

## County Commission Holds December Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on December 6, 2010 at the Courthouse. Joyce Pritt, President of the County Commission, called the meeting to order followed by Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

Planning Commission members Rod Graves, Rocky Parsons, Jim Minard and Garry Talyor, appeared before the County Commission and provided Commissioners with an update of the Planning Commission activities. Rod Graves, Chairman of the Planning Commission, reported that approximately 80 individuals attended the public meeting hosted by the Planning Commission and the WVU Extension Office, held recently at James Monroe High School. The purpose of the meeting was for the Planning Commission to share information acquired by Graves, Parsons and Ba Rea from a gas drilling fact -finding trip they recently took to Upshur and Wetzel Counties. This trip was authorized by the County Commission in an effort to learn more about gas drilling process.

The County Commission authorized the Planning Commission to use office space on the lower level of the Courthouse next to the Day Report Office. In addition, a budget request in the amount of \$200.00 was approved for the Planning Commission for the purpose of purchasing office supplies and other necessary materials.

The County Clerk advised the County Commission, that per their previous approval, a grant application has been submitted to the WV Courthouse Facilities Improvement Authority. The County Commission is seeking grant funds to install air conditioning in the Circuit Courtroom. The cost for this project is approximately \$59,000.00. Region I Planning and Development Council prepared the grant application with the assistance of County Clerk Donald J. Evans.

Jill Fischer, John McLaughlin, Laurie Addison and Richard Mundell appeared before the County Commission to express their opposition to gas drilling in the county. Ms. Fischer advised Commissioners that the County's Historical Society recently made a motion asking the Department of Environmental Protection to place a moratorium on any gas drilling here in the county until more can be learned about the process. Bob Lieberman of Sinks Grove also appeared before the Commission to express his opposition to gas drilling and Commissioners reviewed a letter from Dr. Sophia Sibold, D.O. who also expressed her opposition to gas drilling.

The County Commission reviewed an email from Robbie Gwinn from Gordy Oil Company. In the email, Mr. Gwinn said Gordy Oil declined a previous request from the Monroe Health Department to test all water sources within 5,000 feet of a well. Gwinn said they agree that the more base line test data the better, however, in some instances the number of test sites within 5,000 feet could be very large. Gwinn went on to say that they have tested sites in excess of the required 1,000 feet and will continue to do so on a case-by-case basis.

Dr. Craig Mohler, Project Coordinator for the Potts Valley Trail Project, met with the County Commission to provide them with a final progress report on the newly constructed Potts Valley Trail in Waiteville. Dr. Mohler said this trail was complete and the total project cost was approximately \$69,000.00. He said with the in-kind matches that he was able to obtain, the county only had about \$41.00 in the

entire project. The remaining funds came from a grant from the State of West Virginia. Commissioners thanked Mohler for all time and energy he spent on this most worthwhile project.

Monthly meeting minutes for the Red Sulphur and Gap Mills Public Service Districts were reviewed, as were minutes from the Board of Health and the Mercer County Community Corrections Board.

Commissioners reviewed an email from Shannon Parker, CEO of the Monroe Health Center, advising that Dr. James Wright had resigned as the County Health Officer and Dr. Travis Hansbarger has been appointed to replace Dr. Wright in this capacity.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently approved the county's Floodplain Ordinance. The county previously had a floodplain ordinance in place but FEMA required that it be updated. Having a Floodplain Ordinance in place allows those individuals who live in a flood plain to purchase flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program.

Commissioners discussed the recent passing of Warren Smith. Mr. Smith was the owner of the Old Sweet Springs Resort property in Sweet Springs. He was in the process of renovating the resort and had just recently opened a water bottling facility on the grounds of the resort.

Sheriff Mike Gravely reported that the Sheriff's Department arrested three individuals allegedly to have vandalized the Confederate Monument in Union. The Sheriff said there was one adult and two juveniles charged.

Jill Young, who represents the County Commission on the Mountain RC&D Board, met with the Commission and provided them with an update of the activities of this organization.

The County Commission reviewed a letter from Suddenlink Communications advising they will have a rate increase for their customers effective January 1, 2011. Commissioners also reviewed a letter from the Peterstown Public Library thanking them for they're past support and asking the County Commission to continue supporting the library in the future.

The County Clerk advised the County Commission that officials from Region 1 Planning & Development Council recently told him that the Greenville / Wikel Water Extension Project had been put out for bids. This project will extend public water from Coulter's Chapel to Wikel and on to Greenville.

Commissioners agreed to set the date of January 3, 2011 as the deadline to accept public comments on the Dilapidated Building and Neglected Property Ordinance. The Clerk said he had spoken to the Mayors of the three municipalities in the county and there may be an interest in the incorporated towns being covered by the ordinance. The Mayors advised that they would let the county know if they want to be covered after each of their town councils meet to discuss the matter. Copies of the ordinance are available in the County Clerk's Office. The ordinance is also posted on the county's website at [www.monroecountywv.net](http://www.monroecountywv.net).

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that the State of WV has reimbursed the county for the expenses associated with the August 28<sup>th</sup> Special Election. Total reimbursement was \$28,000.00.

Commissioners addressed one estate matter, approved 14 final estate settlements and four exonerations. The County Commission will meet again in regular session on January 5, 2011.