

Monroe Commission Holds Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on September 2, 2015 at the Courthouse. President Clyde Gum, Jr., called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

The County Commission reviewed a letter from Michael Green, President of the WV Board of Education. This letter was a response to a letter the County Commission previously sent the State Board of Education advising the County Commission was no longer able to work with the Superintendent and Board of Education in attempting to work out a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between themselves and the Board. The Commission asked the State Board to intervene in attempt to get this agreement worked out. The MOU lays out the terms and conditions for the county to place three Prevention Resource Officers in the county's schools and for the reimbursement of expenses associated with the hiring of these officers. Mr. Green advised the matter has been referred to the State Superintendent of Schools. Voters passed an excess levy in November 2014 and included in the levy was the hiring of three Prevention Resource Officers for the county's schools. The County Commission previously made the decision to go ahead and assign the officers to the schools until October 1, 2015 even though an agreement hasn't been worked out by the two parties.

Garry Taylor, chairman of the county's Planning Commission, appeared before the Commission. Mr. Taylor advised Commissioners that Intelos contacted him and they are interested in providing cellular phone service in the Peterstown area. He said they weren't sure if they were going to install their own tower or utilize an existing tower. Mr. Taylor said when they provide additional info he will report back to the County Commission. Commissioner Gum advised he continues to work on getting cell service for the Gap Mills and Sweet Springs area of the county. He said companies just aren't interested in providing service to this area of the county due to the low population numbers in this particular area.

Commissioners reviewed the monthly meeting minutes of the Gap Mills PSD and accepted the resignation of Lewis Buckland from the county's Solid Waste Authority.

Tim Wilson, 911 Director, appeared before the Commission providing an update of activities at the 911 Center. Wilson provided the monthly Wrecker Response Report. He said Galford's received five calls, Neel's three, Clarkson's two and Wilson's received one call. Wilson reported the center received 226 law enforcement related calls for the month of August, 176 EMS calls and 33 fire related calls. Wilson said he has agreed to serve on an Advisory Board for the Vo-Tech School. He praised the county's 911 dispatchers, emergency service agencies and the agencies from other counties who responded to the recent school bus wreck. The County Commission agreed to send all these agencies a letter thanking them for their assistance.

Jeff Jones, the county's Director of Emergency Management, appeared before the Commission. Jones, like Mr. Wilson, also praised the emergency service responders who responded to the bus accident. Jones advised he was in the process of completing the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment which is due to be submitted to the state by the end of the month. Jones said he was working with Greenbrier County to hold a joint mock drill with participation from both counties. The drill will consist of a mock gas spill near the county line and will be held in the near future. Jones then provided the Commission with an update on the complaints filed under the county's Unsafe and Unsanitary Structures and Refuse

ordinance. He concluded by advising he recently attended training workshops on Pipeline Safety and Water Protection.

Assessor Norbert Netzel appeared before the County Commission. On Netzel's recommendation the County Commission approved four parcel consolidations. Netzel told Commissioners that he acquired \$5,000 through Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick to assist with the expenses of the FFA Livestock Judging Team as they travel next month to the national competition. Commissioner Helmick recently presented these funds to the team in a ceremony held recently at James Monroe High School.

The County Commission approved appointing President Gum to the Workforce Local Elected Official Board. Gum will replace Commissioner Ashley on this board.

Jeremy Meadows, Chief Deputy for the County Clerk, advised the County Commission that a company called Gigabeam from Rich Creek, VA will soon be offering wireless internet in Union in the very near future. Meadows said the speed of this internet is about three to four times faster than the current providers can offer. He said Gigabeam has made a request to install their equipment on the Board of Education's tower at James Monroe High School. If permission is granted service can be provided to the Lindside and Peterstown areas.

The County Commission agreed to send Mountain Valley Pipeline a letter asking for clarification on one of the maps they have on their website. The map appears to reflect a more southern route for the pipeline than the original proposed route and the alternate route shows. If indeed this is a third alternative, the Commission will request that Mountain Valley hold an additional public meeting to allow the residents in the affected area to comment and to ensure they get due process.

Brian and Doris McCurdy appeared before the Commission explaining their recent court action against Mountain Valley Pipeline. The McCurdy's sought an injunction in Monroe County Circuit Court prohibiting surveyors from entering their property. The Court granted the injunction advising the definition of eminent domain wasn't met as the pipeline will not provide any public benefit to the residents of Monroe County.

The County Commission was recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$49,000 from the Department of Environmental Protection REAP Program. This grant is to construct a concrete foundation for the Solid Waste Authority's future recycling center. HAM Landfill provided the Solid Waste Authority with a 50 year lease on a parcel of property located at the Landfill. The landfill prepared the site for the Authority at no cost. The Commission previously solicited bids for the construction of the foundation. Two bids were submitted but only one could be considered because the other bid wasn't bid according to instructions. As required by grant requirements, the bid has been submitted to the DEP for their approval.

The Commission held an estate hearing on this day, approved six final estate settlements and four exonerations. The County Commission's next regular meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2015 beginning at 5:30 pm at the Courthouse.