

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE
PROGRAM

City/Town of Bluefield

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: <i>City of Bluefield</i>		
Certifying Official: Ron Martin	Title: Mayor	
Contact Person: Cecil Marson	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: AHeltzel@BlueWV.org		
2020 Census Population: 9,658		
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 Pilot Program Plan Application for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
Ron Martin, Mayor		
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: Disposition of City Property
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 which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City created a land reuse agency pursuant to W.Va. Code §31-18E-1 et seq., 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. In 2018 the City acquired, by donation, a former nursing home facility located a few blocks from City hall, with the intent that the property ultimately be transferred to a non-profit organization for use as a residential substance abuse treatment facility, but the conversion of the facility was not funded. Along with this structure, the City owns other structures and properties that may prove to be of benefit to non-profit organizations and/or for the revitalization of the City, including an historic church near City Hall that was conveyed to the City in lieu of condemnation proceedings. The City has, however, been afforded the opportunity to transfer several tax delinquent, vacant or unused properties to citizens for the purposes of establishing homes or businesses. This assists the City by providing new opportunities for services which include a service fee and returns the properties to the tax rolls in Mercer County.</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>

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: On-Spot Citations
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? May 25, 2015
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>We continue to see an increase in sales tax revenue. Reduced B&O rates have made the City more business friendly. Spot citations have not produced additional revenues, but have made the City safer and enabled the City to remove blight.</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>This initiative remains enormously effective, with the citation initiating a process which usually results in compliance.</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 effectiveness of this process has led us to revise our process for condemning structures, changing the role of our Buildings Commission from the body that issued initial condemnation orders to an appeals board as provided in the IPMC. This will streamline this process significantly.</p>

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Initiative: Contracts with Other Jurisdictions Via Resolutions
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? May 26, 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.
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. 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. City is in negotiations with Princeton for the first use of this program.
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. We expect to understand more about the utility of this authority when we have occasion to use it.

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Initiative: Procurement of Architect-Engineering Services
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? July 14, 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.
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. 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 and this project has been proceeding as planned. The City is in the process of closing the grant out and the authority is beginning the disposition process. We expect to use this authority on other economic development projects as the City moves forward.
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 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.

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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"/> 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? 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>When we implemented the sales tax ordinance, we also reduced 5 categories of Business and Occupation tax (retail sales, water, electric, gas & contracting). Each year the city has produced a net gain when considering the reduction of B&O Tax and the receipt of the sales tax. The net gain figures follow: FYE 2018 net gain \$379,321; FYE 2019 net gain \$765,836; FYE 2020 net gain \$822,249; FYE 2021 net gain \$685,217; and FYE 2022 net gain \$440,103.</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>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>If we could have foreseen the future, we would not have made as large a reduction in the B&O Tax</p>