

Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
Bluff City Board of Mayor & Aldermen  
October 4, 2016

Mayor Wells called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Anyone wanting to comment has three minutes in the first session and three minutes in the second session. The Board members do not have to comment unless they want to. Anyone wanting to comment must come to the podium and give their name, address and telephone number. No talking out in the meeting. If you would like to talk while the meeting is going on, you must go outside or in the hallway. Others want to be able to hear. You can be asked to leave if you are out of order. 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 and fill out the proper request form.

Members present were Alderman Stratton, Vice Mayor Harrington and Alderman Harrison.

Prayer was given by Rev. Ron Whitaker, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Wells opened the floor for Citizen Comments-First Section.

David Smith, 200 Highland Circle: how long has that pipe been in the ground down there at Boone Lake? I have heard estimates up to eighty years. I was just wondering if the City was going to inspect that or just go on by it? The other one is to check it to see what condition it is in. If the lake comes back up and if the sewer cracks or anything, it is going to come right back up into the sewer. I would like to have an inspection on that. As far as the water rates and stuff at Bluff City this \$50.00 cutoff fee is awful hard on our citizens. I would like for Alderman Jack Stratton to bring it up for a vote to help our people that is living on six or seven hundred dollars a month. Cutoff fees used to be twenty-five. Now they are fifty. I would like to see that cut back so our citizens can have their medicine and stuff. The next thing is I would like to bring up. Why would stick any more money in the water treatment plant out there in underwood when we can go across the bridge and save that half a million dollars or eight hundred thousand that we are going to put in out there. Because our water rates is outrageous. That's all I got.

Carolyn Payne, 4818 Bluff City Hwy. 538-9108: I do come down and fill out the request forms. After downloading the meeting of August 2<sup>nd</sup> I contacted Wanda. I said page six was missing, how do we amend it? It was eventually amended. That day I also talked to Mayor Wells and she said didn't have time to talk to me and to submit my questions in writing. Which, I did. The minutes of the meeting when it says see report, see attachment. They should be in the minutes of the meetings. I requested I know how the approvals go. All I was requesting was an amendment to a meeting that was totally incorrect. That is totally different. Then I was informed that my other questions would have to be asked during citizen's comments. Now you just said I can ask but you don't have to answer. So, what's the purpose? You didn't have time to respond so I am going to use my three minutes. So let's go back to the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in which Mayor Wells stated and I quote "the City is responsible for putting in the sewer on the property" the property in question is River Bluff Landing. They want it nine feet deep. Is that for water and sewer? Or is that just sewer? By the way, since you are required to provide that to the residents, why do I not have a sewer line in front of my house? It's been ten years or longer. If you have a responsibility to River Bluff Landing what is your responsibility to me, other home owners and a business. We are at a critical situation. We have been given a loan to replace water lines,

## REGULAR MEETING

October 4, 2016

Page 2

manholes, sewer lines, two pump stations and to repair our water plant. Thirty-eight years to pay it off. Why repair the water plant? Just drive across the bridge turn the valve and buy it from Bristol. We are going to get an 18% increase in 2016 for water and eighteen for sewer and the same amount of money for 2017. If I may finish. And then an additional 10% in 2018. That is a total of 42%. It's outrageous we cannot afford it!

Kim Arrowood, 312 Harr Drive: As we all know Bluff City has been fined more than twenty-five thousand dollars for overflows of over 1500 gallons of sewage running into Boone Lake. That clear running water was sewage after all. You have to pay \$3,864.00 within thirty-one days of receiving the order. This came from an investigation that was done in late December when that overflow and sewage occurred. The same time my house was overflowed with sewage as well. As you know there is a category 4 hurricane brewing right now that we will get the rains off of. My question is, are you prepared for the rain that is going to be coming from this hurricane? Or are the Moores' going to have to worry about sewage running through their yard again? And other residents having to worry about sewage running into their properties again? Are we prepared for the rain that is going to come from this hurricane? Second, this afternoon I had the wonderful privilege of speaking with the woman on Main Street named Debbie Rosenbaum. She gave me permission to use her name. She had an overflow occur at her home with sewage and water coming up in her basement. She called A1 Plumbing who came out and looked in her line and scoped her line and it was thought and said in writing by the plumber that it was in the City's main line. However, the City turned around and said it was in her line and reported it to TDEC as in her line. Are you aware that that is a crime? When it is in the City's line and you purposely report that it is in the resident's line. That is a crime. I have it all right here. I am going to search I am going to turn it over for an investigation to be done. Not to mention a few others. Now are we prepared yes or no for the rain that is going to be coming from the hurricane? Do you know what is going to happen? Are you prepared to protect people's property yes or no? Nobody? I think our citizens can see what we have up here on the Board. I need to say nothing further.

Carol Keith, 305 Lakeview Circle: I only a couple of concerns. I was blessed to be able to go to Heritage Days and I met with a lot of the citizens. The elderly and we talked at great length. They are so concerned about their water bill. I thought I wasn't going to come to the meeting tonight but after talking to them I am really concerned too. Some of them told me that they live on fixed incomes. They only get six hundred dollars a month. They get a water bill for one hundred dollars. What do you expect us to do. I have been traveling a lot lately. I have been in and out of town. I got my water bill, which I paid yesterday. Two people my son goes to college and he works. One hundred and eight dollars. As you know I wanted to sell my home. I got a call from the lady telling me that she would love to buy it but that there is no way she would move to Bluff City. Also I would like to ask I think I am echoing Ms. Payne. Why can't we shut down the Underwood Park and buy Bristol water or Johnson City water? Something that is going to help the people. Is there any way we could do that? I asked Mr. Stratton if he would bring it up for a vote. I feel ridiculous standing up here talking to you all and you all not even answering or saying anything. As Kim said you see what we got. We need help here. We are asking for help. What are people to do? Mayor Wells said get a loan and pay your water bill. Everybody cannot get a loan. I spoke with one lady and she told me for the last two months she has been going through these check cashing places just to be able pay her water bill. Now she is borrowing her own money. We have got a problem. I would just like to bring back to your memory when you was going through all this stuff remember I stood with you. I will stand with anybody as long as it is right. But when you're wrong you're wrong and I am very disappointed in you.

## REGULAR MEETING

October 4, 2016

Page 3

Julie Venable 209 Smith Street Ext. 538-7931- I just want to bring up the water and sewer because that is what everybody is mad about. Everybody adds it all together. My water bill alone is just twenty-seven, my sewer ranges from forty to fifty. Then you got the trash and the fee. It basically comes up to one hundred. But really we don't have this Board or even several Boards before this to blame. We have the Board I believe it was 1993. We had our own sewer plant at that time. It was still working great. We weren't even charged for sewer. They paid the last payment off and that Board decided to shut it down and hook onto Bristol Bluff City. Short term maybe it would have worked out anybody knows long term it is not going to. They can charge us anything they want. That is what's happening and that's what's going to happen. When you have your own sewer you can get grants from the State. If it needed to be larger it could have been larger. They chose not to. They chose to shut it down and hook onto to somebody else and let them do it. So yes it is going to keep going up, but it is not this Board's or like I said this happened around 93 I cannot remember which one. But it was in the early nineties a few years after that we also had our own garbage truck. It was getting old. Instead of saving money up for it, they did the same thing. Let outsiders a contractor do it. Common sense tells you short term it might work. Long term it's going to cost us all. That our big problems now. This board I do not agree with everything they have done. I do not agree with any Board on everything they do. But certain things are not their fault. Thank you.

Becky Buchanan 750 Dry Branch Road 276-1165: What Julie just said is the truth. If you hook onto Bristol water they can jack the price up anytime and they can cut us off at any time with no notice. Just like she said about her water bill, you got your water, your got your sewer and you got your trash. As far as it going up 18%. Is that what you said Ms. Payne 18% next year. Mr. Frye you read it off at the meeting how much it was going to go up every year and it was not 18% was it? Does any of you remember how much it was going to go up next year? It was 9%. You said 18%. Get your facts right. This Board here what you need to do is work with the Board. There is none of us perfect. The citizens needs to work with this Board. Uplift them, don't come in here and complain all the time. Uplift them you know, yeah you talked to a lot of people at Heritage Days, I did too. They said that the citizens of Bluff City needs to work with the Board. Work together, don't pull apart. Sewage is not running in my yard, but I tell you what ya'll was talking about the rain coming Bluff City this Board of Mayor and Alderman cannot prevent this rain. That is God's work you all just remember that. So pull together work with this Board. Help this Board. Don't tear it apart. Yeah people don't want to move to Bluff City, you know why because there is so much negative in the newspaper and on TV. That is why they don't want to move into Bluff City. If everybody will pull together then people would want to come into Bluff City and start business. Thank you.

David Smith, 200 Highland Circle: I don't think we would be in all this situation if we had used our heads. I think in the last nine or ten years that we've had these speed cameras we should have invested that money in the infrastructure and trying to keep these rates down. It seems like Bluff City has no clue as to what they are doing. It just seems like it just keeps getting worser and worser and worser. Something has got to be done. I mean it just. You had all this money you had a good opportunity to put the infrastructure in and make something of this town. You squandered the money.

REGULAR MEETING

October 4, 2016

Page 4

Discussion/Action – Directors Order- State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation  
Mr. Frye states it is his recommendation to appeal this order.

Motion by Jack Stratton. Second by Vice Mayor Harrington  
Motion Carried

Alderman Stratton Yes  
Vice Mayor Harrington Yes  
Alderman Harrison Yes

Discussion/Action- Mattern & Craig Proposals for Corrective Action Plan for state sewer overflow  
response plan.

Randy Beckner, Mattern & Craig- I apologize for not getting the report to you in time to get into your packet. Basically the things we have got going on. Everyone's aware of the sanitary sewer lift station project. We have actually held the startup and the manufacturer's testing of the new pumps. The 390 pump station is pretty much ready to go. I think it is waiting on a fiber drop for the cilematry and skater system on that and it will be pretty much ready to go. A little fencing tearing down the old pump station building. That kind of stuff is yet to be done. The igloo I'm sure most of you are aware, that was also started up. During the design, we were under the impression that the existing force main was a 6" line. It turns out that the line left the existing station and then reduce down to a 4" so we are going to have to replace the force main with a new 6". There is a change order currently in the works to do that. It will be eligible for you rural development funding so it will come out of that pot of money. Roughly looking at about \$80,000 to replace that force main, which also includes replacing some water service lines that will be impacted by that. Those line replacements were already included in the water line project. So basically it's just moving that works. Some of this 80 was going to be done with this water line project anyway. Speaking of the water and sewer line replacement contracts. Just giving you some dates. Those plans were submitted to TDEC and rural development on May 20<sup>th</sup>. TDEC approved the water plans on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Within four days. TDEC approved the sewer plans on June 9<sup>th</sup> and as of today we are still awaiting the review by rural development. We did receive an email on September 30<sup>th</sup> indicating that the reviews were anticipated (was the word they used in the email) to be completed this week. So we are still since May 20<sup>th</sup> awaiting rural development to review our plans and specs. There are some additional services that we have been informed of the need to complete. Some additional investigations and reporting for the sewer system. We are currently refining our scope and our proposal to do that work. Basically it includes three items, the update of your existing corrective action plan, the CAP a generation of capacity management operation and maintenance plan. A lot of times you will hear it referred to as a CMOM for the entire sewer system which will require a complete smoke testing of the system, flow monitoring, visual inspections and a written report of the findings. Then the third component is the generation of a sewer overflow response plan or a SORP. We are currently scoping and working on that proposal looking at estimated around fifty to sixty thousand dollars to complete all those services which again we will be eligible for the RD funding. These items will actually give you better leverage to go after grant and loan money as well from City bg and several others. It could be a good thing. Due to time constraints the time frame to get this done we would ask that the board authorize the Mayor to execute an agreement for this work. Like I said, we are still working on the numbers so I would authorize her agree to sign something up to sixty thousand. Could be less but at this point we just haven't quite finalized it. It was a last minute thing.

REGULAR MEETING

October 4, 2016

Page 5

Vice Mayor Harrington asks if the smoke test also find the possible root of the storm water run off? Mr. Beckner responds stating the intent is where smoke comes out water gets in. Of course your deeper main lines that are below the ground water table the smoke cannot come out. That is where the flow monitoring comes in. You can see dry weather where flows are higher than anticipated. You can also see a major rain event the peak end flows and you can narrow down where your problems are and then the smoke testing does find sources where there is inflow. That is direct in flow of rain water. The final report will be a database of all the defects found with itemized.

Approval of Mattern & Craig Proposals for corrective action plan for state sewer overflow response plan

Motion made by Vice Mayor Harrington Second by Alderman Harrison  
Motion Carried

Alderman Stratton Yes  
Vice Mayor Harrington Yes  
Alderman Harrison Yes

Discussion/Action: Proclamation for Betty Thomas

Approval of Proclamation for Betty Thomas  
Motion made by Vice Mayor Harrington Second by Alderman Harrison

Alderman Stratton Yes  
Vice Mayor Harrington Yes  
Alderman Harrison Yes

Mayor Wells reported the following: I would like to thank each of you for coming out tonight. I hope you will continue coming out and voicing your opinions. We have a lot of things going on in the City and things are moving along pretty good. Things do not happen overnight. We just ask that you understand everything and know that we would not try to do anything that we think that would cost more money than what we are paying at this time.

City Attorney Paul Frye did not have anything to report.

Comments from Alderman:

Alderman Stratton- I haven't been personally going around to each of Bluff City's problems and been studying it. I do know that our pipelines they have been that way. I have lived where I live for forty-six years and we have always had problems because we don't have twenty or thirty million dollars to spend. I cannot sit here because the past is the past and I can only tell you what I have learned. Yes we all have problems. I think someone mentioned about the leak in front of my mother-in-laws house. There was thirty-eight thousand gallons that ran through her meter. The gentleman who takes care of her property didn't pick it up. I didn't pick it up until somebody told me there was a problem with water in there. I kept going in the house and did n't hear nothing. I went out and looked down there at the main thing and still we couldn't figure the problem. I walked back the next day and told me to go in and look if I

## REGULAR MEETING

October 4, 2016

Page 6

wanted to. Her commode was running wide open. She's ninety years old. I don't know what she had to pay. Somebody else will have to answer that question. Because she used thirty-eight thousand gallons. She told me they were taking her whole check, which I know they didn't. because the overseer of her didn't say anything about it. They paid the bill whatever it was. I don't know if someone wants to answer that question or not. That's all I have to say!

Vice Mayor Harrington- I appreciate everybody coming out. I like to see everybody coming for the good comments and the bad comments. We have to have your input to know where we are going. We are getting there, just one step at a time. Apparently we are doing baby steps but we are getting there. I just appreciate everybody coming out. Thank you.

Alderman Harrison- everybody wants to bring this water problem up all the time and they are trying to blame the City for this. It's mandated through the State that we do this. We have nothing to do with it. It is mandated through the State. We aint got no choices in it. You think it is high now. If they done it, it would be twice as high. You have to remember that. You can always think that way. I mean we are not trying to hurt these older people. I grew up with these older people you all talk about all the time. I know them all, I mean why would I do something against them. We aint got nothing to do with that. All we are trying to do is get this mess cleared up and get these water lines cleared up, sewer and all this stuff. It a slow process that's all I can say. Thank you.

Chief Greg Depew reported the following:  
(See Report)

Public Works Supervisor Allen Moultrie reported the following:  
(See Report)

Water Department Dean Fields reported the following:  
(See Report)

County Commissioner Andy Hare was present. Very little to report on our end. Some construction at the Court house which has limited our meetings. So we won't be picking up again until November. However, I wanted to commend and thank you all for hosting the events for the Ober Mountain Victory Trail celebration. I enjoyed that. Of course Heritage Days I love that. I love a chance to eat and have fun. My little kids got plenty of maybe some of your stuff. I don't know but I spend my money here. Also its getting ready to get basketball season. Of course Bluff City will be hosting teams from all over Northeast Tennessee so it will be an exciting time to have a bunch of visitors here to the area to showcase our talent. Thank you all. Hopefully in November I will have some more important information to talk about other than that thank you all.

Mayor Wells opened the floor for the following:

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Citizen Comments-Second Section:

David Smith, 200 Highland Circle- You know I have been coming to this board meeting for twelve years. I have probably missed seven or eight meetings in twelve years. I have campaigned for several of you. There is two on here I would never campaign for right now.

## REGULAR MEETING

October 4, 2016

Page 7

They are coming up for election I would like to make that plain. The City has been here for probably eighty or ninety years. The City has had every opportunity to work on their sewer and their water a little bit at a time. The last time we came in here when we had the first sewer outbreak down there at the Moores' that was on a Sunday. I walked down there. Me and ex board member I went and got him, went down there. There was two ditches 14" deep, 18" wide. The force was so strong that it cut another ditch in hard red clay. The City said I don't think it made it to the river. So I get a phone call and I run back down there, stayed down there for six or seven hours that night and watched that sewer run like a creek. But the letter I heard said we lost 1500 gallons. The Mayor came out and said that they had a spill down here a couple weeks ago and only 10 gallons come out. That lid weighs one hundred pounds. I would like to know how ten gallons of clear water came out of it when Mrs. Arrowood brought that urine in here and it was full of stuff in it. You know I ask the City please build a holding pond down there right behind the Moores' where we got all this space. We got a backhoe, we had the men. We could have dug a big hole and took it down there dug a hole put barricade tape in, put plastic in the bottom and up on the sides. Called a tanker truck. While it's going into that big hole we could have been sucking it out so the people down in Johnson City don't have to drink it.

David Gordon, 200 Holston Drive- Mr. Harrison you ran on the fact that you were not going to raise water rates. You talked bad about me when I was on the Board for raising water rates. Yes you did. If you want someone to be nice to you, you should have acted that way when you were sitting out here and we were sitting up there. Shaking your finger and your fist at everybody. Matter of fact you might have even got arrested one time. I don't know. So you know don't do that. Admit you are wrong. You said you would never raise the water that we went up on the water. You passed a little thing out on it. Did you not?

Kim Arrowood, 312 Harr Drive- As I said earlier, I had the privilege of meeting with Debbie Rosenbaum and who had a overflow in her basement of sewage. I'm here tonight to ask, is anyone willing to submit a proof from the plumber that it was in the City's main line. Because the City reported that it was in her line. The plumber helped the City unclog the main line. It was reported to TDEC as the residents fault, which is a crime. I am asking you is anyone here willing to get her her money back for the plumber and her day of missed work from having to clean up the sewage. Yes or no. Right here's the plumbers report. We all know that it was in the City' side just like it was at my house. And we all know that it was lied about just like it was at my house. Is anyone willing to help her. Yes or no? Anyone willing to go to your insurance the fool and get this woman her money that she deserves? Yes or no? Anybody? So were just going to leave her hanging and what you've done is a crime by reporting this to TDEC as her fault. No. I'd be ashamed.

Carolyn Payne 4818 Bluff City Hwy., 538-9108: I would like to know how much it is going to cost to outsource for the requirements of the nine feet deep and has it been approved? What's the cost verses the income for just three houses? They have to do it nine feet deep that requires a retaining wall to keep the workers safe. To keep it from caving in. If you go back, Mattern & Craig I think you said you wanted an additional maybe 60,000 you weren't sure. Can this board really blindly approve any dollar figure that's thrown out there? Why don't we know what they are? Why do we not know what the line items are? I still don't know what it going cost to outsource River Bluff Landing and why I still don't have a sewer line. You can't do it. When it comes to the minutes of the meetings little Roberts rules of order here. You all cannot pick and choose what you want in the minutes of the meetings. They have to be recorded and I'm so glad that the citizen's comments are back in there. Because we are getting no answers from you all up here. Why bother coming? We get no response whatsoever. I bring it to your attention that

REGULAR MEETING

October 4, 2016

Page 8

there was a problem with the minutes of the meeting. I go so far that I ask for DVD's of these minutes meetings because I want to see what idiots everybody's looking like in here and these no response. You cannot pick and choose and kindly these reports will they be included in future minutes of meetings as they are required to be attached. I'm not letting this go. You all think this old lady is going away I'm not. It was ordinance 2016-002 and ordinance 2016-001 9% increase for both of them water and sewer 2016 and 2017. Then 5% each for 2018. 10%, 18% and 18%. You all do the math. I found a little error. Refer to page 3 of the budget. FYI 2016/2017 under Bluff City Hall number 921 building and grounds. I think a 0 was added making it a total of \$13,000 and I believe it was meant to read 1300.00. That's a \$10,000 error unless you all are planning repairs that I am not aware of. You can't even take responsibility for mistakes.

Carol Keith, 305 Lakeview Circle- Were not here trying to cause trouble or be ugly or anything like that. But if you take one moment to think about it. What if you had sewage all in your yard? I seen it in the Moores' yard. That stuff was coming up like a waterfall. What if it was you? What if you had sewage come in your house and your house was destroyed. I seen Mrs. Arrowood's beautiful home. It was destroyed. Carpet off the floor, concrete floor, holes in her wall. What if it was you? There not trying to be ugly. They are just wanting help and wanting to be treated fairly. These water bills, I mean this isn't something that just happened overnight. This has happened through the years and now it's caught up. We cannot run a City on people paying their water bills and borrowing money grants. It's not going to survive. To be honest it's no harm or weakness to ask for help. I am very thankful that the Senator is here tonight. Because clearly anybody here can see we need help here. I am asking you please help us. I mean people cannot afford to pay their water bills. Also, before I forget I asked Alderman Stratton if he would bring it in for a vote about cutting this \$50.00 fee. If people can't pay eighty dollars how are they going to pay what one hundred thirty dollars? Can you cut it down to twenty five? Is there any way you could do that? Can you bring that in for a vote? What about the people? You are here to represent the people. You are here to help the people. We are not going to have a City because people cannot afford to live here. My son lives in Charlotte and his water bill is twenty five dollars. My Aunt's is eighteen dollars in Johnson City. When I tell people my water bill is one hundred and eight dollars they don't believe it. I carry it in my purse now to show them. We need help here. I know I only have three minutes. I heard somebody say we are getting there. Where are we getting to? The police they ask for cars months ago. They still haven't gotten them. We supposed to gotten a war memorial, we still haven't gotten it. What's going on? We need help. If you can't do it, there's no shame in it. Just say hey we need help. This is a waste of time. But I pray that the Senator hears it and reach out to somebody to bring help to Bluff City because we need it.

Motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Harrison. Second by Jack Stratton. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

  
Irene Wells, Mayor

Attest: This 1<sup>st</sup> Day of November, 2016

  
Sharon Greene, City Recorder/Finance Officer