

Minutes
Bluff City Board of Mayor and Aldermen
Regular Meeting
January 7, 2020

Mayor Wells called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Wells stated this is a business meeting not a court of law. Mayor Wells welcomed everyone and stated that anyone wanting to comment has 3 minutes in the first session and 3 minutes in the second session. Come to the podium and give your name address and phone number. Board members do not have to comment during Citizen Comment's session, unless they want to. Board members raise your hands to be recognized as this will eliminate interruptions. No talking during the meeting. If you want to talk while the meeting is going on you must go outside or to the hallway. Others want to be able to hear. You can be asked to leave if you are out of order. Once the business session starts you will not be able to interrupt, you will need to wait until your second session. If you have a request for information you must come to the office at City Hall during office hours 8 am to 4:30 pm. Monday thru Friday and fill out the proper papers.

Members present were Carol Keith, Jeff Broyles, Ray Harrington, Eric Ward and Richard Bowling.

Prayer was given by Richard Bowling, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Wells opened the floor for the following:

Discussion / Action – Dave Wilson, Engineer with Mattern and Craig – Mr Wilson was absent due to illness.

Citizen Comments – First Session – None

Discussion / Action – Minutes for December 3, 2019

Motion to approve minutes for the December 13, 2019 regular meeting was made by Alderman Bowling. Second by Vice Mayor Harrington. Vote was as follows: Alderwoman Keith – Yes, Alderman Broyles- Yes, Vice Mayor Harrington – Yes, Alderman Ward – Yes, and Alderman Bowling – Yes. Motion carried.

Report from Mayor / City Manager – No Report

Report from City Attorney Paul Frye

Mr Frye stated at the last meeting you all had asked me to do research on alcohol sales. I have completed that research and the first question is, what would we have to do to have on premises beer permit to be able to sell beer by the drink? We would have to amend our city code to allow beer by the drink. We would have to amend our city code to allow on premises. The application process would be the same for off premise. In my research I found that the state has changed the definition of beer and we need to change our definition of beer as well.

Mr Frye stated the second question was, what do we have to do to allow liquor stores in Bluff City? There would have to be a petition by the citizens – registered voters and it would have to be signed by 10% of the voters that voted in the last gubernatorial election. That number would be 56 because there were 557 people who voted from the city in the last gubernatorial election.

Mr Frye stated next question was liquor by the drink, what we would have to do there. You could do it by the same process or an alternative would be, two thirds of the board members could pass

a resolution to ask the Election Commission to put it on the Ballot. Both liquor stores and liquor by the drink would have to be voted in by the voters of Bluff City. If you want me to move forward I can move forward by amending the beer ordinance and also do a resolution which would require 4 board members to vote in the affirmative to pass to petition the Election Commission to put liquor by the drink on the ballot. I could draw up a form petition on the liquor stores to be circulated among the registered voters. Mr Frye asked if they wanted him to move forward with these initiatives. Alderman Broyles stated I am definitely on board with the beer permit modifications. This is a lot easier than I thought it would be. I am of a mind, not from a prospective of drinking liquor, but from a perspective of business that we should move forward on both. Alderman Ward made a second. City Attorney Paul Frye stated it doesn't require anything at this point, I'll just move forward with the initiatives of the resolution, the petition and the amendment of the Beer Ordinance. Alderman Ward stated that gets the beer and liquor going. Is that what we are saying? Mr Frye stated yes.

Report from City Recorder / CMFO – Sharon Greene

CMFO Greene reported the following fund balances as of November 30, 2019: General Fund - \$1,554,000.00, Sanitation Fund - \$31,404.00, Special Police Fund - \$12,437.00, Debt Service Fund - \$104,100.00, Sinking Fund - \$3,095.00, Water /Sewer Fund - \$641,920.00. Motion to approve the financial report was made by Vice Mayor Harrington. Second by Alderman Ward. Vote was as follows: Alderwoman Keith – Yes, Alderman Broyles- Yes, Vice Mayor Harrington – Yes, Alderman Ward – Yes, and Alderman Bowling – Yes. Motion carried.

Comments from Board Members

Alderwoman Keith stated hello and it is good to see everybody. I would like to thank the carolers. We had carolers during the Christmas holiday. We went out caroling and there was a lot of children with us and we really had a blessed time. Bluff City hang in there we will get there.

Alderman Broyles stated good evening town family and Happy New Year. This is going to be the best year Bluff City has seen in a long time. We are stepping forward now and I am excited to be part of this. I have had a Veteran's Organization that has reached out to me and asked to assist us with this Veteran's Memorial project. They have been down that road before so they can help us a lot. I don't know if that is going to be financially, but if not we'll figure it out.

Vice Mayor Harrington thanked everyone for coming. We have more people here in this new year, and I hope it will continue. Like Jeff (Broyles) says we are moving forward and we will continue to do so and I hope that we stay on the right path.

Alderman Ward stated I want to thank everyone for coming and hope everybody had a good Christmas and a good New Year. I hope to continue seeing everybody throughout the year.

Alderman Bowling thanked everyone for coming and stated I hope the next meeting is full. I hope everybody had a Happy New Year and a Merry Christmas and continue to come out.

Report from Chief of Police Greg Depew

Chief Depew presented the monthly report for December 2019. (SEE ATTACHED)
Alderman Ward asked if he had heard any word about the car. Chief Depew stated we were fortunate no one was hurt. There was a part in the car that malfunctioned and broke in the steering

and it hit a tree. No one was hurt and the insurance company has been in touch with us. There was no other property damaged.

Alderman Bowling stated now that the cameras have come down what is your solution to compensate for that. Chief Depew stated right now we are going to keep working hard. We don't know exactly what will or won't be. Vice Mayor Harrington stated especially if you keep up the 138 a month in citations. That is not a typical December is it. Chief Depew stated no, it is not, but everybody is working hard. Alderman Bowling asked how many tickets they were writing a month. Chief Depew stated usually during the winter months is probably their slowest month and it would average 40 to 50 and now we are up to 138.

Report from Public Works Supervisor Allen Moultrie

Mr Moultrie reported that the sewer department is going smoothly. We did not have any overflows during these last couple of rain events. In regards to the sewer department and trying to find some of these issues, when we spoke to the State Department they entertained the thought of us getting flow monitors. We really do need flow monitoring so we can narrow down the actual areas that we are seeing the most flow. Beyond that we have seen improvements. Mr Moultrie stated that we need to stress to the public that they have to stop flushing wipes, paper towels and stuff as it does not grind up very well. We are seeing whole rolls of baby wipes and it is becoming a real nuisance.

Mr Moultrie reported that the pump stations are working properly and everybody is upbeat and they are getting the work done. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

In the street department we have not had to plow snow yet but if you do live on a street where you have to park near the roadway, please leave ample room for us to use our snowplows.

Alderman Bowling asked how many flow meters he would need to have. Mr Moultrie stated between 4 and 5 as we need them where we have the most customers.

Alderman Ward stated there was an area where you said there was a lot of rain water coming into the sewer line. Have you looked into any more? Mr Moultrie stated we have a bunch of old brick made manholes and I have pictures to show what they are doing during these events. We need pre cast manholes. Some of these we can do in house. Alderwoman Keith stated it sounds like we need to have a workshop. Mr Moultrie stated I am compiling a list of areas and I will present that to you all and try to figure out what areas and what approach we need to take. Mrs Keith stated those monitors are something you need. That would save you time. Mr Moultrie stated I would save time because you would know exactly what area the flow is coming from. Mr Moultrie reported that the water plant is operating on its own. We are putting out approximately 220 gallons per minute.

Vice Mayor Harrington asked if they were still working on a letter to send to citizens about flushable wipes. Mayor Wells stated yes I was hoping to have some information from the State from that meeting.

Report from Sullivan County Commissioners

Hershel Glover stated I would like to talk to you about the liquor by the drink you were

discussing. I had a discussion with Mayor Venable today and Thursday night I am going to introduce a resolution to add liquor by the drink to all rural Sullivan County. We will be putting it on a referendum vote. If it passes the commission, it will hopefully be added on as a vote in August. The income will be used for raises for teachers.

Mr Glover presented a facilities plan for a new Elementary School in 2022 which means our Elementary School could be leaving Bluff City also. Mr Glover stated I wanted to talk to you about the Middle School being empty. Mr Glover introduced Heath Guinn from Kingsport and explained that he works with businesses. Mr Glover stated I think we need to keep Bluff City some revenue from the Middle School. Mr Guinn stated that he had worked with a company that converted a school into a co working space which provides a new revenue stream for an empty building. Vice Mayor Harrington stated that it sounds like a great plan if it came to fruition.

Jack Herlbert stated I have been interested in buildings of this nature and I think it can be an asset to the county and be rooted in Bluff City. I believe a boys or girls club could be located in there. I encourage working with the School Board. County Commissioner Glover stated I will speak to Mayor Venable and see if we can get a meeting set up with the School Board.

Old Business

Alderman Broyles stated we have been in discussion about Citizen Comments. Mr Broyles stated he had reviewed the ordinance and he felt that we should only have one portion of Citizens Comments and let it be at the front of the meeting. I would recommend that we extend that to 6 minutes opposed to 3 minutes. Mr Broyles stated I noticed another portion of this that I feel needs to be stricken. The part says the City Recorder shall serve as the official time keeper. Vice Mayor Harrington asked County Commissioner Glover how they do it at the county. Mr Glover stated that they have a sign in sheet at the beginning of the meeting and you are recognized at the start of the meeting and you are given 3 minutes. Mr Glover stated that a lot of times the Mayor, toward the end of the meeting if it's something necessary he will recognize, but it is usually at the start of the meeting. Alderman Ward asked what if they need more time. Alderwoman Keith stated that was what I was going to say. Mr Glover stated usually they sign up to come back next month. Mr Glover stated he is pretty good about working with the 3 minute rule and usually he goes to about 5 minutes. He is pretty good about working with the public on that.

Alderwoman Keith stated citizen's concerns are very important. What if they need more time and it is something that needs to be discussed, is there something that can be done about that. Can they set up a meeting with somebody, or what? I don't want them to come here and have comment and they don't get answered. My concern is the citizens getting answers to their questions.

Mayor Wells stated my thinking is it depends what you need an answer to and if it something that we need to get more information to answer your question we will be happy to do that. Mrs Wells asked if they have anything to say about the 3 minutes or 6 minutes. Alderman Ward stated I think we need to extend it, just like the man last month, cutting him off in mid-sentence, I don't think that is right. Mr Ward stated he would do 5 minutes. Vice Mayor Harrington stated I think it would be good if we did a combination of the counties and ours and do like 5 minutes at the beginning and at the same time have a sign-up sheet where it would be more orderly and you don't have to raise your hands and all that stuff. You have written them down and we can read it off up here. Alderman Ward asked how will we do it, if they have a question about something we

are talking about. Mayor Wells stated once you go into the business session (sentence ended) Alderman Ward stated they can't ask questions. Vice Mayor Harrington stated it could be at the pleasure of the Mayor. Mayor Wells asked Mr Glover if once they go into the business session, do you let the people interrupt you. Mr Glover stated for instance, when they had questions about the animal shelter on the sign-up sheet, when the Mayor recognizes a person he would ask them if they were all there with the animal shelter. He would ask one particular person to speak for 6 or 8 of those members. Normally after the public comments and they go into session, he does not recognize any more public comment until the next meeting or toward the end if they have a question for the Sheriff or Highway Commissioner or something like that.

Alderman Broyles stated I think we should mimic that. If Citizens want to submit something in writing for us to review during their comments, that might help as well. Mr Broyles stated I think 5 minutes is adequate. Mayor Wells asked if anyone had a motion.

Man from audience stated I have a question. He stated the purpose of having 3 minutes before, so the citizens can come up and tell you his complaint and while the meeting is going on, you all go through it and at the end of the meeting they have 3 minutes so they can ask you why you didn't address their problem. If you just have it one time you don't know their problem until the end of the meeting and they have to wait 30 days. Alderman Broyles made a motion to amend Ordinance 96-003 to be worded as such, there be one section of Citizen Comments and it shall last for 5 minutes and the City Recorder shall serve as the official time keeper be stricken. Alderwoman Keith stated that can be changed, it is not in stone you can always go in and change it. Alderman Bowling stated I like the end. If they have something to say about something we bring up in a meeting, they can't ask it until next month. I like it to be a little at the first and a little at the last. Alderwoman Keith stated I agree. Alderman Bowling stated maybe extend the first one another minute or so or the last one another minute or so. Mayor Wells stated we have a motion and a second on the floor. Alderwoman Keith stated I agree with Alderman Bowling. Vice Mayor Harrington asked who seconded it. Mr Harrington stated I second it. Alderman Ward asked are we doing it at the first. Vice Mayor Harrington stated Jeff made a motion to have it 5 minutes at the first session and then have the portion stricken that says the City Recorder is the official time keeper. Alderwoman Keith stated Vice Mayor can I say something. Mayor Wells stated so we need to take a vote on it. Vice Mayor Harrington stated let's take this vote and if it fails we can go from there. Vote went as follows: Alderwoman Keith – No, Alderman Broyles – Yes, Vice Mayor Harrington – Yes, Alderman Ward – Yes, Alderman Bowling- No. Motion carried.

Alderwoman Keith stated I am very concerned about the Moore's that have been experiencing raw sewage in their yard. I am very concerned about the engineer, paying all this money and the problem still is not fixed. I think having a workshop, Allen is very knowledgeable, I think he could save us a lot of money if we set down and take the time to work together. Mrs Keith stated you have already passed it about one session of citizen comments, which I do not agree with because I think people should be able to speak afterwards.

Mayor Wells stated we had the water tank inspected and we have some problem areas that we will have to take care of. We will discuss these when we have the workshop. Allen has been working on some things that he and employees can take care of. As soon as we can get it organized we will call a workshop.

New Business

ViceMayor Harrington stated we need to look at getting prices for flow meters. Mayor Wells stated I have that. Vice Mayor Harrington asked if we could rent them and we could move them from place to place, it might be cheaper.

Vice Mayor Harrington stated if we go with this liquor by the drink would it be possible to get it on the ballot in August. City Attorney Paul Frye stated no it would be the November ballot.

Mayor Wells asked if they could go ahead and vote to put the beer into effect. City Attorney Paul Frye stated as soon as I draw up the ordinance.

Citizens Comments – Second Session


Mayor Wells asked when the new one goes into effect for 5 minutes. Mr Frye stated when the ordinance is amended.

Marion Bott of 237 Duty Drive stated once you go over Jonesboro Dr and cross over the railroad there is trash everywhere. Ms Bott asked if we could put up a sign about littering in that area. Ms Bott asked if they could replace the speed bump on Duty Drive that washed away.


Julie Venable Carty of 209 Smith St. Ext. stated I am disappointed that you took the second section of Comments at the end. Sometimes if you get here late you don't know what's going to be said so you can't be prepared and things come up that you might want to ask but you don't want to wait a month. I think if it is just going to be one it should be at the end so we will know everything that was said and everybody could get in. I think we need to still have 2.

Alderwoman Keith stated I agree with you and I apologize that this has happened.

With no other business a motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Bowling. Second by Alderman Ward. Vote was as follows: Alderwoman Keith – Yes, Alderman Broyles- Yes, Vice Mayor Harrington – Yes, Alderman Ward – Yes, and Alderman Bowling – Yes. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.


Irene Wells, Mayor / City Manager

Attest this 7th day of January, 2020


Sharon Greene, Recorder / CMFO



Bluff City Police Department



MONTHLY REPORT
2019 December
Year Month

NUMBER OF:	CITY	PINEY	COUNTY	TOTAL
CALLS FOR ASSISTANT(S)	58	74	18	150
ISSUED CITATION(S)	49	89		138
WARNING CITATION(S)	10	12		22
PATROLED MILE(S)	1844	4825		6669
ARREST(S)	10	7		17
OFFENSE REPORT(S)	2	7		9
ALARM(S)	2	4		6
ACCIDENT(S)	1	5		6
ANIMAL CALL(S)	3			3
MSD REPORT(S)	2	2		4
FUNERAL ESCORT(S)	3			3
DOMESTIC ASSAULT(S)	1	3		4
VEHICLE SEIZURE(S)				
MISSING PERSON(S)				
D.U.I.(S)				
DRUG VIOLATION(S)		4		4
USE OF FORCE REPORT(S)				

approved by: Chief [Signature] Date: 1-7-2020