

Berkeley County Commission Meeting

September 11, 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

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator

Penny Shewell, Office Administrator

Kiersten Emerick, Administrative Assistant

Gary Wine, County Administrator was not present

Also Present: Anthony Delligatti, Legal Director; Tracie McCormick, Procurement Coordinator; The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor; Matthew Umstead, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning; Jack Laing, Facilities Director; Doug Smith, County Engineer

Re: Call to Order

President Gochenour called the September 11, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting to Order at 9:35 A.M.

Re: Items from the Public

Charles Moore, representing the Berkeley County Youth Fair, appeared before the Commission to express his gratitude to the Commission, the Ambulance Authority, and the Sheriff's Department for their continued support of the Youth Fair. He shared that this year's event welcomed over 20,000 visitors from across the region and showcased the work of more than 644 exhibitors, featuring over 2,000 projects. Mr. Moore then presented plaques as tokens of appreciation on behalf of the youth, thanking the Commission for their role in supporting and celebrating youth achievement. He emphasized that their ongoing support helps ensure this valued tradition continues to grow, thrive, and shape future leaders.

Re: Approval of Agenda

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Agenda for the September 11, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting. Commissioner Boyd 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 for review

3. Changes in Status

President Gochenour stated a hiring recommendation was received from Tim Czaja, Director of Community Corrections for Totianna Etheridge as a Peer Recovery Coach with an annual salary of \$43,135 effective 9/22/2025.

4. Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the September 4, 2025, County Commission Meeting minutes.

5. Bond Release—Stone Mill Lots 1-25 BCP File #2107-241 tied to BCP File #2107-242, #2107-210, #2008,114, & #029-06 LOC Number 4832911-53- Engineering Department

6. Bond Release—Falling Waters Business Center Lot 9 BCP #077-09 tied to BCP #2407-221, 2407,220,2203-074, & R00668-20 Bond Number 100495950-Engineering Department

7. Flu Shot Clinic

President Gochenour stated that the Flu Shot Clinic will be hosted on September 22nd from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM in the Multi-Purpose Room for county employees. He stated that employees can just show up without an appointment and need to bring their employee ID.

**8. Letter of Endorsement to Serve Alcohol at Private Event
WVU Medicine**

Re: Consent Agenda Approval

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for the September 11, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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

The Honorable Larry Hess appeared before the Commission and presented seven (7) personal tax exonerations due to taxpayer error (1st offense) totaling \$2,813.94.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the seven (7) personal tax exonerations due to taxpayer error (1st offense) totaling \$2,813.94. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented eighteen (18) personal tax exonerations due to office error totaling \$22,674.74.

Commissioner Boyd made a motion to approve the eighteen (18) personal tax exonerations due to office error totaling \$22,674.74. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented six (6) real estate tax exonerations due to office error totaling \$11,696.22.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the six (6) real estate tax exonerations due to office error totaling \$11,696.22. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented one (1) application for the consolidation of properties.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the one (1) consolidation of properties presented. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Board Meeting Reports

Commissioner Boyd stated that he had a few meetings this week. He stated that he attended a quarterly meeting with the Home Consortium and stated that they are moving in a good direction under new leadership while also giving updates on the funds between Morgan, Jefferson, and Berkeley counties. Mr. Boyd also attended a Roundhouse Authority meeting stating that things are moving along there well. He stated that the bridge and machine shop is well on its way to being finished with some final inspections nearing. Commissioner Boyd is hoping that it will be ready to start renting by 2026. He also stated that they voted unanimously to go into contract with a filming company.

Commissioner Hardy stated that he attended the Public Service Water District board meeting and that the district has installed 86 new water meters in August which brings the yearly total to 169. He also stated that the CMC is off to a great start.

Commissioner Whitacre stated that he had no meetings to report this week.

Vice President Catlett stated that he attended the Farmland Protection board meeting and noted that they are approaching the deadline for new applicants, which is September 30th. He also met with Dr. Saxe from the Board of Education regarding impact fees in the city and he shared that he plans to adjust his capital improvement plan. Vice President Catlett further stated that he spoke with Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator about incorporating parts of the City of Martinsburg into this plan, with potential additions to South Middle and Rosemont Elementary. Additionally, he and President Gochenour met with Judge McLaughlin, Sheriff Blair, Chief Burnett, and two representatives from the Prosecutor's Office to discuss the serving of papers. He noted that, thanks to recent changes, the situation has improved significantly compared to a month ago. Vice President Catlett described the groundbreaking ceremony for Inwood Park as phenomenal. He also expressed that it was a great honor to have Melanie Pagliaro, Executive Director of the West Virginia County Commission Association, attend their meeting. He recognized Matthew Umstead for his outstanding work on the annual report, which was published and received last week. During his MPO meeting, Vice President Catlett noted that representatives from the Department of Highways in Charleston attended. They followed up with a call last week to answer questions he had raised during the meeting. Finally, he reminded everyone about the upcoming Heroes Dinner, which will take place on September 18th at 6:00 PM. This event, held at the Senior Center, is a fundraiser in support of the center.

President Gochenour began his report by thanking everyone who attended the groundbreaking ceremony for Inwood Park, noting that progress is going well with clearing the area. He stated that he attended a meeting with the Board of Education to discuss the future of school facilities within Berkeley County. He stated during the meeting; a substantial amount of information was shared regarding the direction the school board should consider moving in. He mentioned that there was a discussion about the possibility of a fifth high school, as well as the potential need for additional vocational and technical

(Vo-Tech) centers in the Eastern Panhandle. President Gochenour noted that currently, each of these career tech schools is limited to only three students per class, which is creating constraints across the three counties. He also reported attending a Development Authority meeting, where it was discussed that recently applied tariffs are having an impact, encouraging businesses to consider relocating operations from overseas to the United States in Berkeley County.

Re: Board and Commission Vacancies

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to reappoint Charles Hall III to the Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Re: Bid Opening—SUV Police Interceptors

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator reviewed the RFP for the SUV Police Interceptors stating that it was published on the county website, social media, and in the Journal with the certification of publication present in the read ahead.

At 10:00 AM President Gochenour opened the sealed bids as follows.

Bid #	Vendor	Bid Total
#1	Keystone Ford	\$239,675.00 2026 Ford Police Interceptor
#2	Parsons Ford	\$234,465.00 2026 Ford Police Interceptor
#3	Montrose Ford	\$241,600.00 2026 Ford Police Interceptor
#4	Whiteside of ST. Clairsville	\$299,960.00 2026 Chevrolet Tahoe
#5	Cadetco, LLC	\$297,470.00 2025 Ford Police Interceptor

**Re: Barbara Frankenberry, Shenandoah Valley Chapter DAR
Proclamation Constitution Day**

Barbara Frankenberry from the Shenandoah Valley Chapter of the DAR appeared before the Commission to request the adoption of a Proclamation for Constitution Day. She distributed a true-or-false quiz sheet containing information about the Constitution to test knowledge of the document. Ms. Frankenberry then read the Proclamation aloud.

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to adopt the Proclamation for Constitution Day. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator
WV Office of Emergency Medical Services-EMS Equipment Fund Award**

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator advised the Commission that the West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services had been granted a round of equipment funding, which is being distributed this year to EMS agencies. He noted that Elizabeth Lapchak, Grants Administrator, quickly identified the availability of these funds in our county. Ms. Lapchak was able to schedule a meeting with

the State Director of the Department of Emergency Medical Services, who outlined which agencies were eligible to receive the funds. Within Berkeley County, the two eligible agencies are the Berkeley County Ambulance Authority and the Martinsburg Fire Department. The funding is to be split evenly between the two and must be used specifically to purchase EMS equipment directly related to patient care, Brandon Truman, Executive Director, BC Emergency Ambulance Authority stated that he plans to use the funds toward a capital project to purchase three cardiac monitors. These monitors will allow EMS personnel to monitor patients' hearts, perform defibrillation and cardioversion, convert patients out of lethal rhythms, and carry out other critical life-saving interventions. Martinsburg Fire Chief Knieriem stated that he plans to use the funds to purchase an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) equipped with EMS equipment. This ATV will be used during downtown events and will also enhance response capabilities on the county's various new walking trails. It will include a skid unit, allowing responders to transport patients directly from the scene, rather than having to carry gear to the patient and then manually transport them back to the EMS unit.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the agreements and authorize the President to sign. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Items from the Public

There were no items from the public.

President Gochenour took a moment and asked everyone to remember this day back in 2001, stating that 71 law enforcement were killed in the World Trade Towers, 343 firefighters killed that day, and the many civilian lives lost. He stated to keep their families in prayer and for their healing.

Re: Executive Session

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to go into Executive Session for real estate matters at 10:35 AM. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Gochenour declared the Commission out of Executive Session at 10:45 AM.

Re: Recess

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to Recess the September 11, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Emerick', is written over a horizontal line.

Kiersten Emerick, Administrative Assistant