

Berkeley County Commission Meeting

March 20, 2025

400 W. Stephen Street, Suite 205

9:30 A.M.

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

Also Present: Anthony Delligatti, Legal Director; Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator; Tracie McCormick, Procurement Coordinator; The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor; Tony Petrucci, County Clerk, Doug Smith, County Engineer; Brian Ross, Community Development Director

Re: Call to Order

President Gochenour called the March 20, 2025 Berkeley County Commission Meeting to Order at 9:35 A.M.

Re: Items from the Public

Cory Rodriguez appeared before the Commission and questioned why the budget was tabled last week for the number of Deputies and doesn't believe that it is fair to put that burden on the taxpayers. He stated that he feels the state should be doing their fair share and need to also build a turn pike on I81.

Re: Agenda

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Agenda for the March 20, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting with the removal of items 5 and 6 from the Consent Agenda for the Request to Apply and Resolution for the Community Corrections Grant. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Consent Agenda

1. Purchase Order Log

President Gochenour stated that there were changes on the Purchase Order Log this week as the credit card payments were now on there. Commissioner Hardy stated that he had received a call from the Tomahawk Ruritan Club regarding their check for an LEDA grant and stated that it was on this week's PO Log. Gary Wine, County Administrator stated that this was a very slow process as these checks had to be entered into the budget through a state budget revision then approved by the state before the checks could be issued.

2. Internal Budget Revisions

Gary Wine, County Administrator reviewed the two (2) internal budget revisions received.

3. Changes in Status

President Gochenour stated that a new hire recommendation was received from Tim Czaja, Community Corrections Director for Amanda Gavin as a Grants Administrator effective April 14, 2025 with an annual salary of \$63,000.

President Gochenour stated that a new hire recommendation was received from The Honorable Shelly Schoppert, Circuit Clerk for Megan Hitt as a Deputy Clerk effective March 31, 2025 with an annual salary of \$39,500.

President Gochenour stated that changes in status were received from The Honorable Joseph Kinser, Prosecuting Attorney for corrections to miscalculated pay rates for Ashley Hafley, Administrative Assistant II to change from \$40,000 to \$41,500 effective retroactive to May 15, 2024 and Garrett Robertson, Assistant Prosecutor I to change from \$89,700 to \$90,000 effective retroactive to July 16, 2024.

4. Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the March 13, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting minutes.

- 5. Bond Release Archers Rock, Phase 3A (Final Plat) BCP #2305-170 tied to 2305-177, 2108-290 & 2101-018, Bond #AL103033 – Engineering Department**
- 6. Bond Reduction Caliber Collision (Grading & SWM) BCP #2411-343 tied to 2409-269, 2307-251 & 2401-0077, LOC #1002977 – Engineering Department**
- 7. Stop Payment Check Request – County Clerk’s Finance Office**
- 8. Proclamation American Red Cross Month 2025**
- 9. Resolution WV COSSAP Grant**

Re: Consent Agenda Approval

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for the March 20, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Correction of Assessment Logs, Apportionment of Assessment Logs, Deconsolidation and Consolidation of Properties Applications – Assessor’s Office

The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor appeared before the Commission and presented three (3) personal tax exonerations due to taxpayer error totaling \$365.10.

Commissioner Boyd made a motion to approve the three (3) personal tax exonerations due to taxpayer error totaling \$365.10. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion failed with a vote of zero to five.

Mr. Hess presented fourteen (14) personal tax exonerations for reason of office error totaling \$3,217.50.

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to approve the fourteen (14) personal tax exonerations for reason of office error totaling \$3,217.50. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented two (2) real estate exonerations due to office error totaling \$95,379.95.

Commissioner Boyd made a motion to approve the two (2) real estate exonerations due to office error totaling \$95,379.95. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Board Meeting Repots

Commissioner Boyd reported that he attended the Main Street Martinsburg board meeting where they discussed the St. Patrick's Day event stating that it was the largest event with record sales. He also stated that it was publicized in the state magazine for the largest St. Patrick's Day event. Commissioner Boyd stated that they are working on a new employee handbook and the wine festival coming up in May. He reported that he attended the Roundhouse Authority meeting and reported that the electrical project is moving forward and the elevator project is proposed to be finished in May. Commissioner Boyd also stated that they are working on the Rail fest. He also reported that he was unable to attend the Home Consortium meeting.

Commissioner Hardy reported that he attended the Planning Commission meeting where three (3) projects were moved forward. He reported that he attended the Health Department board meeting and stated that it was a standard meeting other than they had a break in, but not much was taken, but concerned that the parking lot lights may not be working correctly. Gary Wine, County Administrator stated the lights were already being addressed. Commissioner Hardy reported that he had an HEPMO meeting where they discussed two WV projects at Rt. 45 by Blue Ridge College and also Edwin Miller Blvd.

Commissioner Whitacre reported that he attended the Airport Authority meeting where they continue to work with joining the co-op for fuel sales. He also reported that they are looking at widening a runway and Maintenance and Aviation programs at the schools. Commissioner Whitacre reported that he attended the EPTA meeting and reported that the site permit has been reworked and just released. He also reported that he attended the Solid Waste Authority meeting via Zoom with a discussion held on legislative issues.

Vice President Catlett reported that he has been receiving numerous calls regarding Exit 12 and stated that they are currently paving it. Vice President Catlett reported that he participated in a conference call with the CCAWV regarding legislative issues. He stated that he attended a school safety meeting and thanked the Fire Departments, Emergency Services and Emergency Communications for going into the numerous schools teaching about health concerns and gun safety. Vice President Catlett stated that he attended the memorial for Robert Shickle who gave his life to the Hedgesville community and thanked the Hedgesville VFD for hosting his service. Vice President Catlett stated that he was unable to attend the MPO meeting.

President Gochenour reported that he appeared on the WRNR radio program along with Laura Hoffmaster, Senior Planner, Planning Commission regarding the Comprehensive Plan. He also reported that he attended the Parks & Recreation board meeting where they are working on the Dupont Soccer complex. He also reported that the Tough Man contest was held last week and the June Jubilee car show was moved. President Gochenour reported that the Judge and her staff are now in their new offices in the old jail that was converted into courtrooms and thanked Gary Wine for all of his hard work on the project.

Re: Board and Commission Vacancies

There were no Board and Commission vacancies addressed.

Re: Honorary County Commissioner

Commissioner Hardy introduced Matthew Billmyer, a student from St. Joseph School. He swore in Mr. Billmyer as Honorary County Commissioner and presented him with a certificate. Mr. Billmyer stated that he enjoyed sports such as running cross country and enjoyed arts.

**Re: Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator
Engineering, Planning and Building Inspection Restructure
Emergency Management Reorganization
Bid Recommendation RFP Interior Reflective Film**

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator appeared before the Commission and discussed the restructuring of the Engineering, Planning and Building Inspection departments. He stated with the retirement of a long-time employee who was the building code inspector and Code Official, Steve Aberegg assumed the duties of Code Official on a temporary license, and has passed all certification exams and now has a permanent license. He further stated that Debbie Watt has stepped up and taken commercial building inspections and a new employee was recently hired for residential inspections. Mr. Winebrenner stated that this recommendation seeks to permanently place Steve and Debbie in their new roles with a salary adjustment for Steve from \$98,123.00 to \$105,000.00 and Debbie from \$62,000 .00 to \$72,000.00. He further stated that as the structure of the Community Development Office was assessed a need has also been identified for formalization of a Deputy Directors position to assist Mr. Ross in the departmental operations. Mr. Winebrenner further stated that Laura Hoffmaster, Senior Planner has taken the lead on many large projects with great success and is recommending formalizing her position with Community Development as Deputy Director with a salary adjustment from \$72,441.95 to \$92,000.00. Mr. Winebrenner stated that all salary adjustments would be effective April 1, 2025 and would be budget neutral.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the proposed changes in position and salary changes effective April 1, 2025. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Winebrenner reviewed the Emergency Management reorganization stating that as the Fire Department continues to expand they have had to re-evaluate the structure of that department to ensure that they operate as efficiently as possible. He stated that the Fire Department has operated under Emergency Management and allowed for the execution of multiple public safety tasks to be completed under one small department. Mr. Winebrenner further stated that the Commission is reimbursed annually by the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) for 50% of the salary for Director Randy Lilly and the Emergency Manager, Shawn Wolford. He stated in most cases in other areas of the state, Emergency Management coexist under Emergency Communications and stated that they felt it would more beneficial for the operations of both departments to separate Emergency Management and the Fire

Department. Mr. Winebrenner stated this proposal would move the 2 employees of Emergency Management and the 50% of the salary monies under the Department of Emergency Communications where they will continue to be eligible to receive the 50% match the EMPG funding. He further stated that the Fire Department would be established as a stand-alone department with the Fire Chief as the department lead and if approved the change would go into effect April 1, 2025 with little operational impact.

Commissioner Boyd made a motion to approve the requested changes effective April 1, 2025. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Winebrenner reviewed the RFP for the Interior Reflective Film stating that the lowest bid did not qualify as the incorrect product was bid recommending the bid be awarded to the next lowest bid, Jack of All Tints, LLC in the amount of \$12,643.56.

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to award the bid for the Interior Reflective Film to Jack of all Tints, LLC in the bid amount of \$12,643.56. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Anthony Delligatti, Legal Director
301 Winchester Avenue PILOT Assignment**

Anthony Delligatti, Legal Director appeared before the Commission and reviewed the PILOT Assignment for 301 Winchester Avenue.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the PILOT Assignment for 301 Winchester Avenue as presented. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Gary Wine, County Administrator
Adoption of FY2025-26 Budget
State Budget Revision # 07 Fund 001**

Gary Wine, County Administrator reviewed the balanced budget for FY2025-26 with a levy rate of \$13.39 with no change from last year to the levy rate.

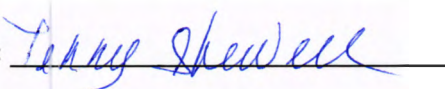
Vice President Catlett made a motion to adopt the budget for FY2025-26. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wine reviewed State Budget Revision #07 for fund 001.

Commissioner Boyd made a motion to approve State Budget Revision # 07 for Fund 001. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Recess

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to Recess the March 20, 2025 Berkeley County Commission meeting.

Submitted by: 

Penny Shewell, Office Administrator