OHIO COUNTY COMMISSION
6/14/2022

The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, June 14, 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, Administrator Randel Russell, Solicitor Don Tennant, Finance Director Rodd Archey, and EMA Director Lou Vargo.

DELEGATIONS

Carlee Dittmar-Carlee Dittmar, a poll worker, reported that on Election Day she heard of a few issues. She reported that she also heard that the school board was not on some ballots, and another call she received from a voter stated when she went to vote and they gave her the wrong ballot, so she went in and asked Toni, and found that she had changed but it was too late and did not get changed. She states she is wondering if the voter registration cards she brings in gets changed or not. She stated that the first year she worked at the polls, there were certain groups of people that had been together working for years at the polls. This was her first training session and Toni was telling them of changes. She overheard some workers saying we've never done it that way so we're not doing it that way now and she is thinking being new she felt was not a good thing to hear. So, her first time being a poll worker she was in a building with two precincts and that is exactly what happened. One person's ballot was spoiled twice, and they did not know what they were supposed to do, and the poll worker who had been there forever went and helped the other side, which happened all day. She noticed that a lot of poll workers lot are elderly, and maybe we should recruit young people. She stated that she would volunteer to help.

Julia Chaplin-Julia Chaplin, a poll worker, reported that she had spoken with Administrator Russell about her precinct. She reported that on Election Day another poll worker opened the ballot box to count the ballots because their numbers weren't matching the poll slips stubs that had been strung. Once they recounted the strung poll slip stubs, all numbers matched. She reported that the school board did not show on the ballot at one time, but the lady went back three times, and it was there.

**MINUTES**-Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 24, 2022, Commission meeting. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting.

**Grants**

**JAG-Prevention Resource Officer/ Drug Task Force**

Finance Director Archey reported that a few weeks back that he asked for permission from the Commission to complete a letter of intent for these grant applications. The Commission approved Mr. Archey's request to complete the letter of intent. They are now doing the application phase through an online service so he cannot bring those to a meeting without approving them and then bringing the completed grant applications back to the meeting. He is requesting permission to move forward with the applications for the PRO grant and the Drug Task Force grant. On the PRO grant, he is requesting $84,000.00, with a required match of $28,000.00, the total cost for these deputies would be $270,000.00. If the County gets the grant for $84,000.00, the school board would put in $180,000.00 and the County matches with $6,000.00. However, in the past few years we've only received $30,000.00 from the grant which would make the County's cost $60,000.00 instead of $6,000.00.

He reported that on the drug task force grant, the County is requesting $28,000.00. The total is $56,000.00 with matching funds of about $18,700.00. Part of that is the City of Wheeling's responsibility. He stated that in the current year's grant, the City of Wheeling and County each received $12,500.00 in grant funds. He is asking for approval to go online and make application for both grants. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the two grant applications. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

FAA-Project 3-54-0030-32-2021 Runway 16-34 Rehab Payment Application #2

Administrator Russell reported that he has a request for payment application #2 from Russell Standard, the contractor doing the runway 16-34 crack seal and sealcoat project. This pay app request is for $433,299.65. This would put us at 80% of the total contract sum. At this point, the work is 95% complete. All that remains is some painting of the lines and some ancillary repairs. He stated with approval he will submit this request to the FAA for reimbursement. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the FAA pay application #2. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Hotel Tax / Community Grant Requests

Fort Henry Days

Administrator Russell stated on Labor Day weekend Fort Henry Days will be held at Oglebay Park and they are requesting $1,500.00. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $1,500.00 for the Fort Henry Days event. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Ohio County 4-H Camps (June/ July 2022)

Administrator Russell stated that the WVU Extension Office is seeking support of 4-H camps in the amount of $4,500.00. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $4,500.00 for the 4-H camps. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Ohio Valley Street Survivors Car Show

Administrator Russell reported the Ohio Valley Street Survivors Club is having a large show at Oglebay in August. They use the funds they collect to donate to various charities. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $500.00 for the Ohio Valley Street Survivors Car Show. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Seeing Hand Association

Administrator Russell reported the Seeing Hand Association provides training for the blind, and the Commission has donated $1,000.00 in the past. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $1,000.00 for the Seeing Hand Association. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Wheeling Symphony 4th of July Event

Administrator Russell reported last is a request for the concert on July 4, 2022, at the Wheeling Heritage Port. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $2,500.00 for the event. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Administrator Russell reported that he has a request from the Town of Triadelphia for ARPA funding in the amount of $175,000.00. This is to cover the costs of the sanitary sewer evaluation study. The system is in very bad shape. They also have an application submitted to the IJDC to do the work to repair the

sanitary sewer system. He reported that it is being considered to give $100,000.00 to each municipality from the ARPA funds. Clearview and Triadelphia are the only ones that have submitted projects, the Village of Valley Grove is working on projects for their utilities as well. West Liberty has not submitted anything as of now. Commissioner Abraham stated that he may suggest that this request be included with the context of all municipality requests and draft a budget that is set aside for volunteer fire departments in the context of larger picture and then it can be on the agenda in two weeks for further discussion.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Growth & Retention Team Development-Shared Resources**

Commissioner Abraham reported that he had an initial meeting with the City of Wheeling, CVB, Wheeling Heritage, Wheeling Chamber, OCDA, Wheeling Park Commission, and REDP for the purpose to grow the communities of Ohio County and Wheeling and to generate new businesses to locate in Ohio County and Wheeling. There would be shared services where everybody would pitch in for two buckets of funding, one would be to hire a team, two people initially, also maybe having Belomar be a part of this, and the Community Foundation of Upper Ohio Valley. He just wanted to let everyone here at the Commission know all about it because there would be some funding. He is focusing on four areas. One is people who relocate and maybe set up shop here; the second one is retirees, if they want to live part of the year here and live somewhere else the rest of the year; the third group is like emersion folks that live here three to four months and then take off an do something else; and the other group is people that come here for the weekend and then are gone, but initially focusing on the first two groups and again those second two groups.

**Election Review Items-Election Worker Feedback, Survey & Recruitment**

Commissioner Abraham reported possibly doing an election poll worker survey to find out what they are seeing see and what they're hearing, possibly by sending them a survey, or possibly deliver this to them when they come in for training in November. Also, recruitment and to focus on how to do that, possibly breaking up the shifts, getting input from people that are working the polls, and to be sensitive to the needs of dealing with new technology. President Wharton asked whether this could possibly be extra credit for some college students, etc. Finance Director Archey reported that he feels more rovers are needed out and about on Election Day to check each precinct.

**Discussion of New County Position-Project Manager**

Commissioner Abraham reported that he has been discussing with Administrator Russell a potential new position for the County. Since Administrator Russell moved into his role there is nobody else doing what he was doing in the past, so Commissioner Abraham wanted to bring it up in conversation.

**Airport items/update**

Administrator Russell reported that Runway 16-34 is nearly complete. The 3-21 project has not been awarded yet, and he received one bid from one contractor which is the same contractor who is doing the 16-34 project, but the FAA has not signed off on that bid yet. He reported he has a grant application under the bipartisan infrastructure legislation for tower repairs. The FAA gave their blessing for the roof and glass on the tower site just the other day so that application will be finalized and submitted. He reported there was an Airport Advisory meeting where we talked about all the opportunities that we are working on trying to get educational and light manufacturing at the Airport. In addition, there are two events coming up, one is Touch a Truck, on August 13, 2022, for Holy Family Childcare Center. They are spear heading that event and we are just lending support. Then the other event is September 24, 2022,

where the Commission will have its own community-oriented event. It will be a Vintage Transportation Show.

**2022/2023 Home Consortium Resolution**

Administrator Russell reported that Melissa Thompson from the Home Consortium is asking the Commission to sign off on the resolution which grants funding for first time home buyers. There was previously a public hearing and Melissa Thompson came in and spoke about the first-time homebuyer's program, which is now funded for the year 2022/2023. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the resolution. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

**Belomar Regional Council dues**

Administrator Russell reported that there is an invoice for the annual Belomar Regional Council dues in the amount of $3,091.58 for consideration. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve to pay the dues. Second by commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**Health, dental, vision and life insurance renewal**

Administrator Russell reported he sent this information that you have in your packet tonight to all Commissioners for review. He is recommending option #4 to remain with Highmark for a two-year period and move to Principal Vison and Principal Life Insurance which will increase life insurance from $10,000.00 to $30,000.00, and then we are moving the dental insurance to Highmark from Guardian. Commissioner Abraham stated that with all those combinations of things we knock the potential increase of 13%, down to 2%. As we talked about last year, he was hoping to get life insurance increased because of the rise in costs, so with the new life insurance the employees pay the same premium as now with more coverage. The increase overall is around a 4% increase. Administrator Russell reported that Keith Park from Highmark always does a great job. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to accept the new insurance rates/renewal for the next two years. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**STAFF/ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**

Administrator Russell stated that he was away last week, and he is still catching up to the projects. Commissioner Abraham reported that he is working on getting another person for the Building Commission.

**EMA**

Emergency Management Director Vargo reported that on the storm here in Ohio County, luckily there was no flooding. The National Weather service reported up to 80 mile per hour wind gusts came through the Valley. He activated the EOC about 1:30 a.m. and is collaborating with AEP. 15,570 are without power this morning. He reported two major lines are down in the City of Wheeling. The hospital lost power too, so they are on diversion right now. The power did come back on at the hospital, but it takes a long while to cool that large of a building back down so hopefully they can open the ER again soon. AEP has 100 teams coming from other States to help with the power lines, and as you know the City and County declared a State of Emergency and made a request for the City of Wheeling to have chainsaw teams come in to help. There is major damage out at Wheeling Park. Also, it is supposed to be terribly hot tomorrow and with so many people without power, WesBanco Arena has agreed to open as a cooling shelter, and OVRTA will transport anyone who needs a ride to the cooling shelter. Mr. Vargo reported for Mr. Gamble from the Health Department reported that there is no free COVID testing going

on. They do have home tests available, but of course, if you're symptomatic send someone else into get them for you. They are doing vaccines daily. He is ordering more vaccines because he expects the approval for children from 6 months to 4 years old to receive the vaccine. The COVID numbers are less than 20 per week as of now.

Emergency management Director Vargo that reported he went with the Sheriff and two deputies, and in collaboration with West Liberty University, during Sheriff's camp will be performing a full-scale active shooter exercise at the College. He reported yesterday that he served as chairman of the Paramedic Advisory Committee at WVNCC. He had their first review in preparation in certification of the program and we received an initial certification yesterday. Administrator Russell asked when the Courthouse may have power. Emergency Management Director Vargo reported that it is possible that the power may be back on Wednesday, June 15, but nothing can be promised.

**FINANCE DIVISION**

Finance Director Archey reported the Commissioners have a copy of all the bills as they are up to date. Commissioner Abraham asked about the Domino's pizza invoice. Finance Director Archey reported that was for the poll worker's lunch. He also asked about the antigovernment services. Finance Director Archey reported that is the monthly fee for the SAT phone. Commissioner Abraham asked about Colossus Inc. and the Rock & Rescue. The Colossus is the annual maintenance fee for the CAD system and the Rock & Rescue is from a grant that EMA Director Vargo applied for, and it will be reimbursed through the Homeland Security grant. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to pay the bills. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**UNPAID BILLS**

Finance Director Archey reported that the County Commissioners Association invoice for the fiscal year 2021-2022 dues was sent to a former Commissioner, and he just realized this, so the County Commissioners Association sent this copy to Administrator Russell for payment. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to pay the dues. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**BUDGET REVISIONS**

Finance Director Archey reported that there are sixteen budget revisions before you, most of these are to just clean up any issues for the end of the year. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the budget revision number five. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**EXONERATIONS**

Finance Director Archey reported that there are nineteen exonerations before the Commission for consideration. He reported that some are minerals, and they were sent to us from the State Auditor's office that were sold at a tax sale, and then once research was done on them it was found out they were not valid bills, so they requested us to exonerate those and refund the monies back to the purchaser. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the exonerations. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**Certificate of Re-Entry**

Finance Director Archey reported there is one Certificate of Re-entry. In this instance, the owner purchased the property from the State, and it did not get put back onto the books in the Assessor's Office. If it has been more than five years, we will not back bill them for those years. We will send it to

the State and let them collect for up to ten years. He reported that once it's redeemed from the State or sold at the State's land sale, the Assessor will put it back on the books at that time and start collecting. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the re-entry. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**COMMISSION BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

**Ohio County Development Authority**

Administrator Russell reported that there are seven members of the Ohio County Development Authority Board expiring June 30, 2022. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve Don Nickerson to the OCDA board for another three-year term. Second by President Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the other six that are up on June 30, 2022, pending their agreement. Second By President Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor. Commissioner Nickerson abstained from both votes.

**Ohio County Fireboard**

Administrator Russell reported that the fire department association appointee from Valley Grove's term is expiring, and he has exceeded his term limit. Typically, the volunteer fire departments have gone in rotation. West Liberty is next, and Bob Fowler would be their appointed member. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve Bob Fowler as the new fire department association member for the Ohio County Fire Board. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor. Administrator Russell reported that the citizen member, Mike Tarbert's term expires June 30, 2022. He can serve an additional three-year term and he is willing to serve. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve Mike Trabert to his second term. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**Ohio County Solid Waste Authority**

Administrator Russell reported that he received a letter form the WV Solid Waste Authority Management Board advising us that Mr. Ronald King's term is about to expire June 30, 2022. This is not a recommendation to re-appoint Mr. King, but just a reminder that an appointment is needed. The appointment is up to the Commission to determine. He has spoken with Ron King, and he is willing to serve another four years. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve Mr. Ronald King to the Solid Waste Authority Board. Second by commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department**

Administrator Russell reported that the appointment of Elizabeth Slater is set to expire on June 30, 2022. They are requesting that she be re-appointed with a new term to expire June 30, 2027. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Elizabeth Slater to the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Board. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

**Home Consortium Board**

Administrator Russell reported that the three members expire June 30, 2002. Melissa Thompson from the Home Consortium board stated in a letter that all three would like to be re-appointed. They are Lisa Badia, Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless, Nancy Brocht, Howard Hanna Select Real Estate, and Paul Ashmore, Kennen & Kennen Realtors. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to re-appoint all three to the board. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

President Wharton reported that the Ohio County Public Service District received its annual audit report from the WV State Health Department last week. The audit is conducted by a professional engineer that is hired by the State to audit the entire system for deficiencies and he is glad to report that there were no significant deficiencies.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Administrator Russell reported that the Governor has proclaimed the State will observe Juneteenth on Friday, June 17, 2022, as a Holiday. Historically the Commission follows suit. The City of Wheeling will be open. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve Friday, June 17, 2022, Juneteenth Holiday and Monday, July 4, 2022, Independence Day. All offices will be closed except for those that are required to remain open. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

FUTURE MEETINGS

President Wharton reported there will be an Ohio County Development Authority meeting on Thursday, June 16, 2022, at the Highlands Event Center at 6:00 p.m. and the next Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, June 28, 2022. Meeting adjourned.

President, Randy Wharton

Administrator, Randel Russell

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