OHIO COUNTY COMMISSION
9/20/2022

The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present at the meeting was President Randy Wharton, Commissioner Don Nickerson, Commissioner Zach Abraham, Administrator Randy Russell, Finance Director Rodd Archey, and Solicitor Don Tennant.

Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2022, Commission meeting. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

President Wharton reported that there is also a set of corrected minutes from the meeting of November 2, 2021. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2021, Commission meeting. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Grants

HAVA Funding-Election Equipment

Finance Director Archey reported that for tonight the Commissioners have the Help America Vote Act grant for consideratiom There is funding available through this grant for election equipment. The application is due in Charleston on September 30, 2022. He reported that the County currently has eighty E-Poll books, and sixty-eight integrated stands. The stands are obsolete currently, and the new Epoll books would have new printers as well. So, he is asking for eighty new poll books with the printers. The total cost would be about $153,000.00. The HAVA grant would match 85% Ohio County would pay about $23,000.00 for the new poll books. Commissioner Abraham asked if this is the same type used now. Finance Director Archey responded yes, just an updated version. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the HAVA grant application. Second by commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

EMPG Grant Application

Finance Director Archey reported that he is requesting $75,000.00 but probably will not receive that amount. This for operational items for the EMA office. This is also due September 30, 2022. Commissioner Abraham questioned the date. Rodd stated yes, it is the 2020 calendar year, as they are behind. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the EMPG grant application. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor

FY2022 Court Security Grant Award

Administrator Russell reported that Ohio County received a grant award from the West Virginia Court Security Grant Program in the amount of $30,071.00 for the purchase of walk-through metal detectors, indoor IP cameras for the Courthouse and Courthouse Annex, and hand-held metal detectors. There is no match for this grant. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion to approve the grant. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

HOTEL TAX REQUEST

WV High School Golf Championship

Administrator Russell reported that there is a request from the WV High School Golf Championship. The WVSSAC event will be held at the Speidel Golf Course at Oglebay Park October 4th and 6th of this year. There is no specific request this year. The Commission has awarded $4,000.00 in the past to this event. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve $4,000.00 for the WV High School Golf Championship. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

ARPA Funding Update

Administrator Russell reported that the ARPA online application is live, and he is in the process of advertising that this week on our website and the local news media with the specific website that folks can go onto and fill out the application. His hope is to have all applications in by October 31, 2022 and have our citizens committee come in and review all the applications at one time. So hopefully to be making awards before the end of the year.

President Wharton requested that the request from Reverend Cummings at our September 6, 2022, Commission meeting be brought back to the next Commission meeting. He knows that the Commissioners thought maybe it would fall under the ARPA funds, but he would like to consider the request again at a future Commission meeting.

Growth & Retention Team

Commissioner Abraham reported that he would like to proceed with getting all the entities together to discuss the Growth & Retention Team. He stated that Administrator Russell attended the conversation with Belomar about the remote worker and this is about increasing the population base and focusing on small businesses to come here. He reported that the remote worker would be a pivotal foundational stone around that. Administrator Russell stated that they are doing a remote worker feasibility study that was applied for through Belomar and the City of Wheeling. He believes that they will have some actual items that the Growth & Retention Team can act on to bring residents and small business to the Valley. Commissioner Abraham reported that this is a shared resource with multiple entities involved. The good news is there may be a few foundations that may be interested in funding to offset. Between labor that some organizations have offered an in addition to some funding for this team, he would like to get approval from the Commission to move forward so that they can address it with the rest of the group. He stated he has already spoken to the OCDA, the Commission, the City of Wheeling, RED, Wheeling Chamber, Wheeling Heritage, Wheeling CVB, Wheeling Park Commission, the Community Foundation, and some support from Belomar. The next step is to get the group together and to get official approval from each body so he can get a memorandum of understanding together to fund the two positions. Finance Director Archey asked who would employ these two positions. Commissioner Abraham reported that he would say they would be OCDA employees because they are the development arm, but with some guidance from that group of shared organizations. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the moving forward to help fund and or support the Growth & Retention Team. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2022 FY 2023 & FY 2024- 3 Year Audit RFP

Finance Director Archey reported that a few weeks ago the Commission approved to put the Audit out for proposal. There was only one company that contacted us. It was Kozicki, Hughes, & Tickerhoof, so he submitted to three other entities, and he only received one back, from BHM. The others declined. He

stated as you can see the bid that BHM submitted was extremely low. He feels that they did not understand our proposal or our audit. He stated that the scoring committee gave KHT a score of 72, and BHM a score of 65. Those are three-year totals in the bid column, In the past three years the cost of the audit was $52,000.00, so with that the audit scoring committee chose Kozicki, Hughes, & Tickerhoof. Commissioner Abraham asked if it is fair to say that the bid from BHM was not a reasonable bid. Finance Director Archey stated he has discussed this with the State Auditor's office, and they suggested that we forward the scoring to them. He stated that the State Auditor's Office recommend scoring as is, but with looking at the proposal itself there is not a whole lot of information about how they could get this prepared in three months at that cost. Commissioner Abraham stated he would think this is an unreasonable bid. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to accept the bid from Kozicki, Hughes, and Tickerhoof. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

STAFF/ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS

Administrator Russell reported that he is continuing to interview for the Project Coordinator position. Hopefully at the next meeting there will be some news. He reported that there will be janitorial positions advertised for, and also for 911 dispatchers. He is also advertising for an assistant dog warden and humane officer. There was some talk of possible retirements at the end of the year, so he is looking for what opportunities are out there for the Animal Shelter.

HVAC-Administrator Russell reported that he is looking for contract documents to go to bid for the HVAC project at the end of September, probably September 27, 2022, and something should be in the newspaper. He will bring that back to the Commission, but he would like to be able to award it in mid to late November. Then the contractors would start early Spring of 2023.

Elevator-Administrator Russell reported that the Courthouse Annex elevator is still down due to the chip that is on order and has not come in yet.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Emergency Management Director Vargo reported that the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department has started the bi-valent vaccines every day each week. This is the new one that is out for COVID-19. The Health Department had Moderna and Pfizer but are out of the Moderna currently. He reported that on October 1, 2022, Chief Blazier, Deputy Director Campbell and a few other fire instructors will be providing training to other volunteer fire departments which will be at the burn tower on Wheeling Island, and then on October 24, 2022, there will be a semi-truck extraction technique training.

Sheriff Howard reported that there is a JAG meeting this Thursday in Charleston for PRO's and Drug Task Force. He spoke with the Administrator of Courthouse Facilities Association about a meeting that is coming up. The State Sheriffs Association was at the Auditor's meeting last week and went over things going on throughout the State, including tax sales, and addressing HR issues. He was re-elected as VicePresident of the State Sheriff's Association. He stated that the Sheriff's Office is having another test October 27, 2022, for Sheriff Deputies. He reported on the interstate. He was told the work should be completed on time in November. He wants to recognize the Deputy Sheriff's Association of Ohio County. The Board is here with other members. He wanted to say he has some support with the DSA. He fully supports them, and a letter was given to the County Administrator, and he believes that all the Commissioners received it also about working on some ideas of having a civilian position at the Sheriffs Department. He reported that he is in full support of that and in full support of the Deputy Sheriff Association. President Wharton asked the Sheriff if he wanted to speak to this tonight. The Sheriff reported it is not on the agenda so he was not sure if it could be talked about. Sheriff Howard reported that he is in full support of changing one of our Chief Deputy positions to a civilian administrator

position. He feels it would be a big benefit to the Sheriff's Department. The Chief Deputy would like to retire but still work as a civilian administrator and the Sheriff feels it would be a big benefit to us, as he has thirty-one years at the Sheriffs Department. He reported that the civilian administrator has nine pages plus of what the job entails. That is part of the letter that the Deputy Sheriff's Association has addressed to the Commissioners. He would like to work as fast as possible to make that happen. Commissioner Abraham asked what percentage of time this person will not be doing Sheriff duties. The Sheriff reported it will be the same job, but be administrator now, but will not have any law enforcement powers. Commissioner Abraham what percent of time week to week, month to month, year to year is his time allocated as a deputy which he will no longer be able to do is my understanding. Is it 10 20%, 30% because my understanding is there is some overtime involved too, at the Highlands and some other things like that so he is trying to get a sense of connecting the dots with the finance people. The Sheriff reported there will be no overtime, and no law enforcement. All law enforcement duties will be gone. He is doing about 150% of the administrative work now. It will be strictly Chief civilian administrator. Commissioner Abraham reported he is asking right now what his duties are right now. The Sheriff responded stating he does it all, he's an SRT commander, he is also a range instructor on top of all the other duties he throws at him. He will not be able to do the SRT, he will still be a certified trainer so he can still do training. Commissioner Abraham stated he just wants to make sure there are other trainers that are needed for our law enforcement if this person can no longer do these trainings. The Sheriff stated he is a trainer himself; he is trying to get people into classes, he finally got one, but it will not be until after our recertifications are due. Commissioner Abraham asked if the association could help with that. The Sheriff reported he has one set up now, Deputy McConnell who is set to go to a class for firearms. Commissioner Abraham stated he just want to make sure there is enough sustainability, like you and the other individual trainers and if something happens to somebody and we cannot do it then what. The Sheriff reported that he has other trainers, but we are working on that but as you know it's been hard getting the training back in progress, we finally got a spot open for firearms and that is one of the main things that is a mandatory State law. The Sheriff reported losing him would be huge, he has thirty-one years of experience and fourteen of those are as Chief Deputy. The Sheriff reported that yes, we have two Chief Deputies, but having one Chief Deputy would be okay. Chief Deputy Schultz works with the grants, and several other duties. He works with Major Rodd Vaught on grants and other activities. He would be picking up part of the payroll duties, learning the new process. Commissioner Nickerson asked the Sheriff if this person would leave tomorrow and not want the civilian job would the Sheriff have someone to cover all his duties. The Sheriff stated no, for example if he left the Sheriff could not spend four weeks at a range and still be Sheriff things would be very, very difficult. Commissioner Nickerson asked the Sheriff if he could cover it if this person said goodbye. Finance Director Archey asked when the effective retirement date is. The Sheriff stated it could be tomorrow. Finance Director Archey asked the Sheriff if you want to recognize the person. Sheriff Howard asked if Chief Flick wanted to speak. Chief Drage Flick stated to answer Commissioner Abraham's question of how much law enforcement work he does. He stated about 10% law enforcement. He stated he works the highlands shift every Sunday or so and a little on the interstate other than that, unless someone does something in front of me when he is coming to or driving home from work, he does not get out of the office nowadays. Chief Flick stated that the extent of my law enforcement is running the SRT team if somebody calls, or taskforce calls, and if a barricade or something is needed. He stated he is in the office most of the time doing payroll, maintaining our systems, IT, and everything that comes through the office. He stated that nobody wants to be in the position that we are in, but we lost three senior people last year and trying to train people to do their

jobs, helping to get people to do some of the jobs that he does. Dawn Zelowicz and Kaleigh Kozik used to do payroll, then he took that over to learn the new system. He has not had time to teach anyone, and nobody else knows networking. Deputy Drage Flick reported that his suggestion to the Sheriff was offer him a temporary civilian position as a civilian position until the end of his term and if the next Sheriff comes in and wants to entertain it as well then so be it. He reported they have been so short, and the other officers are out on the roads doing the law enforcement duties and there has not been anyone to learn so it has fallen on him and he accepted all the work. The idea was a transition so that Dawn and Kaleigh can get up to speed on the payroll, PTO that kind of thing and to get Brady and a few other officers to get certified as firearms instructors. They have to go to 40 hour handgun instructor class and then a 40 hour instructor development class with the FBI. The FBI gives that class only twice a year and only ten people in the class. So, he is fighting with the whole State for twenty spots. He is hoping that in the future they can get new instructors for these trainings. It comes down to three of the four or five they lost last year really hurt and he stated he really cannot afford to completely retire.
President Wharton stated to Deputy Flick so you would be taking a temporary position until the end of the Sheriff's term or whatever, and that would eliminate the need to post the job. President Wharton reported that even if they posted the job, he would want to be very much involved in the qualifications that we would be looking for, and even if the job was posted he is not sure who would have the qualifications other than you. President Wharton asked is this something that the Administrator should work out either with the Sheriff and or Deputy Flick. President Wharton feels that this makes sense to benefit everyone. Sheriff Howard stated that he and the Administrator have had some conversations and is very involved in this situation. Commissioner Abraham reported thank you for the overview about this, it seems like it is about balance between needs and transition, he would like whatever works out to maybe have a plan, transition some of the stuff, and maybe do it in a draft form, maybe if it's a two year time horizon, maybe have a game plan, because before you know it will two years down the road and if things are not moving along you will be in the same spot. Deputy Flick stated he could retire tomorrow. Deputy Dober stated the office work needs to be covered, and the deputies can cover the road work, the sooner he is in the office full time the better. Dawn Zelowicz from the Sheriffs office reported that to take in consideration also this is not like an extraordinary thing to take an LEO let him retire then give him in civilian position. Agencies across the country have been doing this at least the last ten years because they can't get enough people to take the job. She feels they are going to see it more and more, and there are more deputies that will probably be leaving in one or two more years. She stated there are other people in the office questioning their career choices. She stated in five years we may only be able to cover courts and process servers, which sounds harsh, but she says it is this way everywhere. She says if Drage Flick walks out tomorrow we are in big trouble. Deputy Dober stated he feels the same way Commissioner Abraham asked what type of transition plan is in place and what is your recruiting strategy for the Department because no department should crash and burn because of one person leaving. Dawn Zelowicz reported this is nationwide, our other Chief Deputy going to all the colleges, talking to criminal justice programs, we have ads all over the internet. Sheriff Howard reported there are some things we are working on that he has not sent to anyone yet. Commissioner Abraham reported he would be happy to help he stated he does these things all the time. The Sheriff stated when he started there were 400 people taking the test, he is lucky to have to have 12 take the test now. He reported that with the quick retirements they had and then attempting to get people into firearms training there was nothing available. Commissioner Abraham thanked the Sheriff's Office for coming and sharing. Corporal Dober reported this would be good for the office and for the community. Administrator Russell

introduced Detective Seifert as the President of the Ohio County Deputies Association, and Corporal Dober is the Vice President.

FINANCE DIVISION

BILLS-Finance Director Archey reported that the Commissioners have a copy of the bills as they are up to date, Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve paying the bills. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

EXONERATIONS-Finance Director Archey reported that the Commissioners have six exonerations for consideration tonight. All are recommended by the Assessor, and all are credits reducing a tax. Commissioner Nickerson made a motion approve the exonerations. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Elections

Finance Director Archey reported that the Commission is required to choose Emergency Absentee Ballot Commissioners to deliver ballots on Election Day if needed. Deborah Donahue and Joan Hocking have done this in the past and they are willing to do again. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve those two ladies to be the Emergency Ballot Commissioners for this November 8, 2022, General Election. Second by Commissioner Nickerson. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Finance Director Archey reported that the letters to all election officials went in the mail today. There were approximately two hundred thirty-five letters being mailed.

Finance Director Archey reported that the ballot commissioners have proofed and approved the ballot. Friday, September 23, 2022, military and overseas ballots are to be mailed.

COMMISSION BOARD REPORTS

Nothing from the board.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Administrator Russell reported that at this time he would like to introduce Skylar Wotring, he is here from the State Auditor's office to talk about the County Checkbook.

Skylar Wotring represents JB McCuskey, and Mr. Wotring is Director of Transparency and Oversight. He is here to present an accounting system that overlays your current accounting system which allows the County to be transparent to the public. It would show revenues coming in, expenses going out, and it allows you to communicate on those line items, and each transaction that you make to the public. He reported that he is working on his 40th County. Brooke County is on board, he is still working with Marshall County, and he has a good majority of the State at the County level, and another 40 to 50 cities in the works now. There are three components of the project. There is no cost, as they purchase the licensing at the State level. They have a consolidated package with our vendor to hand out these licenses at will. They purchase it for all 55 counties and all 230 plus cities. There is a transparency portal that will have your revenues and expenses visualized, with something called dashboards which will allow the Commissioners and anyone else within the organization to have their own login so they can go in and review finances in real time. The third component is Stories. Stories is a free webpage that they build for us that's built within the transparency portal that allows you to add pictures, graphs, pdf's, videos, and really anything that you want that you can add to this living web page that allows you to give folks a quick review of financial activity for the year or month.

He explained that this program can track trends month to month, year to year, and be able to say if the legislature takes this revenue from us what impact is that going to have and how can that be back filled. There are a hundred different ways to chop the data up and to be able to analyze the way it needs to be done and it is free. Commissioner Abraham asked what the time frame would be. He stated it would depend on if they could meet twice a week with the County it may take a month. It all depends on the when they would get the data. He reported probably a month to month and a half. Commissioner Abraham asked if this could be linked to our current website. Mr. Wotring reported yes. He explained additional information to the County Commissioners.

President Wharton reported that he wanted to speak about the public comment conducted on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, regarding the proposed noise ordinance. He reported that a few things became very apparent to him at the meeting and that was some people who came want to be left alone and not live under restrictions. Also, they want to live where it is peaceful and quiet, but sometimes those two collide. The Commissioners discussed off the record after that meeting and concluded that there are two different types of noise that we are dealing with. One is excessive noise, and one is excessive unnecessary noise. He stated that some of the noise is from industry in the past few years. He stated his opinion is that all three need to be taken care of separately. As far as the ATV's and other vehicles, those could be addressed by the Sheriff's Department. In a situation where neighbors are making noise and other neighbors get upset about it, he really has no answer on that. But a third area is the industrial noise. This Commission has not done a good enough job when people complain to us about the industry noise. He feels that the Commission should begin to meet with these companies to figure out how to ease the noise flow. He stated those are my comments. Commissioner Nickerson thoughts were that he was leaning in favor of adopting a noise ordinance but after the public comment he feels he would like to meet with the Sheriff's Department and the State Police to see if there are laws on the books that could be enforced, and meet with the mines, and oil and gas industry to see what can be done. He feels that we should take a narrow approach first. Commissioner Abraham reported that he echoes a lot of the same comments, The restrictiveness for me was the hard part, so obviously if the good neighbor approach does not work, there has to be an alternative. He would hope to be able to meet and it is our goal to advocate for our citizens so he wants to take the diplomatic approach first and if that does not work then consider how can we put something in place to benefit the citizens.
Sheriff Howard stated that 90% of the time if a call comes in on noise disturbance, by the time the deputy gets there, the person on a four-wheeler is gone. Sheriff Howard stated that they catch some but most of the time is when they have wrecked. He reported that since the law changed, and they can ride on the roads, it is worse.

President Wharton stated that Monday, October 10, 2022, is Columbus Day. All offices will be closed except for those that are required to remain open.

FUTURE MEETINGS

President Wharton reported that the next meeting will be Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at 8:00 a.m.
Meeting adjourned.

President, Randy Wharton

Administrator, Randel Russell