

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE
PROGRAM

City/Town of Bluefield


2020
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 3, 2018, by emailing Courtney Shamblin at courtney.d.shamblin@wv.gov, West Virginia Department of Revenue, West Virginia Home Rule Pilot Program, State Capitol Complex, Building 1, Room W-300, Charleston, West Virginia 25305, 304-558-3356.

A. General Information		
Name of Municipality: City of Bluefield		
Certifying Official: Ron 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; drideout@bluewv.org		
2010 Census Population: 10,447		
B. Municipal Classification		
<input type="checkbox"/> Class I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class II <input type="checkbox"/> Class III <input type="checkbox"/> Class IV		
C. Attest		
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 Program Plan for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
Ron L. Martin		11/1/2020
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.

Initiative: Disposition of City Property			
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>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 has not yet had occasion to exercise this authority. This authority is deemed complementary to the authority found in W.Va. Code §1-5-, which permits transfers between public bodies without considering, alone, the value of the property. The City has created an Economic Development Authority pursuant to W.Va. Code §7-12-1 <i>et seq.</i>, and a land reuse agency pursuant to W.Va. Code §31-18E-1 <i>et seq.</i>, and has transferred some property to the land reuse agency under that statute, but has not yet had occasion to transfer City owned property to a non-profit organization under these home rule powers. We continue to assess possible uses for this authority as the opportunities arise.</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>The City learned in the implementation of these authorities that it needs a comprehensive property management strategy. These powers, plus the Land Bank and the existing Buildings Commission (which addresses declining and dilapidated structures and has the power to order demolition) give the City a variety of tools to address our numerous property challenges. The challenge going forward will be to utilize these powers and agencies in a coordinated, holistic fashion to address the numerous challenges associated with a shrinking population and the resulting abundance of aging housing and building stock.</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.

The on-the-spot citation authority continues to be a key strategy in the cleaning up of the City. Generally, the citations result in a municipal court appearance for the offender, which typically will result in the offender being afforded a period of time to abate the problem before the citation is finalized and a fine imposed. This process successfully resolves all but the most egregious cases or cases with the most intransigent offenders.

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.

The City has two basic processes to address dilapidated or neglected properties. The first is the use of this authority, and the second is the use of condemnation proceedings under the authority of the City's Buildings Commission. Neither of these tools are particularly effective to deal with property conditions which arise from poverty, lack of access to capital, or physical or mental disability. The City needs a non-profit, citizen driven organization to assist residents with simple property maintenance issues that the residents may be unable to address for these reasons.

Initiative: Contracts with Other Jurisdictions Via Resolutions
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>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>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.</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>We expect to understand more about the utility of this authority when we have occasion to use it.</p>

Initiative: Procurement of Architect-Engineering Services
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>As noted in the previous report, the City has been awarded at \$1 million dollar power grant and a \$1 million-dollar matching Shott Foundation Grant to develop property owned by the City at Exit 1 of I-77. Using the authority conferred under this section, the City published a request for proposals and interviewed a number of highly qualified architect/engineering firms for the design of the project. This process resulted in the selection of RK&K Engineering to perform the design work. RK&K will work with Draper Aden Associates, which will perform the geotechnical work needed to design such a project in the area’s karst terrain. We expect to use this authority on other economic development projects as the City moves forward.</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>The use of this process to select the architect/engineering firm for our Exit 1 project demonstrates the enormous utility of this authority. The City is in a transformational period and was very pleased in 2019 that financial software giant Intuit announced the location of a “Prosperity Hub” in Bluefield, bringing up to 500 jobs to our downtown. The growth that we are seeing will bring with it new needs and new opportunities, and anticipate using this authority regularly as we shift from an old to new economy.</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.

Initiative: B&O Tax Reduction and Retail Sales Tax Implementation
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>REVENUES – 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>In FY 2018, the city received a total of \$608,697 of sales tax revenue. In FY 2019, we received \$1,265,249, in FY 2020 we received \$1,078,125. To date, in FY 2021 we have received \$512,374.</p> <p>The B&O Tax collected in FY 2018 was \$413,594 less than the prior fiscal year. This shortfall was \$101,494 more than we estimated. We attribute most of the shortfall to the reduction in B&O rates; however, the economy must also be factored into that reasoning.</p> <p>In October 2019, a major taxpayer became a non-profit entity and we lost approximately \$600,000 of B&O tax. Now with COVID-19 and the mandatory reduction of operations, as well as the closing of businesses the B&O Tax is no longer a viable metric with which to gauge the sales tax implementation. Our projected loss of B&O tax for FY2021 is over \$300,000 as compared to the prior year. The cumulative loss of B&O tax over the last 4 years is well over \$1 million.</p>
<p>SUCSESSES – 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>The sales tax revenue is being used to fund the General Fund Budget in place of the reduced B&O tax.</p>
<p>LESSON 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>If we could have foreseen the future, we would not have made as large a reduction in the B&O Tax.</p>