

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM

City/Town of
Buckhannon

2022
PROGRESS
REPORT

West Virginia
Municipal Home Rule Board
P. O. Box 11360
Charleston, WV 25339-1360
MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov
304.558.3356

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 Home Rule 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 the first business day of December, by emailing to WV Municipal Home Rule Board at MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov.

A. General Information		
Name of Municipality:		
Certifying Official: Robert Skinner III	Title: Mayor	
Contact Person: Amberle Jenkins	Title: Assistant Recorder	
Address: 70 E Main St		
City, State, Zip: Buckhannon WV 26201		
Telephone Number: 304-472-1651	Fax Number: 304-472-0934	
E-Mail Address: amby.jenkins@buckhannonwv.org		
2020 Census Population: 5186		
B. Municipal Classification		
<input type="checkbox"/> Class I	<input type="checkbox"/> Class II	<input checked="" 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 Pilot Program Plan Application for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
<u>Robert Neal Skinner, III</u>	<u>Robert Neal Skinner III</u>	<u>11/28/22</u>
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 and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative: Property Nuisance Abatement – Tax Lien – On-Site Citations
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 19, 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>We continue to have had success with on-site citations and cite residents that ignore warnings. We have had no success in trying to place a tax lien on the property. See narrative in “lessons learned” below. The on-site citations help to remediate un-kept and vacant properties.</p> <p>After receiving a small grant, we called “Good Neighbor Grant” which was used toward persons that met criteria to help pay for disposal of waste. The City saw success in this as well and have budgeted city funds to continue this practice.</p> <p>Threat of citation give incentive to the owner to clean up and grant helps those that struggle financially. Resident is more apt to clean up the property.</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>More Legislative action needs taken to make County Assessors and their software vendor recognize the benefit to this strategy. Tax liens have proven to be challenging. The Upshur County Assessor will not place the liens on the property taxes because Software Solutions, the company that controls the tax software will not recognize this as a tax lien. Until they are directed to do so in writing by state law or State Auditor the liens will not be recognized or placed on the property. The City of Buckhannon has lost several thousand dollars. The City of Buckhannon has placed liens on properties, but if the property is sold at a tax sale our liens are not recognized either. In 2019 two representatives from the city bid on properties that had city liens. The city became the legal title holders in late 2021. One property (Sedgwick St) was sold at auction. Profits will be used toward continued property remediation. In 2021 two more problem properties were purchased at a tax sale. We are waiting and taking the steps to obtain title to these properties. Legislation changed the tax sale process in 2022. We don’t know at this time if the change will help the city remediate problem properties.</p>

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: Part-time police officer and expanding maximum age.			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Administration	<input checked="" 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? August 21, 2016			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)			
<p>SUCCESES – 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>Council authorized hiring a part time police officer in May 2017. This was an asset until June 2020. The certified part time officer could no longer serve in that capacity. The process to advertise, hire, train and certify a full time police officer is lengthy. The process to recruit then train and certify an officer takes six to 12 months. A part time police officer can fill the void and continue police services without putting more burden on existing staff. However, filling that position is a challenge at this time.</p> <p>In 2022 Buckhannon shifted the funds that would have been allocated toward the part time position to the Chief of Police for taking on the added responsibility to handle CALEA certification management. Buckhannon may still utilize the part time certified officer position in the future as it is a valuable tool.</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.

Recently it has been difficult to retain a certified part time police officer.

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: Online Sale or Disposition of Municipal 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? December 15, 2016			
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>In the 2020 report we noted that he first online auction was held in 2019. All of our departments compiled a list of surplus equipment to be auctioned. We drafted an RFP to select an auctioneer. JJ Kane Auctioneers was awarded our auction service. This proved very successful. It exposed our items to a much larger audience. We received over \$61,000 for all of our departments, in combined revenue.</p> <p>We did not hold an auction in 2020 or 2021. We will hold another auction when we have an inventory of items that need disposed.</p> <p>In 2022 the City auctioned a problem property (Sedgwick St \$45,500) that was obtained in a tax sale. A second property (Upper Drive) was obtained but did not receive a minimum bid at auction. The house, which was in very poor condition, was demoed by the city.</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.

It was beneficial to solicit an auctioneer. Each auctioneer charge differently for their services. Also, our auctioneer was experienced, and helped us with the whole process.

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: Change hours that non-intoxicating beer, wine and alcoholic liquor may be sold or dispensed from 1:00 pm to 10:00 am on Sundays in the City of Buckhannon
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application yes or No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a plan amendment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X?
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? March 2, 2017
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 purpose of this initiative was to attract persons to downtown area for social gatherings at our local businesses that serve non-intoxicating beer, wine and alcoholic liquor on Sunday morning.</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>There was some public opposition to this, however, we have not experienced any negative affects to this measure. The pandemic greatly reduced social gatherings in 2020 and 2021. Nothing significant to report in 2022.</p>

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

Initiative: Enterprise Zones-Municipal Real and Personal Property Rebates
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> or N/A <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? August 16, 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
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. As of this date, No revenues have been realized through this initiative.
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. No business has taken advantage of this at this time.
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.

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

Initiative: Municipal Sales Tax and reduction of B&O tax
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment YesX or N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? X Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? Home Rule-Nov 1,2018, Sales Tax-Feb 7, 2019
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>B&O was reduced. In addition to the already existing \$1,000,000.00 exemption, the tiered rates were reduced from \$0.25 per hundred to \$0.20 per hundred and \$0.50 per hundred to \$0.45 per hundred.</p> <p>The City of Buckhannon received from sales tax the following \$497,482 January 2022; \$488,371 April 2022; \$507,1211 July 2022; \$535,317 October 2022</p> <p>The City originally expected approximately \$1.2 million per year in revenues.</p>
<p>SUCCESSSES – 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 first receipt of sales tax came in 2020. The last two years show a very brief summary of items that sales tax was instrumental in obtaining.</p> <p>City Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgraded to fiber internet service in City Hall • Updated furnishings in administrative area of City Hall <p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022, work began to expand the Jawbone Park off of Madison Street. This was budgeted in the Street Department projects. • 2022, \$100,000 was allocated to parks and cemetery for mowing and horticulture <p>Police Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-car and Body cameras continued financing • Maintenance of K-9 purchased for department • In 2022, Five new cruiser financed and continued payments on four other cruisers. We are able to rotated financed cruisers out through a lease program. This ensures reliable cruisers for department use. • Police software annual maintenance • Continued funding for CALEA. Accreditation was achieved through the help that funds were available for needed expenses to certify the department • New for 2022, added one new police officer position. • Pay increases <p>Fire Department:</p>

- Budgeted for three new fire fighters in 2021. Two of them were hired in November 2021. One was hired in June 2022, but quit.
- In 2022 \$10,000 allocated for Station repairs
- In 2022 \$20,000 was allocated toward a training facility
- In 2022 the City starting paying 100% of the insurance premium for the Volunteer Fire Department
- In 2022 a new fire truck was delivered and has been financed
- In 2022 \$30,000 was allocated for Personal Protective Equipment and software for data collection
- In 2022 \$15,000 was allocated for Lifepak equipment
- In 2022 a new pickup truck was budgeted.
- Exercise equipment obtained for fire fighters work out room
- Pay increases

Street Department:

- Concrete truck and silo continue to be financed. We have seen a savings owning this in-house for small concrete jobs.
- A wheel loader and side-by-side was ordered in October 2021.
- In August 2021 a new phone system was purchased.
- 2022 a new Kubota side-by-side was purchased.
- 2022 imaging assessments of streets and sidewalks was conducted \$10,650
- 2021-22 Street paving projects (Smithfield Street; Gum Street; Lightburn Street; North Spring Street; Lincoln Street; 2nd Street and Latham Street)
- Property and buildings were purchased on the Mudlick Road in 2020. The Street Department functions were moved to this complex and are shared with the Waste Collection Department. The Health Department rented a portion of the building until their facility was upgraded in 2022. Waste Department moved a large portion of their operations to this facility and will enable use of a large building for a fire and police training facility.
- \$558,137 was allocated in the 2022-23 budget for Street Department Projects
- \$113,700 was allocated in the 2022-23 budget for finance payments (4 Ram trucks; Concrete truck; and an Excavator). One lowboy trailer was purchased.

Stockert Youth Center:

- Preparations are being made to construct a building on the property that was purchased in November 2021 for the use as a multi-purpose building for both Stockert Youth Center activities and community activities.
- Annual maintenance of Software obtained to help track various youth activities
- A bus was purchased for \$25,000

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.