OHIO COUNTY COMMISSION
12/6/2022

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

Present at the meeting was President Randy Wharton, Commissioner Don Nickerson, Commissioner Zach Abraham, Finance Director Rodd Archey, Solicitor Don Tennant and Administrator Randel Russell.

Delegations

Lambert T. Jones

Mr. Jones stated that everyone here has heard about the issue of our road Leopold Lane. He has become before the Commission, and nothing has been done for the past few years. There is no reason that you cannot help us. Let's turn this this around and put as much energy into the negative and make this happen. Mr. Jones reported that we all need to get together and talk about this. He is asking for one viable lane to get through the road. President Wharton asked if Mr. Lambert lives on Leopold Lane. He stated no he lives in Oglebay but has property on Leopold Lane. President Wharton asked if he ever asked to be annexed into the City of Wheeling. He reported his tenants would not want to be annexed into the city of Wheeling. President Wharton stated that he will participate in assisting with helping with the road, but it is a matter of how much.

Brittany Baldwin

Brittany stated she lives on Leopold Lane. She feels this road has not been touched since 1919 from what she is told, since Valley View Addition was added. It is deteriorating at a rapid pace due to run off coming from the state-owned Hughes Street. The past year my house has flooded more than it ever has, and other residents. She has reached out to many officials, and many have never even called back. There are a lot of issues, and it is impassable and dangerous for all residents out there. No first responders can make it onto Leopold Lane let alone drive on it. She states we all pay our taxes. She reported that nobody on that hill has the money or the means to fix the road. The only fire hydrant they have is past the washed-out road. She has a flash drive with many pictures on it. Emergency Management Director Vargo has sent many things to Charleston with no replies. She stated she is not going to give up on this. President Wharton reported that they have been approached by residents of Reservoir Road, Springers Addition, and Short Creek Road about their bad roads too. Commissioner Abraham stated this must be mutual agreement, there is no issue with assisting, but the point is how much that is the issue at hand. He stated he has been here two years; we have helped two areas and we have asked them to match, and we would give them a grant to help. He has seen some pictures; your property is private land. The Commission reported that they will reach out to the Department of Transportation to get her a return phone call. Commissioner Abraham reported to Brittany Baldwin that the County does not own any or maintain any roads. He stated you all as residents need to come to us all with some solutions. He understands your plea. You as a community need to decide what you can do. Solicitor Tennant stated that all homeowners need to make sure that their roads are publicly owned or private owned when you purchase your homes.

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 22, 2022, Commission meeting. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

COMMUNITY GRANTS-West Liberty University Dollars for Scholars

Administrator Russell reported that at the last meeting we had tabled the request for West Liberty University's Foundation's Dollars for Scholars Program. Commissioner Nickerson reported that he spoke with Angie Hill, and this can be restricted to Ohio County residents, or however we want, and she said they don't necessarily give the whole amount to a student. It is not unusual if a student gets $1,000.00, $2,000.00, $3.000.00, $4,000.00, $5,000.00 in tuition assistance. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to contribute $5,000.00 and ask it to be restricted to an Ohio County male or female that is attending college at West Liberty University for financial help. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor. Commissioner Abraham asked Commissioner Nickerson if he could find out the names of who gets the funds. He responded yes, he will ask.

OLD BUSINESS

ARPA

Administrator Russell reported that last week me and Melissa Marco tried to have a meeting with our Community Input Committee, and we were a little shy on members at that meeting. He is awaiting to get the rest of the group back together soon to be able to make recommendations. We had thirty-seven applicants. Commissioner Abraham stated maybe to have a virtual meeting so this can be completed sooner rather than later.

NEW BUSINESS

Airport Tower Assessment Task Order

Administrator Russell reported that we have the Airport Tower Assessment Task order form from Jacobs Engineering. The task order is in the mount of $75,930.00. We are looking at another bilateral infrastructure law grant in the amount of close to $3 million dollars to continue to improve the airport terminal. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the task order. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

STAFF/ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS

Administrator

Administrator Russell reported that he was recently notified of the retirement of Assistant Dog Warden Tom Oberdick. He posted the position and received several resumes. He interviewed several people and found the best most qualified candidates are two of our own. He decided to make two assistant dog wardens/ humane officers. While they're not on duty and need to pick up their time, they can work in the Animal Shelter as well. Animal Shelter Manager Nelson Croft has agreed they will only need to add one position to the animal shelter staff. So, with that he would like to introduce Wendy Neubauer, our first female Dog Warden, and Eric Murphy. The Commissioners congratulated them. Nelson Croft thanked the Commissioners for the new alarms and the new roof soon to come.

Administrator Russell wanted to remind the Commissioners that we are receiving bids tomorrow for the HVAC project. He is anticipating three bids.

Public Safety-Sheriff Howard reported that on the cruisers he is looking at mid-January for the equipment to be placed in the new cruisers. Fortunately, four of the five cruisers came in. Everything has been a ten-to-twelve-week delay. Sheriff Howard reported that he may have a former security guard being rehired; he will send over the information to payroll office soon. He is sending two to the academy in January. He is in the process of hiring two deputies to replace them, and then we will have to give the test again. Commissioner Abraham asked where the Sheriff is in recruiting for the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff responded saying that we are out there on social media and trying to show that we have a lot to offer. He stated that he still needs a SAM number. He has talked to Mr. Archey about that. The DARE classes are going to be cancelled in January because we did not get a venue set. Sheriff Howard asked if the Commissioners had any questions about the Sheriff's camp. The Commissioners are going to get back with the Sheriff on that. President Wharton asked the Sheriff if he has a plan if cruisers go down. He reported that they probably need to order a few this coming year. He reported that six years ago they were ordering ten a year. Commissioner Abraham reported at the school board we replaced four or five vehicles a year. Ten seems way too many. President Wharton asked where the two new hires are coming from. Sheriff Howard reported they just passed the test. They must get a lot of paperwork completed and then we will bring them back to the Commission. Sheriff Howard brought up Leopold Lane. He has a meeting with the DOH. He was going to see if they could treat it as a HARP Road. Home Access Road program was under Cecil Underwood. President Wharton stated he hopes you have more luck than we did.

Finance

Finance Director Archey reported that the Commissioners have a copy of the bills as they are up to date. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to pay the bills as submitted. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Finance Director Archey reported the Commissioners have two exonerations, both are supplementals, and both are credits, approved by the Assessor. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the exonerations. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

COMMISSION BOARD REPORTS

None tonight.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

None tonight.

FUTURE MEETINGS

President Wharton reported the next meetings will be Tuesday, December 13, 2022, an OCDA meeting at the Highlands Eventer Center at 6:00 p.m., and the next Commission meeting will be on Tuesday December 20, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. here in the Commission boardroom. All subject to change.

Meeting adjourned.

President, Randy Wharton

Administrator, Randel Russell