

**STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, COUNTY OF UPSHUR, CITY OF BUCKHANNON, TO WIT:**

A rescheduled meeting of the Buckhannon City Planning Commission was held in Council Chambers at City Hall, 70 East Main, on Monday, April 15, 2024, at 7:00 pm with the following in attendance (GTM is for GoToMeeting):

Susan Aloï	President (Chair)	Present
Kelley Tierney	Vice-President	Present
Randy Sanders	City Recorder	Present
CJ Rylands	Member/Council Rep	Absent
Vincent Smith	Member/Building Code Enforcement	Present
Curtis Wilkerson	Member	Absent
Virginia Croaff	Member	Present
Tom Lynch	Member	Present
Steve Nanners	Member	Present - GTM
My Buckhannon	Monica Zalaznik	Present - GTM

Guests: COB Mayor Robbie Skinner; Jody Light; Mary Dean; Laura Rusmisell, Weston-Buckhannon Board of Realtors; Kathy McMurray, Mt. Cap; David Long; Jerry Henderson; Sandy Kesling; Charlotte Critchfield; Gary Harmon; Steve Holmes, Realtor – GTM.

**Notice of Meeting  
City of Buckhannon Planning Commission**

The rescheduled meeting of the **Buckhannon City Planning Commission** will be held on **April 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 70 East Main Street, Buckhannon WV. This is an open meeting (per WV code § 6-9A-3) and all interested parties are welcome to attend.

Posted 03/27/24, 04/03/24

***City of Buckhannon Planning Commission – Meeting Agenda  
Monday, April 15, 2024, at 7:00 pm at City Hall in Council Chambers***

**A. Call to Order**

- A.1 Moment of Silence
- A.2 Pledge to the Flag of the United States of America

**B. Recognized Guests**

- B.1 Representation of Landlords
- B.2 Weston-Buckhannon Board of Realtors
- B.3 Don Killmeyer-Chico Enterprises
- B.4 Jody Light-JoAlde Rentals
- B.5 Jerry Henderson- The Baxa Inn
- B.6 Kathy McMurray Executive Director- Mountain CAP of WV

**C. Consent Agenda**

- C.1 Approval of Minutes - Regular Meeting 02/05/2024, Special Meeting 01/11/2024

**D. Correspondence & Information**

- D.1 Housing section of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan

**E. Strategic Issues for Discussion and/or Vote**

- E.1 Discussion/Focus on Housing Providers:
  - Landlord Association
  - Realtors Association
  - Subsidized Housing Reps
  - Mountain CAP (as housing services provider)
  - WV Housing Development Fund Report 2019-2024
  - Information from Home Ownership Center in Elkins-serves all 55 counties
  - Research Online Listing of Rentals

**F. Comments and Announcements**

**G. Adjournment**

Posted 04/10/2024

## **A. Call to Order –**

**A.1 Moment of Silence** - The meeting was called to order by the President of the Planning Commission, Dr. Susan Aloï, who invited the attendees to participate in a Moment of Silence. Jerry Henderson asked that we keep the school children who had lost a faculty member in our thoughts.

**A.2 Pledge to the Flag of the United States of America** – Virginia Croaff led the group in the Pledge to the Flag of the United States of America.

President Aloï provided some context for the meeting and spoke of the duties of the Planning Commission. She noted that Housing was not an original section of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Buckhannon required by the State of West Virginia. Because of a suggestion from Kathy McMurray, we added the Housing section. The outline of the Housing section is part of this meeting packet. This meeting is an opportunity for us to hear from appropriate stakeholders on the need for housing.

### ***Housing***

*The City of Buckhannon needs to assist in ensuring that a wide variety of safe, affordable, and versatile housing is available for current and future residents. Specific issues include availability of quality rental units, downtown loft housing, and handicap accessible housing for temporary residents, new knowledge workers, and senior citizens. These housing options should be affordable, but not limited to low-income requirements.*

*According to the US Census, the City of Buckhannon has approximately 5,700 residents. The general consensus is that, due to a lack of available land for residential development within the City limits, the only future of population expansion would be through extending those limits. However, there are other options to improve housing that the City may explore first.*

*Currently, there is a lack of public information on available rental units provided through digital communications. While some units have signs on them, individuals looking to move to the City or those who are unfamiliar with the City's various neighborhoods do not see these signs. This has led to companies complaining that attracting new employees to Buckhannon has become more difficult.*

*Based on the available information, the following goals for Housing in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan include:*

- *Update the Housing Survey to determine the current number and quality of dwelling units.*
- *Conduct a Housing Demand Survey to determine projected future housing requirements for the next five to ten years.*
- *Identify unbuilt lots within the city limits.*
- *Develop and implement an ongoing system of inspections and ratings of rental properties within the City.*
- *Identify uninhabitable structures within the city limits that may be redeveloped.*
- *Work with landlords to list their available units on digital platforms and news outlets.*
- *Identify additional housing alternatives for senior citizens who do need to live in low-income housing units.*
- *Develop contemporary, affordable, and convenient housing options, such as downtown lofts, for new knowledge workers attracted to Upshur County Development Authority's Idea Center and other entrepreneurial opportunities in the area.*
- *Ensure that information on local laws and zoning ordinances related to all types of housing units is easily accessible and always accurate.*
- *Create a Housing Authority or other entity that would be a public/private partnership to develop empty lots and/or redevelop uninhabited structures.*

Without objection, the Consent Agenda was moved to the table and President Aloï reviewed the following items: Minutes from the Regular Meeting of 02/05/2024.

**Lynch/Croaff motioned to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of 02/05/2024 as presented. Motion carried.**

President Aloï then reviewed the minutes from the Special Meeting of 01/11/2024.

**Lynch/Tierney motioned to approve the minutes from the special meeting of 01/11/2024 as presented. Motion carried.**

## **B. Recognized Guests – President Aloï then recognized the following:**

**B.1 Representation of Landlords** – Jody Light spoke on behalf of the landlords who were attending the meeting. She reported a quick review of the area's rental units showed an inventory of 2,204 units. Included in this count are seven different low-income and subsidized complexes. J. Light also described the screening process as showing challenges for potential tenants, including those with past drug offenses, causing concern from some landlords referencing the “drug house ordinance” (Ordinance 428 – Public Nuisance Properties). In summary, she stated that landlords face several challenges finding qualified tenants and that currently, there are several available units, including single-family units, available and there is currently no housing shortage. She said it is sometimes difficult to convey the availability of properties to the public.

Mary Dean spoke, noting that most landlords work with each other to share leads.

Commission member Croaff noted that younger people communicate by text rather than calls.

Jerry Henderson was recognized and noted that West Virginia Wesleyan College students are more difficult to reach concerning available units. She also expressed concerns about a possible housing study and that the same facts could be found by researching city and county building permits. Local realtors are also a good source of housing availability. Based on her years of experience, she noted that much information can be obtained by researching local government data. She also reported that several new housing developments are being built in the area. She agreed that there is no housing shortage or need for a housing study.

Steve Holmes spoke about the current shortage in the inventory of homes for sale.

**B.3 Don Killmeyer-Chico Enterprises** - Don Killmeyer, representing real estate owners Jim Hinkle and Jill Cable, was recognized, reporting that they have three significant properties available for purchase that would be usable for housing developments.

**B.2 Weston-Buckhannon Board of Realtors** - President Aloï recognized Laura Rusmisell of the Weston-Buckhannon Board of Realtors, who provided extensive information regarding the housing market in Upshur County. Here is her overview of her presentation:

*I'm here on behalf of the Weston Buckhannon Board of Realtors. I've been in real estate for 29 years. One of the main issues I've dealt with is the cost of living and prices rising over the years. First time buyers needing financial literacy and learning to live within their means and realistic expectations. One of the main loans that has always been available with 100% financing is the USDA loan and then closing cost would be needed. The needs to have of course good credit and good income to debt ratio. The homes that qualify for this loan had to be in Al condition in our area. We have so many older homes and homes that need rehabilitated that don't qualify for that type of financing the first-time buyer and the lower income buyers need. I send almost all first-time buyers or people I can tell have no idea about buying a home to the Home Ownership Center. They have financial literacy, home ownership counseling, down payment assistance and loans for al income groups. They now have a 100% conventional loan for purchasing those fixer uppers.*

*On a side note*

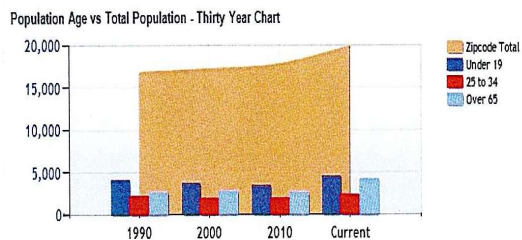
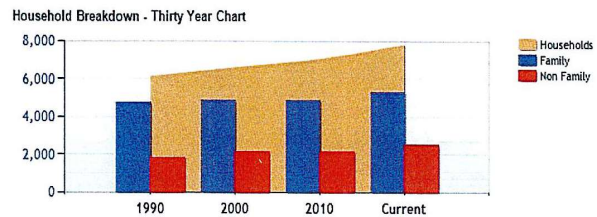
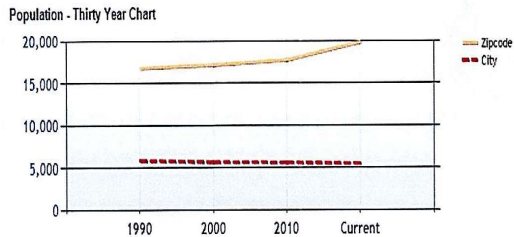
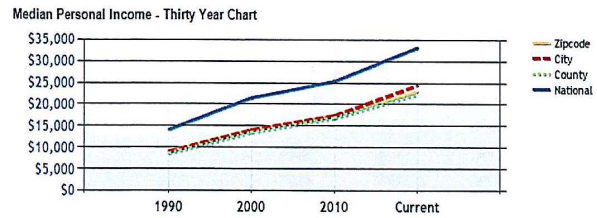
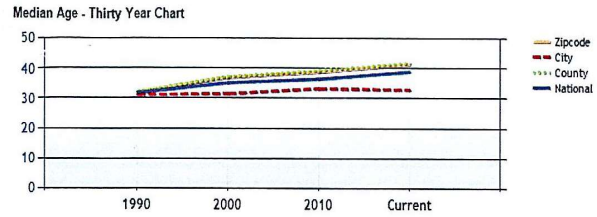
*I got involved with Habitat for Humanity specifically for the reason of trying to help the lower income people that did have decent credit, but had a need for decent and affordable housing to help them become homeowner and knew that I could not do that within the scope of my real estate job. Habitat families have to fall under 80% of the area median income. The partner family then pays a "no interest" loan. One of our main roadblocks is finding suitable land. Having city sewer available is a huge savings.*

*I brought with me tonight, some statistics from the Local MLS for going back a few years that I will go over here.*

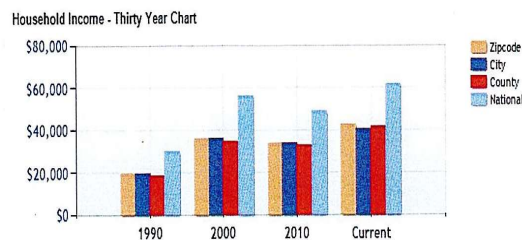
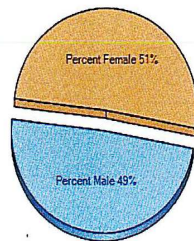
*Laura Rusmisell  
Broker, Coldwell Banker Armstrong-Davis Realty  
1-304-472-7100  
Cell 1-304-613-8777*

# Demographics

Demographics near Zip Code 26201				
	Zipcode	City	County	National
Population	19,506	5,532	24,082	335,858,263
Population Density	109.2	1,986.8	67.9	95.1
Percent Male	49.0%	48.0%	49.0%	49.0%
Percent Female	51.0%	52.0%	51.0%	51.0%
Median Age	41.3	33.0	42.0	39.1
People per Household	2.4	2.1	2.4	2.6
Median Household Income	\$44,267	\$42,783	\$42,453	\$66,222
Average Income per Capita	\$25,703	\$25,867	\$24,198	\$35,475



Male/Female Ratio for Zipcode 26201

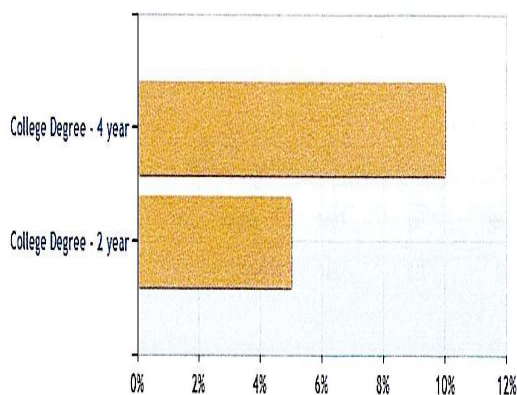


	Zipcode	City	County	National
College Degree - 2 year	5.0%	9.0%	5.0%	9.0%
College Degree - 4 year	10.0%	12.0%	9.0%	20.0%

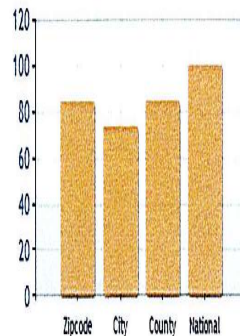
Cost of Living near Zip Code 26201

	Zipcode	City	County	National
Cost of Living Index	84.0	73.0	84.0	100.0

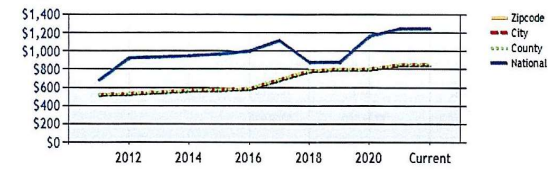
College Analysis for Zipcode 26201



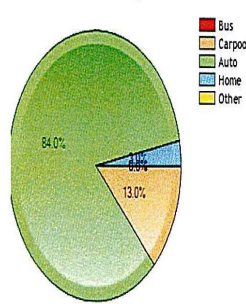
Cost of Living Index



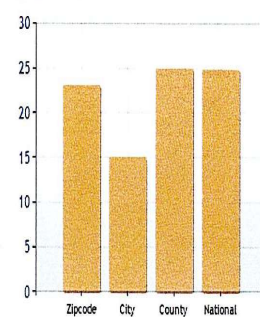
Average Rental Cost - Ten Year Chart



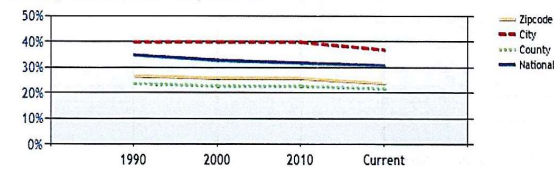
Commuting Methods for Zipcode 26201



Commute Time



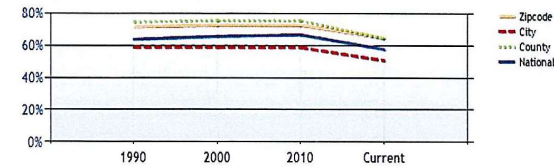
Percentage of Homes Rented - Thirty Year Chart



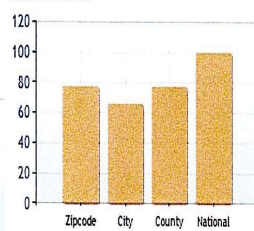
Health near Zip Code 26201

	Zipcode	City	County	National
Health Cost Index	77.0	66.0	77.0	100.0

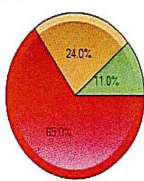
Percentage of Homes Owned - Thirty Year Chart



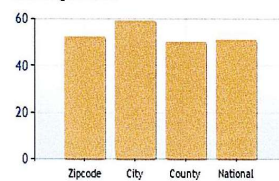
Health Cost Index



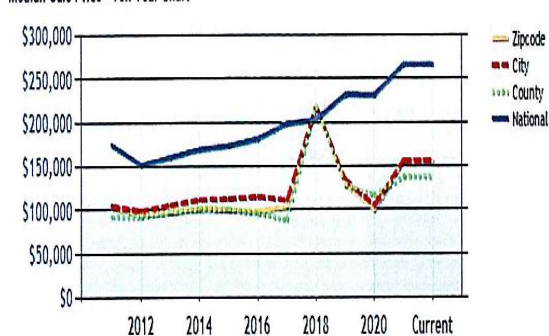
Home Use



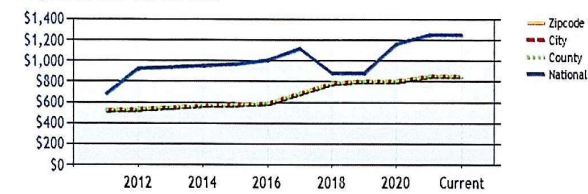
Median Age of Home



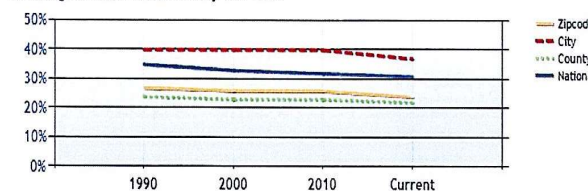
Median Sale Price - Ten Year Chart



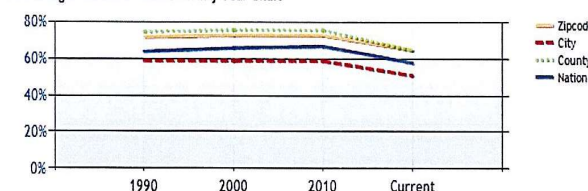
Average Rental Cost - Ten Year Chart



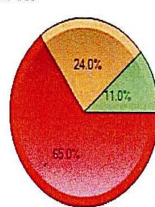
Percentage of Homes Rented - Thirty Year Chart



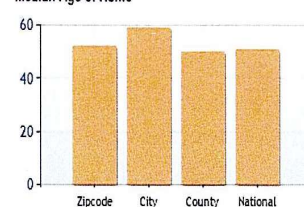
Percentage of Homes Owned - Thirty Year Chart



Home Use



Median Age of Home



Mortgage Loan Calculator: [calculator.paragonrels.com](http://calculator.paragonrels.com)

A Q & A with L. Rusmisell took place.

Other landlords spoke about their inventories, challenges, and marketing efforts. This included David Long and Charlotte Critchfield. Kathy McMurray Executive Director of the Mountain CAP of WV also spoke briefly.

Robbie Skinner (COB Mayor) spoke as the Executive Director of the Upshur County Development Authority to provide context about the Housing Study that the UCDA plans to do. He offered specific highlights on the need for the study, which will cost about \$30,000. He stressed that housing is a pillar for overall economic development. We have already faced resistance from

potential funding sources due to the lack of a current study. It will give us the necessary data to be successful in future economic development not only in the county but joining surrounding counties that already have this type of data. He noted that Upshur County sees 8,000 residents leave the area daily for jobs, while approximately 4,000 non-county residents enter the area daily for employment. Our area has nearly 15,000 people during the workday, returning to the 6,000 number of residents in the evenings.

**B.4 Jody Light-JoAlde Rentals** – Recognized earlier in the meeting.

**B.5 Jerry Henderson** – Recognized earlier in the meeting.

**B.6 Kathy McMurray Executive Director - Mountain CAP of WV** – Recognized earlier in the meeting.

**C. Consent Agenda**

**C.1 Approval of Minutes - Regular Meeting 02/05/2024, Special Meeting 01/11/2024** – Action taken earlier in the meeting.

**D. Correspondence & Information**

**D.1 Housing section of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan** – Reviewed earlier in the meeting

**E. Strategic Issues for Discussion and/or Vote**

**E.1 Discussion/Focus on Housing Providers:**

- **Landlord Association**
- **Realtors Association**
- **Subsidized Housing Reps**
- **Mountain CAP (as housing services provider)**
- **WV Housing Development Fund Report 2019-2024**
- **Information from Home Ownership Center in Elkins-serves all 55 counties**
- **Research Online Listing of Rentals**

These items were all discussed earlier in the meeting.

**F. Comments and Announcements** – Jody Light expressed concern with the Housing section of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, specifically the reference to “Develop and implement an ongoing systems of inspections and ratings of rental properties within the City. President Aloï confirmed that this plan and the recommendations are just that, recommendations. Vince Smith reported that while a ratings system of properties in general has been implemented, it does not include rental units and there are no plans to implement such a system at this time.

Commission member Tom Lynch recommended that we not overlook the need for housing for the elderly who wish to retire here.

**G. Adjournment**

**Without objection, President Aloï adjourned the meeting at 8:54 PM.**

**Commission President Susan Aloï** \_\_\_\_\_

**City Recorder Randall H. Sanders** \_\_\_\_\_