The Board of Commissioners of Ohio County, West Virginia
Minutes of a Regular Session for Tuesday, September 16, 2025

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

Staff Members present:
County Administrator Randel A. Russell
Facilities Director Melissa Marco
Solicitor Don Tennant
Director of 911 Communications Rickie Pritt
Chief Deputy Kent Lewis
Fiscal Officer Becky Coyne
County Commission Staff Michelle Olejasz

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

- Commission President Abraham convened the meeting in Room 215 of the City County Building at 8:03am. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

II. Delegations

- None

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- The minutes for the special meeting on Sunday, June 15, the special meeting on Tuesday, July 29, the regular meeting on Tuesday, August 19, and the regular meeting on September 2, 2025, were reviewed. Commissioner Wharton made the motion to approve the slate of minutes, seconded by President Abraham. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Grants

- LEDA- Administrator Russell presented information about the LEDA grant which is for $30,000 to build a monument in honor of the victims that lost their lives in the June 15, 2025 flood. There is no match. Mr. Russell recommends the Commission approves moving forward with the grant. Commissioner Nickerson made the motion to approve the grant application, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Community Grants

- Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce- Administrator Russell brought before the Commissioners the request to help fund Wheeling's 40th Annual Festival of Lights Parade. They are planning on going back to the original route this year. In the past our sponsorship ranged from $5,000 to $10,000. Last year we did an in-kind donation with a value of approximately $8,000 by providing dividers at the Home Show at The Highlands. There is not an option to do the same this year. For other entities, we provided 50% of what we did in prior years. President Abraham made the

motion to approve a $2,500 donation, seconded by Commissioner Wharton and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Unfinished Business

- Chief Deputy Kent Lewis presented more details about the License Plate Reader System, FLOCK. Surrounding counties, such as Marshall, Brooke, and some in the State of Ohio, are already using it. This system is used to connect law enforcement departments with details on theft, Amber Alerts, hit & runs (which Ohio County has 53 active cases currently) and shoplifting (which Ohio County has 39 active cases currently). The request is for 6 cameras at a cost of $57,900 over 3 years including installation and service of the system & equipment. It can be less if they are able to attach the cameras to an existing structure. The recurring cost is $18,000 per year after the 3 years for 6 cameras. Chief Deputy Lewis gave an example of a recent murder case where if Ohio County had this system the time it took to track down the suspect could have potentially been shortened. He also said a representative from the company is available to come and give a presentation, if requested. He added that Walmart and Lowe's use FLOCK, so we may be able to tie into their system as well. Melissa Marco pointed out that West Virginia First is putting their grant money into 3 buckets and this request doesn't fit into any of their buckets and neither does the Sheriff's canine request. Administrator Russell asked Chief Deputy Lewis how does this help combat the Opioid crisis? His response was that it helps track drugs coming into our area both from the interstates and county roads. The department is looking to determine the placement of the cameras on Rt. 40 coming in from PA, on I-70 East and I-70 West. County Solicitor Tennant inquired if the data collected could be used for marketing purposes and Chief Deputy Lewis' response was no and that FLOCK was a sealed database so the department can limit their use of information to others. Motion to approve the purchase made by President Zach Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson and the motion passed unanimously.

- Sheriff's Request for commitment to purchase patrol vehicles- tabled due to other viable options at this time per Chief Deputy Kent Lewis.

- Family Services- Upper Ohio Valley for use of Opioid Funds for Medication Management and Misuse Prevention: Per Melissa Marco, Paula did provide further information but it does go along with other information that Melissa will be sharing later in the meeting so we will circle back to this.

VII. New Business

- Administrator Russell introduced Joe Nasiff and Carrie Ceci to address the Special District Excise Tax and Bond Refinancing. They also provided follow-up information on the May 2025 updates on OCDA & The Highlands development timeline. Accompanying materials were given to the Commissioners. Discussion included using or losing excess funds that accumulated, and the recommendation was to use the funds to pay down bonds as an example. Mr. Nasiff was complimentary on the County staff of their cooperation and action with regard to the underwriters' requests in preparing these reports. No action required today.

- Resolution, Intent to Reimburse from Proceeds of SDEX Bonds- Carrie Cecil explained what the IRS requires if you have reasonable expectations to reimburse capital gains at the time your bond closes. At this time, you would adopt a reimbursement resolution. Commissioner Wharton made the motion to offer the resolution, seconded by President Abraham. The motion passed unanimously. President Abraham thanked everyone involved as this will be a big positive change.

- Administrator Russell presented FAA Real Estate Contract Supplemental 1, which extends the airport FAA equipment for another 20 years under the Real Estate contract MOA. Administrator Russell requested approval by the Commissioners to execute Supplemental 1. President Abraham made the motion to approve Supplemental 1, seconded by Commissioner Wharton, the motion passed unanimously.

- Administrator Russell told the Commissioners that the WV State Auditor's office reviewed procedures of the Ohio County Magistrate Court's office. All Commissioners were provided with a copy. These procedures are to be entered into public record. No action is required.

- Auditor Selection being Kozicki, Hughes, Tickerhoof, PLLC- Becky Coyne sent out requests to 5 firms pre-approved by the State Auditor's office; 4 declined to submit a proposal. One firm, Kozicki, Hughes, Tickerhoof, PLLC submitted a proposal for $162,000. The Audit Committee reviewed the proposal and is requesting the Commission approve KHT, PLLC to conduct the audit. President Abraham made the motion to approve KHT to complete the audit, seconded by Commissioner Wharton, the motion passed unanimously.

- Administrator Russell stated there was a recent request received from Bob Miller, Jr., Executive Director of the Rt.2/I-68 Authority, for a resolution in support of the I-68 Energy Manufacturing Corridor which would extend the corridor between I-79 in Morgantown and I-77 in Caldwell, Ohio. The Commissioners were asked how they would like to proceed. The new selling point from Mr. Miller is that he is adding an energy corridor along that new section of highway. There are 10 counties involved in the original corridor and 9 of them have approved the resolution. We would be the last. President Abraham said he did not see any issue with accepting to approve. Commissioner Wharton made the motion to approve the resolution, seconded by President Abraham and the motion passed unanimously

VIII. Staff and Elected Official Reports

- County Administrator
  - Last Thursday President Trump approved additional public assistance through supplemental grants that would be available to non-profits and other agencies.
  - Yesterday he attended an EMA meeting & there would be an opportunity to get additional funding from the Governor. These funds have a 25% match.
  - There will be a Town Hall meeting at the Valley Grove Community Center Thursday, Sept. 18th at 6pm to address resident's questions & remind everyone of the FEMA deadline of Sept. 22.
  - The Governor announced his energy policy last week.
  - He attended the Multi-Motal Planning & Steering meeting at Bel-O-Mar last week.
  - The closing on the property at 700 Market St. was on Sept. 4.
  - Facilities Director Melissa Marco will be going to Beckley, WV for Procurement Training put on by WV Division of Purchasing.
  - Monday and Tuesday he will be attending the WV Economic Development Conference in Bridgeport, WV.

- Facilities
  - The contractors started milling & paving on the apron.

- We will be looking at what will go where at the new building on Market.
- The work on the Magistrate's Court building project continues and will be complete within two weeks.
- HVAC project is 80% complete.
- The City will move the Finance and Water Department to the old Police Department, while the Health Department will move to the old Prosecuting Attorney's Office. This will help us to save three months, and the project should be completed in January, 2026.
- The west and south porticos will be completed by October 31, 2025.
- WV First Grant Monies-
    - Meeting yesterday with the Expert Panel- not many applicants for the WV First grant.
    - They now have "Buckets" of funding- Foster Care, Non-Parental Caregivers, Youth Prevention, Recovery Housing, Behavioral Health &Workforce Development, Day Report & Re-Entry Program.
    - If rejected by WV First then asking the Commission to look at those requests as part of their long-term plan to irradicate opioid use & abuse.
    - Family Services of the Upper Ohio Valley - there is intent to do a program that provides education on how misuse happens & how to prevent it with the elderly. They will have speakers from EMA's Lou Vargo, Police Dept., Sheriff's Dept. Kent Lewis, etc. Commissioner Nickerson abstained from voting on this motion. President Abraham made the motion to approve two parts of the program for $8,000 total- $5,000 for Medication Management and $3,000 for misuse prevention for Family Services. Commissioner Wharton seconded the motion with Commissioner Nickerson abstaining. The motion passed. President Abraham did request the Melissa Marco ask Paula of Family Services for her Deployment Plan and details of her progress. Melissa agreed to do so.

- Sheriff's Department
    - Sheriff currently at State Auditor and Tax Deputy training down state.
    - Today at The Highlands the Narcotics Officers Association Conference kicks off. There are 125 officers at the event. Those in attendance will address Drug Task Force issues, share resources and get valuable training.
    - Saturday, Sept. 20, the Sheriff's Dept. will be hosting the Civil Service test and 16 are due to test. Their dept. is currently down 2 deputies with the potential to be down another 2.
    - Chief Dep. Lewis thanked the Commission for everything.

- EMA
    - As a follow up to the EMA meeting where additional public assistance will be available, Lou wants to encourage every agency to apply.
    - Our Long-Term Recovery Team in conjunction with FEMA will make one last attempt to identify those that haven't registered. We have FEMA's list & will target destroyed & major damaged residents & others with special needs, invalids that can't make it in, etc.
    - FEMA will have staff at the DRC; if our volunteers identify someone that wants to apply, the FEMA staff will go directly to them.

- 911 Director
    - Still working on NextGen equipment; doing some software changes.

- Finance
  - Per Administrator Russell, there were no commitments.
  - Becky Coyne directed the Commissioners to the Payables- President Abraham made the motion to approve the payables, seconded by Commissioner Wharton, the motion passed unanimously.
  - Administrator Russell directed Commissioners to the list of unpaid invoices being held for various reasons. No questions/inquires. No action required.
  - Administrator Russell advised that there were no budget revisions
  - City/County Jail Bill – Administrator Russell reported same as last update; paid through 3rd quarter of 2024. Commissioner Nickerson asked Randy to follow-up and he agreed to do so.
- Assessor
  - Administrator Russell directed Commissioners to the list of tax exonerations that have been recommended by the Assessor of Ohio County. Commissioner Nickerson moved to approve the exonerations, seconded by President Abraham, motion approved unanimously.
  - No Certificates of Re-Entry

IX. Commission Board Reports

- None

X. Commissioner Comments

- The Special Meeting on September 30, 2025 at 6:00pm is regarding the Bond Issue. It was agreed to be virtual.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25am

Future Meetings

October 13, 2025 – Columbus Day, Courthouse Closed
October 21, 2025 - County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am * (Meeting time changed)
November 4, 2025 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 6:00pm
November 11, 2025 – Veterans Day, Courthouse Closed
November 18, 2025 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 6:00pm
November 27, 2025 – Thanksgiving Day, Courthouse Closed
November 28, 2025 – Day After Thanksgiving, Courthouse Closed
December 2, 2025 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 6:00pm
December 15, 2025 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 6:00pm
December 24, 2025 – Christmas Eve, Courthouse Closed at 12:30
December 25, 2025 – Christmas Day, Courthouse Closed
December 31, 2025 – New Year's Eve, Courthouse Closed at 12:30

Zachary T. Abraham, Commission President

Randel A. Russell, County Administrator