Ohio County Commission
April 16, 2024

The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 4:12 p.m. The meeting was called to order by President Donald A. Nickerson. The Pledge of Alliance was recited.

The minutes from the April 2, 2024, meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

The minutes from the emergency meeting on April 4, 2024, meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Grants:

- Stop Violence Against Women – At a previous meeting, the Commissioners approved the Letter of Intent to submit the grant. We are now at the application phase. The Ohio County Commission will submit for $73,344.00 with a $16,334.00 match.

Community Grants:

- Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce Leadership Wheeling Graduation – This can be removed from the agenda.
- Wheeling Health Right 28th Annual Chef's Auction – A motion to donate $3,000.00 was made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- ARPA Update
    - ARPA Update – Ms. Marco detailed the projects that were not funded during the initial application process. Ms. Marco went back through and compared each application to the four criteria set forth by the federal government and determined if the projects met the criteria.
    - Wheeling-Ohio County Airport ARPA Funds – On a motion made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton, the Commission agreed to provide $400,000.00 in uncommitted ARPA funds to the airport for the flight school remodel project. Motion carried.
    - Bethlehem Playground – The Ohio County Board of Education and the town of Bethlehem have agreed to donate $26,000.00 each to Bethlehem Elementary School's playground project. On a motion made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton, the Ohio County Commission agreed to also pledge $26,000.00 of uncommitted ARPA funds to the project.
    - Helping Heroes – The Ohio County Commission agreed to pledge $100,000.00 of ARPA funds to Helping Heroes for their building renovation project once bank financing was secured. Financing has been secured and on a motion made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton, the Commission agreed to release the funds. Motion carried.

- Community Grants – Ms. Marco updated the spreadsheet to include the dates of the events. She also rated them as Tier I, II, or III according to the policy set forth by the Commissioners. The Commissioners will review the requests at the next meeting.
- Elm Grove Civics Building Renovations – The Elm Grove Civics have withdrawn their request for funding. They were able to secure the funding needed for their HVAC project.
- Kieran Moses - Dimmeydale Ballfields – At the meeting on April 2, 2024, Kieran Moses made a presentation to the Commissioners. He would like to make improvements to the Dimmydale Ballfields for his Eagle Scout Project. On a motion made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton, the Commission agreed to donate $4,000.00. Motion carried.
- EMS Salary Enhancement – The funds are being distributed per the agreement. Mr. Russell is also seeking approval tonight to provide the necessary funding to the Wheeling Fire Department and Bethlehem. A cover letter will be included with the checks detailing the program. Motion to approve the disbursements made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

New Business:

- Review and Approval of the 2024 / 2025 Levy Rates – Ohio County is currently fourth in the state with regards to their levy rate. The current levy rates were used for the budget proposal made to the state. These rates have been in effect since 1995. Motion to approve the current levy rates made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Northern Panhandle Conservation District – There are two dry dams that feed into Wheeling Creek that the Northern Panhandle Conservation District maintains. The cost of the dues is $3,000.00. Motion to approve the dues made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- 911 Dispatcher New Hire Andrew Sampson – Mr. Russell sought the advice and consent of the Commission to hire Andrew Sampson as a 911 dispatcher. Mr. Abraham made a motion to approve the hire, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- CHANGE, Inc. Community Action Month Proclamation – The proclamation was read by Mr. Russell. Motion to approve and sign the proclamation made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Elections:

- Emergency Ballot Commissioners – The Emergency Ballot Commissioners must consist of one Democrat and one Republican. They are Roger Klinger and Larry Goodwin. Motion to approve the Emergency Ballot Commissioners made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Poll Worker Training Dates – The training are scheduled for April 30, May 1, and May 2, 2024.
- Poll Workers – To date, Ms. Klinger has 206 poll workers registered to work the Primary Election. At a minimum, it takes 180 to run an election. Ms. Klinger is also working with Wheeling Park High School and The Linsly School to recruit students to work the election.

- Absentee Ballot Update – To date, the Election Office has received just under 200 absentee ballots. By code, a ballot must be sent by 3:00 p.m. the day in which the absentee ballot application is received.
- Voter Registration Deadline – The deadline to register is April 23, 2024.
- Sample Ballot – A Sample Ballot will be placed in the newspaper on April 24, 2024. By code, the ballot must appear in the papers between April 18 – 24, 2024.
- Public Testing – Public Testing will be conducted on April 26, 2024.
- Early Voting – Early voting will be held May 1-11, 2024. All of the workers needed for early voting have been identified.

Staff / Elected Official Reports:

- Administrator Report - Mr. Russell did not have anything further to report.
- Facilities Update - Ms. Marco reported the ceiling tile at the Ohio County Animal Shelter was replaced throughout the building. We will continue our updates by power washing the building, painting the outside doors to match the roof, and updating the signage. The Air Traffic Control Tower Project is nearing completion. The HVAC updates include: The chiller has arrived. Windows on the third and fourth floor of 15th Street are complete. The structural steel has been placed on the fifth floor. We are moving forward with the Portico Renovations and look to begin work in late June. The materials must be approved by the State Historical Preservation Office before Angelina Stone and Marble can proceed.
- EMA – Mr. Vargo – Mr. Vargo reported EMA had two Emergency Operations Command activations in the last two weeks due to heavy rain and flooding. There were six water rescues and 500 clean up kits were distributed. The Public Works Department did an excellent job throughout the activation. The Ohio County Health Department offered tetanus shots. There were some landslides, and two houses were completely destroyed. FEMA will be visiting the area on Monday. Mr. Tony Campbell, Deputy Director of EMA stated if the Ohio County Commission was to be awarded Salary Enhancement Funds next year, he would hope that he and Mr. Vargo would receive the same share as other employees.
- Sheriff's Department – A representative from the Sheriff's Department was not in attendance at the meeting.

Finance:

- Mr. Archey reported the bills are up to date. Motion to approve the bills made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Unpaid invoices – Some of the invoices were awaiting grant funding. No further action is required.
- Exonerations – Mr. Abraham made a motion to approve the exonerations, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Commissioner's Comments:

- Mr. Abraham stated the Highlands Sports Complex was very busy during the recent Expo.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Donald A. Nickerson, President

Randel A. Russell, Administrator

*Executive Session for personnel matters or property transactions: West Virginia State Code §6-9A-4