

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

RANDOLPH COUNTY COMMISSION SS:

At a regular session of the Randolph County Commission in and for the aforesaid County and State, at the James F. Cain Court House Annex, on the 18th day of August, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Michael Taylor, President of the Randolph County Commission and Joyce Johns and Chris See, Commissioners thereof.

Meeting called to order by Commissioner Taylor

PUBLIC COMMENT:

R. Allan Huffman appeared before the Commission. He said he was there on behalf of several landowners in the County that could not be there. He said he wished the County Commission would have meetings in the evening when people that worked could attend when there is issues like this on the Agenda. He said this will be the 3rd time the Board of Education Levy is going to be put in front of the voters. He said he is opposed to it because of the duration and the amount. He said the \$765,000.00 proposal for employees is not right. He said levies are not intended for that and should only be done in emergency situations. He said the elderly taxpayers cannot afford it and he was there to ask the County Commission to not let it go on the November ballot.

Nancy Helmick appeared before the Commission. She said she was there to speak in opposition of the Levy. She said it has been voted down twice in the last year. She said they are using the students to talk to their parents to get them to vote for it and that is not right. She said kids should not be burdened with adult issues. She said this is not a rich County and the levy is not and has never been about the children.

Carrie Utt appeared before the Commission. She said the most important right granted to us as US citizens is the right to vote. Why are we voting a third time? Why are we paying for optional benefits? This is unacceptable to the public and is unfair and unjust.

Marilyn Moore appeared before the Commission. She said she is a senior citizen and is damn angry about the levy. She said do they think we are stupid enough to think this will benefit the children. This is a retirement community and we have voted twice and that's enough.

Tony Higgins appeared before the Commission. He said he agrees with the others that have spoken before him. He said the first election, when it passed, the Board of Education bought the votes by paying \$500.00 to each employee. He said he was employed there so he knows for a fact that it did happen. He said there is also equipment missing from the board office. He said he is in favor of supporting the kids and teachers but not in this way.

Ken Shiflett appeared before the Commission. He said he opposes this blatant attempt to overturn the election. He said this is corrupt and there is no reason to put this on the ballot again. He said he realizes if they don't the Board of Education has a right to run a special election again but they would have to pay for it. He said the Board of Education is totally out of control. The people have had enough of this.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Johns moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting that was held on August 4, 2016, as submitted.

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

REPORTS:

Erin Golden, Director of North Central Community Corrections, reported that there are currently 83 people on the program. She said the program has saved the county \$206,111.50 in regional jail bills since July 1, 2016.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Taylor announced that the Commission does have one evening meeting every quarter and the next evening meeting will be held on September 15, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. He said that is something the Commission started doing this year and so far there has been no one attending those meetings but the elected officials and the newspaper.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

CONSIDER REQUEST FROM RANDOLPH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED SCHOOL LEVY TO BE PUT ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT

Pam Hewitt, Rich Carr, Brad Smith and Donna Auvil appeared before the Commission on behalf of the Randolph County Board of Education. Superintendent of Schools, Pam Hewitt said they were there to ask that the Randolph County School Levy be put on the November 8, 2016 ballot. She said they have looked at the situation at the schools and have made changes to the levy. She said this is a four year levy call for 2.9 million dollars annually and they have defined the areas that need funding. She said 43 Counties in the State have levies at this time. She said there is approximately 4,000 students in the Randolph County school system and they have 15 schools right now. She said they would like to take it back to the citizens for a vote.

Commissioner See said he understands and if they lost that much money in their budget they would have to do some cutting, but he has had all these complaints from people saying how many times do we have to vote on this? He said according to state code there is no limit but he believes there is a group here that is forming to go to Charleston to try to get a limit set on how many times a levy can be run.

Donna Auvil, President of the Randolph County Board of Education, said she was a former employee of Randolph County Schools. She said we are in a small minority that does not have a levy. She said most all other counties have a dental and optical plan in their levies for their employees. She said there is a new law in the State Code that was adopted several years ago that does not allow employees to save their days toward their insurance when they retire. She said now when a teacher leaves they just lose those days. She said there is no incentive for teachers to not use up their days.

Commissioner Johns said she has voted for the Levy in the past and she has grandchildren in school and can see the importance of a Levy but she said she was also voted in as a Commissioner for the entire County and she has had many constituents voice their concerns against putting it on the ballot again and she feels they should take those concerns under consideration.

Commissioner Taylor said he thinks the issue before us today obviously is the authorization to put it on the ballot in November. He said he doesn't think it is the role of the Commission to dictate to the Board of Education how the funds are to be spent. He said that is between the Board of Education and the Citizens of the County who pay the taxes. He said as a citizen he might have his opinion on what he feels about these different issues, but as a Commissioner we don't do the oversight of how you spend the money, your accountable to the people and that is why everybody is here today. He said the issue that he sees before the Commission here today is whether we allow it to be on the ballot. He said his concern is this, it has been on the ballot twice in less than a year and he thinks the people have spoken, they spoke in November of 2015 and again in May 2016. He thinks the role of the Commission is do we allow it to be put on the ballot for a third time? He said they have heard from the constituents and they have had some positive but he can tell them that the negatives far out weight the positives in this case. He said he believes it's the timing of it and he just thinks that with it being twice in less than a year a third time the people just object to it.

Brad Smith, Treasurer for the Board of Education, said their financial status has not changed. They have lost over 200 students over the last couple of years and that equates to between 1.5 to two million dollars a year. The Medicaid funding has changed and they have lost 5 to 6 hundred thousand dollars a year in Medicaid funding. The national forest PILT money has changed and they have lost a couple hundred thousand dollars a year in that funding. The Board is currently looking at closing two schools

that will give them a million dollars in savings a year. He said they are trying to move forward but their financial status has not changed and without additional funding it will drive them into a deficit again. The board is making the decision because it is a financial issue. He said Abraham Lincoln failed in five major elections and number six he was elected president and it turned out pretty well. He said we are just asking that the voters make the decision.

Commissioner See moved that we do not place the Randolph County School Levy on the ballot in the November election.

Commissioner See voted yes Commissioner Taylor voted yes Commissioner Johns voted yes

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Taylor said we have given it a lot of consideration and they want everyone to keep in mind that when they started the meeting today everyone came together when they recited the pledge of allegiance, and it stands for liberty, freedom and democracy. Over the next year he is asking for those that support the Levy and those that oppose the Levy and the Board of Education to come together to see if they can find some common ground that in the end will provide the children of our County the best education that our citizens can afford.

CVB TO GIVE ANNUAL REPORT

Jimmy Hammond and Jeanna Stevens appeared before the Commission. Mr. Hammond thanked the Commission for their past support. He said they are going to miss Joyce Johns being on the board. He said they had 20,000 visitors sign the register this past year. He said they changed the Logo and put up a new sign. They have ads in 21 publications now and did several travel shows. They provided the Commission with a copy of their audit that was done by Williams and Associates and it shows everything to be in good order. Ms. Stevens said this is her fourth year on the board and she said the CVB does an amazing job in tourism. Every year it goes up. The money is being spent incredibly well.

Commissioner Taylor said there have been some changes in the Hotel/Motel Tax and the Prosecuting Attorney has it on his desk for review and then there will be an update made in the County Ordinance.

CONSIDER APPROVAL/SIGNAGE TO CONTRACT WITH ILLUME MEDIA GROUP TO CONSTRUCT NEW WEBSITE

Commissioner Taylor said they met with Illume Media Group about three weeks ago about a new website for the County. The website the County had has been hacked or got a virus and has not been working for some time. They gave the Commission some examples of other businesses that have this website in the County and the Commission was impressed with the design. They will monitor it and keep it up to date. The fee is \$350.00 a month and for e-mails it is \$100.00 a month. Commissioner Johns moved to approve going with Illume Media Group to get our website and e-mails up and running and to work with the Sheriff and Prosecuting Attorney to get them a website also.

All yes - Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF DELPHIA AND REBEKAH LODGE 102 REQUEST TO USE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF WEES ANNEX/911 BUILDING DURING THE 70TH MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST FESTIVAL

Commissioner Taylor said this is an annual request we get from them to use the sidewalk to set up chairs for the parade. Commissioner See moved to approve the request from Delphia and Rebekah Lodge 102 to use the sidewalk for chairs for the Forest Festival parade.

All yes - Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BOARD APPOINTMENT TO THE VALLEY HEAD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Commissioner Johns moved to approve the appointment of Jill Fanning to the Valley Head Public Library Board for a five year term beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2021.

All yes - Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BOARD REAPPOINTMENT TO THE HUTTONSVILLE PUBLIC SERVICE DISTRICT BOARD

Commissioner See moved to reappoint Willie Saucerman to the Huttonsville Public Service District Board for a six year term beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2022.

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER CHANGE OF STATUS OF EMPLOYEE FROM PART TIME TO FULL TIME IN THE CIRCUIT CLERK'S OFFICE

Commissioner Taylor said they received a letter from Circuit Clerk Phil Riggleman who could not be there. He read the letter out loud. It said that Carmen Howell is resigning as of August 19, 2016 and he would like to move Hailee Primavera, who is working part time, up to full time at the rate of \$10.20 per hour with benefits.

Commissioner Johns moved to approve the hiring of Hailee Primavera as a full time employee in the Circuit Clerk's Office effective August 22, 2016 with a starting salary of \$10.20 per hour with full benefits.

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FRANCHISE AGREEMENT RENEWAL WITH SUDDEN LINK CABLE

Commissioner Johns moved to approve the request of Suddenlink Cable for the franchise agreement, as submitted.

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

FINAL SETTLEMENTS/ANNUAL ACCOUNTINGS

Commissioner Johns moved to approve the eight final settlements, as submitted.

Walter R. Jones

Sylvia Janice Zirkle

Donald Clifford Griffith

Charlene Kaye Wilmoth

Dorothy E. Bartgis

Hazel Laura O'Kernick

Jeff Jake Arbogast

Kathryn Evone Ware

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

BUDGET REVISIONS: None

DIVISION OF PROPERTY/ERRONEOUS ASSESSMENTS

Commissioner Johns moved to approve the erroneous assessments/divisions of property, as submitted.

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Commissioner Johns moved to pay the bills, as submitted.

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

ADJOURN THE MEETING

Commissioner Johns moved to adjourn the meeting.

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

Attest: _____