

Monroe Commission Holds September Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on September 7, 2011 at 9:00 am at the Courthouse. Commission President Shane Ashley called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

Tisha Terry, Accounts Receivable / Payable Clerk for the County Clerk's Office, provided the County Commission with year end budget reports for year ending June 30, 2012. Ms. Terry also presented Commissioners with the August financial report.

T.J. Meadows, representing American Electric Power, appeared before the County Commission. Meadows spoke about A.E.P. and provided Commissioners with documentation that contained facts and figures concerning the company. Commissioners asked Meadows about the closure of the AEP plant at Glen Lyn. Meadows said with the new regulations issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, it just wasn't feasible to spend the necessary funds to bring the Glen Lyn plant into compliance with the EPA regulations. He said the plant is scheduled for closure on December 2014. Meadows said that AEP was starting to look at alternative energy sources such as natural gas.

Jake Reynolds and Derick McCormick appeared before the County Commission advising there was an effort underway to establish a Volunteer Fire Department in Organ Cave. Reynolds requested a letter of support from the County Commission. Upon the request from the County Commission, Reynolds and McCormick said they would provide a copy of the letter of support provided to them by the Greenbrier County Commission.

Commissioners voted to enter into maintenance agreement with Election Systems & Software for an annual fee of \$4,072.00. ES&S will provide the necessary maintenance and repair on the county's touch screen voting machines. When counties throughout the state first purchased the voting machines, the Secretary of State agreed to pay for the maintenance from grant funds from the Help America Vote Act. This agreement was scheduled to expire in October 2011.

West Virginia Counties Risk Pool (WVCORP) representative Steve Rawlings appeared before the Commission to provide them with an update of the risk pool. Rawlings said there are now 36 counties in the state participating in WVCORP. WVCORP recently offered counties worker's compensation insurance and 33 of the 36 counties, including Monroe, how have their worker's compensation insurance with WVCORP. Rawlings presented Commissioners with a dividend check in the amount of \$1,092.00. There was an agreement in place at the time the county joined the pool that provided the first counties to join the pool with a dividend check at the end of each fiscal year.

Johnny Russell, representing Washington National Insurance, appeared before the County Commission and advised Commissioners of the types of supplemental insurance for employees that his company offers. Commissioners advised Mr. Russell that most employees have supplemental insurance but they would pass his information on to the employees.

The Commission discussed the appointment of a county "Champion" who will oversee all of the county's community service projects to be performed by the Boy Scouts during their National Jamboree. Each scout is required to perform two hours of community service in nine southern counties while attending their jamboree. Commissioners agreed to discuss this appointment further at their October meeting. Commissioner Ashley mentioned that it might be beneficial to have two Champions, one on each end of the county. Anyone interested in serving as the county champion should contact a member of the County Commission before their October 12th meeting.

Commissioners approved a drawdown request for the Greenville Water Project in the amount of \$379,238.31. A budget amendment was also approved for this project moving permit and acquisition cost into the construction line item of the budget.

Commissioner Ashley reported that the House of Delegates has appropriated their portion of the funding for the Prevention Resource Officer position and the Senate should be approving their portion this week. The total amount of funding requested is \$30,000.00 with \$15,000.00 coming from each legislative body.

The County Commission voted to submit a grant application to the WV Courthouse Facilities Improvement Authority seeking funds to replace the Courthouse roof. The roof has started to leak and a recent inspection showed the roof should be replaced. Commissioners also agreed to solicit bids to construct a restroom in the Day Report Center.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that the two walk through metal detectors have been delivered. One detector will be used by the Circuit Court and Magistrate Court will use the other one. These metal detectors were funded from a grant from the Court Security Fund.

The Clerk also reported the county has received a check from the West Virginia Counties Risk Pool for the damages suffered to the courthouse chairlift and Courthouse networking. The chairlift and the network were damaged in a recent storm.

Acting on a previous request from Circuit Clerk Leta Gullette-Comer, Commissioners voted to pay the same amount of the health insurance premium for elected officials as they presently pay on the premiums for county employees. This change is for all county elected officials except for County Commissioners, who are excluded from the amendment. If Commissioners want to participate in the group health insurance program, they will still be required to pay 100% of the premium. This change will take effect July 1, 2012. Presently, if elected officials wish to participate in the group health insurance plan, they are required to pay 100% of the premium.

The County Commission adopted a resolution authorizing the County's Farmland Protection Board to purchase a conservation easement on a piece of property owned by Wilbur and Irene Larew for \$137,000.00. This property consists of 78.014 acres. The United States of America will pay \$68,500.00

toward the purchase and the West Virginia Agricultural Land Protection Authority will pay the remaining \$68,500.00.

Eight individuals who own property in the Walnut Springs development near Union recently appealed their tax assessment to the Circuit Court of Monroe County. The appeals were originally filed with the Board of Equalization where the board upheld the tax assessments, as assessed by the Assessor. The property owners then appealed the matter to Circuit Court. The County Clerk advised Commissioners that the Circuit Court has dismissed all eight appeals because the appeals were not properly filed with the Court.

The County Commission entered an order transferring all the estates previously referred to Frank Upton, Fiduciary Commissioner to newly appointed Fiduciary Commissioner Susan Cobb. Mr. Upton recently resigned as one of the county's Fiduciary Commissioners and Ms. Cobb was appointed by the County Commission to replace Mr. Upton.

Commissioners reviewed the monthly meeting minutes of the Gap Mills and Red Sulphur Districts and nominated Commissioner Clyde Gum to serve on the West Virginia Counties Risk Pool Board of Directors.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that Governor Tomblin recently issued emergency rules in relation to gas drilling and such rules can be found on both the Secretary of State's and Department of Environmental Protection's website. The Clerk also advised that officials with AT&T have said that they plan to install their antennas on the existing US Cellular tower in Peterstown.

Members of the County's Planning Commission met with the County Commission to provide an update of the activities of the Planning Commission. Rod Graves, Chairman, advised Commissioners that the Planning Commission has approved the Unsafe and Unsanitary Ordinance and will forward it to the County Commission for their consideration. A public hearing to hear input on this proposed ordinance will be scheduled in the near future and the date and time will be advertised in the Monroe Watchman. Member Rocky Parsons reported that Gordy Oil Company's application to drill a well here in the county has been denied by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Commissioners addressed three estate matters and one tax issue and agreed to change the date of their October meeting from October 5th to October 12th. This change is necessary due to the Special General Election scheduled for October 4th.