

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

RANDOLPH COUNTY COMMISSION SS:

At a regular session of the County Commission in and for the aforesaid County and State, at the James F. Cain Court House Annex, on the 7th day of December, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Randolph County Commission President David Kesling and Commissioners Chris See and Chris Siler

Meeting called to order by Commissioner Kesling

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jack Bowen appeared before the Commission. He said his wife passed away in April and he moved into Gateway Apartments. He said he signed a contract with Gateway that there would be no smoking in the apartment. He said it is a City Ordinance and he spoke to Shelley Capito and she said he should come to the Commission meeting today. He is asking for a change in the Ordinance to make it so a handicapped or disabled person could smoke inside their apartments if the temperature was below 32 degrees. He said if they want to increase the rent by 5 or 10 dollars a month that would be fine. Commissioner Kesling said if it's a city ordinance then he would need to talk to the City of Elkins, not the County. Commissioner See said he thought the Randolph County Health Department made a smoking ordinance and he should probably go speak to them.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Siler moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting that was held on November 16, 2023, as submitted. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

REPORTS:

Sheriff Rob Elbon said they have the three new cruisers now and he appreciates the County Commission getting those for them.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Kesling announced that the next regular meeting will be on December 21, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. He said they also want to let all the outside organizations know that the Commission will be starting their budget process the first of February and are asking that all budgetary requests from outside organizations, for the next fiscal year, are due into the Commission office by January 31, 2024.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION:

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION REGARDING 911 SIGN INSTALLATION (See copy attached)

Sandy Bibey from the Randolph County 911/OEM Office appeared before the Commission. She said she works in the mapping and flood plain office at the 911 Center. She gave a handout to the Commission regarding the Emergency Responder Sign Project. She said she was there to give an update on the sign placement. She said the sign project started last year and it is being done by fire company territories. She said the signs and posts are ordered through Mt. Olive Correctional Industries shop and over the course of ordering the signs there were some delays in the sign printing due to lockdowns inside the facility. She said bids were received for the sign installation and Jesse Williams secured the bid. She said these signs are to help all emergency responders find residences more efficiently. She said they are bright blue in color. She said removing or stealing an emergency responder sign is a federal offense but they have had reports of signs and posts being removed and tossed to the side and in some cases taken all together. She said overall the public response has been good and people are happy to see the signs going up in their areas. She said however they have had people calling into the office with complaints about the sign contractor's workers and some of those have become heated. She said she urges the public not to approach the sign contractor's workers as it is not worth an escalation of disagreement leading to the worker's being harmed. She said if anyone has a problem, do not remove the signs that are posted and then please contact her office and she will work with you to resolve the problem. She said at the present time they are working on signs in the Elkins territory and after that they will be continuing to work southwards into the Beverly, Tygarts Valley, Valley Head and Pickens areas. She said this will be done as the weather permits. She said Glenmore Acres Homeowners Association told homeowners to contact the County Commission because signs are not being installed there. She said anytime it is private property or in a homeowners association they cannot post a sign. She said the individual organization or homeowners association would have to post their own signs. She said they can voice their displeasure with us but we will not violate state code. She said each sign costs the county approximately \$125-\$130 just for the materials. Commissioner Kesling said they are not free, do not take them down or destroy them. He said it costs \$250 for reinstallation of a sign. He said it is a very worthwhile project.

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION AND FUNDING REQUEST FROM MAPLEWOOD CEMETERY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (See copy attached)

Mark Tomblyn and Mark Talbott from the Maplewood Cemetery Board of Trustees appeared before the Commission. Mr. Tomblyn said they were appointed in 2021 by Judge David Wilmoth to oversee the cemetery after it was bankrupted and abandoned by the former owner. He said it was overgrown and in terrible condition when they took charge of it. He said they have had a number of donations, some small and some large. He said they have worked hard and have gotten in back in condition where it is safe for people to go there. He said with the donations they have and the expenses they have they simply cannot keep going. He said they are here today to ask for any possible funding help. He said they need equipment and other needs to keep going. He said they have had volunteers and neighbors that have helped out tremendously since they took it over. Commissioner Kesling asked if the cemetery was in the city limits? Mr. Tomblyn said a small portion of it is. Commissioner Kesling asked if they had asked the City of Elkins for funding? Mr. Tomblyn said yes but they do not have money in their budget. Commissioner Siler said to check with the boy scouts to see if they could help out and work towards

getting their Eagle Scout badge. Commissioner Kesling said let us go back and talk as a group and see if they can help, they would love to help as there is a lot of history behind that cemetery and it's a shame that it was let go that bad.

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION AND FUNDING REQUEST FROM RANDOLPH COUNTY OUTDOOR EDUCATION (See copy attached)

Kate Reed and Valerie Hart, founders of Wonder and Grow Mindful Nature Experience Inc, appeared before the Commission. Ms. Reed said they are there on behalf of Randolph County Outdoors which is a program in collaboration with several other groups to promote outdoor recreation, education and wellness for the youth of our county. She said Randolph County Outdoors has been running successful programs for elementary aged students since 2021. She said they have been doing 5th grade days again and have been involved in the summer school program. She said they are looking at doing it for all elementary school aged children. She said each one of these sessions includes one day where they will travel to a local natural attraction such as Stuart Recreation Area, Rich Mountain Battlefield and 4-H Camp Pioneer. Ms. Hart discussed the different things the kids get to do when they go to the area locations from canoeing to hiking etc. She said they went to Isaac Walton League and learned archery and how to put a tent together. She said they also learned how to build a campfire safely. She said they plan to take them to Rich Mountain Battlefield and go hiking. She said a lot of these kids have never done anything like this and they want to spark their interest and hopefully they will want to do it more. Ms. Reed said the reason they are here today is because the program relies on limited funding from the Randolph County Board of Education and the generous contributions of our volunteers and this past session they had over 200 volunteers help out over 3 days. She said they are asking for the Commission's support for the 3 programs they have coming up this spring to help them provide lunch for the volunteers. She said the total cost for the 9 days would be around \$2,070.00 which would serve the 200 volunteers. She said they really believe this will help them retain and recruit more volunteers and ensure the safety and quality of their program. Commissioner Kesling said he can see they are both very passionate about this and they would be happy to help with funding. Commissioner Siler moved to approve the funding request from Randolph County Outdoor Education in the amount of \$2,070.00 to be taken from Hotel/Motel Tax funds. All Yes – Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF DOCUMENTS FOR PRO GRANT

Sheriff Elbon said the Commission applied for the PRO Grant program for them again this year and were able to secure funding in the amount of \$33,500.00 to help with the salaries of the PRO Officers that are in the 3 schools now. Commissioner See moved to approve the documents for the PRO Grant, as submitted. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF DOCUMENTS FOR DRUG TASK FORCE GRANT

Commissioner See moved to table this item. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF HIRE FOR COUNTY COMMISSION OFFICE (See copy attached)

Commissioner Kesling said they advertised in the newspaper and on Indeed for this position and received several applicants and interviewed several applicants. He said they narrowed it down to a couple people but kept going back to one lady in particular which was Angela Corbitt. She is originally from Elkins and is currently living in Florida. She is moving back to Elkins to help take care of her mother and she is very well interviewed candidate and very knowledgeable of what needs to be done and has experience. Commissioner Siler moved to approve the hiring of Angela Corbitt as a full time Administrative Assistant in the County Commission office with a starting wage of \$15.13 per hour with full county benefits and she will begin working on December 12, 2023 and she will be placed on a 90 day probationary period. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PAY APPLICATION 11 & 12 FOR POOL/SPLASH PAD PROJECT

Commissioner Kesling said they were waiting on the cover to arrive and be installed and which it now has. He said they were waiting on the kiddie slide which was being redesigned and it was taking too long so they finally decided to go with another type and design. He said they were waiting for that to be installed. He said they held back money for it. He said pay application #11 is in the amount of \$61,568.26. Commissioner Siler moved to approve pay application #11 in the amount of \$61,568.36 and that is to be taken out of the Community Development line. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Kesling said pay application #12 is to pay off the pool in the amount of \$237,279.42. He said the company has agreed to come back to help with opening the pool back up next spring. He said they showed them how to winterize the pool and put the cover on and they will come back in the spring and show them how to open it up. Commissioner Siler moved to approve the payment of pay application #12 in the amount of \$237,279.42 and that is to be taken from the Community Development line. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ACBA LICENSE FOR HALL'S STORE LLC

Commissioner Kesling said they are applying for a liquor license. He said the County has to provide them a letter stating that Randolph County has no zoning regulations outside of city municipalities. Commissioner See moved to approve the ACBA license for Hall's Store, as presented. All yes – Motion

FINAL SETTLEMENTS/ANNUAL ACCOUNTINGS:

Commissioner Siler moved to approve the (9) Final Settlements, as submitted.

Donald Earl Edinger

Leroy Wilfong

Troy Delbert Daniels

Brenda Kay Gragg

Thomas A. Liston

Phyllis Jean Pingley

Patricia Lane Tryon

Kelly Leigh Simmons

Constance N. Varner

All yes – Motion passed unanimously

BUDGET REVISIONS:

Commissioner Kesling moved to approve a State Budget Revision for the DACH Grant in the amount of \$4,555.00. Commissioner Kesling voted yes, Commissioner Siler voted yes, Commissioner See voted yes. Motion passed

Commissioner Kesling moved to approve a State Budget Revision to adjust the Forest Service Grant in the amount of \$150.00 for the Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Kesling voted yes, Commissioner Siler voted yes, Commissioner See voted yes. Motion passed

DIVISION OF PROPERTY/ERRONEOUS ASSESSMENTS:

Commissioner See moved to approve the divisions of property and erroneous assessments, as submitted. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

DISTRESSED PROPERTIES: None

FIRE FEE ADJUSTMENTS:

Commissioner Siler moved to approve the (1) one fire fee adjustment, as submitted. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Commissioner See moved to pay the bills, as submitted. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

ADJOURN THE MEETING:

Commissioner See moved to adjourn the meeting. All yes – Motion passed unanimously

Attest: _____

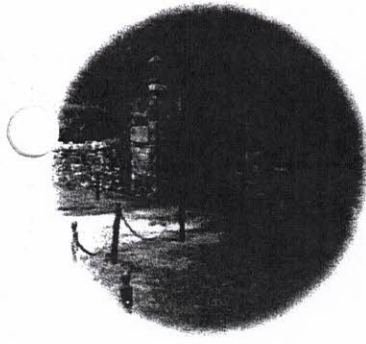
Emergency Responder Sign Project Updates:

The Emergency Responder Sign Project was started last year being done by fire company territories. The signs and posts are ordered through Mt. Olive Correctional Industries shop. Over the course of ordering the signs from Mt. Olive there were some delays in the sign printing process due to lockdowns inside the facility including the work shop. It is my understanding bids were accepted for the installation of the posts and sign with Jesse Williams installing the posts and signs. There were also some delays in the installation of the signs and posts due to weather.

The purpose of the Emergency responder signs, which are bright blue in color, is to help all emergency responders, Fire, Law and EMS, find residences more efficiently. Emergency responder signage can only be installed off State right of ways. We can not install on private property, City properties, State property or in the National Forests. Removing or stealing an emergency responder sign is a federal offense. We have had reports of signs and posts being removed and tossed to the side and in some cases taken all together. We have had signs stolen off the posts. Overall, the public response to emergency responder signs have been good. People are happy to see the signs going up in their areas. However, we do have some negative responses both with people calling into the office and with the sign contractor's workers while installing signs. If people have a problem with a sign, as a few instances have become more than heated, I urge the public not to approach the sign contractor's workers. It is not worth an escalation of disagreement leading to the worker's being harmed. If you have a problem, do not remove the signs that are posted and then please contact my office and I will work with you to resolve your problem.

When I came into the office in February of this year Coalton and Huttonsville had been completed last year. Harman and Whitmer were in progress and were completed in the late Spring and early summer. Leading Creek was the next area ordered and the signs were installed over the summer. At present Elkins territory is now in the process of installation with approximately 100 of the 174 signs for the Elkins territory now have been installed.

Beverly, Tygarts Valley, Valley Head and Pickens signs and posts have been ordered, shipped and received at my office. As the Elkins territory signs are completed the sign contractor will pick up the next batch of signs and posts to continue working southwards. With the weather again now upon us the sign contractor will be working towards completion of the project as weather permits.



MAPLEWOOD CEMETERY
P. O. Box 1185
Elkins, West Virginia 26241

November 30, 2023

Randolph County Commission
4 Randolph Ave.
Elkins, WV 26241

Commissioners,

The Maplewood Cemetery in Elkins was bankrupted and abandoned by the former owner three years ago. At the time, complaints were being lodged by people who purchased burial plots in the cemetery but never provided deeds. Investigations by the Office of the Attorney General of West Virginia were underway. Mowing and trimming in a small area of the cemetery was being provided by a small group of concerned citizens and neighbors in the vicinity of the cemetery grounds. Most of the grounds had waist high grass. The roads were in disrepair. To this day, the abandoned caretakers house is deteriorating and garage is facing collapse.

In 2021 Judge David Wilmoth appointed six trustees to oversee the cemetery. Since that time:

*All complaints filed by the Attorney General have been resolved. All individuals who paid for grave spaces and did not receive deeds for the property have been provided spaces and deeds.

*The cemetery has been declared a 501 C 13 under the Internal Revenue Service tax code for the purpose of federal income tax exemption.

*The cemetery grounds and mausoleum have liability insurance for the protection of the cemetery and those who visit it.

*Some old and diseased trees have been removed, the grounds are mowed and trimmed (thanks to the generosity of several people and the gate is locked and unlocked every day of the year. We have been able to provide some monetary compensation to those who have worked so hard to restore the cemetery (but not to the extent they deserve).

*In the summer of 2023, the cemetery purchased a new industrial strength mower.

* Areas of the roadways throughout the cemetery contained large potholes and vegetation was overgrowing sections of the road making the accessibility of some sections difficult for funeral processions and visitors. The road was patched and brush cut back in late summer of this year.

* Numerous other improvements have been made as well.

The cemetery has many needs but the most pressing needs include:

- 1) The records of thousands of burials need to be digitized and recorded electronically for preservation and identification for future use. Programs are available for purchase.
- 2) Surveying must be completed to allow burials in sections where ground markers were not placed
- 3) A small (used) backhoe to maintain graves, clean ditches, etc.
- 4) The trustees sold a large storage building to pay bills and are in need of a much smaller building to house equipment.
- 5) Numerous old and diseased trees are dangerous and need to be removed
- 6) Cemetery monuments need to be up-righted with new bases to prevent further damage
- 7) Mowing and trimming
- 8) Snow plowing of roads

The grounds of Maplewood Cemetery provide eternal rest for the founders of Elkins, United States Senators, a professional baseball player, Veterans of every war for the past one hundred thirty years, business, community leaders and citizens of Elkins, Randolph County and the state of West Virginia.

Maplewood is no longer a privately owned cemetery. It has no affiliation with a church, organization or private business to provide funding for maintenance or upgrades. The cemetery has three separate trusts but each is designed to provide interest only. These fall drastically short in filling the daily needs of the cemetery. Although many have provided contributions to restore this place of solitude it simply is not enough.

The estimated funding for current needs exceeds \$ 50,000.00. The trustees of Maplewood Cemetery respectfully request the Randolph County Commission consider a request in the amount of \$ 50,000.00.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nicholas Barb, President

Kevin Hostetler, Vice President

Mark Tomblyn, Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Talbott

Thomas R. Eidell, Jr.

Mary Ann Durland

Kate Reed
Wonder & Grow: Mindful Nature Experience
PO Box 406
Elkins, WV 26241



November 14, 2023

Randolph County, WV Commission
4 Randolph Avenue
Suite 102
Elkins, WV 26241

Dear Randolph County Commissioners,

We are writing to you on behalf of Randolph County Outdoors, a collaborative initiative currently coordinated by Wonder & Grow: Mindful Nature Experience, a non-profit organization that aims to promote outdoor recreation, education, and wellness for the youth of our county. We are seeking your support for our spring programs for 2nd, 4th, and 5th grades, which will be held from April to June.

Our spring programs are designed to expose our students to the natural beauty and heritage of our county, as well as to teach them valuable skills and lessons that will benefit them throughout their lives. We will be visiting local natural attractions in the area to share our culture and history such as Stuart Recreation Area, Rich Mountain Battlefield, and 4-H Camp Pioneer. These sites offer opportunities for learning about the Civil War and the wildlife and ecology of our region. We will also be sharing outdoor recreation and education relating to mountain biking, water sports, and hiking. These activities will help our students develop physical fitness, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. Kids will also learn about taking care of nearby nature, and health and wellness to not only enjoy life now but well into adulthood with the hope of wanting to stay in the area and become meaningful citizens who love where they live.

Our programs rely on limited funding from the Randolph County Board of Education and on the generous contributions of our volunteers, who come from various backgrounds and organizations around the county that support our mission. They provide guidance, instruction, and supervision for our students, as well as, equipment and materials. We are very grateful for their time and effort, and we want to show our appreciation by providing them with lunch during the program days. However, due to budget restrictions from the Randolph County Board of Education, we have been unable to do so this fall. We are asking for your support in the spring to cover the costs of providing meals to our volunteers, which will amount to \$2,070 for 9 days, serving around 200 volunteers. This will help us retain and recruit more volunteers, as well as ensure the quality and safety of our programs.

We hope that you will consider our request and support Randolph County Outdoors in our endeavor to enrich the lives of our youth and our community. We believe that our programs are not only fun and educational, but also essential for fostering a sense of connection, pride, and responsibility for our county and its natural resources. We would be happy to provide you with more information or answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Randolph County Outdoor's Coordinators
Kate Reed & Valerie Hart

Kate Reed
CEO & Co-Founder

Valerie Hart
COO & Co-Founder, Wonder & Grow: Mindful Nature Experience, Inc.

Randolph County Commission



Commissioners

David L. Kesling

Chris See

Christopher Siler

December 7, 2023

The Commission has hired Angela Corbitt as a full-time Administrative Assistant in the County Commission office with full county benefits.

Her starting salary pay will be \$15.13 per hour, and she will begin working on December 12, 2023. A 90-day probationary period will apply.

Thank you,

David Kesling, President

Randolph County Commission

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randolphcountycormissionwv.org