the salary of possibly having an Interim CM. He asked if this money might be a cushion for these items until a budget for these items can be better defined. Mr. Trump said that he would not have suggested the raise for the BFD unless the City was able to afford it. He

said he has considered what the City may need to pay for a search firm (a one-time expense) and the salary for a CM, is affordable. The reduction of the Mayor's salary (for a part time Mayor) will help offset the salary of the CM. Mr. Trump said that when he recalculated the ad valorem, the City will probably have over $100K that he had to adjust in the budget before he handed it out. He said the federally directed spending that Senator Manchin is leaving the City with is a good amount. Councilwoman Bullock asked Mr. Trump if the other City employees could also receive a pay raise. Councilman Sopher said he agrees. Mr. Trump said if the BFD is approved this would be the third department to receive a raise. Mr. Trump said the City can look at it sequentially. Councilwoman Bullock said the City Hall employees need a raise. Councilman Sopher said Parks and Recreation need a raise. Councilwoman at Large Hunter asked if there is a need to hire another firefighter rather than a $2K across the board raise. She asked if the BFD has ample staffing so the cost of overtime is eliminated or decreased. Captain Coughlin said the BFD tries to keep nine firefighters on the clock

twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Council unanimously approved the $2K across the board raise for the BFD on a motion made by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilwoman at Large Hunter.

Next on the Agenda was the purchase of seven police cruisers in the amount of $301,678.58. Chief Bailey said since COVID, it has been hard to get police cruisers. He said five of the existing fifty vehicles have almost 100K miles, three have over 125K miles, eight vehicles have 112K miles, and some are twelve years or older and starting to rust. The Mayor said the per unit cost of each cruiser is less expensive than if they were purchased with one of the City's buying groups. Council unanimously approved the purchase of the seven police cruisers in the amount of $301,678.58 on a motion made by Councilman Reedy and seconded by Councilman Price.

Next, Mr. File presented a request to Council from the City Manager Recruitment Committee (CMRC) (a committee made up of volunteers appointed by the Mayor) seeking approval to advertise for a recruitment firm to recruit a City Manager (CM). The request for proposals would need to be submitted from the recruitment firms by April 9th which is the day of a Council meeting. Council will determine which recruitment firm the City hires. The deadline is July 9th for the recruitment firm to submit candidates to the CMRC for the CM position. Mr. File said the recruitment firm needs to be experienced in helping municipalities. Councilman Sopher said that three or four recruitment firms were mentioned during the last committee meeting and the members agreed to contact those firms letting them know that the City will be accepting proposals. Mr. File said this request for proposals will be sent to various companies. Council unanimously approved the City running an ad requesting proposals from recruitment firms on a motion made by Councilman Dunlap and seconded by Councilman Price. Councilman Dunlap said the role

and job descriptions of Council members needs defined and the purview of the CMRC needs expanded to include the ability to define this for future Council members. He said there are duties and responsibilities that the current Mayor has that need distributed among Council members. Council unanimously approved expanding the purview of the CMRC to work to define the duties of the future Mayor and future Council members on a motion made by Councilman Dunlap and seconded by Councilman Sopher. Councilman Price asked if this information is outlined in the code. Councilman Dunlap said the duties of the CM are clearly defined. However, there is a gap for what all the Mayor currently engages in (some of which are statutorily required for a Mayor to engage in) and since the new City Council members will be the policymakers as stated in the ordinance, it would be beneficial to define what future Council members will be responsible for.

Next, Mr. File presented a resolution for USDA Rural Development Grant Certifications and Assurance Forms. Mr. File explained that on February 13th Council approved a grant for the City to receive through the USDA in the amount of $139K which is for heavy equipment for the Board of Public Works. This resolution approves certain forms that authorize the Mayor to enter in to and it obligates the City to comply with the terms requested by the USDA. Form RD 442-7 is the Operating Budget of the City, RD 1940-1 is the Request for Obligation of Funds, RD 400-4 is the Assurance Agreement, AD 1047 is the Certificate regarding disbarment, suspension and other matters, and RD 1972-6 is the Letter of Intent To Meet Conditions. Mr. File read the resolution which was unanimously passed by Council on a motion made by Councilman Price and seconded by Councilwoman Bullock. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

OLD BUSINESS: The Mayor said that several agencies requested to be included in a Workshop. The agencies are the Raleigh County Family Support Center, Theatre WV, Raleigh County Community Action, and the subject of removing two parking meters on Main Street needs to be discussed at the Workshop. He said the Workshop will be scheduled soon. The Mayor said that Dr. Best from the UK who founded the Inclusive Recovery City (IRC) Program will be at the WVU Tech building on Neville St. at 9:30 on March 19th. He said Beckley is in the process of being inducted as the first City into this program. The Mayor said you can register to attend online. Councilman Reedy expressed his concern about the IRC coming to Beckley. He said that he has had a lot of people contact him opposing this idea and are concerned about what this brings to the City. Councilman Reedy asked why a Workshop was not held regarding the IRC. He said Jay Phillips presented this during a recent Council meeting and no votes were taken and the event for the IRC was scheduled. He said Council did not have a vote in this matter and he has received texts, calls, and messages from

the community about it when it appeared on Facebook this morning. The Mayor said that it is a tremendous honor for the City and a great cause and it attacks the most troubling problem in southern WV. The Mayor said it did not occur to him that anyone would oppose it and did not think it needed to be brought before Council. Councilwoman at Large Hunter said she has also received a lot of feedback today from concerned citizens today regarding the IRC. Councilman Reedy said the Pinehaven Homeless Shelter is losing funding and may have to decrease capacity and his concern is Beckley becoming a hub for more drugs and homelessness. Councilman Reedy said he is concerned that this may open the City up for more problems and questions if the City has adequate does resources to handle it all. The Mayor asked both Councilpersons at Large to present him with a list of names of people that have reached out to them. Councilwoman Bullock asked Director of Parks and Recreation Leslie Baker when the equipment will be installed in the park on Barber Avenue. Ms. Baker said because February had mild weather the company was supposed to have started

then. However, she said the contractor's employees quit working for him. She said that she hears every two weeks that the work will begin but it hasn't yet and the contractor has been awarded already and she hopes it takes place soon. She said the equipment has been purchased. Councilwoman at Large Hunter asked Leslie if construction has recently taken place at Historic Black Knight. Ms. Baker said the roof on the pool house was replaced and employees from the Parks and Recreation department did the labor. She said so far, six lifeguards are returning from last year and she is hoping this pool is able to open this summer. Councilman Sopher asked if Historic Black Knight had an issue arise today. Ms. Baker said that a main water line burst which likely occurred Monday night and flooded the downstairs. She said the facility may need to be closed for a week or longer. ServPro is helping take care of the water and the insurance company has been contacted. Tamarack has been helpful in accepting events that were previously scheduled at the Historic Black Knight and honored its pricing.

NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: The Mayor said that public comments are no longer accepted via WEB-X or by phone. The City did that as a courtesy. Public comments can be made by people who attend meetings and sign up identifying who they are on the sign-up sheet. Mary West said that she withdrew her submission to run for City Council and will no longer be a resident of Beckley. Rose Campbell-Regaalado said she was a resident of Seed Sower (SS) or an employee of Fruits of Labor (FOL). She gave Council handouts of messages, text messages, and information she provided regarding Seed Sower and Fruits of Labor. She had negative comments about SS and FOL. The information she provided Council is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Christie Lilly spoke in opposition to Beckley becoming an (IRC) Inclusive Recovery City. Kris Kincaid said that Beckley does not have the resources to become an IRC. Tina Panell thanked the animal rescue organization and Soaring Hope Rescue Animal Shelter that worked together to find a home for a dog. She recommended Camp Creek Mountain Maintenance for the great work they do. Natalie Coots said the homeless problem in Beckley is ignored and suggested the Community Development Grant money needs to be used for housing also. She questioned the City becoming an IRC. She was displeased that the CMFG will not be on the ballot. Christina Baisden asked that the CM job requirements include the CM to be a resident of the City. She suggested that the City advertise not for a City Manager's position to help expedite the process. She said no City employee should qualify for public assistance and pay needs to be adjusted. She asked what the process is for Council members to get an item placed on the Agenda. Gayle Oaks is the General Manager (GM) of Theater WV and thanked Council and the Mayor for including the theater as part of an

upcoming workshop. The Mayor told Christian Baisden that she can contact the Council person serving the Ward in which she lives, she can discuss it with that person about making whatever her concern may be an Agenda item. He said City Attorney, Mr. File approves each Agenda before it is published.

There were no further comments.

Council unanimously approved adjournment on a motion made by Councilman Reedy and seconded by Councilman Price. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

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Mayor
Recorder-Treasurer