

Berkeley County Commission Meeting
400 W. Stephen Street, Suite 205
Martinsburg, WV 25401

October 9, 2025
9:30 A.M.

Present:

G. Edgar Gochenour, President

R. Stephen Catlett, Vice President

James P. Whitacre, Commissioner

John Hardy, Commissioner

Gary Wine, County Administrator

Kiersten Emerick, Administrative Assistant

H.D Boyd, Commissioner was present via Zoom.

Also Present: Larry Hess, Assessor; Jeffrey Mauzy, Deputy Legal Director; Anthony Delligatti, Legal Director; Anthony Petrucci, County Clerk; Laura Hoffmaster, Deputy Director of Community Development; Matthew Umstead, Director of Strategic Planning and Communications; Tracie McCormick, Procurement Coordinator; Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator; Elizabeth Lapchak, Grants Administrator; Martin Roberts, Fire Chief

Re: Call to Order

President Gochenour called the October 9, 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: Approval of Agenda

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Agenda for the October 9, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Consent Agenda

1. Purchase Order Log

President Gochenour stated that he had two questions regarding the purchase order log, but Tracie McCormick, Procurement Coordinator already answered those for him.

2. Internal Budget Revisions

Gary Wine, County Administrator, reviewed the two (2) Internal Budget Revisions received.

3. Changes in Status

President Gochenour stated a hiring recommendation was received from Jennifer Swisher, Director of Emergency Communications for Beverly Mason as a telecommunicator trainee with an annual salary of \$48,674 effective 10/27/2025.

President Gochenour stated a hiring recommendation was received from Martin Roberts, Fire Chief for Brad Wright as a part-time firefighter with a compensation rate of \$17.83 per hour effective 10/16/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Gary Wine, County Administrator for Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator for a temporary 10% increase for additional duties with an annual salary change from \$133,903 to \$147,293 effective 10/01/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Gary Wine, County Administrator for Aleah Tucker, Executive Assistant for a temporary 10% increase for additional duties with an annual salary change from \$60,900 to \$66,990 effective 10/01/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Gary Wine, County Administrator for Kiersten Emerick, Administrative Assistant II for a temporary 10% increase for additional duties with an annual salary change from \$44,100 to \$48,510 effective 10/01/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from The Honorable Rob Blair, Sheriff for Melanie Murphy, Tax Office Floor Supervisor with a voluntary step down to Tax Deputy with an annual salary change from \$57,225 to \$52,628 effective 10/15/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from The Honorable Rob Blair, Sheriff for Staci Horton, Tax Deputy to promote to Tax Office Floor Supervisor with an annual salary change from \$55,173 to \$60,90 effective 10/15/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from The Honorable Rob Blair, Sheriff for Francesca Lorretta, Tax Deputy to promote to Conservator and Estate Manager with an annual salary change from \$42,000 to \$50,676 effective 10/15/2025.

President Gochenour stated a letter of resignation was received from Tim Czaja, Director of Community Corrections for Jeanie Blaylock, Drug Screening Technician effective 10/15/2025.

President Gochenour stated a letter of resignation was received from Tim Czaja, Director of Community Corrections for Danny Dulyea Jr., Part Time Driver effective 10/2/2025.

President Gochenour stated a letter of resignation was received from The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor for Bobbi-Ann Foltz, Clerk effective 10/6/2025.

President Gochenour stated a letter of resignation was received from Brian Ross, Director of Community Development for Shaun Becker, Residential Building Inspector effective 10/15/2025.

4. Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the October 2, 2025, County Commission Meeting minutes.

5. Letter of Endorsement for Sale of Alcohol at Private Event—Magnolia Fields Venue

6. Bond Reduction—Breeze Hill Section 1 Phase 1 (Grading) BCP File #2403-075 tied to #2401-004 & #2403-063 Bond #NFB7469994—Engineering Department

7. **Bond Reduction—Cardinal Pointe Section 4, Phase 2 Lots 1-7, 128-139, & 147, 1052 (Final Plat) BCP File #2409-271 tied to #2409-270, 2209-260 & #2205-134 Bond #100711273—Engineering Department**
8. **Bond Reduction—Bridle Creek Phase 6 Section 2 Lots 448-459 & 464-471 BCP File #2201-010 tied to #2112-448 & #058-18 Bond #100507474—Engineering Department**
9. **Warranty Start—Bridle Creek Phase 6 Section 1 BCP File #2112-448 tied to #2102-062 & #021-13 Bond #100475611—Engineering Department**

Re: Consent Agenda Approval

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for the October 9, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting. Vice President Catlett 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 one personal tax exoneration due to taxpayer error (1st offense) totaling \$167.78.

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to approve the one personal tax exoneration due to taxpayer error (1st offense) totaling \$167.78. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented thirty personal tax exonerations due to office errors totaling \$8,451.67.

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to approve the thirty personal tax exonerations due to office errors totaling \$8,451.67. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Board Meeting Reports

Commissioner Boyd reported that he attended a Roundhouse Authority meeting. He stated that electrical corrections to the HVAC system are being completed, and the final inspection is expected soon. Once approved, the upstairs area will be available for use. Rental rates for general spaces have been finalized, and additional research is being done on HVAC options for the bridge and machine shop. Mr. Boyd also stated that farmers market season concludes at the end of this month, but the Merry Makers Market is scheduled for December 6-7, 12-13, and 20-21 with seasonal events and activities for the community. Commissioner Boyd stated that HUD funds have been allocated for concrete floor repairs, and ADA and fire-accessible door installations. Lastly, he stated that future farmers market operations will be managed by a nonprofit who will rent space directly from the Roundhouse.

Commissioner Hardy reported that he was unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting due to travel. Mr. Hardy stated that he did receive legislative calls regarding a potential cemetery site on private property and coordinated with President Gochenour, the Planning Department, and Susan Crowell of the Landmarks Division to ensure proper review. Commissioner Hardy also met with local delegates to discuss possible legislative changes when it comes to legal advertisement requirements with paper

publication. Currently some legal ads must be printed three times in a weekly paper, causing delays and costs. Mr. Hardy stated he would like to see the allowing of digital publication to improve accessibility and reduce expenses.

Commissioner Whitacre reported that he did not attend any meetings.

Vice President Catlett reported that he attended a Public Service Sewer District meeting in which two projects were discussed: the Ecolab redesign and the Woods Resort Treatment Plant project. He stated that both projects are progressing as planned. Vice President Catlett also reported that he attended a Public Service Stormwater meeting, which focused on the upcoming MS4 permit. Mr. Catlett expressed his appreciation to Secretary Harold Ward and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for their strong cooperation on multiple projects. He added that the history with the DEP was previously negative, but recently they have been very helpful, and he hopes that this continues.

President Gochenour reported that he attended an Infrastructure and Government Affairs Committee meeting with Thomas Butcher Potomac Edison; Curtis Keller, General Manager of the Sewer District; and Jim Ouelett of the Water District. President Gochenour stated that all the agencies are keeping busy and are committed to ensuring that infrastructure projects align with anticipated growth. He also noted the growing interest from companies in exploring opportunities to locate in Berkeley County, especially in the technology and data center sectors.

Gary Wine, County Administrator, gave an update on the Inwood Park Project. He stated that the site has been cleared, seismic sensors are being set, and preparations for blasting and power line relocation are underway. He said the project remains on schedule and is expected to be completed within 8–9 months. Mr. Wine stated that due to weather, a large tree had fallen on the Sheriff's Department roof, resulting in damage to the structure and HVAC unit, but insurance claims have been filed, and temporary repairs are in place.

Re: Board and Commission Vacancies

There was nothing to review for board and commission vacancies.

Re: Honorary County Commissioner

Vice President Gochenour introduced Shaan Sood, a student at St. Joseph School. Commissioner Hardy swore in Mr. Sood as Honorary County Commissioner and presented him with a certificate. Mr. Sood stated that he played basketball and plans to become a Lawyer when he grows up.

Re: Elizabeth Lapchak, Grants Administrator

Acceptance of FY24 SAFER Grant for Fire Fighter Staffing

Elizabeth Lapchak, Grants Administrator appeared before the Commission to request the Acceptance of the SAFER Grant. Ms. Lapchak reported that the County was awarded the SAFER grant to hire 12 new firefighters. The total award is \$3,009,388, with a federal share of \$1,855,724 and a required match of \$1,153,564 over three years. The Commission congratulated staff on their efforts on coming together so well on applying for this grant.

Commission Whitacre made a motion to accept the FY24 SAFER Grant for fire fighter staffing. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Gary Wine, County Administrator
Declaration of Surplus Equipment
MS4 Permit Discussion**

Gary Wine, County Administrator, reviewed the declaration of surplus equipment to the Commission. Mr. Wine stated that the equipment will be a part of a buy back with Atlantic Tactical and the money for the equipment will go towards the purchase of new equipment.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the declaration of surplus equipment. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wine also opened a discussion on the topic of the MS4 Permit. Vice President Catlett reported that the County's individual MS4 Permit is expected to be issued within a few days after a three-year wait. Mr. Catlett also stated that the new permit will only cover the County's growth area, exempting the Back Creek Valley area from stormwater-related fees. Vice President Catlett explained that the decision to pursue the individual permit rather than the statewide general permit was due to modifications being easier to accomplish under an individual permit, and because the statewide program is new, it would be preferable to observe its implementation before participating. Vice President Catlett thanked Harold Ward, Secretary of the DEP; Attorney Richard Lewis with the Stormwater District; Curtis Keller, General Manager of the Sewer District and head of Stormwater; and the Stormwater District Board of Directors, Greg Rhoe, John Kunkle, and John Meyers, for their collaboration and dedication.

Re: Executive Session – Legal Matters and Economic Development

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to go into executive session for legal matters and economic development at 10:25 A.M. Commissioner Whitacre seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Gochenour declared the Commission out of executive session at 11:36 stating no action was taken.

Re: Items from the Public

There were no items from the public.

Re: Recess

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to Recess the October 9, Berkeley County Commission meeting.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. E.', is written on the page.

Kiersten Emerick, Administrative Assistant