The Board of Commissioners of Ohio County, West Virginia
Minutes of a Regular Session for Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Commission members present:
Commission President Zachary T. Abraham
Commissioner Randy Wharton

Commissioner Donald A. Nickerson, Jr. attended via phone

Staff Members present:
County Administrator Randel A. Russell
County Solicitor Don Tennant
Facilities Director Melissa Marco
Director of Emergency Management Lou Vargo
Assistant Director of Emergency Management Tony Campbell
Chief Deputy Kent Lewis
Election Coordinator Erin Allietta
Cody Koehler w/OCDA
Jessica Klinger
Michelle Olejasz

Elected Officials present:
County Assessor Tiffany Hoffman
Circuit Clerk Brenda Miller
Sheriff Nelson Croft

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

- Commission President Abraham convened the meeting in Room 215 of the City County Building at approx.8:35am. (Meeting was moved to 8:30am due to inclement weather.) Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

II. Delegations

- None

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- The minutes for the regular meeting on Tuesday, November 18, 2025 were presented to the Commissioners for approval. Commissioner Wharton made the motion to accept the minutes, seconded by President Abraham. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Grants

- None

V. Community Grants

- Ohio Valley Night To Shine 2026- Administrator Russell came to the Commissioners with a request from the Ohio Valley Night to Shine event for a financial sponsorship of their event which will take place on Friday, February 13, 2026, at the Training Center of the former West Virginia Penitentiary in Moundsville and hosted by the Limestone Presbyterian Church. It is a prom for our special needs community partially sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Mr. Russell asked the Commission for their approval for a $500 sponsorship for this year's event, which is the same as they have done for last 5 years. Commissioner Wharton made the motion to approve the $500 and it was seconded by President Abraham. The motion passed unanimously.

- Oglebay Institute, Arts, History & Nature Activities- Administrator Russell came to the Commissioners with a request from Oglebay Institute for financial support of their programs related to arts, history, and nature. They report that West Virginia arts funding has been cut in half, leaving them with a $40,000 shortfall for such programs. It does appear this is a first-time request for these programs. Commissioner Nickerson stated he needed to abstain from this vote. Commissioners Abraham & Wharton asked if a financial statement or further details were provided and Mr. Russell's answer was no, so a motion was made by President Abraham to table this subject for more information & it was seconded by Commissioner Wharton.

VI. Unfinished Business

- Wheeling Health Right, Reallocation of Community Grant Award- Administrator Randy Russell referenced Wheeling Health Right's request to reallocate their community grant of $36,552 for expansion of their mobile health unit to their dental program.
    - President Abraham said he spoke with Anne from Wheeling Health Right after the last meeting to get clarification and she further explained the money can be used on the Mobile Unit for dental care
    - Commissioner Wharton stated this is general taxpayer money and thinks the Commission needs to rethink & come up with a new plan to allocate funds
    - Concerns were raised & discussed if this is going to be for original time frame or recurring & it was clarified just for the original time frame. President Abraham made the motion to reallocate the funds to the dental program, and it was seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed unanimously.

- Special District Excise Tax, The Highlands, Series 2025A- Joe Nassif from Piper Sandler and Carrie Cecil from Frost Brown Todd along with her co-worker Chris, provided an update on the Special District Excise Tax bond issuance. Everything is due to be finalized this week on Thursday, Dec. 4. There were several compliments & congratulatory statements made to Randy Russell, Cody Koehler and others that worked on the Bond project for its success.

VII. New Business

- Elections, destruction of outdated records- Administrator Russell explained that The Ohio County Commission is required to retain certain documents related to an election for twenty-two months following the election. Mr. Russell presented the Commissioners with a list that Election Coordinator Allietta prepared that will be destroyed. President Abraham made the

motion to move forward with the destruction of the election items on the list, and it was seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed unanimously.

- Addressing, New Road Name, Boneyard Drive- Administrator Russell, on behalf of Bud & Darl, Inc., the owners of a parcel of land off Technology Drive, have constructed a second structure on their parcel, which now requires them to have a driveway on the property, named. They are requesting a road name of Boneyard Dr. There are no known objections to the road name. President Abraham made the motion to approve the road name, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed unanimously.

- Wheeling-Ohio County Airport, General Liability Insurance renewal- Administrator Russell stated to the Commissioners it was time to renew the general liability insurance for Wheeling-Ohio County Airport. Old Republic Insurance Company's renewal quote of $9,270.00 is just a 1.6% increase over last year's premiums. Mr. Russell noted Airport general liability insurance is a specialty line that very few carriers offer. A motion to approve the renewal coverage with Old Republic was made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed unanimously.

- Airport On-call Engineering Services, Selection- Administrator Russell explained that the County periodically is required to engage is a process for the procurement of the services of an on-call engineer at Wheeling-Ohio County Airport per West Virginia Code §5G. We received three (3) responses to our Request for Qualifications. The interview/selection committee is recommending Chapman Technical Group from Buckhannon, WV as the on-call engineer at the airport. President Abraham made the motion to enter into contract negotiations with Chapman, seconded with Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed unanimously.

- Utility Engineering Services, Selection- Administrator Russell requested approval of a utility engineer for the Ohio County Commission in the event the County would like to complete such a project. The same process is followed as for the on-call engineer as specified in West Virginia Code §5G. The County received two responses to our Request for Qualifications. The interview and selection committee recommended the selection of The Thrasher Group as the County's utility engineer for the next three years. President Abraham made the motion to enter into contract negotiations with The Thrasher Group, seconded with Commissioner Wharton. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Staff and Elected Official Reports

- Administrator Russell had nothing more to report

- Facilities Director Melissa Marco reported the following:
  - Found more grants but too late to present more for this meeting; currently up to 12 Grants found for the county

- Lintels on annex building- continues but still running into delays; should be done in two weeks
- Apron at Airport- work has started on Phase 2
- Pre-bid meeting for Tower is today
- HVAC still on target to be completed Jan 20

- Sheriff Nelson Croft reported the following:
  - Two of the four FLOCK license plate readers installed & working; other two should be very soon
  - New Deputy starting
  - Additional testing date coming up for additional hiring

- EMA/EMS Director Lou Vargo reported the following:
  - FEMA update:
    - Assistance to date- $7,422,000
    - Home Repair & Replacement- $4,867,055
    - Rental Assistance- $399,686
    - Other needs & Assistance- $2,155,351
    - Susie Nelson- Donations of Christmas Decorations to be distributed to flood victims
    - Students of WV Northern Community College doing some plumbing & other repairs for flood victims
  - Several in Ohio County completed Traumatic Life Saving training

  President Abraham requested a monthly update from Susie Nelson to show how funds have been allocated. Mr. Russell said that it is forthcoming.

- 911 Director Ricky Pritt not in attendance so Randy Russell reported the following in his absence:
  - The NextGen switch over is complete. They are working on their next phase.

- Assessor Tiffany Hoffman
  - She is working with Monongalia County to see who they have been handling their back taxes
  - Ohio County has about 40 non-taxable Mineral accounts
  - She did research & discovered there are 7 taxpayers that need The Ohio County Commission's approval to back-tax for minerals
  - There are smaller ones and a couple of large ones in the thousands
  - She has evidence that Solicitor Don Tennant can review
  - The deadline for billing is February 1, 2026
  - Other counties did take action, but the amounts were much smaller
  - Tiffany feels it's best to be fair to everyone & bill those she found
  - Moving forward everything is correct

  Jessica Klinger from Tiffany's office added clarification how the issue occurred & it was not just a basic clerical error; it was tied to reporting errors along with working in multiple system modules, etc.

  President Abraham made a motion to bill the taxpayers for the mineral back taxes owed based on the Assessor's office findings, Commissioner Wharton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Finance- In Becky Coyne's absence, Mr. Russell directed the Commissioners to the following:
    - Payables- The list was presented to the Commissioners. There were no questions. President Abraham made the motion to approve the payables, seconded by Commissioner Wharton, the motion passed unanimously.
    - Unpaid invoices- The list was presented to the Commissioners. No questions/inquiries. No action required.
    - Mr. Russell advised that there were no budget revisions

- Assessor
    - Administrator Russell directed Commissioners to the list of 6 tax exonerations. They have been reviewed & found reasonable. President Abraham made the motion to approve the Exonerations, seconded by Commissioner Wharton, motion approved unanimously.
    - No Certificates of Re-Entry

IX. Commission Board Reports

- None

X. Commissioner Comments

- President Abraham commented on all of the good work done on the bonds. Also, at the recent OVTRA meeting there was discussion about reducing routes due to driver shortages.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35am

Future Meetings

December 16, 2025 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
December 24, 2025 – Christmas Eve, Courthouse Closed at 12:30pm
December 25, 2025 – Christmas Day, Courthouse Closed
December 31, 2025 – New Year's Eve, Courthouse Closed at 12:30pm
January 6, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
January 19, 2026 – Martin Luther King Day, Courthouse Closed
January 20, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting
February 3, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
February 3, 2026 – Board of Equalization and Review at 9:30am
February 17, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
February 17, 2026 – Board of Equalization and Review at 9:30am

Zachary T. Abraham, Commission President

Randel A. Russell County Administrator

- Finance- In Becky Coyne's absence, Mr. Russell directed the Commissioners to the following:
    - Payables- The list was presented to the Commissioners. There were no questions. President Abraham made the motion to approve the payables, seconded by Commissioner Wharton, the motion passed unanimously.
    - Unpaid invoices- The list was presented to the Commissioners. No questions/inquiries. No action required.
    - Mr. Russell advised that there were no budget revisions.

- Assessor
    - Administrator Russell directed Commissioners to the list of six exonerations. They have been reviewed and found reasonable. President Abraham made the motion to approve the exonerations, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. The motion was approved unanimously.
    - No Certificates of Re-Entry

IX. Commission Board Reports

- None

X. Commissioner Comments

- President Abraham commented on the good work done on the bonds. Also, at the recent OVRTA meeting there was discussion about reducing routes due to driver shortages.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Future Meetings

December 16, 2025 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
December 24, 2025 – Christmas Eve, Courthouse Closed at 12:30pm
December 25, 2025 – Christmas Day, Courthouse Closed
December 31, 2025 – New Year's Eve, Courthouse Closed at 12:30pm
January 6, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
January 19, 2026 – Martin Luther King Day, Courthouse Closed
January 20, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting
February 3, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
February 3, 2026 – Board of Equalization and Review at 9:30am
February 17, 2026 – County Commission, Regular Meeting at 8:00am
February 17, 2026 – Board of Equalization and Review at 9:30am

Zachary T. Abraham, Commission President

Randel A. Russell County Administrator