

Monroe Commission Holds February Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on February 3rd at the Courthouse. Commission President Joyce Pritt called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

At the request of Doris Taylor, who was representing the county's Community Outreach Service organization, Commissioners agreed to declare the week of May 16-22 as Community Educational Outreach Service Week in Monroe County. Others representing this organization at the meeting were Phyllis Baker and Susie Ridgeway.

Commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Jerry L. Pitzer of Peterstown to the Red Sulphur Public Service District Board of Directors. Mr. Pitzer will replace Dennis Sibold on this Board. Mr. Sibold recently resigned due to health concerns after serving on the Board of Directors for over 50 years. Teresa Johnson was appointed to the Monroe Library Board of Trustees.

Tom Murtaugh, Attorney at Law, appeared before Commissioners to present his findings after conducting a title search on the "old school building property" located at Second Creek. This school building once served the community of Second Creek and was previously used as a polling place. The County Commission previously asked Mr. Murtaugh to conduct this search since there was some confusion on who actually owns the property. Murtaugh said the property belonged to the Monroe County Board of Education. He said he planned to meet with the Board of Education later in the day to present his findings to them.

Commissioners accepted the resignation of Jeannie Ratliff as a member of the Regional Emergency Medical Services Board and appointed Richard Miller to replace Ms. Ratliff on such board. A drawdown request for the Greenville / Wikel Water project in the amount of \$29,616.30 was approved by Commission. This drawdown was for administration services from Region I Planning and Development Council and engineering fees from Pentree, Inc.

The County Commission accepted the resignation of Debra Dalton from the County Historic Landmark Commission and reviewed the monthly meeting minutes for the Red Sulphur and Gap Mills Public Service Districts and the County Board of Health.

Rod Graves, Chairman of the County's Planning Commission, met with Commissioners and provided them with an update of the activities of the Planning Commission. Graves said the editing of the county's comprehensive plan has been completed and as soon as the plan can be picked up from the printer, hard copies of the plan will be available. The plan is also available in electronic format. Graves reported that the Planning Commission has discussed drafting several different types of ordinances for the county and a viscous or dangerous dog ordinance will be the first ordinance they prepare. Graves said the Planning Commission meets every third Thursday at the Monroe Health Center's conference room.

Commissioners reviewed a letter from the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) advising that PERS Board of Directors recently voted to increase the percentage the county pays of an employee's retirement from 11% to 17%, effective July 1st. The Clerk told Commissioners this increase would cost the county an additional \$48,000.00 per year.

At the request of Bruce Power, 911 Director, Commissioners extended the time to submit a bid for the renovation project at the 911 Center.

Dale McCutcheon met with Commissioners and asked them to consider creating a Water Resources Task Force for the County. McCutcheon said the purpose of such task force would be to identify and monitor the county's water sources and uses through a county-wide resource assessment. Commissioners agreed to study and discuss McCutcheon's proposal.

The County Commission prioritized various county projects to be considered for funding consideration from the Small Cities Block Grant Program. The order of funding requests for these projects were as follows; 1. Greenville / Wikel Water Project, 2. Red Sulphur Water Project, 3. Red Sulphur PSD Mutli-Extension Project, 4. Broadband Service, 5. Gap Mills / Moncove Lake Water Project, 6. Law Enforcement, 7, Emergency Services, 8. Promotion of Tourism, 9. Sinks Grove Water Project, 10. Courthouse Improvements, 11. Animal Control.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that officials with US Cellular have advised him that US Cellular has selected a site near Rock Camp to construct a new cell tower. Construction on this tower should begin in late summer. He said the construction of the tower near Ballard was scheduled to begin in January but has been delayed due to the weather. The official also said they were looking to construct a tower in the Wolf Creek area in 2011.

Commissioners discussed the idea of putting the Animal Control Officer under the supervision of the Sheriff but took no action on such proposal.

There were eight estate final settlements approved as was eight exonerations. The County Commission will meet again in regular session on March 3, 2010.