

Berkeley County Commission Meeting

February 13, 2025

400 W. Stephen Street, Suite 205

9:30 A.M.

Martinsburg, WV 25401

Present:

G. Edgar Gochenour, President

R. Stephen Catlett, Vice President

John Hardy, Commissioner

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator

Penny Shewell, Office Administrator

Commissioner Whitacre, Commissioner Boyd and Gary Wine County Administrator were not present for the meeting.

Also Present: Anthony Delligatti, Legal Director; Tracie McCormick, Procurement Coordinator; Will Lorensen, Fiduciary Supervisor; The Honorable Shelly Schoppert, Circuit Clerk; The Honorable Tony Petrucci, County Clerk; Fire Chief Martin Roberts; Jeff Mauzy, Deputy Legal Director

Re: Call to Order

President Gochenour called the February 13, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting to Order at 9:35 A.M.

Re: Items from the Public

There were no items from the public.

Re: Agenda

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Agenda for the February 13, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting with a modification to remove Jennifer Swisher, Emergency Communications Director from the Agenda. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Consent Agenda

1. Purchase Order Log

There were no questions regarding the Purchase Order Log.

2. Internal Budget Revisions

There were no internal budget revisions to review.

3. Changes in Status

President Gochenour stated that a letter of resignation was received from the Honorable Tony Petrucci, County Clerk for Rose Clark Deputy Clerk, Voter's Registration effective February 28, 2025.

4. Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the February 4, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting sitting as the Board of Review & Equalization; February 6, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting or the February 6, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting sitting as the Board of Review and Equalization,

- 5. Bond Reduction – South Brook Section 1, Grading,
BCP File #2112-439 tied to BCP #2105-176 & 2105-0301 Bond #0798292 – Engineering
Department**
- 6. Bond Release – Dollar General Bunker Hill, Grading, BCP File #2011-300 tied to BCP #013-
19 & R00585-20 Bond #4432380 – Engineering Department**
- 7. Bond Reduction – South Brook Section 2, Phase 1 (Final) BCP File #2407-201 tied to BCP
File #2405-113, #2304-138, #2407-204 & 2205-136, Bond #00832506
Engineering Department**
- 8. Bond Reduction – South Brook Section 2, Phase 2, BCP File #2407-202 tied to BCP File
#2410-328, #2306-210, #2407-204 & 22005-136, Bond #00832508 – Engineering Department**
- 9. Bond Reduction Springdale Farms Phase 4 Lots 102-127 & 233-244 (Final) BCP File #2304-
134 tied to BCP File #2304-135, #2102-040 & #65-04, Bond #01724556 Engineering
Department**
- 10. Bond Reduction Overlook at Riverside PUD Phase 6 Lots 53-64, 158-168 & 214-221 (Final)
BCP #2412-395 tied to BCP File #2501-011, #2308-260 & 2012-357, Bond #AL104113 –
Engineering Department**
- 11. Bond Reduction Overlook at Riverside PUD Phase 7, Lots 78-112, 244-251 & 289-305
(Final) BCP File #2412-396 tied to BCP File #2501-012, #2405-124 & #2012-357
Bond #AL104436 – Engineering Department**
- 12. Acceptance of FY26 Records Management & Preservation Board (RMBP) Grant**

President Gochenour stated that this was a 12 month grant for the Circuit Clerk to assist in the management and preservation of county records with a total award of \$35,000 with a grant match of 10% or \$3,500.

Re: Consent Agenda Approval

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for the February 13, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Correction of Assessments Log, Apportionment of Assessment Applications, Deconsolidation Applications and Consolidation of Properties Applications – Assessor’s Office

The Assessor’s Office had nothing to present this week.

Re: Board Meeting Reports

Commissioner Hardy reported that he attended the Public Service Water District board meeting and stated that they had put out a good deal of bonds with a good return rate.

Vice President Catlett reported that he attended the Farmland Protection board meeting and reported that they have two board members terms expiring soon. He reported that Lavone Petyon who was the previous Director of the Farmland Protection board and now the new State Executive Director attended the board meeting. Vice President Catlett reported that he had sent a letter to Lee Thorne with the DOH in January regarding the new access road to CMC on Route 11 North and his response back was they had done a study of that area in 2023 and Vice President Catlett suggested the Commission keep asking them to reconsider.

President Gochenour reported that he attended a special meeting with Back Creek Valley VFD regarding staffing. He also reported that he attended the LEPC meeting and they are working on a table top drill and reviewed the commodity study for traffic on the highways. President Gochenour also reported that he attended two zoom meetings with the Development Authority with one being for property management and the other the regular Development Authority meeting.

Board and Commission Vacancies

There were no board and commission vacancies to be addressed.

Re: Honorary County Commissioner

Commissioner Hardy swore in Isaac Schafferman, a student from Faith Christian Academy as Honorary County Commissioner and presented him with a certificate. Mr. Schafferman stated that he planned to go to medical school and study in biology and had already been accepted at WVU and Liberty.

Re: Bid Opening – RFQ Architectural Engineering Services Public Safety Complex

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator reviewed the RFP for the Architectural Engineering Services for the Public Safety complex stating that it was advertised on social media, on the county web site and in the Martinsburg Journal with the Certification of Publication present in the read ahead.

At 9:55 A.M. President Gochenour opened the sealed bids received as follows:

Bid #	Vendor
Bid # 1	Century Engineering Annapolis, MD
Bid # 2	New River Engineering, Inc. Charlestown, WV
Bid #3	Newcomer Associates Architecture & Engineering Chambersburg, PA

Bid # 4	ZMM Architects Engineers Blacksburg, VA
Bid # 5	McKinley Architecture & Engineering Martinsburg, WV
Bid # 6	Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates Charlottesville, VA
Bid # 7	Alpha & Associates, Inc. Morgantown, WV
Bid # 8	A E WORKS ARLINGTON, VA
Bid # 9	Manns Woodward Studios Nottingham, MD
Bid # 10	Thrasher Group, Inc. Bridgeport, WV
Bid # 11	Buchart Horn Architect York PA

**Re: Will Lorensen, Fiduciary Supervisor
Estate Hearing James Sherad Swinson**

Will Lorensen appeared before the Commission and reviewed the history of the estate of James Sherad Swinson stating that he died in testate with no will. He stated that Robert Alan Blackman appeared at the Fiduciary Office with a \$100,000 cash surety bond and requested to be the executor of the estate as the sole heir. It was then discovered that Mr. Blackman was not the sole heir and the original will was discovered naming his sister, Cythina Williams as Executor of the Estate which has been done and Mr. Blackburn's request is now moot since the original will has been located and Ms. Williams has been named the Executor as per the will. Mr. Lorensen did request to keep the \$100,000 surety bond for Mr. Blackburn in place since he was the Executor of the estate for several months until such time that Mr. Blackburn provides an accounting of the estate.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the request of the Fiduciary Supervisor. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Will Lorensen, Fiduciary Supervisor
Estate Hearing – Estate of Peggy Ann Humphries**

Will Lorensen, Fiduciary Supervisor appeared before the Commission and reviewed the history of the estate of Peggy Ann Humphries. Jamie Hill, Esquire representing Christine M. Ashbrook the petitioner requesting to remove Tracie A. Hose as executor of the estate of Peggy Ann Humphries due to the delay in filing the accounting. Tracie Hose appeared before the Commission and was sworn in by Penny Shewell, Office Administrator. Ms. Hose reviewed the steps she had taken with the estate and stated that she realized she had failed to communicate and was willing to step down as executor of the estate.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to remove Tacie A. Hose as executor of the estate of Peggy Ann Humphries and require that she providing an interim accounting of the estate to the Fiduciary Office within 30 days. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator
Costing Sharing Agreement for Paid Firefighters
Hiring Approval for 2025 Firefighter for Recruit Academy
Bonnie Bus & Lucas Truck Parking Lot Use**

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator reviewed the Cost Sharing Agreement for Paid Firefighters. He stated that it was approved by the Fireboard last week. President Gochenour stated that it was a pleasure to work with Fireboard to be able to provide 24/7 staffing for all the of five volunteer fire stations. Fire Chief Marty Roberts appeared before the Commission and thanked them for providing 245/7 services to the public and stating they will be conducting their first Fire academy in Berkeley County.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Cost Sharing Agreement which will add paid firefighters to all VFD's and authorize the President to sign. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chad reviewed the hiring approval request for the 2025 Firefighter recruit academy requesting to hire twelve (12) new firefighters with a start date of March 17, 2025 with an annual compensation rate of \$54,227.

Cody Kief
Jed Tighe
Ashton Shambaugh
Daniel Miller
Andrew Biller
Jesse Bly
Richard Hahn
Garrison Hahn
Garrison Huggins
Roger Bradford, II
Eduardo Hernandez
Bolodi Fritzsich
Joshua Mills

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the 2025 Firefighter recruit academy to hire twelve (12) new firefighters. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hardy made a motion for three (3) of the new firefighters to be placed in Back Creek Valley VFD to be paid for by the Fireboard. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Winebrenner reviewed the request for the Bonnie Bus & Lucas Truck parking lot. He stated that this would be a WVU bus for healthcare for lung screenings for patients with appointments and should be minimal traffic to use a corner of the Sheriff's Department parking lot for two days in the month of March.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to allow the Bonnie Bus & Lucas Truck for WVU lung screenings in the Sheriff's department parking lot in the month of March. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Public Hearing FY2025 Home Investment Partnership Program

President Gochenour stated that the Certification of Publication for the Public Hearing was present in the read head,

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to open the public hearing for the FY2025 Home Investment Partnership Program at 10:45 A.M. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Cory Roma, CDBG & Home Administrator, City of Martinsburg appeared before the Commission and reviewed the Home Consortium program and what the program covers and eligible home activities and costs.

There were no comments from the public.

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Cory Roman, CDBG & Home Administrator, City of Martinsburg
Resolution FY2025 Home Consortium**

Cory Roman, CDBG & Home Administrator, City of Martinsburg appeared before the Commission and read the Resolution for the FY2025 Home Consortium.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to adopt the Resolution for the FY2025 Home Consortium. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

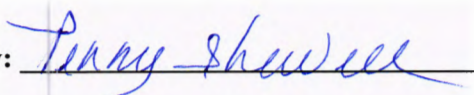
**Re: Joseph Kinser, Prosecuting Attorney
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

Joseph Kinser, Prosecuting Attorney appeared before the Commission and presented his FY2025-26 budget. Mr. Kinser thanked the county and specially Mr. Wine with the past years data in assisting to prepare his first budget. He reviewed his budget by line item and stated that they were working on updating their West Law contract.

Re: Recess

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to Recess the February 13, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting.

Approved by: _____



Penny Shewell, Office Administrator

Berkeley County Commission Meeting
Sitting as the Board of Review & Equalization

February 13, 2025

2:00 P.M.

400 W. Stephen Street, Suite 205

Martinsburg, WV 25401

Present:

G. Edgar Gochenour, President

R. Stephen Catlett, Vice President

John Hardy, Commissioner

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator

Penny Shewell, Office Administrator

Commissioner Whitacre, Commissioner Boyd and Gary Wine County Administrator were not present for the meeting.

Also Present: The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor; Cody Legg, Assessor's Office; Rhonda Loudan, Assessor's Office; John Streett, Assessor's Office; The Honorable Shelly Schoppert, Circuit Clerk; The Honorable Tony Petrucci, County Clerk; John Alderton, County Clerk's Office

Re: Call to Order at the Board of Review of Equalization

President Gochenour called the February 13, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting to Order sitting as the Board of Review & Equalization.

The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor appeared before the Commission and stated that they had no Board of Review & Equalization applicants scheduled for today, but did have some changes for the tax books.

Cody Legg, Assessor's Office appeared before the Commission and reviewed the proposed changes to the tax books as follows:

Parcel 06-11-241	Current Assessment	Proposed Assessment	Reason
	\$64,860	\$18,660	Incorrect Lot s size
Parcel 01-16-3	\$49,320	\$49,140	Incorrect Acreage
Parcel 01-16-1.2	N/A	\$26,940	New parcel for 2025 Merged with Another Property

**Re: The Honorable Shelly Schoppert, Circuit Clerk
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

The Honorable Shelly Schoppert, Circuit Clerk appeared before the Commission and presented her FY2025-26 budget. She stated that she was staying within last year's budget and items such as scanners and other items were taken care of by the state. Mrs. Schoppert reviewed the office procedures and training.

**Re: The Honorable Tony Petrucci, County Clerk
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

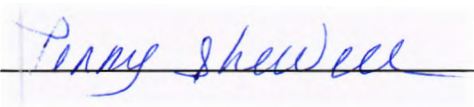
The Honorable Tony Petrucci, County Clerk appeared before the Commission and presented his budget for FY2025-26 reviewing his departments needs. Clerk Petrucci stated that he made an error on line item 413-230 and it should be \$325,000 and not \$300,000. John Alderton also appeared before the Commission and reviewed the budget needs for the Civic Service.

**Re: Mark Barney, Vice Chair, Berkeley County Solid Waste Auth
FY2025-26 Budget Presentation**

Mark Barney, Vice Chair, Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority appeared before the Commission and presented their FY2025-26 budget requesting \$72,000. Mr. Barney presented and reviewed a power point presentation of their annual report and discussed the recycling program and the changes they have made to the Solid Waste Authority staffing.

Recess:

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to Recess the February 13, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting sitting as the Board of Review & Equalization.

Submitted by: 

Penny Shewell, Office Administrator