Ohio County Commission
January 16, 2024

The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, January 16, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order by President Donald A. Nickerson. The Pledge of Alliance was recited.

The minutes from January 2, 2024, were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Grants:

- WV DEP Recycling Assistance Grant – The City of Wheeling was provided with $150,000 under the grant, while the Ohio County Commission was awarded $75,000. This money will be used to purchase a recycling truck. Each organization will be responsible for completing grant paperwork and attending classes. Approval to sign the grant agreements made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) – Approval for the grant is due by February 24, 2024, through WV OASIS. In 2020, we received $50,918.00 from the grant, with a typical award ranging from $50,000.00 to $55,000.00. This year, we are requesting $125,000.00. Motion to approve the grant made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Community Grants

- Grant Letters – Letters were sent to all past grant recipients and Ms. Marco is fielding any calls that are received. No action is required.
- Wheeling Chamber of Commerce Workplace Wellness Lunch and Learn – The event will be held on January 31, 2024. On a motion made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton, the Commission will make a $500.00 donation to the event. A recap of the event will be requested.

Old Business:

- OCEMS Policy 4-21 – At the Ohio County Commission meeting on December 2, 2023, OCEMS Policy 4-21 was approved. Mr. Russell has since spoken with an insurance carrier and requests that the language concerning response to fire alarms be rescinded from the policy. Mr. Russell has also talked with the Ohio County Development Authority, as well as the Wheeling Ohio County Airport concerning their response to fire alarms. After discussion, Mr. Abraham made a motion to rescind the response to fire alarm language with a second by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

New Business:

- Ohio County Animal Shelter Annual Report – The Ohio County Animal Shelter provided its annual report to the Commissioners. No further action is required.
- Ohio County 911 Annual Report – The numbers are down 7.5% from last year likely due to the weather. Animal Control was dispatched 238 times. Interviews for a 911 Deputy Director will begin on Thursday at 1:00 p.m.

- MOU – Rural Emergency Trauma Institute – Over 1,200 teachers and students have participated in Stop the Bleed training sessions. This MOU will provide 14 kits and 2 training kits to EMA. In the future, Director Vargo would like to see a second Stop the Bleed kit in each elementary school. There is no monetary exchange for the kits. Motion to approve the MOU made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Elections:

- Election Calendar – Ms. Jessica Klinger, the Election Coordinator, has provided an election calendar for review. No further action is required.
- Emergency Absentee Voting Policy – This resolution allows two absentee ballot commissioners to be on hand. These individuals would respond to adjacent counties or 35 miles from the City County Building. Mr. Don Tennant stated the importance of this resolution. Motion to approve the resolution made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Appointed Ballot Commissioners from Executive Committees – For the Democratic Party, Fuzz LaRue was nominated, while the Republican Party nominated Greg Smith. No further action is required.
- Ohio County Board of Education Excess Levies – The Board of Education will be placing two excess levies on the May 14, 2024 ballot. Motion to approve the ballots made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Ohio Valley Regional Transit Authority Levy (Bethlehem) – Motion to approve the ballot for Bethlehem made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Staff / Elected Official Reports:

- Administrator Report - Mr. Russell – Mr. Russell provided several updates:
    - A county vehicle policy is being circulated among department heads.
    - A P-Card policy will be presented at the next meeting.
    - The County Commission Association meeting will meet in Charleston January 20-23, 2024.
- Facilities Update - Ms. Marco – HVAC update: the double doors in penthouse room 605 will be cut, work on the interior trim of the windows will be mocked up and provided to the Architect, new piping in the penthouse will continue, layout of the duct chase through the floors is complete, and the lower roof work is continuing. At the Animal Shelter, painting is almost complete, and the grooming sink has arrived, and at the Wheeling Ohio County Airport, work continues the tower renovation.
- EMA – Mr. Vargo – Directional signage has been installed and we are waiting for it to link to traffic controls. Several departments responded to a severe accident with a chipper. The departments worked exceptionally well together. A tour bus broke down along Interstate 70 and EMA worked with Ohio County Schools to bus the group to the Welcome Center. The partnership between EMA and Ohio County Schools was recognized.
- Sheriff's Department – Major Rod Vaught stated the goal was to provide a healthy fleet of cars for the Sheriff's Department. Currently, they have one vehicle which has been totaled and one vehicle receiving extensive repairs. He stated the Department is under a time crunch because manufacturers are changing how they sell police vehicles. Now, dealerships will not manufacture a car with a purchase order. Robinson Automotive

Group hopes to receive ten vehicles, while Whitesides would be willing to hold nine for the Ohio County Sheriff's Department. Major Vaught provided a fleet analysis and those highlighted in pink should be removed immediately and those highlighted and red would need to be removed from the fleet by the time the new cars arrived. The last time sedans were purchased was in 2014. Currently, there is not a state bidding process. Mr. Abraham asked what are other agencies doing and what are the costs associated with the purchase. Mr. Abrham also requested the total cost to operate the fleet of cars currently owned by the Department. Since the cost of each car, or the overall cost of the purchase was not provided, the Commission will place the cars out to bid.

Finance:

- Mr. Archey reported the bills are up to date. Two invoices were questioned: InSync was inquired upon by Mr. Abraham. Mr. Archey stated this pertains to the Sheriff vehicle records. Mr. Nickerson inquired as to the Truist Government Finance payment. Mr. Archey stated this was for Sheriff vehicles. Motion to approve the bills made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Unpaid invoices – Some of the invoices were awaiting grant funding. This funding has now been received and the invoices will be paid by the next meeting. No further action is required.

Commissioner's Comments:

- Mr. Abraham reported an event will be held at the Wheeling Ohio County Airport on August 24, 2024. The Growth and Retention group met yesterday, and at the OVRTA meeting, the levy was discussed.
- Mr. Nickerson reported the Shot in the Park, an archery tournament, was held at the Highlands and had a record number of participants.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Donald A. Nickerson, President

Randel A. Russell, Administrator