

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE
PILOT PROGRAM

City of Bluefield

2018
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: 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: citymanager@cityofbluefield.com		
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. Pilot Program Entry Phase		
<input type="checkbox"/> Phase I (2007 Legislation)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phase II (2014 Legislation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Phase III (2015 Legislation)
D. 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 Pilot Program Plan Application for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
Ronny L. Martin		11/1/18
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 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. To complement this initiative, the City recently passed a comprehensive ordinance creating the “Bluefield Municipal Land Bank.” This agency will enable the City to dispose of the numerous parcels of mostly vacant property owned by the City. These parcels, which number well over 200, are located in neighborhoods throughout the City. The Land Bank will complement the home rule initiatives re: disposition of City property. Additionally, during the last year the City hired a GIS specialist who can quickly create maps showing all City properties, and their status. This capability will enable the City to readily inventory City property, and reach out to potential interested parties regarding possible purchase of the properties. Our focus for calendar year 2019 will be to significantly reduce the City’s inventory of property. The City has recently acquired, by donation, a former nursing home facility located a few blocks from City hall. This facility was generously donated by a subsidiary of American Medical Facilities Management, which retired the facility when it constructed a new, state of the art nursing home within the City. The City has applied for a grant from the Brickstreet foundation for the renovation of this facility, which it intends to lease to Recovery Point for the operation of an expanded residential substance abuse treatment facility. The powers granted to the City pursuant to this initiative will be utilized in this transaction.</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, declining housing and building stock.</p>

Initiative: On-Spot Citations
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 on the spot citation tool was heavily utilized in 2017. City code enforcement officers were able to curb behavior with landlords and repeat offenders. This was instrumental in reducing man-hours and streamlining a burdensome process. Violators are now aware that at any time, they could be cited to city court and are much more diligent to take care of their properties. Because of this enforcement instrument, we have seen a substantial decrease this year in the number of on the spot citations totaling 7. The end state has been a cleaner city and a much more compliant population.</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>City code enforcement learned that responsiveness is the most important factor the citizens hope to see when dealing with code enforcement cases. We have learned that by using the on the spot citations, corrections are made much more quickly than if we simply send a notice to correct. This tool has given citizens a piece of mind and our city has an overall better first impression.</p>

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>

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>The City of Bluefield was awarded a \$1 million EDA POWER grant and \$1 million matching Shott Foundation grant to develop property owned by the City at Exit 1 on I-77. The Preliminary Engineering Report and submission to the EDA 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. Additionally, planned for January 2019, the City will publish the 2019-2029 Comprehensive Plan that 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.

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 and so far in FY 2019 we have received \$494,610 – a total of \$1,103,307. To date, each distribution has been more than the prior distribution.</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>It is anticipated that the recent legislative change regarding internet sales and sales tax will help continue to boost our sales tax revenues.</p>
<p>SUCCESES – 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. If the sales tax exceeds our long term projections, the extra revenue will be available to shore up the police and fire pensions, fund our capital equipment needs and help spur economic development.</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>When we started this process, if we could have foreseen the future, we would not have been so generous in our B&O Tax reductions. At the time, our initial intent was to begin to replace the antiquated B&O Tax on business with a more level and fair sales tax on the consumer. The loss of B&O Tax from the reduced rates coupled with the loss of several businesses has hurt more than anticipated.</p>