

## Monroe Commission Meets

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at the Courthouse. Commission President Clyde Gum, Jr., called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

Mike Clemons, representing Giggabeam, appeared before the County Commission. Giggabeam is a company from Rich Creek, VA that provides wireless high speed internet service. Mr. Clemons previously met with the County Commission and told them he was back today to provide them an update on the expansion of this service. He stated this internet service works by "line of sight", basically meaning if one of Giggabeam's towers can be seen from an individual's particular residence, this particular customer will more than likely be able to access their internet. Clemons also said that they plan install repeaters in areas in which an individual may not have "line of sight" from their residence to assist them in acquiring internet service. He stated that this internet service offers the highest speed of any internet service currently available in the area. Commission President Clyde Gum said "The County Commission realizes the importance of having fast and reliable internet and to make this service available to as many people in Union and the surrounding area, the Commission has authorized Giggabeam to install their equipment on the county owned tower at Bickett Knob and on an existing tower on the Courthouse roof." addition, Giggabeam will also be using an existing tower on the Courthouse roof. Clemons said he is also wanting to extend this service in the Lindside area and he is awaiting a response from the Board of Education as to whether they can put their equipment on the tower as James Monroe High School. Gum went on to say that he hopes the Board of Education realizes the importance of letting Giggabeam use this tower at the high school as it will allow many people in and around Lindside to acquire this valuable service.

Donald J. Evans, County Clerk, advised the County Commission that the county has received the grant funds from the WV Courthouse Facilities Improvement Authority in the amount of \$100,000. These grant funds were used to install a sprinkler system throughout the Courthouse. All floors of the Courthouse now have a sprinkler system except for the attic area. The Commission plans to seek funding in the near future to put a sprinkler system in the attic. President Gum served as the Project Director for this project. He performed a valuable service to the county working with the contractor, almost on a daily basis, ensuring the system was installed to specifications and the historic nature of the Courthouse was maintained. Evans wrote this grant on behalf of the County Commission.

Commissioners discussed the need to replace the Animal Control Officer's vehicle. The current vehicle needs a lot of work done on it. Due to the age, mileage and the amount of work it needs Commissioners agreed to try and find a good, used vehicle to replace the current one.

The County Commission reviewed the Gap Mills and Red Sulphur PSD meeting minutes. They also reviewed a letter from Jerry Pitzer advising he didn't wish to be reappointed to the Red Sulphur PSD Board of Directors when his current term expires at the end of December. Commissioners decided they will name an appointment to replace Pitzer at their December

meeting. Anyone interested in being considered for this appointment should submit a Letter of Interest along with any qualifications to the County Commission by December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The County Clerk advised that the Clerk's Office has submitted an invoice in the amount of \$47,702.28 to the Board of Education for the reimbursement of the salaries and benefits for the three Prevention Resource Officers. The pay period for this invoice covers August 15<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>. These officers are assigned to James Monroe High School, Peterstown Middle School and Mountain View Schools. The voters of Monroe County passed an excess levy in November 2014 that will in part, pay for the salaries of these three officers and their necessary equipment.

The County Commission voted to make a donation to the proposed document-drama called Mary Jane's War. Joe Roles, the author of the book Mary Jane's War, was born in Monroe County and lived at Salt Sulphur. This 60 minute document-drama is a fictional account of the life of an actual West Virginia woman, Mary Jane Arnott Smith. Ms. Smith crossed North Mountain during the civil war to bring her deceased soldier husband's body home for burial. A portion of the document-drama will be filmed here in Monroe County. A 501 (c) (3) organization has been established to raise the necessary funds to produce this document-drama.

In an effort to try and assist Union Rescue Squad with their financial situation, Commissioners voted to request financial records from the squad for the last two years. Representatives from Union Rescue have told Commissioners that their current financial situation has been brought on due to the amount of reimbursement they receive from Medicaid that has been drastically reduced. Union Rescue has asked the County Commission to consider adopting an ordinance creating a countywide ambulance authority that would place a annual fee on county residents to pay for emergency medical services here in Monroe County. At their last meeting the County Commission voted to appoint a committee of residents from the different areas of the county for the purpose of making a recommendation to the County Commission how emergency medical services should be provided in the next five and ten years.

On the recommendation of Tim Wilson, 911 Director, the County Commission voted to hire Atlas Geographics to complete the 911 addressing project. Larry Kirkpatrick from Atlas was in attendance and advised the project will take three to four months to complete. Atlas Geographics recently digitized the Assessor's tax maps and according to Assessor Norb Netzel, they done a very good job. Wilson also provided the 911 center's monthly call report. He said the center received 145 law enforcement calls, 154 EMS calls and 27 fire related calls. Wilson also reported that Galford's received ten wrecker calls for the month of October and Clarkson's received two.

Jeff Jones, the county's Director of Emergency Management, appeared before the County Commission. Jones provided the Commission with an update of the complaints filed under the county's Unsafe and Unsanitary Structures and Refuse ordinance. He also advised he recently attended and Improvement Planning workshop in Beckley. Jones said he wants to set up

meetings with the churches that have been designated as emergency shelters to see if they need anything from the county before winter season starts. He advised the County Commission that a mock exercise is scheduled for April 2016 between Monroe and Greenbrier counties.

Commissioners reviewed a letter from Jerry Pitzer advising he wasn't planning to seek reappointment to the Red Sulphur Public Service District Board of Directors when his current term expires at the end of December. Commissioners agreed to send Pitzer a letter thanking him for his service on this board. Anyone who is interested in being considered to be appointed to this board should send a Letter of Interest to the County Commission along with any special skills or qualifications. Letters will need to be received by the December 2, 2015 meeting date of the County Commission.

The County Clerk advised he sent a reimbursement request to the Board of Education in the amount of \$47,702.28 for the reimbursement of the salaries and benefits for the three Prevention Resource Officers. He said the period covered by this reimbursement is from August 15<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>.

The County Commission authorized President Gum to sign a Request for Payment and Certificate of Completion form for the Monroe Day Care grant. The Day Care was recently approved for a grant from the Governor's Community Participation Grant Program in the amount of \$5,000 to replace the roof on the day care center.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners the annual County Commissioner's Association meeting is scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am at the Mercer County Courthouse.

Allison Tomlinson, the county's Tourism Director, met with the County Commission and provided an update on how she is planning to increase tourism here in the county. Ms. Tomlinson advised that Creekside Resort was no longer offering any short term lodging or hosting any weddings or other events.

The Commission approved three parcel consolidations and two exonerations and held an estate hearing.