

Minutes  
Bluff City Board of Mayor and Aldermen  
Regular Meeting  
November 1, 2016

Mayor Wells opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Wells stated that this is a business meeting not a court of law, no personal attacks in this meeting. Mayor Wells stated that anyone wanting to comment has 3 minutes in the first session and 3 minutes in the second session, do not try to speak twice in any session as it will not be allowed. Mayor Wells stated that on Citizen Comments, 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 phone number. Mayor Wells stated no talking during the meeting; if you need to talk you must go outside or to the hallway. You can be asked to leave if you are out of order. If you have a request for information you must come to the City Hall Office during business hours of 8:00 a.m. thru 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday and fill out the proper request.

Members present were Sandra Madison, Jack Stratton, John Harrison and Richard Bowling.

Ray Harrington was absent.

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

Mayor Wells opened the floor for the following:

Citizen Comments – First Session

Becky Murray, from Elizabethton, President of The Friends of the Thomas Memorial Library thanked the city for the money that they donated to the library. Ms Murray presented a list of things the library offers.

Jeff Broyles of 660 Kentucky Ave stated that last week he had mailed the Board Members a letter from the Ruritan Club. Mr Broyles stated that the club requested that they be able to maintain the United States Flag at 2 locations in Bluff City. Mr Broyles stated that the Ruritan Club will assume the responsibility of monitoring the serviceability and appearance of the flag at both City Hall and the Pavilion Park along with the replacement of the flag when deemed necessary and the proper disposal of the flag that is taken down. Mr Broyles stated that the changing of the flags when necessary may or may not include a short ceremony by the club or other veteran's organization. Mr Broyles thanked the BMA in advance for the opportunity to show the clubs patriotism to the town. Mr Broyles asked for approval for the club to start this immediately. No comments or motion was made.

Carol Keith of 305 Lakeview Circle stated that she wanted to address some really serious to her and to a lot of citizens some important issues. Mrs Keith stated that she and her sister were at Walmart and as there were coming out this couple said that they were leaving Bluff City and she said why, and they said they could not afford their water bill it was \$126.00. They stated that they were going to a housing authority to get help to find a place to live. Mrs Keith stated we have a problem and she is talking about the water bills and is going to continue to talk about the water bills. Mrs Keith stated that the citizens need help here and it won't be ignored because we will be

speaking out about it. Mrs Keith stated that she had asked before that they consider buying water from Bristol Bluff of Johnson City and they were going to address it at the next meeting. She asked Alderman Stratton if they would, could they bring it up for a vote. Something that will bring relief to the citizens because people are moving out and she would not advise anybody to move in. She said to Mr Stratton, you will bring it up for a vote and he said he would do something. Mrs Keith said thank you.

Julie Venable Carty of 209 Smith Street Extension stated that she felt that at the last meeting they may have misunderstood what she said about the project bidding. Mrs Carty stated that she knew that the projects going on were open bids and what she was trying to say was that 2 of the companies that wanted to bid and didn't, did not think that Bluff City had the accurate amount of money they needed for the project.

Becky Buchanan 750 Drybranch Road stated that every time she comes to a meeting the water bill is brought up. Mrs Buchanan stated that she lives outside the city and pays more for her water than people inside the city and she does not gripe and complain about it. Mrs Buchanan stated that Carol Keith was always bringing about hers how much hers is and she never saw a copy of it so she got a copy of it. Mrs Buchanan stated not this bill that came out yesterday but the month before she used 5300 gallons of water. Mrs Buchanan stated that when you say water bill everybody is thinking about water bill, you got the trash and you got the sewer added into it. But on your bill it says how much you use a month, 5300 gallons. Mrs Buchanan stated you say you travel a lot, I stay at home I do washing, I do cooking, I do everything. Mrs Keith stated let me go home and get my bills and I will bring them to you. Mrs Buchanan stated I pay more for my water than you pay for yours because I live outside the city, so when you use 5300 gallons of water and I use 1600 gallons of water you must have a water leak somewhere. Mrs Buchanan stated I'm serious because I use 1600 gallons and they's 2 of us at home all the time, but our water rates are cheaper than a lot of places. Mrs Buchanan stated that these people complaining about their water bills alright if you can't afford your water bill, pay your water sewer and garbage pickup then do away with your cell phone and internet and cable and you will be able to do what you need to do. God says he will provide our needs not our wants. Thank you.

Kim Arwood 312 Harr Drive stated that she was there on behalf of Debbie Rosenbalm who lives on Main Street and there was an overflow at her house in February. She had damage to her basement and some property she had there. She had to pay \$180.00 to a plumber to come out and the plumber noted that it was in the cities line however the city reported that it was in her line. Mrs Arwood stated that since they have proof that the city is at fault for this clog will they resubmit it to the insurance company so she can get her \$180.00 and the fees paid back where she had to call a plumber. City Attorney Paul Frye advised the Board Members not to comment or discuss any pending or threatened litigation or insurance claims. Mrs Arwood stated that reporting false information to TDEC is a crime.

Mayor Wells discussed a contract with Board Members to put all City meetings on the Bluff City Website. The cost would be \$50.00 per month for a maximum of 2 meetings per month. Individuals will be able to obtain all information themselves. Motion to approve was made by Alderman Harrison. Second by Alderman Bowling. All present in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes for the October 4, 2016 Regular meeting were approved with a motion by Alderman Bowling. Second by Alderman Harrison. Vote was as follows: Alderwoman Madison – No, All others in favor. Motion carried.

#### Report from Mayor / City Manager

Mayor Wells read a letter from the State of Tennessee Water / Waste Water Financial Board from Betsy Knotts, Legal Counsel. (SEE ATTACHED) The letter reflects that the rate structure mandates an increase of 9% by July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, additional 9% by July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017, and by 5% by July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. Mayor Wells asked the board to approve mailing 2 letters and the order to all water customers.

Motion to approve sending 2 letters and the order to all water customers was made by Alderman Harrison. Second by Alderman Bowling. Vote was as follows: Alderwoman Madison – Abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.

SEE THE FOLLOWING ATTACHMENTS:



## City of Bluff City

4391 Bluff City Highway • Bluff City, TN 37618  
Telephone: (423) 538-7144 • Fax: (423) 538-7138  
Email: bluffcitycityof@aol.com

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 70  
Bluff City, Tennessee 37618



November 1, 2016

### TO THE CITIZENS OF BLUFF CITY

The water and sewer increases were ordered by the State of Tennessee Utilities Board due to showing a loss in the utilities fund.

The state requires the Utility fund of a City to have enough income to cover its expenses. These expenses cannot be paid out of the General Fund.

The new project was undertaken to reduce the cost of operating the water and sewer Department. By installing two new pump stations, some old water/sewer lines and a new water tank at the water plant, this will help reduce our cost. The new water tank will reduce the amount of water purchased from a second source.

The contractor which picks up the citizen's garbage increased the rate by \$2.00 per month, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen voted not to pass this increase on to the customers.

The Board of Mayor and Aldermen are making every effort to reduce the cost of operating our City.

Thank you for supporting the Board of Mayor and Aldermen in their efforts to help the citizens and improve our City.

For your information attached is a copy of the letter from the legal department of the State of Tennessee showing what is required of Bluff City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Irene Wells".

Irene Wells  
Mayor/City Manager

Attachment: 2



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**Water and Wastewater Financing Board**  
James K. Polk State Office Building  
505 Deaderick Street, Suite 1700  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1402  
Utilities Line (615) 747-5260 Fax (615) 741-1551

October 27, 2016

Mayor Irene Wells  
City of Bluff City  
P.O. Box 70  
Bluff City, TN 37618

Dear Mayor Wells,

As you know, the Water and Wastewater Financing Board ("WWFB") entered the attached order on March 21, 2016 ("Order") pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-221-1010(b). The Order is a legally enforceable mandate of the WWFB. It requires Bluff City to adopt and maintain the rate structure outlined in it. This graduated rate increase will provide adequate funding for the system's operation, maintenance, debt service payments, and depreciation.

If Bluff City fails to adopt the rate structure outlined in the Order, I will advise the WWFB to petition Davidson County Chancery Court to require Bluff City to fully comply with the Order, including adoption of the rate structure, and to obtain any other remedial action which, in the discretion of the court, may be required to cause the system to be operated in a financially self-sufficient manner.

If you have any questions, please call (615) 401-7954 or email [betsv.knotts@cot.tn.gov](mailto:betsv.knotts@cot.tn.gov).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsy Knotts".

Betsy Knotts  
Legal Counsel to the WWFB



**BEFORE THE TENNESSEE WATER AND WASTEWATER FINANCING BOARD**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

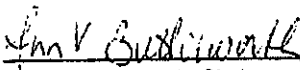
**T.C.A. § 68-221-1010—FINANCIAL DISTRESS  
CITY OF BLUFF CITY WATER AND SEWER**

**ORDER**

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 68-221-1010, the Tennessee Water and Wastewater Financing Board (the "WWFB") reviewed on March 10, 2016, the financially distressed status of the City of Bluff City's (the "City") water and sewer systems. In order to correct these deficiencies, the WWFB directs the City to comply with the following corrective action plan:

1. The City will increase its rates by 9% by July 1, 2016;
2. The City will increase its rates by 9% by July 1, 2017;
3. The City will increase its rates by 5% by July 1, 2018;
4. The City shall comply with all provisions of Resolution No. 2016-002; and
5. The City shall update the WWFB's staff on its progress quarterly until formally released from WWFB oversight.

Entered this 21 day of March, 2016.

  
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Ann V. Butterworth, Chair  
Water and Wastewater Financing Board

Report from City Attorney Paul Frye – No report.

Comments from Board Members:

Alderwoman Madison thanked everyone for coming and reminded everyone to vote.

Alderman Stratton thanked people for coming and stated whether you agree or not that is one of the good things about being an American. Mr Stratton asked that they hold their tempers and be patient as they are trying to improve Bluff City.

Alderman Harrison stated that he agreed with Alderman Stratton and they are not trying to hurt the city they are trying to help the best they can and some of them are new at it and it is going to take a while.

Alderman Bowling thanked everyone for coming and thanked the Boy Scouts for being there. Mr Bowling asked that they give them time to get things worked out.

Report from Assistant Chief Jamey Dunbar- SEE ATTACHED REPORT

Assistant Chief Dunbar reported that they have another officer certified as a Firearms Instructor, Officer Julian as they like to have more than one officer trained.

Assistant Chief Dunbar reported that the new cars were ordered 2 weeks ago and we should receive them in about 5 to 6 weeks. Mr Dunbar thanked the BMA for the new cars.

Report from Public Works Supervisor- Allen Moultrie – SEE ATTACHED REPORT

Mr Moultrie reported that the pump stations are working properly. Mr Moultrie stated that the leaf and brush pick up is ongoing and reminded citizens to place them no more than 5 feet off the road. Alderman Bowling told Mr Moultrie that he was doing a good job and Mayor Wells stated yes.

Report from Water Plant Operator Dean Fields- SEE ATTACHED REPORT

Mr Fields reported the following:

The water plant is operating normally.

They installed a new motor on their high service pump in October.

They are continuing leak detection. Mr Fields asked that citizens take necessary precautions to keep pipes from freezing as winter approaches.

No Sullivan County Commissioners were present.

Boy Scouts were present as part of working on 2 merit badges dealing with communications and assistance in the community.

Old Business – None

New Business – None

Citizen Comments – Second Session

Carol Keith of 305 Lakeview Circle stated that she was not here to be ugly and she is blessed that she can afford to pay her water bill. Mrs Keith stated that she is not speaking out for herself; she is speaking out for people that don't have it. Mrs Keith stated that she is not here to cause trouble she is here to try to show the love of God. Mrs Keith stated you know, you don't really know me you know of me but you don't really know me. She said don't make the same mistake I made. Mrs Keith stated as you know Mayor Wells when they thought you was only fit to give people permission to have chickens in their yard, I stood with you and I stand for what is right and I am going to continue to stand for what is right. I will continue to stand for what is right and I will continue to fight for people that don't have. Mrs Keith stated I don't forget where I come from and I try to help people. I don't care who you are or what color you are an I will stand with them as long as it is right. It is hard when people come to me and tell me they don't have money to pay their water bills, I can't just set back and watch somebody suffer and not do anything. Mrs Keith stated I am not here to be ugly Alderman Harrison; I'm not here to cause any trouble. Mrs Keith asked Alderman Harrison if people have a right to get your personal business, my water bill, because I'm going to check into that. Mrs Keith stated as the board, Alderman Bowling is it right, in your heart you know the truth, for somebody to give somebody a copy of my water bill. Mrs Keith stated that's not right and I know election is coming up and I stand with whoever stands for what is right. Would you please take a stand even if you have to stand by yourself but if you stand for what is right, somebody will stand with you. Thank you. Mrs Keith stated it is not right for somebody to get my water bill, but I'm blessed, I can pay mine.

Mayor Wells asked City Attorney Paul Frye if he had any comments and he said no. Mayor Wells asked if anyone else has a comment.



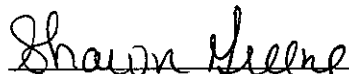
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BMA  
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With no other business, motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Bowling. Second by Alderman Harrison. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



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Irene Wells, Mayor / City Manager

Attest this 1<sup>st</sup> day of November, 2016



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Sharon Greene, City Recorder/ Finance Officer