OHIO COUNTY COMMISSION

01/17/2023

 The Ohio County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, January 17, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

 Present at the meeting was President Don Nickerson, Commissioner Zach Abraham, Commissioner Randy Wharton, Solicitor Don Tennant, and Finance Director Rodd Archey.

**Delegations**

Reservoir Road

Robyn Powell reported that she lives of off Reservoir Road off Stone Church Road. The road is deplorable. There are a lot of water main breaks that have washed out the roads. The PSD has not fixed them properly. There is a water tower at the end of our lane which is also not maintained. We have a petition that we have all signed, we feel we do not have the luxury of other taxpayers with ambulances and firetrucks. In the winter if we want it cleared of snow that cannot happen because of the condition it is in. We pay taxes also like everyone else and feel our roads need maintained. She reported that the Ohio County Commission did give $10,000.00 previously but she has never seen any receipts from any of that money being used for repairs.

Karen Yakubow reported that she remembers when the Commission had a large piece of equipment and scraped at the very end where we lived, it lasted about two months. The worst is that when you come up the hill it is caving in underneath. There are two places in front of her houses and she has talked to the water department about it and they are constantly full of water. It must be coming from somewhere.

Kay Bartos reported she has lived there for the last 46 years and the last ten or fifteen years the road has been horrible. She reported for thirty years there was never a problem then the water company did something on that hill, the water was diverted. She has pictures to show. Commissioner Abraham asked how many citizens live up there. She reported twenty-five to thirty homes.

Grace Lontz reported that she understands they are an orphan road, but we do not know where to go for help. The PSD used that road, and there is a cell phone tower up there too. She feels that the County PSD should have some responsibility because they are up there twice a day. President Nickerson reported unfortunately there are a lot of these roads here and across the State. President Nickerson reported that it is important that you have a plan going forward because these things will fall apart very quickly if there is no routine maintenance going on.

Kay Bartos continued about the road. Commissioner Abraham asked if you have tried to get quotes on any repairs. A resident stated we get gravel and asphalt but it all washes back out because of the drainage. Commissioner Abraham reported that he will look at it. What we have done in the past as to try to help out, but it is very limited. President Nickerson asked if you have ever had an engineer come up to see what the problem is. Kay Bartos continued to talk about the issue. President Nickerson asked if anyone has talked to the City of Wheeling to talk about annexation.

Karen Yakubow reported that back in the fifties and sixties the State went around to all little roads and that is how the orphan road came about. Solicitor Tennant reported that the Counties in West Virginia have no legal responsibility to maintain any roads. The only roads that Ohio County maintains are the roads up at the Highlands, which is on the Ohio County Development Authorities land. So, what happens is when a resident buys a home you should ask who maintains the road. He reported that he will use Clinton Hills as an example. They have a homeowner’s association, and they have monthly dues and assessments. They maintain their road with those funds. He continued with even though you’re an older development what you need to do is form a homeowner’s association.

Nancy Weeks

Nancy Weeks reported that everyone knows that today it takes many people to operate programs and sometimes it just takes a good faith effort. Each November the Ohio County 4H programs attempt to recognize those folks that have truly supported our program and have gone above and beyond helping our kids. There is a gentleman here that anytime she has talked to him he only asked one question. Is it for the kids. He happened to be out of town when the awards we given, so with that she would like to present Randy Russell as an Ohio County 4H Outstanding Supporter.

Tina Morris/ John Moses- Life Hub

John Moses reported that he works with a team of people to create what is called a Life Hub. It is kind of a mini mall that he hopes to welcome the homeless people that are in the shelters in this community. He hopes to have several social services working with the homeless in the same space. This season thank God for Catholic Charities allowing the use of the building on Main Street. So far, he has welcomed one hundred twenty-five people to the shelter. The City of Wheeling is more involved than they have been in the past, also the County, the Health Department, and Project Hope for the medical care. This Life Hub is something that he is asking the County Commission to help support. He has given everyone a handout that explains the Life Hub and where they have been successful across the Country. Tina Morris reported that the City of Wheeling has acted with the homeless situation. A non-profit has been formed which is called the Life Hub. The City of Wheeling has collaborated with the Wheeling Housing Authority. She has been researching other life hubs. She is hoping there will be community meetings soon. More information will be coming soon. She reported that they are looking for federal funding for homelessness. She stated she does grant writing also and is hoping to get extra funding.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the minutes form the January 3, 2023, Commission meeting. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

Moundsville Honor Guard

Administrator Russell reported under community grants first up is the Moundsville Veterans Honor Guard. They are requesting $3,000.00 for expenses towards providing the Honor Guard. The past two years the Commission has awarded $2,000.00. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve $3,000.00 for the Moundsville Honor Guard. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Dave Schoenian reported that he is a member of the Moundsville Honor Guard, and he can’t thank the Commission enough for your support. President Nickerson stated he is familiar with what you guys do and it is a wonderful thing. Steve Duncil stated he started a go fund me page for John Nanny for a pedestal right beside the Gold Star Family Memorial at the Heritage Port down at the riverfront. The Commission made a generous donation, and he is here to thank you for that. Dave Schoenian discussed his relationship with John Nanny. John Nanny gave a lot to this community.

Elmhurst

Administrator Russell reported that the next request is from Elmhurst, the House of Friendship. They are looking for assistance to renovate their roof at their complex. President Nickerson stated he received some more information on this today and had printed out for the Commissioners. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to table this for the future while it is researched.

OLD BUSINESS

ARPA Funding

Administrator Russell reported that the Commissioners have a copy of the ARPA request from the Ohio County website. He stated that the committee has made some recommendations and the Commissioners have made some additional recommendations. President Nickerson reported that the plan is to approve those in the first three categories that met the criteria. The ones that did not meet the criteria will be sent a letter. Commissioner Abraham made a motion to approve the ARPA Funding to those that met the criteria. Second by Commissioner Wharton. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS
Board of Equalization & Review-Real Estate/ Commercial Real Estate

Administrator Russell reported that the Commissioners have tonight the publication that will be placed in the newspaper for the Board of Review and Equalization which happens in February. He reported that the in person hearings for Ohio County will be on February 14, and February 28, 2023, after the County commission meetings if there are any hearings.

STAFF / ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS

Administrator

Administrator Russell reported he does not have anything tonight.

Facilities

Melissa Marco reported that she is moving ahead with the HVAC project. She will be meeting with the two approved contractors to have the initial meeting to see what everything will look like. This will be a fourteen-to-sixteen-month project. She reported today that she opened bids for the Animal Shelter Roof replacement project. She needs to complete due diligence on our part. She reported the results will be brought back to the next meeting. Nelson Croft, Animal Shelter Manager reported that he has a list of animals taken in and ones taken out, but he left it on his desk. He reported he had over 500 dogs come in, and only had to euthanize 10 last year, and somewhere around 300 cats, with 20 being euthanized, as they were too sick to be helped or too aggressive to be adopted. There have been a lot of donations coming in. He has started with their weekend animal control officers working, and then once he has one more person on the kennel crew he can have afternoon shift of an animal control person. He has also requested an AED from Emergency Management Director Vargo.

Public Safety

911-Annual Report-Theresa Russell

Theresa Russell reported that you have a copy of the 2022 statistics. This is all derived from the computer dispatch system and the telephone system. Our equipment tracks everything that 911 does. She reported they are down slightly on law enforcement calls this year but have increased on fire and EMS side which she attributes to the EMS being the heaviest of the increase. She reported they are up about 3% overall with the types of information she is taking in as far as the phone calls and the police fire calls that we document.

OCSO Update

Drage Flick reported that if you remember back in September, we talked about some of the functions in the Sheriffs office. He has completed some training with Dawn and Kaleigh who are the Administrative Assistants in the Sheriff’s office in case for some reason he cannot function he believes they can do the payroll. He reported that they have had to change scheduling of shifts, and there are a few more tweaks needed. He has gone over processes with the Administrative Assistants also. He is also working with Major Vaught on State Reporting. He reported that Brady McConnell has completed his firearms training. He will get certified in February.

Sheriff Howard reported that he collected $6,908.00 for Home Confinement. There was 6672 days of Home Confinement which saved the County over $300,000.00 by those people not being incarcerated. He reported that the Medical Cannabis grant will allow for $57,000.00 to go towards the PRO officer and the rest towards the PRO conference. He also asked to be able to hire two deputies for the next Commission meeting and needs security officers which he is hoping they could possibly be full time with benefits in the future. John Schultz reported it is just hard to find people to fill the positions. He would like to move forward with a Body Camera Grant that is through the State he has found those to cost about $2,000.00 a camera. It is a better idea to get them now then later when it will be mandatory to wear cameras and the cost will go up. Discussion went on about security officers.

EMA/EMS-Lou Vargo

Emergency Management Director Vargo reported that if the Commission remembers, the Mountaineer Baseball approached the Commission about AEDs for all the ballfields in the area. A lot of the associations are scheduling try outs, so he has scheduled two classes at the Sports Complex for all the coaches. He will be teaching CPR and how to use the AEDs. He is hoping to get all the AEDs mounted before the season starts. He reported that February is Heart month, so he is partnering with the Wheeling Ohio County Health Department to help with CPR.

FINANCE

BILLS-Finance Director Archey reported that the Commissioners have a copy of the bills as they are up to date. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to pay the bills. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor. He reported that in the Airport bills there was a check written for $9,070.00 for their liability insurance, which is an increase of 5% from last year. He had received a past due on it and he just wanted you to be aware of it.

EXONERATIONS-Finance Director Archey reported that there is one exoneration for the Commissioners tonight. It is recommended by the Assessor and is a credit reducing a tax. Commissioner Wharton made a motion to approve the exoneration. Second by Commissioner Abraham. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

ELECTIONS

ERIC Mailing

Finance Director Archey reported that ever since 2017 the Secretary of State joined the ERIC information which is in twenty-five states across the Country. The State will get us a list of about 1100 names. This must be done at our cost through super mail. The estimated cost to do this is $1,091.00.

COMMISSION BOARD REPORTS

President Nickerson reported he was at the Highlands Sports Complex this past weekend at the Shot in the Park Archery tournament that the Commission has supported the last few years. The newspaper reported about 700 kids shooting, plus parents, and he can say that afterwards being in a restaurant that there were people with their school team shirts eating at the restaurants and shopping in Cabela’s. It was a very nice event.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Nothing from the board.

FUTURE MEETINGS

President Nickerson reported that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 6:00 pm. Meeting adjourned.

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President, Don Nickerson Administrator, Randel Russell

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