

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

October 23, 2025
9:30 A.M.

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

Kiersten Emerick, Administrative Assistant

Also Present: Anthony Deligatti, Legal Director; Anthony J. Petrucci, County Clerk; Larry Hess, Assessor; Tracie McCormick, Procurement Coordinator; Jeffery Mauzy, Deputy Legal Director; Tim Czaja, Director of Community Corrections; Matthew Umstead, Director of Strategic Planning and Communications.

Re: Call to Order

President Gochenour called the October 23, 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 23, 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 received for review

3. Changes in Status

President Gochenour stated a hiring recommendation was received from The Honorable Larry Hess, Assessor for Karrie Whittington as a Personal Property Clerk with an annual salary of \$35,360 with an effective start date to be determined.

President Gochenour stated a hiring recommendation was received from The Honorable Rob Blair, Sheriff for Jackson Martin as a Deputy Sheriff with an annual salary of \$57,466 effective 11/3/2025.

President Gochenour stated a hiring recommendation was received from The Honorable Rob Blair, Sheriff for Caleb Atkinson as a Deputy Sheriff with an annual salary of \$57,466 effective 11/3/2025.

President Gochenour stated a hiring recommendation was received from Tim Czaja, Director of Community Corrections for Lindsey Mann as a Case Manager with an annual salary of \$50,676 effective 11/10/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Martin Roberts, Fire Chief for Kole Kernan, Fire Fighter 1 for a grade increase for years of service to Fire Fighter 2 with a salary change from \$62,551 to \$64,602 effective 11/1/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Jennifer Swisher, Director of Emergency Communications for Cynthia Bell, Senior Telecommunicator for a step increase for years of service with a salary change from \$60,024 to \$61,825 effective 11/8/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Jennifer Swisher, Director of Emergency Communications for Delany Lison, Senior Telecommunicator for a step increase for years of service with a salary change from \$60,024 to \$61,825 effective 11/8/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Jennifer Swisher, Director of Emergency Communications for Melissa Holtsclaw, Supervisor for a step increase for years of service with a salary change from \$63,025 to \$64,916 effective 11/8/2025.

President Gochenour stated a change in status was received from Jennifer Swisher, Director of Emergency Communications for Bryce Turner, Telecommunicator Trainee for a grade increase to Telecommunicator 1 with a salary change from \$48,674 to \$52,858 effective 10/25/2025.

President Gochenour stated a letter of resignation was received from The Honorable Joseph Kinser, Prosecuting Attorney for Christian Baker, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney effective 10/28/2025.

4. Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the October 16, 2025, County Commission Meeting Minutes

Re: Consent Agenda Approval

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for the October 23, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting. Commissioner Boyd 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 two personal tax exonerations due to taxpayer error (1st offense) totaling \$116.22.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the two personal tax exonerations due to taxpayer error (1st offense) totaling \$116.22. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented eight personal tax exonerations due to office errors totaling \$860.21.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the eight personal tax exonerations due to office errors totaling \$860.21. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented one real estate tax exoneration due to office error totaling \$1,202.41.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the one real estate tax exoneration due to office error totaling \$1,202.41. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hess presented one application for the consolidation of property.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to approve the one application for the consolidation of property. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Board Meeting Reports

Commissioner Boyd reported that he attended the Governor's Economic Development meeting, which focused on Project Allstar, an initiative between Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan Counties. He stated that while opinions differ, the project represents significant progress and opportunity for the region. Commissioner Boyd also attended the CCAWV Region 2 meeting, which brought commissioners from surrounding counties together. He highlighted the value of regional cooperation, especially regarding legislative priorities and shared concerns between counties. Mr. Boyd attended a Main Street Martinsburg meeting and stated that the new five-year strategic plan centered on improving public perception and increasing foot traffic downtown. The plan focuses on lighting improvements, clear parking signage, and beautification projects to enhance the overall downtown experience. He also stated that Mike McCullough with Valley Health was elected as the new president of the Main Street Martinsburg Board. Commissioner Boyd reported that he attended the Roundhouse board meeting, where the annual fundraiser was discussed. Updates were also provided on facility improvements, including sealing work in the bridge and machine shop buildings to improve HVAC efficiency and reduce energy costs. He also stated that a formal dedication event for the recent restoration work is planned for early next year and that the annual Home Show will be held at the Roundhouse in the first week of April.

Commissioner Hardy reported that he attended a roundtable discussion with the Speaker of the House and state legislators to discuss upcoming legislative priorities. Some of the topics discussed included the need for additional county funding, support for infrastructure, and greater local control over county-level operations. Commissioner Hardy emphasized the importance of maintaining communication with state officials to ensure the counties' needs are represented. He also stated that he attended the CCAWV Region 2 meeting earlier in the week. He commended the turnout and noted that discussions among counties were productive, focusing on shared challenges such as EMA staffing, economic growth, and property tax structures. Mr. Hardy also attended the Planning Commission's public hearing, where Doug Smith, County Engineer, provided an update on the new MS4 stormwater permit. Mr. Hardy also attended the Board of Health meeting, which included updates on regular public health operations and a review of ongoing issues at Potomac Park. Several compliance concerns were identified, and matters have been forwarded to the county attorney for coordination with the Department of Health.

Commissioner Hardy reported that during the Public Service Water District meeting, they discussed water infrastructure improvements, including the installation of new water meters and the construction of water storage tanks along Ridge Road and Tabler Station. The water tanks are expected to help stabilize water pressure and provide sufficient reserves during maintenance operations or emergencies.

Commissioner Whitacre reported that he attended the Apple Harvest Gala and parade events, noting the strong turnout and community participation. Jessica Lynch, who served as Grand Marshal, was recognized for her inspirational remarks and dedication to service. Mr. Whitacre also attended an EPTA meeting and reported on ongoing progress at the new transit facility located at Raleigh and Race Streets. He reported that despite minor design and stormwater issues that are being addressed, the project is still moving forward. Commissioner Whitacre reported that he attended an Airport Authority meeting. He stated that Will Walkup, Airport Manager, has retired after many years of service but will remain part-time to assist with ongoing grant administration and project coordination. He stated that the Airport Authority will host its annual Trunk or Treat event on October 29th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., which remains one of its most popular community activities.

Vice President Catlett reported a busy week of meetings focused on infrastructure, regional collaboration, and community services. He began by discussing the Governor's Economic Development Meeting, expressing his appreciation to the Governor for facilitating the discussion, and noted that the project remains in the feasibility phase. He then provided an update on the CCAWV Region 2 meeting. He stated that this year, all eight counties in the region were represented, with approximately 35–40 attendees. This event provided an opportunity for commissioners to share regional concerns and discuss statewide issues, including infrastructure, emergency services, and legislative matters. Vice President Catlett noted that participants agreed to hold regional meetings twice per year to continue strengthening cooperation among the counties in the region. Mr. Catlett also gave updates from the Public Service Sewer District and Public Service Stormwater District. He stated that the Woods Treatment Plant and the Ecolab Sewer System are now fully operational, though staff are still working through minor adjustments to ensure compliance and efficiency. Vice President Catlett spoke on the ongoing discussions related to the MS4 Permit. He explained that discrepancies have been identified between the County's existing stormwater program and the requirements outlined in the new permit by the DEP. He also reported appearing on WRNR radio earlier this week to discuss current County projects, upcoming initiatives, and community programs. Mr. Catlett gave an extensive update from the Berkeley County Senior Services board meeting, highlighting the organization's impact and reach within the community. He noted that the numbers he provided demonstrate the County's ongoing commitment to supporting its senior population and ensuring access to critical services. He also reported that the recent Heroes Dinner Fundraiser was highly successful, raising nearly \$10,000 to support senior programs and outreach initiatives. Lastly, Vice President Catlett reported that he met with Judge McLaughlin and Chief Burnett to discuss judicial and emergency services operations. He mentioned the meeting focused on coordination among departments, upcoming facility needs, and workflow improvements within the judicial system.

President Gochenour started his board report by commending the success of the recent Apple Harvest Festival, which he described as a well-attended and positive community event despite the weather conditions. He thanked all the county staff, volunteers, and law enforcement personnel for their efforts in ensuring safety and organization throughout the weekend. Mr. Gochenour also provided an update on economic development efforts, emphasizing the ongoing tri-county collaboration with the Governor's Office related to Project Allstar. President Gochenour stated that the Berkeley County Development Authority has initiated a feasibility study to evaluate infrastructure, workforce, and transportation logistics connected to the potential project site. He noted that results from the study are expected to provide

valuable data to help position the County for future development opportunities. Mr. Gochenour reported that the Parks and Recreation Oktoberfest at Poor House Farm Park was a great success, attracting approximately 1,000 attendees. He also announced that the annual Christmas in the Park at War Memorial Park will run from November 25th through January 4th, featuring expanded light displays and community participation. President Gochenour also discussed the progress on the Inwood Park Project, reporting that the blasting operations are ongoing to prepare for parking lot expansion and stormwater infrastructure. He also stated that utility line extensions are scheduled to begin shortly, and the overall project remains on schedule. Once completed, the improvements will significantly enhance accessibility, recreational space, and community use of the park. He concluded his report by emphasizing the importance of ongoing County partnerships with community organizations, municipal governments, and state agencies. He commended staff for maintaining project timelines and for their commitment to fiscal responsibility and public service.

Re: Board and Commission Vacancies

There was nothing received for review

Re: Honorary County Commissioner

President Gochenour introduced Alana Espenlaub, a student at St. Joseph School. Commissioner Hardy swore in Ms. Espenlaub as Honorary County Commissioner and presented her with a certificate. Ms. Espenlaub stated that she plays volleyball and is a part of student council. She also stated that she wants to join the Army or Navy when she gets older.

Re: Bid Opening-RFP Comprehensive HVAC & Utility Management Services Agreement

Gary Wine, County Administrator, reviewed the RFP for the Comprehensive HVAC & Utility Management Services Agreement and stated the bid was posted on the county website, social media, and advertised 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	Casto Technical Services	\$84,576
#2	Boland Trane Services	\$208,844
#3	Hobbs & Associates	\$129,360

Re: Bid Opening- RFP Emergency Communications Computers

Gary Wine, County Administrator, reviewed the RFP for the Emergency Communications Computers and stated the bid was posted on the county website, social media, and advertised in the Journal with the Certification of Publication present in the Read Ahead.

At 10:05 President Gochenour opened the sealed bids as follows:

Bid #	Vendor	Bid Total
#1	CDW Government	\$31,566.40
#2	Aztek Computers	\$18,880.00
#3	Southern Computer Warehouse	\$38,679.68
#4	Hypertec USA	\$38,466.24

#5	Milliard Tek LLC	\$42,848.00
#6	Government Goods, Inc.	\$29,921.22
#7	Berry Solutions	\$36,071.04

**Re: Christi Bentley, Co-Executive Director, Bethany House
Recognition of Employee**

Christi Bentley, Co-Executive Director at the Bethany House, appeared before the Commission to present a special recognition honoring one of the organization's most dedicated employees, Bunny Shaw, for her over 40 years of continuous service to the agency and the community. Ms. Bentley explained that the Bethany House Shelter operates as a cornerstone of the organization's outreach, providing safe emergency housing, supportive counseling, and long-term case management for women and children who are victims of domestic violence or facing homelessness. During her remarks, Ms. Bentley shared that Ms. Shaw has personally assisted hundreds of women and children in rebuilding their lives after crisis situations. She described Ms. Shaw as a calming presence who often goes above and beyond to ensure that each client feels safe, supported, and valued. Beyond her official duties, she has volunteered countless hours coordinating donations, organizing children's activities, and mentoring new employees who enter the field of social services.

President Gochenour expressed gratitude to Ms. Shaw for her decades of service to the community. He stated that the Commission recognizes the invaluable role that Bethany House and Community Networks play in supporting vulnerable residents. Ms. Shaw was presented with a plaque recognizing her outstanding service, dedication, and contributions to improving the lives of Berkeley County residents. Mr. Gochenour commended her for demonstrating extraordinary compassion and professionalism over her many years of service and noted that individuals like her represent the best of public service and community care.

**Re: Eric Burnett, Chief Deputy of Staff
Bid Award Recommendation—Patrol Rifles
ICE/DHS 287(g) Program Participation**

Eric Burnett, Chief Deputy of Staff, appeared before the Commission and recommended that the bid for patrol rifles be awarded to Atlantic Tactical. He stated that they met all the specifications and were the lowest bid received due to offering to purchase the Sheriff's Office's old rifles, handguns, and miscellaneous surplus property. With this buyback offer, the cost of the patrol rifles decreases by \$70,000, bringing the total bid amount to \$102,000, which will be covered by forfeiture funds derived from drug-related seizures. Chief Burnett stated, "Our local drug dealers are going to be purchasing our rifles for us at no cost to the taxpayers."

Vice President Catlett made a motion to award the bid for patrol rifles to Atlantic Tactical in the amount of 172,771.80. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of four to one with Commissioner Hardy voting against the motion.

The Honorable Sheriff Rob Blair, Chief Burnett, and Chief Young appeared before the Commission and discussed participation in the federal ICE 287(g) Program, allowing reimbursement for cooperation with ICE during the normal course of duty. They explained that the Sheriff's Office is already

doing the work the program entails but is currently not being reimbursed for their equipment and personnel time. This program allows for reimbursement of equipment and personnel time when deputies encounter undocumented individuals. To receive funds, the Sheriff's Office must use the County's Federal Tax ID and SAMs registration numbers since they do not have their own. Chief Burnett explained that this agreement applies only within Berkeley County, and they will not be going outside their jurisdiction to assist ICE.

Commissioners questioned potential liabilities if wrongful arrests or deaths occur. The Honorable Rob Blair, Sheriff, clarified that liability remains the same with this program as with any other law enforcement activities. He also stated that ICE assumes responsibility once the suspect is transferred to the jail. Sheriff Blair stated that the deputies contact ICE upon encountering suspected undocumented individuals, and then ICE determines the next steps. He also reaffirmed that the department enforces laws, not immigration policy, and focuses on criminal activity.

Vice President Catlett approved the Utilization of the Commission's SAM, DUNS, and or Tax Identification Numbers for the Sheriff's Departments participation in the D5 HS' 287(g) program. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Elizabeth Lapchak, Grants Administrator
Acceptance of the FY25 COPS Hiring Grant**

Elizabeth Lapchak, Grants Administrator appeared before the Commission requesting the acceptance of the FY25 COPS Hiring Grant. Ms. Lapchak reported that the county was awarded the COPS grant to hire 5 new deputies. The total award is \$1,294,735, with a federal share of \$625,000 and a required match of \$669,735 over three years. The Commission congratulated Ms. Lapchak and the Sheriff's Office for securing this funding.

Commissioner Whitacre made a motion to accept the FY25 COPS Grant for deputy staffing. Vice President Catlett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Anthony Deligatti, Legal Director
Noise Ordinance Update**

Anthony Deligatti, Legal Director, appeared before the Commission to provide an update on the County's Noise Ordinance following a request from a potential developer regarding the use of backup generators. Mr. Deligatti explained that upon reviewing the ordinance, it was determined that an amendment was needed to explicitly include standby generators as an exception to the noise restrictions. The proposed revision clarifies that the use of generators during electrical outages and routine maintenance or testing will not be considered violations of the noise ordinance. In addition to adding this exception, the amendment also cleans up the language used, clarifies day and night restrictions, and reinforces that enforcement remains at the discretion of the responding officer.

Vice President Catlett made a motion to approve the Noise Ordinance Update as presented. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Re: Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator
Impact Fee Ordinance Revision**

Chad Winebrenner, Deputy County Administrator appeared before the Commission to provide a revision to the Impact Fee Ordinance. Mr. Winebrenner stated that the revision of the ordinance was needed due to the recalculations required to incorporate the City of Martinsburg into the impact fee structure. The recalculations affected the County Administration fee component of the ordinance, resulting in reductions to the total impact fee amounts. Mr. Winebrenner confirmed that the implementation remains on schedule for November 1st.

Commissioner Boyd made a motion to approve the revised Impact Fee Ordinance as presented. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Re: Executive Session – Real Estate Matters

Vice President Catlett made a motion to go into executive session for real estate matters at 11:16 A.M. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Gochenour declared the Commission out of executive session at 11:50 A.M. He stated there were no motions made.

Re: Items from the Public

There were no items from the public

Re: Recess

Commissioner Hardy made a motion to Recess the October 23, 2025, Berkeley County Commission meeting.

Submitted by:

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

Kiersten Emerick, Administrative Assistant