THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BECKLEY HELD A WORKSHOP WHICH CONVENED AT 4:00 PM ON OCTOBER 13, 2026, IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIA WEB-X.

PRESENT: Mayor Ryan Neal, City Attorney Bill File, City Manager Phillip Jarrell, Mayor and City Manager's Executive Assistant Susan Miller, Recorder-Treasurer Evan Dewey, Fire Marshal/Code Officer Chris Graham, Code Office Employee Jeanie Campbell, Deputy Chief Morgan Bragg, Board of Public Works Director Mike Bolen, Director of IT Luke Miller and IT Technician John Hopkins.
Council Members present: Natalie Coots, Nancy Shoemaker-Dingess, Frank Williams, Kip Buchanan, Janine Bullock, Cody Reedy and Sherrie Hunter (online).

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.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The Mayor said that public comments are for City Council Meetings, not Workshops, therefore public comments will not be made at this Workshop. The Mayor said that Workshops are for discussion only; no votes will be taken during a Workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to discuss 3 ordinances (provided to Council prior to Workshop), discuss any additional ordinances needed, and discuss the Rules of Decorum for City Council Meetings. City Manager Jarrell said these ordinances were submitted by Code

Enforcement and have not yet been adopted. He said that several changes have been made to these ordinances and are different than the drafts previously given to Council. He is in the process of looking at similar ordinances from other surrounding municipalities. Council's feedback is welcomed. He and Mr. File hope to finalize these ordinances soon after tonight's Workshop to get them on upcoming agendas for council meetings. First, the **Beckley Litter Control Ordinance** was discussed. Mr. Jarrell said that Councilwoman Hunter was an important part in helping with the City's Litter Control. Ms. Hunter would like to see the City have a litter control officer. The Mayor asked if there is enough work to constitute a full-time position. Fire Marshal/Code Officer Graham said yes. City Manager Jarrell said he got a job description for a Litter Control Officer (LCO) from the Raleigh County Litter Office. He said the County's LCO does not cover the City. The Mayor asked if perhaps an agreement between the City and County could be made to share the position/cost. Code Officer Graham said he was told by the Raleigh County Landfill official that their officer is

already too busy with the work for the County. He said Litter Control Officers are usually retired police officers. Code Officer Graham said the City's policies are different and the administrative part for the City's Code office involves a lot more which could result in the Board of Public Works (BPW) cleaning up the mess and the Code Office putting a lien on the property. Whereas, the Counties LCO is armed, carries a gun, and wears a badge. Code Officer Graham is not armed. The City's Code Office has cases that are over one thousand days old. Councilwoman Coots asked if someone is observed violating the litter control ordinance could they be cited on the spot. Code Officer Graham said yes, which expedites the process. A benefit of having a full-time LCO is that person would issue a citation on the spot. The Mayor asked again if the City and County could discuss sharing the cost of and responsibilities for an LCO. City Manager Jarrell said that if he is going to pay for an LCO, he would want to supervise them. He said Code Enforcement would have control over that individual. He said the County's Litter Control Ordinance is different than the

City's. He said that he thinks the City should hire a retired police officer and thinks that they also need to be trained by the DEP. He said he doesn't think the starting pay is too high because they are retired police officers. Code Officer Graham said the County's LCO offered to help train the City's LCO, but if the City and County want to combine this job for the County's two current LCO's one to cover the City and County, one of them would quit because it would be too much. Mr. Graham reviewed some of the fines listed in Section 8-214.

He said Tier III lists jail time. He said the City's Code Office would like to avoid that if possible. He said currently there are no penalties because the City loses the liens most of the time because if it goes to a tax sale, the liens are not collected. The Mayor asked what happens if the person does not pay their fines. Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess asked if the City couldn't attach the offender's cars. Councilman Reedy said we could consider garnishing wages. Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess said that there are other ways to collect other than putting them in jail. Councilman Williams asked if the City could suspend

their driver's license. Code Officer Graham said Municipal Court said that is no longer an option. Mr. File confirmed. He said that the Legislature made that decision and the Municipal Court can do only what the State Code permits. Fines issued by the City's Litter Control Officer would go before the City's Municipal Court. Councilwoman Bullock asked Code Officer Graham how he felt about Mr. Jarrell's recommendations. Officer Graham said that it would be helpful if the City hired a retired police officer as a LCO who would also be a process server for Code Enforcement. He said it is safer and speeds up the process for the Code Office.

Mr. Jarrell said he is in favor of a Litter Control Officer serving in various ways to help Code also. Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess said that making community service part of the offense is a great idea. Code Officer Graham said he doesn't always feel safe when he delivers citations to someone's door. He said an armed officer would be worth the investment. Councilman Williams asked Code Officer Graham if he carries a weapon. He said no but he is currently looking into it because other Fire

Marshals do. Councilman Williams said that he thinks this is a good idea and the cases that are getting stockpiled need to get attention and something has to get put into place. He said that if any member of the Code Enforcement Office is dealing with offenders, the employees should be carrying a gun. Councilman Williams said that the individuals who are not paying the fines before the deadline should have their name published in the newspaper. Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess said that publishing their names will help get their attention. Councilwoman Coots said the public needs to be educated as to how the City will handle these issues and the consequences need to be made known. Code Officer Graham said currently the renter and the landlord are both notified of any violations. However, it is the occupant(s) who is/are ultimately held responsible. Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess said a cumulative list needs to be kept of repeat offenders, so the City is aware of who they are. Jeanie said a rental registry would help. Councilwoman Hunter said that she is in favor of the Litter Control Ordinance and when property is put up for sale, the owner

needs to be held accountable for continuing to maintain it.

Next was the **City of Beckley Vacant Building Registration, Maintenance, and Redevelopment Ordinance.**

City Manager Jarrell said that this only involves property that has vacant housing on it. It is just vacant structures. This ordinance requires the owner to register the vacant property with the City within 90 days. Some of the benefits are listed as 1-6 under Section 1. Section 3 lists 1-5 the provisions this ordinance applies to. The fees and fines are also listed.

He said the landlord registration is a list of landlords that rent out properties in a jurisdiction. He spoke briefly on the differences between a Vacant Property Registration (VPR) and a landlord registration. Mr. Jarrell said that he is a landlord and he doesn't have a problem with either one of these registries.

Councilwoman Coots voiced concerns over property that is for sale on Harper Road that is not being maintained. The Mayor said that he drove by there today and it has been cleared off. Code Officer Graham said that he thinks storage buildings will be there soon.

Councilwoman Hunter said that there are

real estate companies with properties for sale that need to be held to a higher standard so that someone is interested in purchasing the property. Mr. Jarrell said that he has the Vacant Registration Ordinance for Huntington, Princeton, Charleston, Fairmont, Wheeling, and Clarksburg. He told Council that if they wanted copies to let him know. He said that the City of Beckley can look at other municipalities' ordinances and compare them to Beckley's.

Mr. Jarrell said Council has a copy of Beckley's Vacant Building Registration Maintenance, and Redevelopment Ordinance. He said changes will be made to this ordinance. He said it can be brought before Council later. Mr. File must review it. Councilwoman Hunter asked if the City Manager form of government is active in the six municipalities that he is using for a comparison. Mr. Jarrell said he did not check to see but thinks that it is. Councilwoman Hunter said that she likes the possibility of replicating what is working successfully for other municipalities. Councilman Williams asked who will be responsible to enforce these ordinances. Mr. Jarrell said that

Code Enforcement is, and Code Enforcement asked for these ordinances to be updated. Mr. Jarrell said that new software may be required. Jeanie said that she has a demo scheduled soon. Code Officer Graham said it's another tool in their toolbox to help the Code office operate more efficiently. He said under Section. 6 – Vacant Building Fees pushes the responsibility on the owner of the building to secure it, not the City. There's a one-time registration fee of $50. If the property is in a condition as described in Section 6, then penalties will be charged. The Mayor said that if someone has a vacant home, the insurance doubles. The Mayor asked why people don't sell the property rather than just leave it vacant. Code Officer Graham said sometimes it may be due to a family dispute over heirship. The Mayor said that in July when Councilwoman Hunter shared information regarding statistics on permitting fees, etc. the number for new construction was zero dollars. He said investors can buy these houses and turn them into nice homes. He said this might be a way to attract more professionals and younger professionals. Councilman Williams said that if properties have been

boarded up by Board of Public Works what does the City do right now to stop this.

Jeanie said that the City Code Office has become property managers and it isn't the City's responsibility. She said that now, sometimes when Code reaches out to property owners by phone, they aren't answering or returning phone calls. She hopes penalties will make a difference. Jeanie said that they try to connect people who want to buy property to the owner of vacant property. Councilwoman Coots said that the LRA has approximately 3 or 4 properties being donated to it. Councilwoman Coots said that if people who are interested can be found that are willing to do something with the vacant property, it will be great for the City. Councilman Reedy said that he is aware of how much these ordinances need to be enforced and thinks they will be helpful. Code Officer Graham added that the ordinance shall include that, "the vacancy period shall run continuously regardless of transfer of ownership." He said this will help with the problem Councilman Reedy referred to. Regardless of how many LLC's a person starts, the penalties will follow them.

Next was the **City of Beckley Rental Housing Registration, Inspection, and Occupancy Ordinance.**

Jeanie said another thing this updated ordinance helps with is not allowing landlords to move people into locations where there are no utilities at the property. With the rental inspections, this will require landlords to have running water and utilities for the occupants. She said sometimes the tenants are renting a place online without knowing that there may not be a place for power to be hooked up to, etc. She said inspections and certificates of occupancy should help with this. Councilwoman Coots asked if an individual submits a HUD certificate, will the certificate of occupancy help eliminate the possibility of too many people living in one dwelling. Code Officer Graham said that the City can define "family". Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess said it can be done using the number of people residing there verses the number of bedrooms in the unit/house. Councilwoman Coots asked for this to be added to the rental ordinance. The Mayor asked how often inspections take place. Jeanie said once every three years but if there is a problem,

inspections can be done at that location annually. Code Officer Graham said they should probably be done more often but they take up a lot of time. He said there is a fee schedule listed in Section 10. Councilman Reedy asked if there is a way that the tenant will be able to make complaints if the landlord isn't fixing what needs to be fixed. Code Officer Graham said yes, it will work both ways. If a tenant tears something up, a landlord can report it.

The software that the Code office is looking into will help with these types of issues. Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess said the inspection fees are low. Code Officer Graham said that he is open to higher fees if Council thinks they should be higher. City Manager Jarrell said that the Code office is comparing Beckley's fees to the fees that other municipalities charge in order to be aligned. Councilman Williams said that the Code Enforcement Office is in need of more employees. The Mayor asked for a timeline on how soon these ordinances would be on an agenda. Mr. Jarrell said that it all depends on how long it takes Mr. File to review them, add the changes Council wants, and get the software in

place. Mr. Jarrell said that it takes time to place liens on properties and to track them. Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess said placing liens have not worked to this point and the City needs to change it to something that works and gets their attention. Code Officer Graham said that he attended a meeting in Hinton where he was told that an ordinance change can make it a criminal offense due to Home Rule. He said Council may want to consider this.

The Mayor said that he thinks the majority of the landlords in Beckley will be happy about these ordinances.

Next was the **Rules of Decorum and Public Participation Policy.** Mr. File said that once Council makes any changes they wish to make to this, he suggests that Council adopt it as soon as possible as it gives the City more enforceability. City Manager Jarrell said that this needs to be on the agenda for the October 20th Council Meeting.

The Mayor asked if there were any other ordinances/resolutions needing to be discussed at this time. Councilwoman Bullock told City Manager Jarrell that he said MacArthur Street would be discussed. Mr. File said that he thinks it

is best if he and City Manager Jarrell talk to Councilwoman Bullock about this as he and City Manager Jarrell have been discussing what can and cannot be done. They are researching what effect it would have if the property were transferred. Councilwoman Bullock said that she wants to keep Ms. Hernandez informed. She is here tonight but can't make public comments due to this being a workshop. She said that Ms. Hernandez had said in the past that she along with other residents in that area signed the petition. Councilwoman Bullock said that the WV Code in reference to dead end streets was also submitted. She said the residents of that street have been taking care of the property for years. Councilman Williams asked if she is referring to the property near the Black Knight. She said yes. City Manager Jarrell said Queen Ann Drive also needs to be discussed as well as other orphan streets in the City. He was asked if the City patched Queen Ann Drive this year. Mike Bolen, Director of Board of Public Works said that they did not patch it this year; Bridgeport Motors patched it. Councilman Reedy said the City still needs a long-term solution as this has been discussed many times. City

Manager Jarrell said that he and Mr. File need to work on what can and cannot be done with orphaned streets. Councilman Williams said that the City may open a can of worms if it patches one street and not another. He said if the store(s) can patch it, they can pave it. The Mayor said that he agrees. Councilman Reedy said an ordinance needs adopted for parking lots to be maintained.

The Mayor said that some developers charge the tenants so much monthly for parking lot repairs and put it into escrow for things such as this.

Councilwoman Shoemaker-Dingess gave the application needed for a City Manager to Council members. She said it needs to be looked at thoroughly and updated. She said it needs to be a priority. She said that she knows Council will not use Baker-Tilley and may just post directly on indeed, LinkedIn or use a recruiter. She said that she also gave a description of another position that is needed to Council members. She said Council needs to get started and this needs to be discussed at the next Council meeting during Executive Session. She said the holiday season is here and it's time to get started.

The Mayor said he thought the process

would start in January. She said in order to start in January these items she gave out need to be updated.

With there being no further business to discuss, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m. on a motion by Councilwoman Coots seconded by Councilman Williams.

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Mayor
City Manager