

Monroe Commission Elects Joyce Pritt as President

The Monroe County Commission held its first meeting of the New Year on January 7th. The first item of business for the day was welcoming newly elected County Commissioner Bill Miller. The next item of business was for the Commission to select a President for the upcoming year. Commissioner Joyce Pritt was elected President and Commissioner Shane Ashley was chosen as Vice-President.

The County Commission agreed to pay the \$100.00 fire service fee for businesses as solicited by the Union Volunteer Fire Department. At the request of Donald J. Evans, County Clerk, Commissioners agreed to give each of the other volunteer fire department in the county \$100.00 as well.

Commissioners reviewed a petition containing numerous signatures of individuals opposing a proposal from 911 officials to rename the "Hans Creek" road. After some discussion, Commissioners unanimously agreed to name the road, beginning at the intersection of Pine Grove road and what is now known as the "Blue Lick" road to the intersection of what is now known as the "Hans Creek" road and Route 122, "Hans Creek Road".

The name change proposal was presented by 911 officials as part of the 911 Mapping and Addressing Project. Federal and State mapping and addressing standards call for a road to have the same name from the beginning of the road to the end of the road, unless the road leads to an intersection with a stop sign. The purpose of these standards is to improve response times of emergency service responders and to eliminate any confusion when a dispatcher is giving directions to emergency service responders. Commissioners felt this road naming was a good compromise between the residents of Hans Creek and following 911 mapping and addressing standards.

Newly elected Sheriff Mike Gravely appeared before Commissioners to discuss several issues. Sheriff Gravely said that he was going to make the present Sheriff's Department a professional and respectable organization. He said that his deputies, as well as himself, will be accountable to the public and those they serve. He said when his department receives a call for assistance, they will respond.

Gravely reported that he has hired K.D. Hedrick as his Chief Deputy. Hedrick is a retired WV State Trooper and most recently served as the Police Chief for Peterstown. Sheriff Gravely said that he was already working on some problems certain communities in the county are facing. He expressed the need for additional room for his deputies to complete paperwork and conduct interrogations and the need to acquire new cruisers. Commissioners told the Sheriff he could use one of the newly remodeled offices located in the Day Report Center annex.

The Sheriff also reported that the tax office will not be closing for lunch as has been the policy in the past. Gravely said that having officers in the county's schools is a priority for him and he plans to seek grant funding in an effort to address this most important issue. The County Commission stated that they are committed to helping the Sheriff in any way possible in his efforts in making positive changes to the department.

Commissioners agreed to purchase a box trailer that contained enough supplies to assist 50 individuals in the event someone should lose their home to a fire or if the county should have some sort of emergency or disaster. The trailer will be stationed at the 911 Center. Bruce

Power, 911 Director, will be responsible for the trailer. The trailer can be towed to the site of such fire or catastrophic event or to one of the county's emergency shelters. The trailer and supplies were purchased from the American Red Cross.

The County Commission accepted a proposal from Sayre Brothers, Inc. to remove the old emergency communications tower from the roof of the Courthouse. This tower is no longer being used and county officials are concerned the tower could be struck by lightning. The proposal included the removal and disposal of the tower.

Representatives from Total Tech, a heating and air conditioning company from Renick, met with Commissioners to discuss the "Request for Proposals" recently requested by the Commission to install air conditioning on the main floor of the Courthouse. These representatives said they would have their bids submitted to the Commission by the February 1st deadline.

Commissioners reviewed the monthly minutes of the Gap Mills Public Service District and signed authorized Bruce Power, 911 Director, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Red Cross. This memorandum provides the framework for cooperation between the Red Cross and the Monroe County Emergency Operations Center in providing disaster recovery in Monroe County.

The County Commission agreed to enter into a lease with IKON Solutions for the lease of a new copier for the Courthouse. One of the two copiers in the record room is inoperable and is so old parts are no longer available.

The County Clerk provided Commissioners with a financial report of the county and also advised them that the Court Security Grant application is due March 1st. Julia Light, Circuit Clerk, advised Commissioners that she was resigning from the Board of Directors for the Monroe County Council on Aging. Commissioner Bill Miller was appointed to replace Ms. Light on this board.

Commissioners scheduled their annual Board of Equalization meetings. The dates and times of the meetings are as follows; January 27th 9:00 am till 12:00 noon, February 4th 2:00 pm till 5:00 pm and February 9th, 6:00 pm till 8:00 pm. All meetings will be held in the Commission's Conference Room at the Courthouse.

The purpose of these meetings is for the County Commission to review and equalize real estate assessments made by the Assessor. Any property owner who feels their real estate is assessed incorrect or unfairly, can call 772-3096 to schedule a date to meet with the Board of Equalization. The Board has adopted a policy that requires any property owner who feels their real estate assessment is unfair or incorrect, as assessed by the Assessor's Office, to bring a certified real estate appraisal of the property in question, with them when they appear before the Board. The appraisal must have been performed within the last twelve months. The Board of Equalization is only authorized to meet one time during the year. WV Code 11-3-24 states in part that "any person to apply for relief at one of these meetings, shall have waived his or her right to ask for correction in his or her assessment for the current year, and shall not thereafter be permitted to question the correctness of the assessment as fixed by the County Commission, except on appeal to the Circuit Court".

Commissioners addressed one estate matter, approved nine estate final settlements and three exonerations. The County Commission will meet again in regular session on February 4th.