

Monroe Commission Holds June Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on June 2, 2010 at the Courthouse. Commission President Joyce Pritt called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

The County Commission voted to enter into an agreement with the Town of Peterstown. Sheriff Mike Gravely and the Peterstown Town Council have been working on such an agreement for a couple of months. The agreement calls for the Sheriff to assign a Deputy Sheriff to the Town of Peterstown for 40 hours per week with the understanding that such deputy may respond to emergency calls outside of the town limits within a reasonable distance.

The town will pay the county \$22,000.00 per year for providing this officer. Since the deputy will be able to respond to calls outside the town limits, the county will pay the balance of the deputy's salary and benefits. The county has a similar agreement with the Town of Union. "This is a win-win situation for the county and the Town of Peterstown", said Joyce Pritt, President of the County Commission, "The deputy sheriff will be able to answer calls within the Town of Peterstown and the surrounding area much quicker since they will be stationed in Peterstown".

Rod Graves, Chairman for the Planning Commission, appeared before Commissioners for the purpose of providing them an update on the activities of the Commission. Graves said the gas and oil fact -finding trip to Pennsylvania has been scheduled for the week of June 21st. He also expressed the need again for office space for the Planning Commissioner. Commissioner Ashley will check with the Board of Education to see if they have any space available. Commissioners agreed to meet in special session when the need arises to review any ordinance prepared by the Planning Commission. It was agreed that there isn't ample time during a regular meeting to review and discuss these ordinances. Thus far, the Planning Commission has presented the County Commission with a Dangerous Dog Ordinance and a Dilapidated Building Ordinance. Commissioners haven't taken any action on either ordinance.

At the request of Bruce Power, 911 Director, Commissioners authorized the purchase of a 2010 Ford Expedition to be used by the 911 Center. This vehicle will be purchased from Stephens Auto through the State of West Virginia's vehicle purchasing contract. Power reported that the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system went live on June 7th.

Commissioners voted to explore the possibility of constructing an access road to the Wayside Community Center. This center is owned by the County Commission and the county allows the residents of Wayside to use such property for a community center. A neighboring property owner has provided notice that she will no longer allow access to the community center through her property.

The County Commission denied a request from some of the residents in the Wolf Creek community to expand the boundary lines of the Bellview voting precinct. When this precinct was closed some years ago, voters registered in this precinct were reassigned to another precinct based on where they lived. A couple years ago, residents of the Wolf Creek met with the County Commission

and advised them they had renovated the polling place and asked the County Commission to reopen the precinct. Commissioners voted to reopen this precinct a couple years ago after obtaining a waiver from the Secretary of State. This release was required because the precinct didn't contain the minimum number of voters for a precinct. Commissioners agreed it wasn't fair to move a voter from their present assigned precinct to the Bellview precinct just to increase the number of registered voters in the Bellview precinct. The Clerk's Office will continue to identify those individuals living within the Bellview precinct that may be registered in another precinct.

The County Commission reviewed the monthly meeting minutes of the Gap Mills and Red Sulphur Public Service Districts and the Board of Health. An annual report from the Southern WV Convention and Visitor's Bureau was also reviewed and Shirley Dixon was reappointed to the Board of Health.

The Clerk told Commissioners that he had spoken to Steve Weir, Executive Director for the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation and Mr. Weir advised him that Richard Ellard, Special Project Manager for the GVEDC was resigning effective June 30th. Ellard was instrumental in getting the Fountain Springs Industrial Project developed near Peterstown as well as many other projects throughout the three county region served by GVEDC.

Commissioners discussed a proposal by Brickstreet to increase the premiums for worker's compensation for volunteer fire departments. State Insurance Commissioner Jane Cline recently approved the increase. At the request of Donald J. Evans, County Clerk, Commissioners agreed to send a letter to Governor Joe Manchin asking him to intervene in this matter due to the fact that such an increase would place a financial hardship on the volunteer fire departments in the county. On June 17th county officials learned that the Governor did get involved in the matter and an agreement was reached that will delay any increase in worker's compensation premiums for one year to give the Legislature time to come up with a way to deal with these increases.

A drawdown request was approved for the Greenville / Wikel Water Project in the amount of \$1,893.00. This payment was for administrative fees and legal services related to the project.

Commissioners heard a presentation from Christopher Shepherd concerning a proposed wind tower farm for the southern end of the county. Shepherd said the project would be a "community owned" project. "Community owned" means a landowner could agree to have a tower placed on their property and receive financial benefits from the electricity generated from such tower. Shepherd said this type of project is becoming popular and works out much better than some big company coming into the county and leasing property to construct these towers. Shepherd said a lot of work has to be done to see if the wind speed will be sufficient to operate the wind towers. The wind study itself takes one year. After the wind study is complete, other studies such as environmental studies, a GEO Technical Study, a bat and bird survey and a study will need to be conducted on existing Shepherd said he was working with a company called Windustry. Windustry[®] promotes progressive renewable energy solutions and empowers communities to develop and own wind energy as an

environmentally sustainable asset. Through member -supported outreach, education and advocacy Windustry works to remove the barriers to broad community ownership of wind energy. Commissioners agreed that they supported alternative energy but they would have to learn much more about a wind farm project and hold a public hearing to hear input on such a project before deciding whether or not to support the project. Shepherd said that Little Mountain, beginning at Peterstown and ending in Lindside, is being considered for the wind farm and advised Commissioners that there is no action required by them at this time because, as mentioned earlier, the wind study takes a year to complete. If the wind speed isn't adequate, there will be no project.

Commissioners reviewed a letter from an attorney in Charlotte, NC, advising that he was representing a company called Three Rivers and he was providing notice to the county that his client plans to sue all 55 counties in the state as well as all 55 county health departments throughout the state. The attorney advised he plans to bring legal action against County Commissions and Health Departments because they have violated the Clean Water Act by allowing residents to run their raw sewer from their homes into creeks, rivers and streams throughout West Virginia. Commissioners agreed to send the attorney a letter advising that County Commissions have no statutory authority to deal with sewage drainage issues, other than reporting such violations. Commissioners advised the attorney that county health departments and the WV Board of Health are the agencies authorized by WV Code to address these issues.

Ten final estate settlements were approved as was five exonerations. The County Commission will meet again in regular session on July 7th.