The Board of Commissioners of Ohio County, West Virginia
Minutes of a Regular Session for Tuesday, March 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 H. Nelson Croft
Assessor Tiffany Hoffman

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.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from February 17, 2026, were tabled.

Community Grants

- Opioid Fund, Valley Grove VFD, Power Load System – The Valley Grove Volunteer Fire Department is requesting $84,000.00 for a new to purchase a new cot and loading system for their ambulance. They currently have the cot, but are in need of the loading system. After discussion, President Abraham made a motion to approve $42,000.00 for the system, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- General Fund, MEC Basketball Championship – The Commission entered into a three-year partnership with the MEC. This will support year two of the commitment. The cost is $5,000.00. Motion to approve the payment of the sponsorship made by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.

Unfinished Business

- Request for Funding, General Fund, WV RT 2 / I-69 Authority, $4,000.00 – Mr. Bob Miller spoke about the WV RT 2 / I-69 Authority. He took the position in 2019 and stated they are working closely with the Department of Energy, Department of Commerce, and the Department of Transportation. Mr. Miller stated the Authority essentially has to start over every time the administration changes. In May 2025, the Head of Intergovernmental Affairs wanted the Governors of West Virginia and Ohio to work together on the project and sign an agreement. He has now set up a meeting with Congressman Moore on Friday to discuss how the road will now extend to Caldwell, Ohio and it has moved south of Moundsville. It now ends at Baltimore Harbor. President Abraham asked what role the Authority played in the expansion of Route 2.

Mr. Miller stated they voiced their thoughts to the Department of Transportation and State officials. He feels they are making progress in the endeavor.

- Addressing, Road Name Change, Fitz's Lane to Vog's Lane – After some research and discussing the matter with other residents on the lane, Mr. Russell is recommending changing the road name to Vog's Lane. President Abraham made the motion to approve the road name change, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried.

New Business

- Temporary Voting Precinct Relocation, Precinct 28 St. James Evangelical Church to City-County Building – The Precinct has informed the Commission that they have a large amount of food stored in the Church they are unable to distribute by the time of the election. The Precinct will be temporarily relocated to the City-County Building. In year's past, it was held at the City-County Building but was moved due to the public's comments on police presence in the building.
- Ohio County Travel Rule – A travel policy has been recommended by the Auditors. Mr. Russell requested the Commissioners adopt the policy previously reviewed. Motion to approve the travel policy made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Sheriff's Department, Advice and Consent for New Hire, Deputy Devin Milbert – Mr. Milbert previously worked in Courthouse Security. Motion to approve the hire made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Sheriff's Department, Advice and Consent for New Hire, Deputy Mason Parsons – Mr. Parsons also worked in Courthouse Security. Motion to approve the hire made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Animal Shelter, Advice and Consent, Part Time to Full Time, Emmaly Cole – Mr. Russell stated Ms. Cole has done an excellent job at the shelter and would like to move her to full time. President Abraham made a motion to approve the position from part time to full time, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Airport Lease, T-Hanger #1, LaRoche Aviation Services LLC – LaRoche would like to store an MD 5001 Helicopter by renting the hanger. The motion to rent the hanger to LaRoche Aviation Services was made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Airport Lease, T-Hanger #5, LaRoche Aviation Services LLC – LaRoche would like to store a Cherokee Aircraft in Hanger 5. Motion to rent the hanger to LaRoche Aviation Services was made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Personnel Matter, 911 Communications Department – This matter will be moved to the end of the meeting and discussed in Executive Session.

Staff and Elected Official Reports

- County Administrator Randy Russell – The new jail bill will be out in five days. The City is still reviewing the January bill.
- Senior Fiscal Office Rebecca Coyne – President Abraham questioned the payment made to WesBanco Areana. Mr. Russell explained this was for the MEC sponsorship. Motion to approve the payables made by President Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- Exonerations – Mr. Russell stated there were 26 exonerations recommended by the Assessor's Office. All were to reduce taxes. President Abraham made a motion to accept the exonerations, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried.
- There was one certificate of reentry presented to the Commissioners. This certificate was to reenter a parcel into the land books that has been vacant since 2015. President Abraham made a motion to reenter the property, seconded by Commissioner Wharton. Commissioner Nickerson abstained from the vote.

At 8:20 a.m. the Commissioners entered Executive Session.

Executive Session was adjourned at 8:50 a.m. with no further comments to add to the record.

There being no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Zachary T. Abraham, Commission President

Randel A. Russell, County Administrator