MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM

City of Beckley

2023
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: City of Beckley	
Certifying Official: Robert R. Rappold	Title: Mayor
Contact Person: Billie Trump	Title: Recorder/Treasurer
Address: 409 South Kanawha Street	
City, State, Zip: Beckley, WV 25801	
Telephone Number: 304-256-1768	Fax Number: 304-256-1767
E-Mail Address: billie.trump@beckley.org	
2010 Census Population: 17614	
B. Municipal Classification ☐ Class I x Class II ☐ Class III ☐ 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. Robert R. Rappold	
Robert R. Rappold	Robert R. Rappold 11/7/23
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: Authorization of Code Enforcement Officials to issue citations immediately on scene for code violations concerning public nuisance, safety and or health.
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application X or a plan amendment ☐?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? X Yes
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? 12/08/2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
SUCCESSES – 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. The City of Beckley integration of Code Enforcement into the Fire Department has increased the number of certified inspectors and as they perform their associated duties as firefighters they become more aware of areas in the City that need attention as opposed to responding only to Code complaints. This has led to a significant increase in inspections and follow up inspections. The ability to issue citations and the increasing awareness of the public that Code Enforcement has the ability to survey a much greater number of properties has led to more voluntary cooperation especially in the area of property maintence. This has led to significantly more cooperation in quickly resolving nuisance and code violation incidents. Residents and businesses that are cited have demonstrated that they would prefer to resolve the violations quickly rather than to deal with a citation and still have to resolve the problem. The streamlined process has been a great benefit in this regard. When citations are issued and followed up in a short time compliance has greatly increased. Along with compliance has been an increased revenue as contractors have been compelled to get permits and pay proper B&O.
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 clear that success was dependent on having addition inspectors and having the inspectors trained and certified, so the use of off duty firefighters has added to the coverage of the program The realization that there are more inspectors with citation powers and that all complaints will be followed up in a short time frame has increased voluntary compliance significantly. The value to the City and its citizens of the threat of citations and accompanying fines for violators is that it has given leverage to the inspectors to compel voluntary compliance. The subsequent improvement in neighborhood appearance and the abatement of potential safety issues is more valuable than the nominal fines that could be collected. Also it is becoming apparent that once a problem is addressed and mitigated that the offenders do not repeat the offense.

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: Authorization to dispose of City Property without auction: to lease or sell city property for less than fair market value in certain circumstances

Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)

☐ Organization X Administration ☐ Personnel ☐ Other

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

Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? **X** Yes

If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? December 8, 2015

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

SUCCESSES – 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.

Many times, it is difficult to assess the real value of surplus property. Using the auction format yields results that let the very wide pool of bidders determine the value.
There have been cases where the City has property that could be used to expand existing businesses but would have limited auction value because of size and proximity. These properties have been conveyed for less than appraised value to commercial enterprises that have used them to increase their ability to do business.

The City has opted to use a streamlined auction method to dispose of its surplus property.
The City is mirroring the State of West Virginia in using GovDeals to dispose of surplus property in on-line auctions. This has expanded the pool of interested buyers greatly and has resulted in higher returns from the sale of surplus property. The return on surplus property sold has gone over the $ 700,000 mark and the City is able to sell property as it becomes surplus on an ongoing basis rather than wait and arrange for local auctions. While the City can sell property for less than fair market value, the auction process has yielded in many cases value above market value. We have also provided an unused City lot for a minimal price to an expanding local business, and we are exploring business expansion on unimproved City property.

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 streamlined ability to sell real property at fair market value has the potential to encourage commercial growth. Also the use of on-line resources expands the potential buyer base for surplus equipment to a large degree. The City has built a new Police Station and Fire Station and the property that was previously occupied has been put up for auction. There have been no shortage of suggestions of other uses for the property, none economically feasible. The benefits of turning these properties into viable commercial entities must be stressed as well as the economic boost to the City's coffers of the sale of these properties.

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: Authorizes purchase of tax liens on property subject to delinquent property taxes: right of redemption by City
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply) ☐ Organization X Administration ☐ Personnel ☐ Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application **X** or a plan amendment☐?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? **X** Yes ☐ No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? December 8, 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)
SUCCESSES – 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 City has not at this time exercised this option. The new legislation that changes the way delinquent property is auctioned has created several opportunities for the City going forward. These opportunities will enable the City to recover demolition fees on delinquent properties and make them available for development. The city is exploring a land bank initiative like the ones used in other Cities. With the interest incentives taken away from speculators this gives the City a better opportunity to recover these properties and turn them to productive uses.
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. As with any other initiative preparation and public support will be key to the success of this project. A public-private partnership is a key element in the success of this initiative.

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Initiative: Ability to enter into Intergovernmental agreements by resolution			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
☐ Organization	**X** Administration	☐ Personnel	☐ Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application **X**		or	a plan amendment☐?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted?		**X** Yes	☐ No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? December 8, 2015			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s) There are governmental functions that lend themselves to integration on a municipal and county level. The process of identifying these functions is time consuming			
SUCCESSES – 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 City has partnered with the County to integrate some services with Raleigh County. The City Information Technology department is spearheading the adoption and installation of new hardware and software that will modernize emergency dispatch throughout the county. Information Technology of the City is configuring itself to be the backup for the County Emergency Operations Center. There is also agreements to operate the County Civic Center, and support local non-profits. An example is joint funding of repairs to the County Health Department building. Also, there are preliminary efforts to reduce or share jail bill expenses with the County. We have joined with the county in an effort to supplement the current animal shelter by sponsoring animal transportation to outside adoption centers.			
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. Intergovernmental agreements will save both the City and County money, but attention needs to be paid to how both savings and responsibilities are allocated initially. Joint funding of projects have to have a beneficial result for the city as well as the county.			

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: Authorizes City to place liens on property for action taken in regard to eyesores and dilapidated buildings			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
☐ Organization	X Administration	☐ Personnel	☐ Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application X		or	a plan amendment☐?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted?		X Yes	☐ No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? December 8, 2015			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)			

SUCCESSES – 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 City has placed liens on property that are currently pending. The City has offered installment plans to property owners to reimburse the City for the costs of demolition. The City has a working list of structures scheduled for demolition. When demolition occurs property owners are billed and if the charges are unpaid the property has a lien placed against it to recover demolition costs. There are property owners that when they are notified that a lien will be filed come to the City and a payment plan for the expenses is reached. As long as payments are made the lien is not implemented. The City is also actively studying the revision in the West Virginia state code regarding blighted structures (8-12-16) and how it could be beneficially applied. The City believes that with the changes in the code regarding delinquent property that demolition costs can be recovered by purchasing the tax lien and then using the land bank model to recover costs. The city has also submitted a list of dilapidated structures to the state as well as application to receive some state allocated funds for these demolitions.

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 ability to use of liens to recover expenses has been a good tool in the efforts to remove blighted properties. Property owners will make payments rather than have a lien against them. It is in the City's interest to recover expenses with payments rather than wait until the property is sold to recover demolition costs. However challenges remain with absentee owners and heirship complications.

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: Authorizes the City of Beckley to allow sale of alcoholic beverages on Sundays beginning at 10:00am,"Brunch Bill"			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
☐ Organization	**X** Administration	☐ Personnel	☐ Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application or a plan amendment **X**?			
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? **X** Yes ☐ No			
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? October 25,2016			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)			
SUCCESSES – 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. Senate Bill 561 that went into effect in June of 2019 was a state wide authorization for the sale of alcoholic beverages beginning at 10:00 am on Sundays. This made the City of Beckley local initiative unnecessary.			
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. None that apply			

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: Reduction of B&O rates in 3 Classifications and enactment of a 1% consumer sales tax
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application X or a plan amendment☐?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? X yes ☐ No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? Passed by Council 12/8/2015 ; effective 7/1/2016
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. The City of Beckley reduced the B&O tax in 3 categories: Manufacturing (from $.30/$100 to $.25/$100 a 17% reduction), Retail (from $.50/$100 to $.40/$100 a 20% reduction) and Amusement (From $.50/$100 to $.35/$100 a 30% reduction). B&O for fiscal 15-16 was $ 10,306,477.40 and the city ran a deficit of $ 778,680.57 for that period. B&O for fiscal 16-17 was $ 10,002,462.94 (even with the reductions), the 1% tax yielded $ 4,985,018.51 (which exceeded estimates by nearly 2 million). B&O for fiscal 17-18 was $ 9,947,276.53, the 1% sales tax yielded $ 5,676,002.80. B&O for fiscal 18-19 was $ 10,795,382.02, the 1% sales tax yielded $5,920,512.60 for the same period. B&O for fiscal 19-20 was $ 10,653,599.15, the 1% sales tax yielded $ 5,730,261.50 for fiscal 20-21 the B&O was $ 10,944,570.97, the 1% sales tax yielded $ 6,417,156.66. in fiscal 21-22 the B&O was $ 11,369,660.87 and the 1% yielded $6,814,810.56 in fiscal 22-23 B&O was $ 12,436,720.15 and 1% was $ 7,052,231.78. B&O changed because of the identification of some significant uncollected sources of revenue. Working with DataMax to enhance collections has proven very valuable
SUCCESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting project, improvements, programming, etc. realized through the implementation of this revenue initiative and any metrics used to track performance. The City has used the additional monies to address critical needs that could not have been realized with B&O alone. A new Police headquarters has been constructed replacing the former decrepit building. Upgrades in equipment for Public Works will allow them to more efficiently remove snow and provide needed services to the citizens in a safe and efficient manner. Pension shortfalls in both the Police and Fire pension systems are being addressed. Also a merger of Code Enforcement into the Fire Department at a replacement fire station is underway, with a new joint fire station and code office under construction.
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. Uncollected sources of B&O should be explored and identified if possible. The WV State Tax Department has been an invaluable resource during this process and it is recommended that their assistance be sought out. Also B&O can be collected on vendors doing business with tax exempt entities in the City. Inflation is a driver of both B&O and 1% sales tax and while revenue may seem to be up, expenses are up an equal and sometimes greater amount.