

Monroe Commission Holds July Meeting

The Monroe County Commission met in regular session on July 6, 2011 at the Courthouse. Commission President Shane Ashley called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation.

The Commission appointed Tommie Noble, Shelby Jennings and Eugenie Malick to the Monroe Health Center Board of Trustees. Ms. Malick was also appointed to the Board of Health.

Commissioners reviewed a progress report for the Greenville Water Project prepared by Bob Hazelwood, Project Engineer. Mr. Hazelwood reported that the project was on schedule and moving along well. This project will extend public water from Coulture's Chapel to Wikel onto Greenville. Completion date for the project is April 2012. A drawdown request in the amount of \$282,274.00 was approved for this project for construction and administrative costs.

Commissioner Clyde Gum reported that the Courthouse Energy Efficiency and Conservation projects have been completed. These projects included the replacement of the lights in the Courthouse, 911 Center and Prosecuting Attorney's Office, replacement of the Courthouse boiler, replacement of two Courthouse doors, replacement of the Prosecuting Attorney's doors and the installation of a heating and air conditioning system in the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. These projects were funded from a \$90,000.00 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy written by Donald J. Evans, County Clerk. Commissioner Gum served as Project Director.

The exterior condition of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office was discussed. Commissioner Gum reported that there were screws loose in the metal roof and the roof needed painting as well as the siding. Gum said he would prepare a list of items that needed attention and present it at the Commission's August meeting.

Sheriff Mike Gravely appeared before the County Commission and reported the new software purchased to submit the department's criminal reports to Charleston was working well. The Sheriff also reported that he was awaiting word on the county's grant application to continue to have the Prevention Resource Officer at James Monroe High School. The Sheriff assigned a Prevention Resource Officer to James Monroe last year but he must apply for funding each year to keep the officer at the school.

As previously requested by the County Commission, the County Clerk advised that the county has made a \$150,000.00 payment to the Regional Jail Authority and have paid the attorneys who represented the County Commission and Assessor in the Walnut Springs tax appeal, in full. This appeal cost the county \$262,000.00 in legal fees.

Commissioners reviewed the monthly meeting minutes of the Red Sulphur and Gap Mills Public Service Districts, the Assessor's Valuation budget for 2011-2012 and accepted the resignation of Frank Upton as one of the county's two Fiduciary Commissioners. The County Commission authorized the Clerk to place a notice in the local paper soliciting letters of interest to replace Mr. Upton.

Steve Weir, Executive Director of the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation and Rita Cruise, representing National Capital Investment Fund, appeared before the County Commission. Ms. Cruise advised Commissioners that the mission of the National Capital Investment Fund was to assist small businesses who were operating a business related to natural resources such as wind, water, and biomass. Mr. Weir said the main purpose of their visit today was to see how the County Commission felt about pursuing a project directly related to our natural resources. Commissioners said they wanted to read the written material provided by Ms. Cruise and they would get back to Mr. Weir.

Planning Commission members Rod Graves, Rocky Parsons and Jim Menard appeared before Commissioners providing an update of the activities of the Planning Commission. Mr. Parsons advised that the Prosecuting Attorney was in the process of reviewing the proposed Dilapidated Building Ordinance and they would report back to the County Commission once the Prosecutor has finished reviewing it and making any recommendations on it. Mr. Graves reported that the Planning Commission is now holding its meetings in different areas of the county. He said the July meeting will be held in Peterstown and the August meeting will be held in Alderson.

County Clerk Donald J. Evans advised the County Commission that he has been reviewing the county's monthly gas bills for the last few months and said the county could buy gas from businesses in the county cheaper than they are paying to the state. The County presently buys gas from the state at the Department of Highways offices in Union and Peterstown. The Clerk said the per gallon price the county pays is higher than the per gallon price offered by most county businesses. In addition, the Clerk stated, the county would be supporting businesses right here in the county. The Clerk said the county doesn't have to pay the state gas tax when purchasing gas through the state. However, if the county buys gas elsewhere, the state will reimburse the county for the tax. Commissioners agreed to discuss this matter further at their August meeting.

At the request of the County Clerk, Commissioners agreed to appropriate funding to install a light on the flag located on the Courthouse lawn and to solicit proposals for landscaping at the area in front of the Courthouse where two trees and bushes were recently removed.

Scott Yates, local manager for Frontier, met with the County Commission to provide an update on extending broadband service to many areas of the county. He said broadband has already been installed in Gap Mills, Rock Camp and Bozoo. Yates said services will also be extended to Wayside, Hans Creek, Cashmere, Ballard, Pickaway, Sinks Grove and Hillsdale. He said before Frontier starting extending broadband to different areas in the county, less than 25% of county residents actually had broadband.

Three individuals representing the Citizen's Conservation Corps appeared before the County Commission. Robert Martin, Cutter Houck and Rob Wooton spoke about the new Boy Scout Camp that is being constructed in Fayette County. They advised Commissioners that the National Boy Scout Jamboree is scheduled to be held at this new camp in 2013 and they expect over 40,000

scouts and 100,000 visitors. Martin explained that each scout attending the jamboree would be required to perform one day of community service. He said this community service would be performed in nine southern West Virginia counties including Monroe. Mr. Wooton told Commissioners that they needed to prepare a "wish list" of county projects they wanted the Boy Scouts to work on here in Monroe County. Such list must be submitted by March 2012. The Scouts will be provided transportation from the campsite to the county and their meals will be provided. The county would need to furnish the necessary tools and materials for the project. In addition to preparing the list, the County Commission will need to appoint a "county champion" who will oversee all of the community service projects and various work groups consisting of local individuals.

The County Commission received notice that an individual has applied for a video lottery license for the purpose of opening a business near Peterstown in the building that formerly housed "Walts Place". State law requires the owner of a business that offers the video lottery machines to also have an alcoholic beverage permit. The state has jurisdiction over these two permits.

The County Clerk reported that some equipment in the 911 Center was damaged by a lightning strike during a recent storm. He said damages to the equipment are around \$23,000.00. The Clerk said some of the equipment in the Courthouse also sustained damage in the amount of \$4,000.00. Commissioners authorized the Clerk to file a claim with the county's insurance provider.

The County Commission discussed a request from an individual to be connected to the new Greenville Water System. The Clerk said he contacted the Project Engineer for this project concerning this request and the engineer stated the individual simply lived too far from where the new extension line ends and it is impossible to connect his house to the new line.

The County Commission scheduled a "Meet & Greet" reception to be held at the Peterstown Public Library on August 23rd at 7:00 pm. The purpose of this reception is to provide residents an opportunity to meet their county officials and discuss any concerns they may have. All county officials have been invited and refreshments will be served. The Commission plans to hold these events in other areas of the county.

The County Commission discussed two estate matters, approved 16 final estate settlements and 11 exonerations.