

## County Commission Hears Financial Concerns from Union Rescue

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on Wednesday, September 3, 2014 at the Courthouse. Commission President Shane Ashley called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

Union Rescue Squad Executive Director Robin Frazier, board members Robert M. Williams, Sr. and Bill Wickline and Paramedic Rhonda Hall appeared before the County Commission. Ms. Frazier once again told Commissioners that the Union Rescue Squad was in serious financial shape. She said the recent changes in the way Medicare reimburses rescue squads for their services will result in the Union squad to cease operations unless other sources of income can be identified real soon. Frazier said the squad simply wasn't receiving enough revenue to pay their expenditures including drivers, Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics in addition to the fuel and other cost associated with responding to calls for assistance.

In other business, Commissioners met with Bob Hazelwood from Thrasher, Inc. Hazelwood is serving as the engineer/architect on the Courthouse Sprinkler System project. After some discussion, the County Commission awarded the bid to install the sprinkler system to Brewer and Company of WV for \$227,600.00 and an Additive Alternate No. 1 bid in the amount of \$46,200.00. The alternate bid consists of using a chemical retardant in both Courthouse record rooms instead of water. Due to the amount of funding currently available for the project, it was agreed to install the system in phases. Phase I will consist of the following; 1) Underground work (bringing in the sprinkler system piping inside the building, ready for operation; \$46,500.00. 2) clean agent fire sprinkler system for two record rooms \$42,400.00. 3) Installation of the fire alarm system (partial) \$9,300.00. Total project cost for Phase I is \$98,200.00.

On the recommendation of Gary Taylor, Chairman of the county's Planning Commission, the County Commission approved a request from Verizon to install a 172-foot antenna on an existing tower located on Bickett Knob.

The Commission reviewed a letter from WV Archives and History Commission advising that a meeting will be held in Huntington on September 25, 2014 at 9:30 am for the purpose of making a determination on whether to nominate a portion of the Gap Mills Valley to the National Register of Historic Places. Donald J. Evans, County Clerk, advised Commissioners he contacted representatives at Archives and History to ask if this meeting could be held in Monroe County to allow those, either supporting the nomination or opposing it, to have the opportunity to voice their concerns. Evans said he was told these meeting locations are scheduled months in advance and they really don't know what will be on the agenda at a specific location. They said it just so happens the Gap Valley nomination is on the agenda for the Huntington meeting. The Clerk's request was denied but Archives and History representatives advised residents could submit letters supporting or opposing the nomination in writing and send it to Susan M. Pierce, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, WV Division of Culture & History, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Charleston, WV 25305.

Jeff Jones, Director for the Office of Emergency Management, appeared before the County Commission. In the absence of Tim Wilson, 911 Director, Jones provided the monthly Wrecker Response Report. He said Galford's received nine calls, Clarkson's three and Neel's, Wilson and Lee's received one call each. Jones then provided the Monthly Call Report. He said the 911 Center received 216 Emergency Medical Service calls, 182 law enforcement calls and 32 fire related calls. Jones presented a proposal to the Commission from Bostic Fencing for constructing a chain link fence around a tower located on Bickett Knob. The amount of the proposal was \$7,218.30. Commissioners wanted additional information on the fence that wasn't included in the proposal and asked Commissioner Gum to get the info prior to the Commission acting on the proposal.

Mike Clemons and Adam Blankenship from WVVA.net appeared before the County Commission. Mr. Clemons said his business offers Internet service. He said he currently has offices in Rich Creek and Princeton and wants to expand his business to northern Monroe County. The County Commission and Clemens talked about possibly partnering on various tower sites.

Commissioners reviewed a proposal from Lisa Thornburg, CPA, to prepare the county's financial statements in accordance with Government Accounting Standard Board (GASB). Commissioners agreed to solicit Requests for Proposals for providing this service to the county.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that the Courthouse Facilities Improvement Authority grant application is due October 4<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners plan to seek additional grant funding to complete Phase II of the Courthouse Sprinkler System project.

Commissioner approved the poll workers for the November 4, 2012 General Election and at the request of the Prosecuting Attorney, appropriated additional funds the office's record book line item.

The County Clerk informed Commissioners that County Clerk employee Jeremy Meadows will no longer be able to serve as the county's Information Technology Manager. The Clerk said he has assigned Mr. Meadows additional duties in the office and he simply won't have time to perform his office duties along with the IT duties. The Clerk said most offices have a company that will provide IT support for them for a fee.

Chris Webb, Executive Director for the Summers/Monroe Day Report Center, along with Judge Robert Irons, Matt McMillen, Probation Officer and Jennifer McMeekin, Executive Director of Drug Court met with the County Commission. Mr. Webb advised Commissioners that the Day Report Program now has a full time presence in Monroe County. The office is located on Main Street beside the former Monroe Motors building. Mr. Webb then reported the program has switched monitoring companies resulting in a \$20,000 a year savings to the program.

Magistrates Kevin Miller and Nancy Crews and Magistrate Assistant Jeannie Gullette appeared before the County Commission with concerns over the maintenance of their offices. The County Commission rents office space for the Magistrates on the top floor of the Union Volunteer Fire Department building. The County Commission advised these individuals they would speak to the Chief of the Union Fire Department about getting these problems fixed.

A delegation of individuals appeared before the County Commission with concerns about the upcoming Pink Moon Festival that is scheduled to be held in Rock Camp on the Testerman Farm, September 11-15, 2014. These individuals included Allen and Arlene McInarnay, Roger Rance, Anthony Mietus and Janet Goldman. Ms. McInarnay told Commissioners that her and her husband's property joins the property on which the festival is held and they are downstream from the site. She said the event is a public nuisance and requested the County Commission encourage all law enforcement agencies to enforce the laws at this event and to support County Sanitarian David Johnson as he performs his duties as health inspector. Mr. McInarnay then spoke and he said he had an oily substance that ran onto his property last year and he felt sure it came from the festival. He also stated that he hasn't talked to one single person in the county that supports the Pink Moon Festival. Commissioner Ashley told those in attendance that he would speak to the State Police and see if they could have additional manpower available for the dates of the festival. Ashley also requested that Jeff Jones, the Director of the County Office of Emergency Management develop an Emergency Action Plan for this event.

As presented by Assessor Norbert Netzel, the County Commission approved parcel consolidations for Thomas Mitchell, Robert Miller, William Grover and Sharon Campbell and Christine B. Parker.

The Commission approved 15 final estate settlements and four exonerations. The County Commission will meet again in regular session on October 1, 2014 at 9:00 am at the Courthouse. If you need to be placed on the Commission's agenda, please call 772-3096.