

Monroe Commission Meets

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at the Courthouse. The meeting was called to order by President Clyde Gum, Jr. Followed by the Allegiance and Invocation.

Donald J. Evans, County Clerk, told Commissioners he recently spoke to Walt Helmick, Commissioner of Agriculture, and he said the state was going to be able to work with Ashby Berkley, the new owner of the former Sweet Springs Resort, on leasing the state owned property that joins the resort property, to Mr. Berkley. Berkley previously advised the County Commission he needs use of this property for his development plan for the resort property.

The County Commissioner approved the poll workers for the May 10, 2016 Primary Election and appointed Tom Rickman to the Emergency Services Committee.

The County Clerk reported that he recently spoke to Frontier representative Scott Yates and Yates advised that Frontier has no plans to extend internet service in the county for the upcoming year. Yates did say he was still pushing to extend service to the Red Sulphur community because the fiber is already installed in this area. Commissioners agreed to write Frontier a letter asking why no internet extension projects have been included for Monroe County for this year.

The County Commission prioritized projects for funding consideration for Small Cities Block Grant funding for the upcoming year. The projects in priority order are as follows; Little Rich Creek Valley Public Water Extension Project, Gap Mills/Moncove Lake Public Water Extension Project, Sinks Grove Public Water Extension Project, tie several small Red Sulphur PSD projects together, public water for northern Monroe County, Old Greenville School, Law Enforcement, Tourism, Animal Control.

Tim Wilson, 911 Director, appeared before the County Commission, providing an update of 911 Center activities. Under the Wrecker Response Report he said Galford's received four calls, Neel's two and Clarkson's received one call. Wilson reported the center received 112 law enforcement related calls for the month of February, 128 EMS calls and 36 fire related calls. At the request of Wilson, the Commission approved the advertising for a part time dispatcher and increased the starting pay for a part time dispatcher to \$9.00 an hour. At the request of Wilson, the County Commission approved a quote in the amount of \$11,761.00 to upgrade the 911 Center's recorder. Wilson advised it would cost the county approximately \$40,500 to install the necessary repeaters on the cellular tower located near Rock Camp. Wilson said these repeaters would drastically improve communications between the 911 Center and emergency service responders in this particular area. When the new cell towers were installed in the county, the County Commission worked out an agreement with the owner of the towers to place the county's repeaters on these towers at no cost to the county.

Jeff Jones, the county's Director of Emergency Management, appeared before the County Commission. Mr. Jones provided an update on the complaints filed under the Unsafe and Unsanitary Structures and Refuse Ordinance. Jones said he is scheduled to attend a workshop on February 18th in Beckley that will provide information on the funds that are available in the form of grants and loans that are available to address unsafe structures. Jones reported a tabletop exercise was held on February 18th with the Monroe and Greenbrier Local Emergency Planning Commissions, fire departments and emergency managers. He said he was also preparing a grant application seeking funds to purchase radios for law enforcement and portable lighting.

Melissa Hodges, Director of the Family Resource Network, appeared before the County Commission. Ms. Hodges advised Commissioners that the budgets of the Family Resource Networks around the state are going to be cut. She said she continually looks for various grants to assist in providing services to the residents of Monroe County.

Jennifer McMeekin, Judge Robert Irons and Tony Reed, appeared before the County Commission to discuss the Monroe/Summers Day Report Center. Ms. McMeekin advised that Tony Reed has been named the Interim Director of the program and he will also continue his duties as home confinement officer.

Planning Commission members Gary Taylor, Melvin Young, Rocky Parson and Tom Rickman, appeared before the County Commission. These members said they met last night at Union Rescue for the purpose of reviewing their financial records. Mr. Young said Union lost a little over \$200,000 the last two years. Union Rescue is having financial woes due to Medicare and Medicaid decreasing the amounts they will reimburse rescue squads when transporting a patient covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

The County Commission scheduled budget meetings for March 9th and 16th.

At the request of Assessor Norb Netzel, the County Commission approved six parcel consolidation requests. A request for two estates to remain open were also approved as were three exonerations.

The County Commission will meet again in regular session on March 16th beginning at 5:30 To be placed on the agenda please call 772-3096.