OHIO COUNTY COMMISSION
10/18/2022

The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Delegations

Nicholas Cochran

Mr. Cochran reported that he is the director of Youth Services System here in Wheeling. West Virginia. He is also a person in long term recovery. He stated he is here to speak about the syringe services program. He reported as a person that works in the addiction field, he strongly supports a syringe services program. He stated it was very difficult for him. He thought in many ways it was enabling or adding to the problems of solving addiction but after earning a degree from WJU, Catholic University of America and pursuing a degree from Ohio University, he has come to learn the value of evidence. The evidence shows that most that participate in syringe services programs are more likely to enter recovery from their substance abuse disorder. The folks that participate in the syringe services program are less likely to experience fatal overdoses. His goal is to help people in their recovery journeys to maintain abstinence from drugs and alcohol so they can have a better life. He urges you the Commissioners to vote in favor of having the syringe services here in Ohio County.

Claudia Raymer

Ms. Raymer stated that she is the Executive Director for the Ohio County Family Resource Network where she has worked for eleven years. She reported that the work that we do changes depending on the needs of the citizens. You are all aware of the needs for harm reduction services due to the substance abuse disorder that has grown. The needle exchange syringe services are a public health crisis. She stated people who access these are more likely to enter recovery, and she praises those that are in recovery. People must be alive to get to recovery, and one way they do is by preventing disease. This is not something about enabling, this is about meeting people where they are and giving them the information so when their ready, they can access those services. She is in favor of the syringe services program. Commissioner Wharton asked if this would also help veterans. She responded that they provide information and referrals for veterans, but Helping Heroes has the expertise in Veteran's services in this area.

Catherine Roach stated she is a third-year medical student at the WV School of Osteopathic Medicine. She first moved to Wheeling in 2019 and now reside in Glendale, West Virginia. She volunteers with Project Hope, an organization that works closely with the Ohio County Health Department. Project Hope's mission is to connect people that are suffering from homelessness and bridge them to primary care. A lot of what we see is related to IV drug use, primarily abscesses and wounds, and a lot of staff infections. She reported that when she started with Project Hope the syringe service program was still legal, and she will say since the program had to shut down due to the enacted legislative rules, they have seen an uptick in infections, abscesses and transfers to Reynolds and Wheeling Hospitals. As a result of not having a syringe exchange program the people are hurt, they are draining the system. They're draining the law enforcement, the first responders, and the hospitals. She has seen in researching that larger cities show that people who are in syringe service programs are five times more likely to access rehab services and detox programs. For first responders one of the top ten concerns is when they respond to a call is being stuck with a dirty needle. If we can get the dirty needles off the

streets, out of public access and out of public eye, the first responders would feel safer and the public as well. She stated there have been a lot of dirty needles found down by Catholic Charities which is not good because there are after school programs held there. She reported that she is in favor of the syringe services program. Commissioner Abraham asked if any of the people that spoke could send some links to the data. They all responded yes.

Minutes

Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve minutes from the September 20, 2022, Commission meeting and the October 4, 2022, Commission meeting. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Grants

WVDOT Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities Ward

Administrator Russell reported that the grant award is for $12,500.00 in general revenue funds. He stated they would like to use the funds towards the Ventrac Tractor that was just recently ordered. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

County Records Management & Preservation Grant App (Circuit Clerk)

Administrator Russell reported that Circuit Clerk Brenda Miller would like to apply for a grant in the amount of $4,000.00 to purchase a shredder to shred all the old jury records and case files now that they are all digitalized. The match is $440.00. Commissioner Abraham asked if the maximum on that $10,000.00, so there is no more digitization needed in her office. Finance Director Archey stated he believes there is but at this point the shredder is needed more at this time. Commissioner Abraham asked if the Administrator or Finance Director could investigate see where the Circuit Clerk is at with digitizing. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the grant. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Medical Cannabis Grant Application (Sheriff PRO)

Administrator Russell reported next is the Medical Cannabis grant application. Sheriff Howard stated this grant is put out very quickly by our JAG. The grant is basically for extra money for PRO's supplies, computers, anything they need. The match would already be there. The grant application is for $127,109.00. Administrator Russell stated the Sheriff receives $180,000.00 from the Board of Education and would like to use that as the match. Commissioner Abraham stated that we would have to fund $22,000.00. The County already funds some of the PRO cost as well. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the grant. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Community Grants

WV Society of Daughters of the American Revolution

Administrator Russell reported that the first community grant request is from the WV Society of Daughters of the American Revolution. They have a project to restore the bronze plaque with a five-foot granite marker for Fort Van Meter Plaque on Boone and Hedges Road. The project total is $6,400.00, and they do not have a specific request. This is a first time ask. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve $1,000.00 for the WV Society of Daughters of the American Revolution. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Valley Grove Volunteer Fire Department

Administrator Russell reported that the Valley Grove Fire Department is asking for funding for their fall fundraiser, which is a quarter auction on November 5, 2022, at the firehouse. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $500.00 for the quarter auction at the Valley Grove Fire Department. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Heather Miller Memorial

Administrator Russell reported that there is a request for a Heather Miller docu series about organ donation. The total budget for the project is $100,000.00 and they have already raised $50,000.00. There is no specific ask. Commissioner Abraham stated he had a conversation with Jody Miller who is Heather Miller's mother, and they do a lot of fundraising. The actual filming, he believes will be here, so there is some economic potential support of that, and he thinks she has been asking other entities to contribute. He thinks this docu series will be shared at the high schools, in relation to what organ donation can do and talks about drinking and driving. He feels that there are a lot of organizations donating to this and he would make a motion to approve $2,500.00 to the Heather Miller Memorial docu series. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Wheeling Nailers Educational School Day

Administrator Russell reported that the Commissioners had tabled this from the last Commission meeting. The way it reads is this is a sponsorship just simply for education school day. He spoke with the Wheeling Nailers COO, and it is actually a corporate sponsorship that helps to fund the education school day. Historically the Ohio County Development Authority, prior to Covid, had funded this sponsorship for about six years in a row. He would like to defer that to the Ohio County Development Authority.

OLD BUSINESS

ARPA updates

Administrator Russell reported that there are about six applications in the pipeline right now. For the next meeting he will put together a budget for all the projects that we funded to date and bring the Community Input Committee together and begin reviewing the applications.

NEW BUSINESS

Sheriff of Ohio County: Cruiser Dash Cam Equipment Purchase

Administrator Russell reported that the Sheriff has submitted a purchase order for cruiser dash cams for the five new cruisers that are in route. This is a single source vendor. The camera system itself would cost a tremendous amount of money if they took bids and decided on a different system. The $42,000.00 purchase is above his authority, so he has brought it to the Commissioners for their approval. Commissioner Nickerson asked to please explain to him how this would work from a budget standpoint. Administrator Russell reported that when the quote was done for the vehicles, they included the cost of the cars and all the equipment that would go into the vehicles. This $8,000.00 per car would have been included in that budget. Finance Director Archey asked if they going to get bank funding for the financing. Administrator Russell stated he does not know in that he has not finalized that piece of it yet. Commissioner Nickerson asked if this is in what was already approved or additional.

Administrator Russell stated this was already approved as a general budget and as they purchase each piece of the cars, the radar equipment, the cameras, the other components, they ask for the Commission to approve. Most of it goes out to bid and you approve the bids, this because it is a single source vendor, and they are buying cameras that already work with their recording equipment. This was not put out to bid. He is asking the Commission to approve the purchase. Sheriff Howard reported that if they would have to change the system for the cameras, they would have to change every vehicle including the server. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the purchase order. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

WOC Health Department: Letter of Support-Syringe Services Program

Administrator Russell reported that he has a letter of support for the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department's Syringe Services program with the new state regulations. Administrator Howard Gamble reported that the program began in 2015. So, this County, Kanawha, and Cabell went together and put together a needle exchange program. There was no state guidance, and we learned from other states like Pennsylvania, Colorado, even down to what needle we purchased. He ran the program from 2015 to 2021. New legislation from the State legislature reported that such programs must be licensed under the WV Office of Health Facilities and Licensing. So, all programs had to cease unless you became licensed. In 2021 he reported he was a little busy in his office and did not pick up the license until he got out of Delta and Omicron and then started the application process. The process is a little different whereas before they created the program and ran with it. Now you have to apply, must have your policies and procedures, regulations etc. but you must get the support from the County Commission and the City that your operating in. There are only ten programs in the State right now, whereas before there were an abundance including Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Monongalia, and so did Health Right. Now there are only ten. The program is a one for one exchange, which means you must bring in a needle to get a needle, they do not give anything else out except for needles, alcohol pads and condoms, as well as literature. Most of the time their program was done at Northwood. The idea is you could do same day service if they really wanted services they could be seen by a counselor, and it was only on Fridays. The proposal they want to give to the State Health Department is to run three programs in the County. One is downstairs five days a week, and it is a walk in. He reported they would also operate at Northwood on Fridays, and then they would operate out of Project Hope one or two days a week. The plan has to be approved by both the City and the County to be able to move forward, once that's done, the letter goes into an application to Charleston. They review it and if they approve you get a license for one year. They would have to renew each year. Commissioner Abraham asked who funds this. Howard Gamble reported they do. It comes from State aid, County support or City support, mainly from the general operations budget. He buys local at the medical supply here in town. Solicitor Tennant asked when the legislation was being put together, if they consulted with you on your knowledge of this needle exchange program. Mr. Gamble answered no. Does the new legislation functionally cost your group more money. Mr. Gamble stated yes, and an annual fee after that. Solicitor Tennant asked if other residents that use needles for other reasons can they dispose of them to your office. Mr. Gamble stated yes. President Wharton thanked the Health Department and thanked them for using a small business in town for purchasing needles. Commissioner Abraham stated this is a good program. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the letter of support. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

OVRTA dues: 10/01/2022-9/30/2023

Administrator Russell reported the Commission has the OVRTA dues for the next year in the amount of $500.00. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept paying the dues. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Addressing

Dave Weaver from the addressing board reported there are two road names to present to the Commission tonight. Richard Deenis is putting in new utility services in several buildings off East Cove Avenue and Mr. Deenis is requesting Meta Manor. This is within the City of Wheeling, but they do not want anything to do with naming of a private lane. Also, Dan Cook is building a new home in Bethlehem and has plans to build more homes and wants the road name of New Haven Lane. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the two new road names. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Janssen WV Statewide Opioid Settlement Agreement

Administrator Russell reported that the question is if the Commissioners okay with the allocation of the settlement. He stated if you are okay with the allocation of the settlement you can move on to signing off on the settlement agreement. Solicitor Don Tennant reported that as you recall our case had a certain number of defendants and that there was an agreement between our camp and the Attorney General's camp to accumulate all cases especially being represented by the Attorney General, so we are participating in those settlements. A number of these groups were not sued by our group in the litigation that we were involved in. The Commissioners asked if this paperwork has changed. Solicitor Tennant stated no. Solicitor Tennant reported that if you recall they had an allocation as to what amount each County would get. This is a little different. This is an intra County breakdown, and he does not know how they arrived at those numbers. Solicitor Tennant thought that they were going to have a telephone call on this. He recalls that there was a request by Clayton Fitzsimmons to have a call and that would have been one of the questions as to how they came up with this intra County breakdown. Commissioner Abraham reported that he remembers it being a master list with the census numbers a while back. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the agreement conditionally that they understand a little bit more on this. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

STAFF/ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS

ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Russell reported that tonight he wanted to recognize Melissa Marco. She is our new Projects Coordinator here at the Ohio County Commission. The Commissioners welcomed Melissa Marco to the office.

Administrator Russell reported that the Elections Coordinator Toni Chieffalo and himself spent two days at Wheeling Park High School educating the Senior Class on voting and registering to vote. He also took time to recruit poll workers. Administrator Russell stated that he wanted to recognize teachers Richard Marsh and Ryan Stanton, Civics teachers at Wheeling Park High School for understanding and organizing the event at Wheeling Park High School. Administrator Russell reported that they are going to Wheeling Central next week.

FACILITIES

Administrator Russell reported that this afternoon they had a meeting of the Ohio County Building Commission and had the first reading for the bond ordinance for the HVAC project. He also stated they are advertising in the newspaper tomorrow for bids for a general contractor for the project. The bids are due November 21, 2022, and he and Melissa will sort through the bids and bring their recommendation back to the Commission.

The contractors for the elevator in the Courthouse Annex are working to install the hardware. There is still no chip.

Administrator Russell reported that he and Melissa have started a tour, they have met with Rusty Escue at the Airport, and she has been to the Animal Shelter, and the Ohio County Development Authority. He is trying to integrate her into as many projects as he can.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Emergency Management Director Vargo reported that since Mr. Gamble is here tonight let's ask him to speak on Covid-19. Mr. Gamble reported that they are vaccinating in the Health Department, including the new one that just came out for children. He reported they have all four vaccines. Disease wise they are low, but the concern is Western Europe. If you were anywhere near Germany in the last two weeks, the Oktoberfest resulted in a huge spike in cases. He reported more concerning is Asia with the new variant that is a sub variant of Omicron. The new vaccine seems to be responding very well to it which is the only booster you can get now. Solicitor Tennant asked if he had a number of Ohio County residents that have been boosted. He stated no, but he has good news for booster vaccinations Ohio County. Ohio County is number one in the State. You would have to look at the State dashboard to see how many have been vaccinated. He stated that on Monkey Pox, in Ohio County, no cases but we do vaccinate for that also.

Emergency Management Director Lou Vargo reported they are continuing their training for the volunteer fire departments. Recently they conducted a live burn over at the Wheeling Fire Department Tower. Last Saturday they completed the training of semi-truck extraction. The next training will be with SWN on November 5, 2022. In addition to all of our first responders, Brooke County, Marshall County, and Wetzel County are invited to the SWN training. On October 28, 2022, they will be presenting the Stop the Bleed to 120 staff and faculty at Wheeling Park High School.

Sheriff Howard reported that some lanes on I 70 are supposed to open on Thursday, October 20, 2022. They will still be working in the center median of the road.

Sheriff Howard reported that the coal mine will be coming underneath very soon so the backups will be happening soon. Commissioner Abraham asked how much notice you get before they go under the highway. He reported a while before, as they are very good at letting us know.

Sheriff Howard reported that he is at the range right now helping to qualifying everybody, including all the deputies in the surrounding Counties and Cities.

Sheriff Howard reported that he is looking at possibly sponsoring a new DARE certification class in January. He has most funding in place but is looking for a place to hold it at, preferably at the Highlands. It is a two-week class so everyone including instructors would be staying at the Highlands. They come from other States too. He will continue working on that.

Sheriff Howard reported that he hopes the cruisers come in soon, as a lot of the cruisers now have over 120,000 miles on them. Commissioner Abraham asked if he is looking at the municipalities to see if they can use the cruisers that are being replaced. He responded yes, he is.

Sheriff Howard spoke with the City of Wheeling since they are going back to evening meetings so he will need to place security guards at the door there after 5:00 p.m. He reported he has thirteen applicants signed up for the Deputy test at the end of the month.

FINANCE

Finance Director Archey reported that the Commissioners have the bills as they are up to date. Commissioner Nickerson asked what National Role Play Museum is. Finance Director reported that was one of the companies that did the airplane rides at the Airport event. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to pay the bills. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

EXONERATIONS

Finance Director Archey reported there are eighteen exonerations for the Commissioners to review tonight. All are credits reducing a tax, and all are recommended by the Assessor. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the exonerations. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

ELECTIONS

Finance Director Archey reported on elections. You have a copy of the sample ballot that will be in the paper tomorrow and on Monday, November 7, 2022. Also, this Friday at 9:00 a.m. is the Public Test where the ballot Commissioners will test all equipment to be used for early voting and election day. Early Voting begins October 26, 2022, and runs through November 5, 2022. Open both Saturdays. Hours are 9-5 every day in Room 102 on the first floor of the City County Building excluding Sundays. Election Worker classes will be held on Thursday, October 27, Friday, October 28, and Monday, October 31, 2022.

COMMISSION BOARD REPORTS

Nothing from the board.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Mayor Ken Murphy just wanted to thank Administrator Russell for getting on the website with the County for making payments. His council approved it 100%.

FUTURE MEETINGS

President Wharton reported the next Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, November 1, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Randy Wharton

President, Randy Wharton

Randel Russell

Administrator, Randel Russell