Ohio County Commission
November 21, 2023

The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order by President Donald A. Nickerson. The Pledge of Alliance was recited.

Delegations:

- Sharon David and Peggy Niebergall would like to access the County Farm to assess if it is feasible and safe to complete workshops in the spring and summer. The group has recently formed a 501(c)3. They are insured by AmeriCorp. The issue will be placed on the next County Commission agenda for approval.

The minutes from November 7, 2023, were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Community Grants:

- North Wheeling Community Youth Center Annual Thanksgiving Food – The Commission has provided a sponsorship in the amount of $1,250.00 for a basketball shootout which supports this event. Unfortunately, we did not receive this request in time, but they are asking for funds to directly support the Thanksgiving Food Giveaway. Motion to approve a donation in the amount of $1,250.00 made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Ignite Hope – Motion to approve $500.00 made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Super Six Football Championships – The Super Six Committee has requested a $7,500.00 donation for the event to be held on December 1 and 2, 2023 at Wheeling Island Stadium. Motion to approve the donation for $7,500.00 made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- Vehicle Policy – Due to Mr. Russell's absence, this issue will be tabled until the next meeting.
- ARPA Community Grants – Approval is sought by the Commissioners to disburse the first round of payments to approved organizations. Approval to disburse the payments made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

New Business:

- New Checking Accounts – Per the West Virginia State Auditor's Office, we are required to open three new checking accounts for Opioid Settlement Funds, County Fire Protection Funds, and EMS Enhancement Funds. Funds for these three accounts will be coming from outside sources. Motion to approve the opening of the checking accounts made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Updates to Election Policy – Per the West Virginia Secretary of State, we are required to have a policy for public access to our voter's records. Jessica Klinger has written a

policy for your approval. Motion to approve the policy made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

- Ohio River at Wheeling Stream Gauge – The United States Department of Interior has sent a renewal agreement for joint funding of the flood gauge on Wheeling Creek. This agreement is for a five-year term beginning on 10-1-2023 at a cost of $31,180.00. In the past, the City has split the cost with the County. The Commission requested Mr. Tennant formalize the agreement with a letter to the City. Motion to approve made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Ohio County Employee Incremental Pay Increase – It was proposed that a $500.00 incremental increase be provided to full time staff, while part time staff would be paid by service hours. A conversation ensued that a salary survey needs to be completed for appropriate cost adjustments. This salary survey would suffice in the future for any adjustments. It was also noted the County has paid for all health insurance increases. Tiffany Hoffman from the Assessor's Office and Donna Vance from the Prosecutor's Office noted that employees count on this money. But the Commissioners noted it is not sustainable to pay for these increases and all related health insurance costs. A discussion will be had at a future meeting to discuss what the method will look like moving forward. A $500.00 payment will be paid to all full-time staff tomorrow, while part-time staff will be paid based on their hours. The Commission will work diligently to get these payments to staff before 12:00 p.m. when they dismiss for the holiday.

Staff / Elected Official Reports:

- In Mr. Russell's absence, Ms. Marco reported that the State Legislature held their interim sessions at Oglebay last week and he took a group of Legislatures on a tour of the Highlands. The group was very impressed with the Highlands Sports Complex.
- Ms. Marco reported work has commenced on the North end of the building. The alley will close on Monday to run the temporary gas lines for the project. The City and the Judges have been notified of the closure, although a walkway will be open throughout the project for access. We are still on track to complete the windows and roof by the end of the year. Governor Justice has also declared tomorrow a half day off for employees to enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends. Motion to approve the half-day holiday made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.
- Emergency Services – Mr. Vargo stated ERB, the PSD, EMA, and the Commission are working together to write a FEMA grant. The National Registry representative applauded Ohio County, while the OVMS Director said Ohio County was number one in the state.
- Sheriff – A representative of the Sheriff's Office 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. This funding has now been received and the invoices will be paid by the next meeting. No further action is required.
- Mr. Archey presented the second budget revision of the year. Motion to approve the revision made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

- Mr. Archey presented the exonerations for consideration. Motion to approve made by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Wharton. Motion carried.

Board Reports:

- Mr. Abraham provided a REDP and OVRTA update.
- Mr. Nickerson provided a Northern Panhandle Workforce Development board report.

Commissioner's Comments:

- Mr. Abraham reported all the interviews for the Growth and Retention Team have been completed.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Donald A. Nickerson, President

Randel A. Russell, Administrator