The Board of Commissioners of Ohio County, West Virginia
Minutes of a Regular Session for Tuesday, February 3, 2026

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

Staff Members present:
County Administrator Randel A. Russell
County Solicitor Don Tennant
Facilities Director Melissa Marco
Director of Emergency Management Louis Vargo
Assistant Director of Emergency Management Anthony Campbell
Chief Deputy Kent Lewis

Elected Officials present:
Sheriff Nelson Croft

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

- Commission President Abraham convened the meeting in Room 215 of the City County Building at 8:00 a.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Public Hearing

- President Abraham opened the public hearing on the consolidation of voting precinct 12 located at Short Creek United Methodist Church into Precinct 11 located at Betty Zane Community Center. There were no comments or questions regarding the matter. The public meeting was closed at 8:10 a.m.

Delegations

- None

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from January 22, 2026, were tabled.

Grants

- None

Community Grants

- None

Unfinished Business

- Ms. Susie Nelson from the Community Foundation of the Upper Ohio Valley provided the Commissioners with an update on the flood relief funds. President Abraham asked if there was an update on the bridge project in Triadelphia. Mr. Randy Russell stated he had no further information at this time.
- Letter of support request from WVUM for Dr. Asmi Chattaraj – Commissioner Nickerson stated he heard back from WVUM and they are working with an immigration lawyer. Dr. Chattaraj is located in India and WVUM is asking for a letter of support from the Ohio County Commission.

Motion to approve the letter of support made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.

New Business

- AEP's Request for Easement and Right a Way across parcel 03-L13-3.1 – Mr. Randy Russell stated AEP has requested an easement and right a way to fix a slip on Dixon's Run Road. This is part of the County Farm Parcel. Mr. Tennant has reviewed the document and found it to be acceptable. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the easement and right a way, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. President Abraham abstained from the vote.
- Board Appointment, Ohio County Fire Board, Matthew Beitter – Mr. Randy Russell stated the Fire Board would like to fill an unexpired term with Mr. Matthew Beitter. The term runs through June 30, 2026. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the appointment, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried.
- Consolidation of Voting Precinct 12 into Precinct 11 at Betty Zane Community Center - Since there were no objections during the public hearing, President Abraham made a motion to consolidate the voting precincts, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried.
- Polling place relocation (temporary) Precinct 124 at Christ United Methodist Church to St. Michaels Angelus Center, 1212 National Road, Wheeling – Christ United Methodist Church is unable to serve as a polling location this year. On a temporary basis, the polling location will be moved to St. Michaels Angelus Center. The Center meets all polling place requirements. President Abraham made a motion to approve the temporary change, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Community Grant Process – Mr. Randy Russell asked the Commissioners to consider allocating funds during the budget process. This will help the Commission determine how much money is available for event requests. President Abraham stated the funds should be allocated to citizen and community-based events. He also asked for flexibility receiving the application and for budget numbers and a listing of events that were given funds. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the process with the modifications discussed, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Personnel Matters, Investigation, Discussion, and Consideration of Disciplinary Action – President Abraham asked that this matter be moved to the end of the meeting agenda.

Staff and Elected Officials Report

- Mr. Randy Russell reported on the jail bill. The projections for the 2026 jail bill are projected to increase in 2026; possibly by $700,000.00. The City has reimbursed the County $53,000.00 and are current through 2025.

Finance:

- Payables- The list was presented to the Commissioners. No questions were raised. Motion to pay the bills made by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.

- Unpaid invoices- The list was presented to the Commissioners. No questions/inquiries. No action required.

Exonerations:

- Administrator Russell directed Commissioners to one tax exoneration that would reduce taxes by $11.62. It has been reviewed & found reasonable. President Abraham made the motion to approve the Exoneration, seconded by Commissioner Wharton; motion approved unanimously.

A motion was made to enter Executive Session by President Abraham at 8:27 a.m., seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.

The Commissioners exited Executive Session at 10:15 a.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Wharton, seconded by President Abraham. Motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Zachary T. Abraham, Commission President

Randel A. Russell County Administrator