The Board of Commissioners of Ohio County, West Virginia
Minutes of a Regular Session for Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Commission members present:
Commission President Zachary T. Abraham
Commissioner Randy Wharton
Commissioner Donald A. Nickerson, Jr.

Staff Members present:
County Administrator Randel A. Russell
County Solicitor Don Tennant
Facilities Director Melissa Marco
Director of Emergency Management Louis Vargo
Assistant Director of Emergency Management Anthony Campbell

Elected Officials present:
Sheriff H. Nelson Croft

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

- Commission President Abraham convened the meeting in Room 215 of the City County Building at 8:00 a.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Delegations
- None

Approval of Meeting Minutes
- The minutes from April 21, 2026, were read. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by President Abraham. Motion carried.
- The minutes from May 5, 2026, were read. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.

New Business
- Ohio County Employee Group Health Insurance Proposal – Employee educational sessions were held, which were mandatory this year. The Ohio County Commission was able to keep and maintain premiums and deductibles. On July 1, 2026, the plan will take effect, and forms must be returned by May 27, 2026. Dental, vision, and life insurance will all be covered by United Healthcare as well. Short-term disability, which is a different plan, will not be covered by United Healthcare. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the plan, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried.
- Sheriff's Tax Office, Software Systems, server maintenance agreement – The Sheriff's Tax Office currently uses IBM AS 400 and the server maintenance agreement is up for renewal. The cost for one year is $5,242.18, while the three-year cost is $14,858.34. This software is how the Tax Office communicates with the state of West Virginia. At the end of the three years, the system will most likely be at the end of its useful life and a new system will be needed. President Abraham made a motion to enter into a three-year service agreement, with Commissioner Wharton seconding. Motion carried.
- Wheeling-Ohio County Airport
    - After bidding out Runway 321, the costs came in at $875,000.00 for construction. Chapman Technical Group has a fee of $121,000.00 for the project, bringing the total to

$996,000.00. The fee for Chapman Technical Group must be approved by an independent fee estimate process. The FAA requires all fees be reviewed prior to the start of construction. A motion was made by President Abraham to commence with the project, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.

- Wildlife Service Agreement – This agreement, through the USDA, started four years ago. Due to some holes in the fence, wildlife is able to enter the runway. In this event, the Wheeling-Ohio County Airport can call the USDA to have the animal relocated. The cost for a one-year agreement is $5,085.00. Motion to approve the agreement made by Commissioner Wharton, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried.

- Statement of Qualifications, Civil Engineering Selection – The Ohio County Commission and the Ohio County Development Authority published a request for qualifications and received proposals from three firms. Mr. Randy Russell, Mr. Brian Taylor, and Mr. Cody Koehler interviewed the firms and have selected the Trasher Group. The projects that the Ohio County Commission and the Ohio County Development Authority complete will focus on will include those that use TIF and SDEX funds. If the Trasher Group is approved, Mr. Russell will enter into contract negotiations with the Trasher Group. The contract would be for three years with the option of two (2) one-year extensions. Each item they work on would be a different task order. Motion to approve the Trasher Group made by Commissioner Wharton, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried.

Staff and Elected Official Reports

- County Administrator Randy Russell – Mr. Russell stated the jail bill is starting to get back under control but still looks to be about $500,000.00 above last year. The City of Wheeling is current on paying their jail bill to the County. The County Commission Association will meet June 7-9, 2026, at Stonewall Resort, while the West Virginia Association of Counties will meet June 14-16, 2026, at Oglebay Resort. Mr. Russell also stated he was asked about the un-homed population at the Library. He has called the Library and they are working to address the issue. Mr. Russell also reported that there are eight exonerations totaling $3,224.80. A motion to approve the exonerations was made be President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Finance – Ms. Rebecca Coyne presented the payables. With no questions on the payables, Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve mailing the checks, seconded by President Abraham. Motion carried.
- Sheriff – Sheriff Nelson Croft stated he is looking into claims made on social media. He also reported Canine Ory is in service.
- 911 – Mr. Rickie Pritt reported two staff members are currently taking their EMS training.
- EMS / EMA – Mr. Louis Vargo reported there was an issue at a tower site. The vendor was at fault and it has been corrected.
- Facilities – Ms. Melissa Marco reported the HVAC project is nearing completion. We are in the test and balancing phase and after the reporting is provided, the project will officially be complete.

There being no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Zachary T. Abraham, Commission President

Randel A. Russell, County Administrator