Ohio County Commission
January 7, 2025

The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order by President Zachary T. Abraham. The Pledge of Alliance was recited.

Delegations:

- Ms. Marie Travis from Serenity Hills spoke about their financials. She stated without financial assistance, they might not be able to operate at their current capacity.
- Mr. Jeffrey Johnson and Mr. Anthony McDaniel spoke concerning three topics: 1. The salary survey. Mr. McDaniel said the last time they received an update was November 4, 2024 and he would like a new update to pass along to staff. 2. Salary Enhancement Survey. The money will be released the first quarter of 2025 and he, and the department, are asking that Anthony Campbell and Lou Vargo receive as much as the personnel and not 50%. 3. Distribution of Opioid Funding. A budget was prepared and presented to Mr. Russell in September. The items listed were very similar to the City and the City presented funds in June, 2024. Since then, the price of all quoted items have went up in cost.

The minutes from the November 12, 2024, meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Mr. Wharton, seconded by Mr. Nickerson. Motion carried.

Staff Appointments:

- County Administrator – A motion was made by Mr. Abraham and seconded by Mr. Wharton to reappoint Mr. Randel Russell to the County Administrator post. Motion carried.
- County Solicitor – A motion was made by Mr. Wharton, seconded by Mr. Nickerson, to reappoint Mr. Don Tennant to the post. Motion carried.

Commission Board and Committee Assignments:

- Bel-O-Mar Regional Council – Zachary T. Abraham
- Northern Panhandle Workforce – Donald A. Nickerson, Jr.
- Ohio County Development Authority – Randy Wharton
- Ohio County Fire Board – Randy Wharton
- Ohio County Personnel Advisory Committee – Zachary T. Abraham
- Ohio Valley Regional Transportation Authority – Zachary T. Abraham
- Regional Economic Development Partnership – Zachary T. Abraham
- Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce – Randel Russell
- Wheeling Creek Watershed Corporation – Donald A. Nickerson, Jr.
- Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation – Donald A. Nickerson, Jr.
- WVU Cooperative Extension Committee – Randy Wharton

Mr. Nickerson made a motion that the appointments be carried over into 2025 with a second from Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

New Business:

- Ohio County Prosecuting Attorney's Office – New Hire Allison Provence – Motion to approve the new hire made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Staff / Elected Official Reports:

- Administrator Report – Kozicki, Hughes, and Tickerhoof is in the process of conducting the audit for the fiscal year 2023-24 county finances. They are projecting to have the audit complete by January 31, 2025. From there, our accounting staff will go straight into budget mode. The State Auditor's Office scheduled a half-day regional budget workshop for February 6, 2025. Becky Coyne, Kim Lemley, and I will attend. The County Commissioner's Association of West Virginia will hold their annual legislative conference starting on Sunday, February 23, 2025. Budget hearings will be held the week of March 9, 2025. The West Virginia Association of County Officials will hold their annual Conference of Counties starting Saturday, March 1, 2025. On Monday, January 20, 2025, the Courthouse will be closed in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The County Commission shall annually, not later than February 1 of the tax year, meet as a board of equalization and review. I suggested that the Board's first meeting be Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. The board may adjourn anytime after sine die after February 15, 2025 but must adjourn by the last day of February. The State Tax Department is scheduled to be here on Tuesday, February 11 at 6:00 p.m. for all hearings regarding mineral valuations. Commissioners should place that date on their calendar. The annual report of 911 calls is provided. A conversation with Mr. David Evertson of Municipal Solutions was held on the salary and compensation study. They require six sets of data points to make the study statistically significant. At this point, they only have three in hand and are awaiting three others. He is going to send me the three he is still waiting for so that we can reach out directly to those counties or municipalities.
- Facilities – Ms. Marco provided the Commissioners with pictures of the HVAC project. The third, fourth, and fifth floors are currently under construction. The porch column project has been completed. We will now bid out the porch pavers. This project will be completed in 2025. The abatement in the Annex will now begin on January 20, 2025, due to weather delays the company experienced. All of the books have been moved from the County Clerk's office and the build out in the Assessor's office is 90% complete. The City is scheduled to move back to the third floor the week of January 27, 2025.
- Sheriff's Department – The Sheriff would like to place a request for bids in the newspaper for five new police cruisers. They are working on their Standard Operating Procedures. Sheriff Croft will be attending the Sheriff's Association Training next week in Charleston. They are looking for two instructors to teach at the range.
- EMA Director – The Marshall County Honor Guard will receive training on their AED later this month.
- 911 Director – Mr. Pritt reported the 2024 call sheets look very similar to the 2023 reports. Mr. Abraham asked why there was a 20,000 call difference to the non-emergency line. Mr. Pritt stated he attributed this to the outages we had with the system on three different occasions.

Finance:

- Mr. Russell reported the bills are up to date. Motion to approve the bills made by Mr. Nickerson, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Unpaid invoices –No further action is required.
- Exonerations – Mr. Wharton made a motion to approve the exonerations, seconded by Mr. Nickerson. Motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Zachary T. Abraham, President

Randel A. Russell, Administrator