Board of Commissioners of Ohio County
Minutes of a Meeting
Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 8:00am

County Commission meetings are held in
Room 215 of the City County Building, 1500 Chapline Street, Wheeling, WV 26003
County Commission meetings are open to the public

County Commission Members Present

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

Staff Members Present

County Solicitor Donald J. Tennant, Jr.
Finance Director Becky Coyne
Executive Assistant Jennifer Hastings
Election Coordinator Erin Allietta
Ohio County 911 Director Rickie Pritt
Director of Emergency Management Tony Campbell

Other Members Present

West Liberty Police Chief Tristan Painter

- **Call to Order**

  Commission President Abraham called the meeting to order at 8:00am in Room 215 of the City County Building. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

- **Delegations**

  There were no delegations.

- **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

  Regular Meeting of October 6, 2026

  The minutes were reviewed by Commissioners. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission.

- **Grants**

  U.S. Dept. of Justice, Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)
  Finance Director Coyne presented the FY2026 Interlocal Agreement between the City of Wheeling and the County for the U.S. Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant. Through this grant, the Sheriff's Department will receive $10,339 to purchase equipment aimed at combating violent crime and enhancing public safety within the community. No local match is required for the County's participation. The administration requested ratification of its decision to participate in this grant and to execute the Interlocal Agreement.

Commission President Abraham made a motion to approve the grant agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission.

- **Community Grants**

Town of West Liberty, Police Cruiser
Commissioner Wharton had a brief discussion with Police Chief Painter regarding a potential solution to the matter and noted that further discussion would take place at a later time.

Commission President Abraham made a motion to table for further discussion. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission.

- **Unfinished Business**

Employment Matters, Investigation 2
Commission President Abraham suggested that the County Commission enter executive session later in the meeting to discuss employment matters.

- **New Business**

WVU HVI Community Support Letters
Finance Director Coyne advised the County Commissioners that the County had received a request from WVU Medicine for a letter of support on behalf of Dr. Sanchari Banerjee regarding special placement in Non-Invasive Cardiology. The administration requested approval to provide a letter of support.

Commissioner Nickerson reported that Dr. Banerjee, a non-invasive cardiologist, and Dr. Tarek Khrisat, a vascular surgeon, are both legally authorized to work in the United States. He further stated that, according to WVU Medicine, both physicians are critically needed to support the region's healthcare services.

Commission President Abraham made a motion to support the letters. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission.

AEP Request for Easement and Right of Way, Parcel #04-R8-8.16
Finance Director Coyne advised the County Commissioners that American Electric Power had requested an Easement and Right-of-Way to install a pole guy anchor on parcel 04-R8-8.16. The 2.247-acre parcel is located on Short Creek Road near the intersection with North Fork Road and was acquired by the County following the 2004 flooding. The property is subject to restrictions regarding its use. Finance Director Coyne noted that additional information had been provided in the Commissioners' meeting packet. The administration requested approval to execute the Easement and Right-of-Way.

Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the Easement and Right-of-Way. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission.

Assessor's Supplemental Farm Census of 2026

Finance Director Coyne reminded the County Commissioners that West Virginia Code § 7-7-6c authorizes the County Commission to provide the Assessor with reasonable compensation, not to exceed ten percent of her salary, for completing the Farm Census. The administration received certification from the West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture confirming that the Ohio County Assessor had completed the 2026 Farm Census and was therefore eligible for supplemental compensation. The administration requested approval to pay the Assessor a supplement equal to ten percent of her salary, totaling $5,963.30, for completion of this work.

Commission President Abraham made a motion to approve the supplemental compensation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission.

- **Staff and Elected Official Reports**

  - **County Administrator**

Finance Director Coyne reported that early voting would begin on Tuesday, October 21, at 9:00 a.m. and continue through Saturday, October 31, at 5:00 p.m., excluding Sundays. Voters wishing to cast their ballots early may do so on the first floor of the City-County Building during those dates and times.

Finance Director Coyne further advised that Election Day would be held on Tuesday, November 3. Polling locations will open at 6:30 a.m. and remain open until 7:30 p.m.

She also informed the Commissioners that the Board of Canvassers would meet on Monday, November 9, in the County Commission boardroom beginning at 9:00 a.m. and continuing until the canvass is completed. The Board of Canvassers will declare the election results upon completion of the canvass.

Finance Director Coyne advised that certification of the election results in Ohio County would occur 48 hours after the final county in West Virginia declares its election results, provided no recount is requested. She noted that the certification could be conducted via teleconference; however, Commissioners would need to be available to sign the certification documents.

Solicitor Tennant requested that Election Coordinator Allietta inform the public about the new state law requiring voters to present photo identification when voting. Election Coordinator Allietta reported that information regarding the requirement had been shared with local news outlets and published in area newspapers. She further advised that the requirement would also be publicized at polling precincts and through social media.

Commission President Abraham requested an update regarding student participation in the upcoming election. Election Coordinator Allietta reported that approximately 50 students had registered to assist with the election and had completed the required training.

- **Emergency Services**

  Director of Ohio County Emergency Management

  Director Campbell reported that nearly $800,000 had been spent to assist residents of Valley Grove and Triadelphia with flood recovery. He indicated that funds appeared to remain available and that the group would meet any additional needs identified by residents.

  Ohio County E911

  Director Pritt provided a staffing update, reporting that five new hires were scheduled to attend training to obtain their certification.

- **Finance Director Becky Coyne**

  Finance Director Coyne presented County Commissioners with a list of invoices that are to be approved for payment.

  Commission President Abraham made a motion to approve the invoices. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission.

  The unpaid invoices were presented to the Commissioners for review and there were no questions/inquiries about them. No action required.

  Finance Director Becky Coyne advised that there were no budget revisions.

- **Assessor**

  Exonerations
  Finance Director Coyne reported that there were no exonerations to be considered at this time.

  Certificates of Re-Entry
  Finance Director Coyne reported that there were no Certificates of Re-Entry to be considered at this time.

- **Commission Board Reports**

  There were no Commission Board Reports

- **Commissioner Comments**

  There were no additional comments.

- **Executive Session**

  Commission President Abraham made a motion for the County Commission to go into Executive Session pursuant to the Code of West Virginia §6-9A-4(b)(A) to discuss Employment Matters, Investigation 2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner

Nickerson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission at 8:15am.

Commission President Abraham made a motion for the County Commission to come out from Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of the County Commission at 9:11am.

Commission President Abraham advised those present that the next regular meeting of the County Commission will need to be rescheduled and that the new date is pending. The meeting adjourned at 9:12 am.

We do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the minutes of a meeting of the County Commission of Ohio County conducted on Tuesday, October 20, 2026.

Zachary T. Abraham, President

Randel A. Russell, County Administrator