

Berkeley County Commission Meeting

February 4, 2025

Board of Review & Equalization

2:00 P.M.

400 W. Stephen Street, Suite 205

Martinsburg, WV 25401

Present:

G. Edgar Gochenour, President

R. Stephen Catlett, Vice President

James P. Whitacre, Commissioner

H. D. Boyd, Commissioner

John Hardy, Commissioner

Gary A. Wine, County Administrator

Penny Shewell, Office Administrator

Aleah Tucker, Executive Assistant

Also Present: Jeff Mauzy, Deputy Legal Director; The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor; John Streetts, Assessor's Office; Rhonda Loudan, Assessor's Office

Re: Call to Order

President Gochenour called the February 4, 2025 Berkeley County Commission Meeting sitting as the Board of Review & Equalization to Order at 2:05 P.M.

Re: Items from the Public

Douglas Copenhaver, Jr. appeared before the Commission and stated that he has had an issue with the Assessor and requesting a meeting with a Commissioner and the Assessor to review his tax assessment. President Gochenour advised the would work with the Assessor to have a meeting scheduled with the Assessor, Mr. Copenhaver and himself.

Re: Agenda

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Agenda for the February 4, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting sitting as the Board of Review & Equalization. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Board of Review & Equalization Session # 2
Larry Hess, Assessor

The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor appeared before the Commission and stated that their office had received a Sales Ratio report which is a type of report Card from the State Tax Department and reported that for tax year 2025 they were within 92% which means for all properties in Berkeley County they are within 8% of fair market value.

John Streets from the Assessor's Office appeared before the Commission and presented a change to the tax books for District/Map/Parcel 06-17-35, 739 Winchester Avenue with proposed change:

Current Assessed Value		Proposed Assessed Value	
Land	\$ 62,940	Land	\$ 62,940
Building	\$ 89,460	Building	\$ 79,500
Total Assessment	\$152,400	Total Assessment	\$142,440

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the changes to the tax books as presented. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Margaret Kursey, Director, The Martinsburg Initiative
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

Margaret Kursey, Director, The Martinsburg Initiative appeared before the Commission and presented their FY2025-26 budget requesting \$5,000. Ms. Kursey stated that they were 100% grant funded, were present in sixteen (16) schools and funded three (3) positions at WVU. She also reported that they work with CASA, and the Boys & Girls Club.

**Re: Deborah Fleming, Executive Director, American Red Cross
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

Deborah Fleming, Executive Director, American Red Cross appeared before the Commission and presented their FY2025-26 budget requesting \$5,000. Ms. Fleming reported that they assisted eighty five (85) individuals and thirty five (35) families last year to find lodging and food and provided clothing, baby needs and personal hygiene products.

**Re: Michelle Suddoth, CASA of the Eastern Panhandle
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

Michelle Suddoth, CASA of the Eastern Panhandle appeared before the Commission and presented their FY2025-26 budget requesting \$20,000. Mike Saga with ARGOS appeared before the Commission and spoke on behalf of CASA and reported that ARGOS has assisted with this program and their commitment to foster future programs. Mr. Saga spoke about the great work that CASA is doing and why ARGOS supports them.

**Re: Joe Burton, Executive Director, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

Joe Burton, Executive Director, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation appeared before the Commission and presented their budget for FY2025-26 requesting \$1,860,321. Mr. Burton presented a power point presentation and reviewed the updates to all of the parks and the goals and needs for the parks for the next fiscal year.

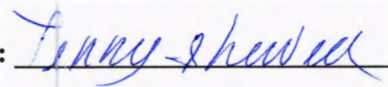
**Re: Gretchen Fry, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

Gretchen Fry, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library appeared before the Commission and presented their FY2025-26 budget presentation requesting \$1,579,472 which is mandated by state code with a request for an additional \$500,000 to help fund the HVAC replacement and asbestos abatement. She reported that they have applied for grants, but stated that there is no grant funding available for library buildings.

Re: Recess

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to Recess the February 4, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting sitting as the Board of Review & Equalization.

Submitted by: _____



Penny Shewell, Office Administrator