

The Washington County Commissioner's regular meeting on Feb. 7 was primarily informational, but the group did make decisions about pressing issues.

The biggest issue addressed was the hiring of a full-time person to clean the courthouse.

Until now, Elizabeth Lewis had been completing those cleaning duties on a contract basis, but she and a number of supporters showed up at the commissioner meeting lobbying for her to be hired full time.

The salary for that position was still in the budget, but the commissioner's wanted to try to see if that job could be done through out-sourcing.

While the contract arrangement was working out, the group voted unanimously to hire Lewis full-time.

County Clerk Shirley Batt and Washington Circuit Court Judge Larry Medlock attended the meeting to express their support for hiring Lewis full-time.

Commissioner President Dave Brown said he has seen a big improvement at the courthouse since Lewis took over the cleaning duties and said he'd like to see that continue.

Brown's support, however, did come with conditions.

He said that he would be OK with hiring Lewis as long as she understood there is no over-time with the position.

Lewis, whose husband is undergoing treatments for Stage 4 Colon cancer, said she didn't see that as being a problem unless there was a request for jobs to be done outside the scope of the normal everyday cleaning, such as windows and blinds.

Brown's other request was that Lewis continue with her current schedule which is a swing-shift. She starts cleaning later in the day and finishes up after the court house is closed.

Lewis said she intended to keep her current schedule.

Commissioner John D. Fultz made the motion to hire Lewis full-time and compliment both her and maintenance man Tony Maranto for the work that they are doing at the courthouse.

John Mishler seconded the motion and all three voted in favor of the hiring.

In other business:

The commissioners were also updated by John Buechler about the work on the Multi-Hazard Mitigation plan, which is expected to be a 12-month process to have a plan in place.

They confirmed their appointment of Angie Mead to the PETA/BOA board and Jerry Roberts re-appointment to the group.

Cecilia Peredo gave the commissioners an update on progress on the new Blue River Services Salem facility and requested a release of funds for the project, which the commissioner's approved unanimously. The amount was a little more than \$124,524.90.

Of that amount, \$61,017.20 came from grants and \$53,570.70 came from a local match. There was also a retainage of \$13,800.

Peredo also updated the commissioner's on the progress of the Blue River Fire District. She said there was a public meeting on Jan. 31 and there was great attendance. She said it seems to be something the community wants.

She said the group is planning to conduct an income survey in the coming weeks as part of the requirements to obtain a grant.

The commissioner's appointed Brown to meet with Sheriff Claude Combs and County Council President Ben Bowling to discuss on-going over-crowding and security issues at the jail.

Julie Graham & Peggy Scott were present to update the commissioners on the state's

regulations concerning rabbiie shots.

The ladies informed them that if shots are required for indigent patients the county is responsible for paying that fee.

Angie Liner made a presentation to the commissioners about a GPS system that can be used for government vehicles.

Liner said if the county had GPS systems they would be able to see where the vehicles are at all times and make sure the driver's maintain speed limits, which in turn could save the county money on fuel mileage.

She said there are several clients who have saved money by using her company's tracking system.

Beth Armstrong gave the commissioner's an update on the HTC Internship program last summer.

Armstrong said the work completed by the group, which included recording Public Service Announcements about Washington County and an informational video about the quality of life in Washington County.

She said the program was so successful that they plan to offer it again this summer.