

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE  
PILOT PROGRAM

City of Bluefield

2017  
PROGRESS  
REPORT

West Virginia State Code §8-1-5a (m) provides:

“Commencing December 1, 2015, and each year thereafter, each participating municipality shall give a progress report to the Municipal Home Rule Board and commencing January 1, 2016, and each year thereafter, the Municipal Home Rule Board shall give a summary report of all the participating municipalities to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.”

The Municipal Home Rule Board has developed this standard format for Pilot Program participating municipalities to prepare and submit their respective Annual Progress Reports. The intent of this standard format is to gather and compile information in a consistent, easily understood, and efficient manner that will be used to develop a concise and practical summary report to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.

Annual Progress Reports must be submitted electronically as an individual file in PDF format no later than the close of business on December 1, 2015 by emailing Debbie Browning at [debbie.a.browning@wv.gov](mailto:debbie.a.browning@wv.gov), West Virginia Development Office, West Virginia Home Rule Pilot Program, State Capitol Complex, Building 6, Room 553, Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0311, 304-558-2234.

<b>A. General Information</b>		
Name of Municipality: City of Bluefield		
Certifying Official: Ronny L. Martin	Title: Mayor	
Contact Person: Dane D. Rideout	Title: City Manager	
Address: 200 Rogers Street		
City, State, Zip: Bluefield, WV 24701		
Telephone Number: 304.327.2401 ext. 2406	Fax Number: 304.327.8670	
E-Mail Address: <a href="mailto:citymanager@cityofbluefield.com">citymanager@cityofbluefield.com</a>		
2010 Census Population: 10,447		
<b>B. Municipal Classification</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Class I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class II <input type="checkbox"/> Class III <input type="checkbox"/> Class IV		
<b>C. Pilot Program Entry Phase</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Phase I (2007 Legislation) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phase II (2014 Legislation) <input type="checkbox"/> Phase III (2015 Legislation)		
<b>D. Attest</b>		
I hereby confirm that I am the authorized official for this municipality and certify that the information submitted herein and attached hereto is true and accurate and that this report addresses each and every initiative included in the original Home Rule Pilot Program Plan Application for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
Ronny L. Martin		12/1/17
Type Name of Certifying Official	Signature of Certifying Official	Date

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application. Each non-tax related initiative must have a separate page.

<b>Initiative: Disposition of City Property</b>
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? May 26, 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)
<p><b>SUCSESSES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City of Bluefield continues to acquire properties to be used for economic development purposes and establishing a land use map in its comprehensive plan process. This includes participating in a Delinquent and Non-entered Land Sale for Mercer County and an aggressive campaign to educate the public on those individuals participating in Tax Sales who are delinquent themselves. It is the City’s intent to either turn these over to adjacent property owners, allow the area to return to green space and/or be used for economic development. Currently, the city has not utilized this ability as it is still in the acquisition stage.</p>
<p><b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>The City of Bluefield has a Municipal Buildings Commission established in addition to this authority. We are also studying the establishment of an Urban Renewal Authority, Economic Development Authority, or a Land Reuse Agency. We have researched with the City of Huntington to determine the best “fit” for the municipal government for future property acquisition/ownership/disposition. Understanding what model works best for the long-term goals and strategies to be set forth in the comprehensive plan will help us select our best way forward.</p>

**Initiative: On-Spot Citations**

Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)

Organization       Administration       Personnel       Other

Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application  or a plan amendment ?

Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted?     Yes     No

If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? May 26, 2015

If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)

**SUCSESSES** – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.

This new major tool being utilized by the City of Bluefield’s Code Enforcement Division has been part of 58 cases during the 2017 calendar year. This has doubled since last year and has continued to be a “game changer” that allows the city code enforcement officers to have additional authorities when dealing with repeat violators of city codes. This has been paramount in our ability to clean up problem areas throughout the city. City code enforcement officers also cited enhanced penalties has given landlords more of reason to have their tenants act responsibly.

**LESSONS LEARNED** – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.

City code enforcement officers found this tool to be extremely helpful in dealing with repeat violators. It also gave officers the ability to stop violators who “play the game” of getting a summons, waiting the time out, and waiting again for the code enforcement department to call again. This tool has given neighbors a better piece of mind that problem properties will be dealt with in a timelier manner.

**Initiative: Contracts with Other Jurisdictions Via Resolutions**

Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)

Organization

Administration

Personnel

Other

Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application  or a plan amendment ?

Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted?  Yes  No

If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? May 26, 2015

If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)

**SUCSESSES** – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.

This initiative was implemented with the understanding it would allow contracts to not be held up an extra month for readings. Such contracts have not come to term at this time, but they will allow for quick passage at the time they are brought before the governing Board of Directors.

**LESSONS LEARNED** – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.

<b>Initiative: Procurement of Architect-Engineering Services</b>
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? July 14, 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City of Bluefield was awarded a \$2.04 million EDA POWER grant and \$500K matching Shott Foundation grant to redevelop the former freight station into a Commercialization Station where “dirty incubation work space” will be available for entrepreneurs. The revitalization of this building allowed this provision to be utilized, streamline the process and select the A/E Firm that is the “true best value” for the city and not hampered by the cumbersome State Code 5G-1-3 process. On 13 December 2016, the City Board completed the selection process and approved the first A/E Contract utilizing this authority. Additionally, planned for January 2018, the City will publish the 2018-2028 Comprehensive Plan which will include several major projects requiring A/E Services. This initiative will once again be utilized on those major projects to cut through red tape in selecting the best firm and capitalize on existing opportunities.</p>
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>Streamlining processes and expediting City Board decisions has been key in our Economic Development operations. Major stakeholders and Grant Foundations need to be educated on these new authorities provided under Home Rule which creates an environment of “by-in” of these organization of the municipalities’ vision. Once realized, long term funding opportunities have emerged.</p>

Please use this page to report progress on each tax related initiative included in your Home Rule Application. Each tax related initiative must have a separate page.

<b>Initiative: B&amp;O Tax Reduction and Retail Sales Tax Implementation</b>
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? October 11, 2016
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)
<p><b>REVENUES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting revenue amounts and revenue categories realized; revenue amounts and revenue categories reduced; net revenue gain; and, any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City received the very first tax distribution October 20, 2017 in the amount of \$147,685.78. This distribution was taxes collected during the months of July and August 2017.</p> <p>The city passed an ordinance October 11, 2016 to reduce B&amp;O Tax for retailers, contractors and utilities effective July 1, 2017. The total reduction of B&amp;O tax is estimated at \$312,100 and the estimated new sales tax revenue is expected to be \$700,000, producing a net revenue gain of \$387,900.</p> <p>Based upon the first distribution we are falling short in our estimates; however, the first distribution is not a full 3 month collection and distribution. Most if not all cities experience an increase in the second and following quarterly distributions.</p>
<p><b>SUCSESSES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting projects, improvements, programming, etc. realized through the implementation of this revenue initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>Our initial sales tax distribution was just received and is being used to fund the General Fund Budget, in place of the reduced B&amp;O tax. If the sales tax meets or exceeds our long term projections, it is hoped that the extra revenue will be available to shore up the police and fire pensions, capital equipment purchases and economic development.</p> <p>The city has completed the paperwork and received the quarterly tax information pertaining to the taxes administered by the WV State Tax Department as it relates to this recent tax distribution.</p>
<p><b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>Being located in a border county on the WV/VA line presents notification problems as it relates to sales tax when items are delivered from Virginia into the city. We initially concentrated on notifying our business community but had to go back and send the same notifications to the businesses across the border.</p>