A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY CONVENED AT 6:30 PM ON FEBRUARY 25, 2025, IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIA WEB-X.

PRESENT: Interim Recorder-Treasurer Jessica Chandler, City Attorney Bill File, and the Mayor's and CM's Assistant Susan Miller. Council Members: Natalie Coots, Kip Buchanan, Nancy Shoemaker-Dingess, Frank Williams, Janine Bullock, Sherrie Hunter, and Cody Reedy. The following City employees were present: IT Tech Anthony Martin, IT Director Bil Kelly, Director of P&R Leslie Baker, BFD Captain Ernie Parsons, Director of Board of Public Works (BPW) Pam Frey, Beckley Events Coordinator Jill Moorefield, Chief Dean Bailey of BPD, and Chief Code Enforcement Officer Donald Morgan. ABSENT: Mayor Neal.

The Mayor was absent due to illness.

Mr. File led in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a prayer by Pastor John Jordan with Calvary Assembly of God.

The public had the option to join the meeting in person, 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.

Mr. File called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He explained that due to the Mayor being absent, a motion and second needed to be made for a Council member to chair the meeting. Council unanimously approved Councilman Reedy to chair the meeting on a motion made by Councilwoman Coots seconded by Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess.

Councilman Reedy said all members of Council were present and there was a quorum. Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes from the January 8, 2025, Special Council Meeting, copies of which had been distributed to each member.

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

Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes from the January 28, 2025, Council Meeting, copies of which had been distributed to each member. Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by Councilwoman Coots seconded by Councilman Buchanan.

Council dispensed with the readingl of the minutes from the February 3, 2025, Special Council Meeting, copies of which had been distributed to each member.

Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess seconded by Councilman Buchanan.

Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes from the February 18, 2025, Special Council Meeting, copies of which

had been distributed to each member. Council unanimously approved the minutes as written on a motion by Councilwoman Hunter seconded by Councilman Williams.

Councilman Reedy presented proclamations to the families and friends of Mr. Stovall and Mr. Worley, recognizing the selfless contributions each had made to the betterment of the City of Beckley.

Brief comments from Council Members and the Interim Recorder-Treasurer included Councilwoman Bullock who said it is Black History Month and she wanted to recognize the first African American Councilwoman in Ward V which was Lorraine Seay. She also said that she would be getting in touch with the Code Enforcement Office regarding some issues in Ward V. Councilman Buchanan did not have any comments. Councilman Williams said that the abandoned houses in the City need attention and uptown needs improvements. He also recognized Carter G. Woodson, who founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)

and said Mr. Woodson was his wife's great, great uncle. Councilwoman Shoemaker Dingess said that the sidewalks on Harper Road through the uptown area are in desperate need of attention and the vacant storefronts uptown need addressed. She said the City needs a dog park. Councilwoman Coots said that Rachael Cornett contacted her about the City getting a dog park.

She expressed her desire that Council support WV Collective and requested this matter be added to the Agenda of an upcoming Workshop. She asked that a dog park be added to a Workshop Agenda.

Councilwoman Hunter thanked everyone who came out tonight to support the City during this time of deciding on an Interim City Manager. Councilwoman Hunter expressed gratitude for the grant of over $200K that Salem Baptist Church received and said that Mr. Cook used to work at the recycling center.

Councilwoman Hunter said that she is in favor of helping WV Collective because it brings foot traffic to the downtown area.

Councilman Reedy said he is also in favor of helping WV Collective, but thinks that the City should first take a closer look at

the budget. He said the City needs to decide if it wants to be a landlord. He has concerns about the City making an offer to one 501C-3 organization because others may also ask and things need to be put into place before moving forward on this type of request. Councilman Reedy confirmed that the Parks and Recreation Department is working with groups including the YMCA to have enough lifeguards and staff to open the New River Pool and the Black Knight pool on time. Director of Parks & Rec. Leslie Baker said twenty lifeguards would be needed to open both pols and they are advertising on the City's website, social media, and working with the YMCA.

Interim Recorder-Treasurer Jessica Chandler presented Council with the Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for FY that ended June 30, 2024, as prepared by Ferrari & Associates, PLLC.

She said the only finding against the City was from the January 2024 cyber-attack, the same finding as last year. She also provided Council with information from the Sanitary Board's Audit.

Councilwoman Bullock asked IT Director Bill Kelly what the IT Department has in place to prevent another cyber-attack from occurring. He explained various measures are in place, among which are the IT Department working with Arete Advisors on a regular basis in order to be more proactive. This is the company that IT has been working with since the cyber-attack occurred. Mr. Kelly said that he has a list of tools they have implemented to prevent this from happening again.

Next, Mr. File read the Resolution Authorizing City of Beckley To Accept Terms And Conditions Of Reconnect Program Grant And Security Agreement (US Dept. of Agriculture). Mr. File asked IT Director Bill Kelly if he had any comments.

Mr. Kelly said that this will allow the uptown area to receive Wi-Fi.

Councilwoman Coots asked if the campground near the Youth Museum would be included. Mr. Kelly said the IT Department will continue its work to provide Wi-Fi to the campground. The resolution was unanimously approved by Council on a motion by Councilman Williams seconded by Councilwoman Coots.

The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next, Mr. File read the Resolution Of The Common Council Of The City Of Beckley To Permit The Open Burning Of Vegetation. Council unanimously approved the resolution on a motion by Councilman Buchanan seconded by Councilwoman Hunter. The resolution is hereby incorporated into these minutes.

Next on the Agenda was the discussion of vacant buildings. Councilman Buchanan asked Ms. Chandler if the City has received any interest from anyone to purchase/lease any of the buildings that the City owns. She said no. She said the former Fruits of Labor building recently had the copper stolen from the HVAC system so that space is not a climate controlled space right now. Councilman Reedy asked Council to consider if the City wants to be a landlord, sell, lease, or auction its buildings. Councilman Williams said that he thinks the City should sell the buildings. Councilman Reedy asked Mr. File if the City has a certain protocol it has to follow regarding getting rid of buildings when it pertains to selling them or putting them up for auction. Mr. File said Home Rule allowed the City to adopt procedures it can follow in selling and leasing its property, and the City normally puts its buildings up for auction. Councilman Reedy said that he is opposed to the City being a landlord. He said that this topic needs to be added to the next Agenda for further discussion so the Mayor is included.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mary West voiced concerns about drivers speeding on Larew Avenue. She said the ad for the position of City Manager needs to run in the local newspaper. Tom Moseley thanked Council for recognizing two former residents of Beckley who recently passed away. The following people spoke in favor of hiring Danielle Stewart as the Interim City Manager: Lori Midkiff, Tanisha Hughes, Carol Workman, Stephanie Paynter, LarShella Murphy, Hayley Lanchester, Kelly Elkins, Dayle Simpson, Kris Kincaid, Chris Brown, Tony Martin, Christinia, and Danielle Stewart. Chris Brown thanked the BPD and Councilwoman Bullock for the assistance recently given on the street he lives. He said he would help the City advertise buildings it wants to sell or lease. Tony Martin said that he is in favor of the City assisting WV Collective so it can continue putting on performances uptown.

Council unanimously approved entering into Executive Session at 7:39 p.m. for a City Manager Personnel Matter on a motion by Councilwoman Bullock seconded by Councilman Buchanan.

Council unanimously approved entering

back into the Regular Council Meeting at 8:22 p.m. on a motion by Councilwoman Coots seconded by Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess.

Next on the Agenda was the Appointment of an Interim City Manager. Mr. File read the Resolution regarding Mr. Phillip Jarrell being appointed the Interim City Manager beginning March 1, 2025. Council approved the Resolution on a motion by Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess, seconded by Councilman Buchanan. All Council members except Councilwoman Hunter voted in favor of the Resolution. Councilwoman Hunter opposed the resolution. The Resolution passed on a 6-1 vote and is hereby incorporated into these minutes. Mr. Jarrell's annual salary shall be $110,000.

Councilwoman Bullock asked Mr. File if she could share some of Mr. Jarrell's background with Council. He said that Mr. Jarrell worked for the Raleigh County Board of Education for a number of years overseeing several major projects and managing various departments. Councilman Reedy said that prior to that he worked for Fairchild International. With there being no further business to discuss Council unanimously approved adjourning the meeting on a motion made by Councilwoman Bullock seconded by Councilman Williams. Councilman Reedy adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

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Mayor

_____
City Attorney