

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM

City of Buckhannon

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:		
Certifying Official: Robert Skinner III	Title: Mayor	
Contact Person: Amberle Jenkins	Title: Assistant Recorder	
Address: 70 E Main St		
City, State, Zip: Buckhannon		
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.		
Robert N. Skinner III		11/22/2023
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>Five citations have been issued so far in 2023. They are pending and no corrective action has taken place at this time.</p> <p>Just the threat of citation does give some incentive to the owner to clean up their properties.</p> <p>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>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.</p>

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: Part-time police officer and expanding maximum age.
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>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>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>
<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>It is difficult to recruit a certified part time police officer.</p>

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: Online Sale or Disposition of Municipal 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? 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 which highlights 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> <p>We have not held an auction since 2022 as of the date of this report (November 2023).</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>It was beneficial to solicit an auctioneer. Each auctioneer charge differently for their services.</p>

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: 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
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input checked="" 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? March 2, 2017
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
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. 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.
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. 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 2023.

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 15, 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 X Yes X or N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? X Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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; \$540,884 January 2023 \$519,083 April 2023 \$595,985 July 2023 \$598,558 October 2023</p> <p>The City originally expected approximately \$1.2 million per year in revenues. The budget for fy 2023-24 calls for use of \$2.1 million dollars from sales tax fund.</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 report for 2022 outlined a summary of items that were possible because of sales tax revenue. This report summarizes expenses supplemented with sales tax revenue in the 2023-24 budget.</p> <p>Council designation toward community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution toward free community summer activity every Friday during the summer in downtown Buckhannon. • Contribution toward the WV Strawberry Festival. This draws thousands of people to Buckhannon during the week-long event. • Outside entity funding program. This program give opportunity through an application process for 501(c)(3) organization to apply for funding that enhance community activities. • Contribution toward public transit. • The local Airport Authority asked for an additional \$5,000 contribution for a total contribution of \$20,000 annually. <p>City Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgraded computer network • Replace security cameras at City Hall

Parks:

- Ongoing improvement to Madison Street/Jawbone Park
- Engineering service to address drainage issues Jawbone Run
- 2023, \$100,000 was allocated to parks and cemetery for mowing and horticulture

Police Department:

- In-car and Body cameras continued financing
- Maintenance of K-9 purchased for department
- In 2023, continued the program to rotated and lease financed cruisers. 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. This will be an ongoing cost
- Pay increases in 2022 will be an ongoing cost
- New mobile radios were budgeted
- Equipment for use by the Volunteers in Police Service. This group is a huge help that assist the police department and community with tasks such as traffic control and manning street barricades and community gatherings.

Fire Department:

- Budgeted for three new fire fighters in 2021. This will be an ongoing cost.
- In 2023 \$60,000 was allocated toward a training facility
- In 2022 the City starting paying 100% of the insurance premium for the Volunteer Fire Department. This is an ongoing cost
- In 2022 a new fire truck was delivered and has been financed. This is an ongoing cost to 2031
- In 2023 a new truck for the Fire Chief was obtained through the Enterprise vehicle lease program
- In 2023 funding was allocated for Lifepak equipment
- Pay increases in 2022. This is an ongoing expense.

Street Department:

- Concrete truck and silo continue to be financed. We have seen a savings owning this in-house for small concrete jobs.
- 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. Waste Department moved a large portion of their operations to this facility which will enable use of a large building for a fire and police training facility. Annual property payment is \$117,300.
- \$200,000 was allocated in the 2023-24 budget for Street Department Projects
- \$139,200 was allocated in the 2023-24 budget for lease finance payments (4 Ram trucks; Concrete truck; and an Excavator). Purchase of a mini skid steer, grapple bucket and brush hog.
- \$100,000 is allocated toward paving projects.
- \$100,000 will be contributed to the Stormwater Department of the Sanitary Board

Stockert Youth Center:

- Preparations are being made to construct a building on the property that was purchased in November 2021. This will be used as a multi-purpose building for both Stockert Youth Center activities and community activities. \$216,000 was budgeted for an anticipated payment
- Annual maintenance of Software obtained to help track various youth activities \$3,900 annual
- \$20,000 budgeted to upgrade kitchen in the youth center.

Colonial Arts Center:

- This facility is a former theatre that was in a dilapidated condition. Council voted to obtain the property in 2016. Since then, some grants were obtained and some donations were received and fundraising activities conducted since then. The building was renovated and is now in full use as an arts center owned and operated by the City of Buckhannon.

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.

Prior to applying for this plank, the Buckhannon City Council established a Revenue Review Committee to explore options to increase revenue and identify projects and activities that the revenues would fund prior to public meeting and discussions with City Council.