

Monroe Commission holds February Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on February 2, 2011 at the Courthouse. Commission President Shane Ashley called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

Leta Gullette-Comer, Circuit Clerk, provided the County Commission with an update of the activities of the Circuit Clerk's Office. She advised she was conducting research for grant funding sources and hopes to apply for some grant funds in the near future to improve operations in the Circuit Clerk's Office. Ms. Gullette-Comer also made a request for the window air conditioning unit be removed along with the panel surrounding it and replaced with a new window. Commissioners agreed to solicit bids for the window replacement.

Planning Commission members Rod Graves, Rocky Parsons and Jim Menard met with the County Commission and provided them with an update of the Planning Commission's activities. Rod Graves, Chairman of the Planning Commission, reported that the Planning Commission has been working on two ordinances that the County Commission previously asked them to prepare. On this day, Commissioners were presented with the final draft of the Improvement Location Ordinance as prepared by the Planning Commission. Graves reported that the Dangerous Dog Ordinance will be provided to the County Commission in just a few days. The County Commission will need to review both of these ordinances prior to the ordinances being put out for public comment. Mr. Graves told Commissioners that the Planning Commission needs feedback from the County Commission on the Dilapidated Building Ordinance that was previously presented to them by the Planning Commission.

The County Commission appointed Susan Bumgardner to the Board of Health, replacing Cathy Ballard, who recently resigned. The following individuals were appointed to the county's Planning Commission; Lewis Buckland, Ronnie Riner, Aaron Elswick, Rose Preston, and Chuck Nikolaus. The resignation of Margaret Vass from the Planning Commission was approved.

At the request of Shirley Neel, member of the county's Democrat Executive Committee, Duane Miller, chairman of the county's Republican Executive Committee and County Clerk Donald J. Evans, the County Commission approved a pay increase for poll workers. Effective with the May 14, 2011 Special Primary Election, poll workers will be paid \$25.00 for attending the required training session and \$125.00 for their service on Election Day for a total of \$150.00. Miller and Neel both said this increase should help in attracting poll workers.

At the request of Sheriff Mike Gravely, the County Commission approved a proposal from Spencer Carpet to replace the floor covering in the Sheriff's Tax Office. The currently floor is in disrepair and has become a safety concern.

Commissioners reviewed the monthly meeting minutes for the Red Sulphur and Gap Mills Public Service Districts as well as the minutes for the Board of Health.

County Clerk Donald J. Evans reported that the County Clerk's Office has been awarded a grant from the WV Records Preservation and Management Board in the amount of \$6,700.00. Evans said these funds will be used to assist in the purchase of a Document Scanning System for the Clerk's office. He said the total cost of this

project is about \$38,000.00 and has secured a total of \$30,000.00 in other grant funds toward the purchase of this system.

Evans explained that the system will enable the Clerk's office to generate a digital backup of all documents presented for recordation in the office. He also said that there will be four computer monitors in the Record Room and users will be able to search for a document, review it on the screen and print it if necessary. Evans said the new system will not only provide a digital backup of the records but will save on the wear and tear of the records, since they won't have to be handled on a daily basis.

Commissioners approved an amendment for the Greenville Water Project. This amendment was necessary to bring the \$1,070,000.00 former Governor Joe Manchin appropriated for the project. Construction on the new system is scheduled to begin in mid-March.

The County Clerk reported that he didn't have any new information on the proposal from Gordy Oil Company from Houston, TX to drill for gas in the county.

Commissioners passed a resolution supporting the efforts of the Monroe Health Center in obtaining a grant from the Governor's Community Participation Grant Program.

County Clerk employees Lydia Huffman, Barbara Nikolaus, Jeremy Meadows and Tisha Terry met with the County Commission and asked if they would consider implementing a four -day workweek for county employees. These employees stated that with the ever- rising cost of gas, this could be a potential savings to employees. Under the proposal, all Courthouse offices will remain open five days per week but employees would simply work four, ten-hour days. For those who have trouble getting to the Courthouse, this schedule would allow the Courthouse to be open an hour earlier in the morning and remain open an hour later in the evening. Commissioners said they would solicit input from the other Courthouse offices on this proposal.

The County Commission recognized Judy Ellison of Greenville for her service to the county's Planning Commission. Ms. Ellison, who has resigned from the Planning Commission, was one of the first individuals to be appointed to the county's first ever Planning Commission.

Commissioners reviewed a letter from the Division of Highways affirming that they had received the County Commission's letter expressing their support to leave County Route 4 open. The Division of Highways previously received a request to close this road.

Commissioners also reviewed a copy of a letter the Town of Glen Lyn, VA recently sent to the WV Division of Highways, expressing their support in the replacement of the bridge in Peterstown on the West Virginia / Virginia border. Monroe and Giles County, VA officials have been working to get this bridge replaced.

The County Commission addressed three estate issues, approved three final estate settlements and four exonerations. The County Commission will meet in special session on March 8th to begin preparing the county's 2011-2012 budget.