OHIO COUNTY COMMISSION
01/03/2023

The Ohio County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, 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, Administrator Randel Russell, Solicitor Don Tennant, and Finance Director Rodd Archey.

Oath of Office

Commissioner Randy Wharton was sworn in by County Clerk Mike Kelly for another six-year term as Ohio County Commissioner.

Election of Officers

President Wharton reported that at this first meeting of the year the Commission nominates a President and Vice President. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to nominate Don Nickerson as President of the Ohio County Commission. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor. President Nickerson reported that next is the nomination of Vice President. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to nominate Zach Abraham as Vice President of the Ohio County Commission. Second by President Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2022, Commission meeting. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Staff Appointments

Administrator Russell reported that the staff appointments for 2023 are listed. The administration recommends that Don Tennant continue in his role as County Solicitor, Chester Roger Bise will continue in his role as County Dog Warden and Russell Escue continue in his role as Airport Manager.
Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve all those staff appointments for 2023. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.
Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve Randel Russell as the County Administrator for 2023. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.
Administrator Russell reported that historically each year we do a resolution that the dog warden be considered the Humane Officer for Ohio County. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the resolution. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

COMMISSIONER BOARDS & COMMITTEES ASSIGNMENTS

Administrator Russell reported that next is the list of the 2022 appointments to the various boards. President Nickerson asked if there needs to be any changes for 2023. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the list as it is. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor. Administrator Russell stated that Commissioner Abraham will continue with the Belomar Regional Council, Ohio County Personnel Advisory Board, OVRTA, and the REDP. President Nickerson will continue with the Northern Panhandle Workforce Investment Board, Wheeling Creek Watershed, and

the Wheeling National Heritage Corporation. Commissioner Wharton will continue to serve on the Ohio County Fireboard and the WVU Cooperative Extension Commission for 2023.

Grants

2023 JAG Medical Cannabis PRO Grant Award

Administrator Russell reported that before the Commissioners is the 2023 grant award. The top sheet is the summary sheet. The Commissioners will see that the Sheriff applied for $127,000.00. The grant committee awarded $97,000.00. The Sheriff will have to recommend some budget adjustments. This is additional funding for the PRO program and part of it is to go towards the PRO conference. Finance Director Archey reported that he has reached out to the JAG board to see if they're requiring a certain amount go towards the conference. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the grant. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor. President Nickerson asked what part of this is already in the PRO program. Administrator Russell reported that the Ohio County Board of Education funds $180,000.00 a year and the County Commission funds another PRO grant of $35,000.00.

Airport-3-21 Runway Contractor Payment

Administrator Russell reported that next is the Runway 3-21 project. This is a pay request for Russell Standard and is pay request #4 in the amount of $84,022.91. The project is 99% complete. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the pay request. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Community Grants

Foundations Baseball

Administrator Russell reported that Foundations Baseball is requesting funds for their catcher's clinic. In August of 2022 the Commission granted them $1,500.00 for their youth clinic and in January of 2022 the Commission granted them $1,000.00 for a catcher's clinic. You will see the sponsorship levels on the second page there. Finance Director Archey reported that in fiscal year 2022 the Commission gave them $1,500.00 and then in August of 2022 the Commission gave $1,500.00. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $500.00 for the Foundations Baseball Catcher's Clinic. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Commissioner Wharton would like in the future when there are events at the Sports Complex to ask for a budget like in a spreadsheet format. The County commissioners had a discussion on how to move forward with these requests. Don Tennant stated that after the event we should request a verified statement. He feels we should ask for a pre-event document to support their event also.

Oglebay Institute Towngate Roof Restoration

Administrator Russell reported that there is a request from Oglebay Institute in the amount of $20,000.00 towards their roof restoration project at the Towngate Theatre. They have included a construction budget prepared by McKinley Structural Engineers along with photographs. In the past the Commission has contributed $5,000.00 in 2016 towards general renovations, and in 2021 there was $10,000.00 contributed for roof renovations at the Stifel. It indicates that they have secured $89,000.00 towards the project. They are pursuing other funding from grants, along with local individuals and businesses. Solicitor Tennant reported that you would think that would be a Benedum Foundation item for that type of money. To put a roof on a non-for-profit building is the most important aspect of the building too. For protection of the next 30 years. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the request payment upon completion of the fund raising and commencement of the project. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Wheeling Park High School Duals-Wrestling

Administrator Russell reported that there is a request from Wheeling Park High School in the amount of $6,000.00 for the Wrestling tournament that was held on December 28 & 29, 2022. The Commission has contributed $6,000.00 in the last five out of six years. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $6,000.00 for the Wheeling Park Duals. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

ARPA Funding

Sheriff's Department Cruiser Payment

Administrator Russell reported that he is requesting that we release $155,892.00 to Bob Robinson Inc. for the purchase of four Chevrolet Tahoes for the Sheriff's Department. This is an acceptable use of the funds. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the payment for the four new vehicles. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Sheriff's Department Cruiser Equipment Payment

Administrator Russell reported that next he has an invoice from Safe Fleet for the purchase of accessories for the four Sheriff cruisers. He recommends the approval. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the invoice. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

OCC HVAC Project-Contract Award

Administrator Russell reported that at the last meeting the Commission approved the bond financing for the HVAC project. At this meeting he would like to ask for your approval to give notice to proceed to the Contractors that have been selected for the HVAC construction. They were Cattrell Companies from Toronto, Ohio at $9,969,000.00 with a four hundred twenty-day construction schedule, Colaianni Construction bid $12,775,000.00 with a seven hundred thirty-day construction schedule, and Accelerated Construction Services out of Morgantown bid $14,492,000.00 with a five hundred twenty-day construction schedule. He recommends that the notice to proceed and the project be awarded to Cattrell Companies from Toronto, Ohio. Subsequently the MSI with the building automation system piece of this, Dagostino Electric services, Inc. bid $1,047,900.00 and RoviSys Building Technologies out of Pittsburgh bid $2,237,606.61. He recommends that the notice to proceed be awarded to and the contract be awarded to Dagostino Electronic Services. Commissioner Abraham asked if there is any detail as to why so much spread between these bids. Administrator Russell reported there was a lot of negotiation, and the RoviSys team is who did the building automation at the Sports Complex. There have been a lot of problems and he thinks they are overestimating the cost. Dagostino has done a lot of work in this field, and we are very excited about working with Dagostino. Commissioner Abraham stated the construction bids were spread out too. Cattrell is a not only a general contractor, they are also a MAP contractor, and they will do the mechanical work themselves without subbing it out to another contractor. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the HVAC bid from Cattrell Companies. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the bid from Dagostino for the MSI package. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor. The last page in your packet shows the budget for your information only.

NEW BUSINESS

Nothing from the board.

STAFF/ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS

Administrator

Administrator Russell reported that the State Tax department has scheduled the Oil & Gas hearing date for February 16, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Administrator Russell reported that he would like the Commissioners to look at their calendars so that some board of review and equalization hearing dates can be set up in February.

Facilities

Melissa Marco reported that she will get a schedule started as to what the HVAC project will look like. On January 17, 2023, bids will be received for the Ohio County Animal Shelter. Commissioner Abraham asked if anyone would have to relocate while construction is going on. Administrator Russell reported that the all offices will have to be moved to the fourth-floor law library for four to six weeks. There will be eighteen phases to go through and complete a comprehensive phasing schedule.

Public Safety

Emergency Management Director Vargo reported that Deputy Director Campbell is here to present an EMS report. He wanted to let the Commissioners and Administrator Russell know this is the first year for the 24-hour EMS, he feels that they significantly improved the amount of response we had in the County. So far, they have had 1523 runs which is high, considering the City of Wheeling who is quite busy and runs about 6000 or 7000 runs a year including fire. In the evening hours they responded to 581 calls. He reported they were able to transport 579 people within the County and were able to assist paramedic wise for 131. Which means we would go with Valley Grove, Triadelphia, West liberty and whoever needed assistance. More importantly every call that came into the County was answered by Ohio County EMS or one of the volunteer fire departments. He feels they have been very successful with this and hopes to be even more successful in the future. They have received about $200,000.00 for their services from the insurance companies. Commissioner Wharton asked how it works if someone lives near Florence Crittenden, not sure if it is in the city or in Triadelphia. Assistant Emergency Director reported that in dispatch in Triadelphia/ Wheeling there is a dual response. Wheeling is toned down and Triadelphia is toned down. Triadelphia responds with an ambulance, or not and we respond with an ambulance. Pretty much if it is outside of the City, we will take them to the hospital but if in that city limit because there is a gray area as to what is in and out. Bethlehem has the same type of situation too. Like Hubbard Lane because it's in the City but Bethlehem will respond as well. Commissioner Wharton asked if the City of Wheeling back us up, and do we back up the City of Wheeling. He knows we back up the volunteers, can you discuss how dispatching works in the whole County. There is mutual aid within all the departments. If there is a call in Triadelphia, Valley Grove is called as well as EMS, so what they are looking for is at least one person to respond in each of those districts. The same thing happens in Clearview. They get dispatched but West Liberty does too and EMS. There is going to be at least three that get toned out anywhere in the County. Now within the City of Wheeling who are fortunate because they have three squads that work all the time. They can't respond to all calls either so their first call for mutual aid is Bethlehem, if they're not available they go to Ohio County EMS.

Finance

Finance Director Archey reported that the Commissioners have a copy of the bills as they are up to date. Commissioner Abraham asked what Fremouw, Sigley & Baker for $600.00 was for. Finance Director Archey reported those are for two psychological examinations for potential new deputies.

President Nickerson asked about a charge from December 21, 2022, for $500.00 to WVU. Finance Director Archey reported it was the approved amount for the WVU Agricultural Dinner series.

Commissioner Wharton made a motion to pay the bills. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor. Finance Director Archey reported he will get you a list of unpaid bills that he has not entered, so if you have any questions on those.

Exonerations

Administrator Russell reported that the Commissioners have a letter that was sent to us from Mr. & Mrs. Murphy on Stamm Lane. They purchased their home in October of 2021 just after it was reclassified to Class 4, non-owner occupied as of July 1, 2021. There was no way for them to have known that and they are requesting that the Assessor or the Commissioners to request an exoneration. President Nickerson reported to a point of clarification, he likes to help people if we can. The resident stated it should have been adjusted at the closing. That is not accurate as they aren't adjusted at the closing. They would have gotten a report of those taxes in the title work they had done. That snapshot is taken July 1, and unfortunately it works to the homeowner's disadvantage if it's a higher tax class because it won't change until the next tax year. To be honest he is not sure if we can exonerate a tax class. Don Tennant reported that he understands from staff that this is the way it has been done in the real estate business. It is an odd situation from the standpoint of costs, and he assumes there are smaller numbers owed all the time and people just eat it. The home was unoccupied so that's why it was reclassified, and the price of taxes go up when you're not owner occupied.

Administrator Russell stated that the lawyer would not have known until January. Finance Director Archey stated that if the lawyer would have checked in the Assessor's office, they would have most likely been told it was under a different classification. Normally the tax classes we have exonerated in the past is because the owner did not realize when they purchased the property that there was a difference between classes. If these people owned the property July 1, 2021, then we would say yes, then there was mistake made because it should have been Class two in July 2021. President Nickerson asked Don Tennant if he can find out if we as a Commission if we can change this classification. A discussion began amongst the Commissioners.

COMMISSION BOARD REPORTS

Nothing from the board.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Nothing from the board.

FUTURE MEETINGS

President Nickerson reported the next Commission meetings will be on Tuesday, January 17, 2023, and February 14, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. On Thursday, February 16, 2023, there will be Oil & Gas Board of Appeals hearings beginning at 6:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

President, Don Nickerson

Administrator, Randel Russell