

Monroe Commission Holds April Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on April 1st at the Courthouse. Commissioners opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

Commissioners met with Matt Fife, the new administrator of Springfield Comprehensive Care Center in Lindsie and Larry Pack, one of the new owners of the facility. Mr. Pack and three other individuals have purchased Springfield and he advised Commissioners that the business status will be changed from non-profit to profit. He expected the transfer will be finalized in June.

The County Commission adopted a resolution authorizing the County Farmland Protection Board to purchase a conservation easement from Larry and Frances Mustain. The easement is on 52.1315 acres in Second Creek district. The amount of the purchase was \$129,000.00 with the County Farmland Board paying \$43,000.00 of the purchase price and the United States of America paying the remainder \$86,000.00.

Donald J. Evans, County Clerk, provided Commissioners with a monthly financial report for the county. He told Commissioners that the State Tax Department had recently notified all counties in the state that they will not be receiving the Synthetic Fuel Tax for this upcoming budget year. Monroe County has been receiving about \$43,000.00 annually from this tax. Commissioners agreed they would have to amend their 2009-10 budget because they had already appropriated this revenue. The Clerk also reported that the paperwork was being finalized by US Cellular for placing a new cellular tower just north of Peterstown.

Debra Dalton, newly elected President of the Monroe County Historic Landmark Commission, appeared before the County Commission and provided them with an update of this organization. Ms. Dalton reported that the Commission has reorganized and elected officers. She said the Commission had agreed to support two separate Historical Society grant applications seeking funds to continue renovations on the Old Baptist Church in Union. The Landmark Commission plans to meet twice a year, in March and September. Both meetings will be held on the second Monday of the month.

Bruce Power, 911 Director, met with Commissioners and provided them with an update of activities at the 911 Center. He said that Yvonne Booth, a 911 dispatcher has completed the Introduction to Incident Command training and three other employees were presently attending additional training for their specific jobs. He reported that approximately 42% of the structures in the county have been assigned a physical address and that he has received 58% of the "leave behind" cards. These cards are left at a residence when 911 officials are unable to speak to anyone concerning the assignment of their physical address.

At the request of Commissioners, Bob Hazelwood, an engineer with Pentree, Inc., met with the County Commission to talk about constructing an annex facility on Courthouse property. Commissioners recently received notice from the Union Volunteer Fire Department that they planned to increase the rent the county pays for the Magistrate Court Offices located on the top floor of the

Union Fire Department. The rent is presently \$600.00 per month and the Fire Department pays all utilities. The Fire Department has given the county two options; continue paying the \$600.00 and pay all utilities or pay \$1,000.00 per month and the Fire Department will continue paying utilities. The county also rents the bottom floor of the Courthouse for Family Court. The amount of this rent is \$1,600.00 per month. The county is required to provide space for Family Court and the Supreme Court of Appeals reimburses the county for the rent.

Commissioners Pritt and Miller recently decided it was time for the county to think about constructing an annex facility on Courthouse property and try to get all county offices, presently not located in the Courthouse, under one roof and in closer proximity to the Courthouse. These other offices include the Magistrates, Family Court, Prosecuting Attorney, 911 Center and the Planning Commission. Having these offices closer to the Courthouse would assist the Sheriff's Department in providing security for the offices. It would also be more cost effective to the county having each of these offices located under one roof versus being located in three or four different buildings. The Commission gave Mr. Hazelwood an idea of what they wanted and he plans to prepare some drawings and preliminary cost estimates and report back to Commissioners.

Dennis White, representing the Friends of Second Creek, appeared before Commissioners as did Kathy Johnson, representing the Second Creek Watershed Historic Landmark Commission. Mr. White and Mrs. Johnson provided Commissioners with an update of the activities of these two organizations.

The County Clerk advised Commissioners that three companies were interested in providing the county with a quote for group health insurance. The Clerk said representatives were soliciting the necessary information from the employees in order to provide the quote. The county presently has group coverage with the Public Employees Insurance Agency. PEIA has provided notice to the County Commission that they will have a 12% increase in premiums effective July 1st.

Tammy Fox, Flood Plain Coordinator for the County, met with Commissioners and provided them with an update of the County's Flood Plain Program. She said a representative from FEMA is scheduled to visit Monroe County to tour areas of the county that are prone to flooding.

Cindy Laws, Director of the Peterstown Library, appeared before Commissioners. Ms. Laws provided the County Commission with a financial report for the library and reported they continue to struggle with financial support. She advised Commissioners that Monroe County was one of nine counties in the state that didn't fund its libraries on an annual basis. Ms. Laws said the library has lost some of their funding because the Board of Education elected to relocate the GED classes from the library to the town hall in Peterstown. The -----
-----She also said the library lost a portion of the funding they receive from the Board of Education because Peterstown Elementary School moved their computer lab from the library to the school. She said she didn't have the funds on hand to meet the next payroll period or to pay the utilities.

Commissioners agreed to appropriate \$5,000.00 to the library in an effort to keep the library open.

Commissioners adopted a resolution in reference to James Monroe High School's grant application to the Governor's Community Participation Grant Program. This grant will provide funding to construct a concession stand at the baseball field. The amount of the grant is \$6,000.00.

Monthly minutes of the Red Sulphur and Gap Mills Public Service Districts and the Board of Health were reviewed. Commissioners approved a memo to be distributed to county employees advising them that isn't ample funds available for a pay increase for the upcoming fiscal year. The county previously agreed to pay a portion of the premium increase for those employees with group health insurance. Commissioners expressed their appreciation to all elected officials and employees for their dedication and hard work they provide to county residents on a daily basis.

Evelyn Hansbarger presented Commissioners with a petition signed by residents and business owners located on the Rowan Road in Gap Mills. Ms. Hansbarger said that those who live on this road have already been assigned a house number and didn't understand why 911 officials had to change the numbers. Commissioners authorized Bruce Power, 911 Director, to work meet with Ms. Hansbarger to see what can be done in reference to her complaint.

The County Commission agreed to provide each county elected official and the 911 Director with a Purchasing Card. The card, similar to a credit card, is to be used for lodging and meal expenses when such elected official is traveling on official county business. On the recommendation of the County Clerk, the county recently implemented the Purchasing Card Program which is administered by the State Auditor's Office. A Purchasing Card will also be used to pay the county's monthly invoices. As part of the agreement, the county will receive a 1% rebate on all purchases made with the card. The County Clerk reported that most of the county's vendors are accepting the card for payment. The cost of preparing a single check is around \$5.00. With the Purchasing Card, the county will write one check per month. The Clerk said the monthly savings to the county would be \$300.00 to \$400.00 per month, not including the rebate amount.