

Monroe Commission Meets

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on December 16, 2015 at the Courthouse. Commission President Clyde Gum, Jr., called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

Ashby Berkley, the new owner of the Sweet Springs Resort, appeared before the County Commission. Mr. Berkley recently purchased the property at a public auction held on site at the former resort. Mr. Berkley said he planned to renovate the main building on the grounds and offer lodging and a restaurant. He said he plans to work with architectural students from Virginia Tech and University of Virginia on such renovations. Mr. Berkley said he has five professional individuals who are interested in opening an office on resort property. He said he was presently working with officials from the State of WV in an effort to lease the 600 acres than joins the resort property. Mr. Berkley said he really needs the state property as plans call for the construction of a driving range with other sports related activities on this property. Berkley said a vineyard is also part of his plans and he is going to try and get someone to operate the water bottling system operation that is currently on site. The County Commission offered any assistance they could provide and thanked Mr. Berkley for his interest in restoring this historic property.

Dr. Craig Mohler, Project Manager for the Potts Valley Trail Project in Waiteville, appeared before the County Commission. Dr. Mohler said a state grant has been secured to construct a pedestrian bridge on the trail. He said E.L. Robinson has completed the design of this bridge. At Mohler's request, Commissioners approved a drawdown request in the amount of \$8,000, the amount of the design fee charged by E.L. Robinson.

Donald J. Evans, County Clerk, advised the Commission that the county's Solid Waste Authority recently received notice that they have been approved for a grant from the WV Department of Environmental Protection's REAP Grant Program. The amount of the grant was \$134,000. The majority of these funds are designated to construct a building to house a recycling center. Last year, the County Commission was awarded a REAP Grant to construct the concrete foundation for this building. Hoke Brothers Contracting was awarded the bid for the foundation work. The Solid Waste Authority plans to advertise for construction of the building in the very near future.

The County Commission will meet as a Board of Equalization meetings on the following dates; February 1st, February 5th, February 11th and February 17th. All meetings will be held in the County Commission's meeting room at the Courthouse. The purpose of these meetings is to provide property owners an opportunity to appeal their tax assessment, as assessed by the Assessor. Those feeling their assessment is incorrect must provide clear and convincing proof that such assessment is incorrect. The board has determined that the best evidence is an real estate appraisal of the property conducted by a certified real estate appraiser, performed within the last 12 months. Those needing to meet with the board should call 772-3096 to schedule an appointment.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that to date, there individuals have expressed interest in being appointed to the Red Sulphur PSD Board of Directors. Current board member Jerry Pitzer previously advised the Commission stay he doesn't wish to be considered for

reappointment to the board. Commissioners plan to make this appointment at their January 6th meeting.

The County Commission addressed two estate matters and approved three estate final settlements.

The Commission will meet again in regular session on January 6, 2016 at the Courthouse. Those needing to get on the agenda should call 772-3096.