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Assessor: New hires for office

Pair will replace Tyler Technologies

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In October, Monongalia County Assessor Mark Musick announced that the working relationship between his office and independent consulting company, Tyler Technologies would end Dec. 31 and property evaluations would be handled in-house beginning in January.

During Wednesday's Monongalia County Commission meeting, Musick introduced two new hires who will head up the property evaluations for the assessor's office.

Kristin Liller and James "Chris" Michael will be new to the assessor's office, but each brings a wealth of experience to Monongalia County.

Both come from jobs at the West Virginia State Tax Department. Liller has a start date of Dec. 9 and spent the past 10 years in the state's property tax division.

Liller has much familiarity with Monongalia County, having served as its state monitor. Musick said Liller will likely head up residential property assessments.

"As our monitor, she was with us this past spring to give us our

grade," Musick said. "She's very familiar with Monongalia County, very familiar with the office and the situation, and very excited about moving forward."

Michael, scheduled to begin Dec. 16, brings more than 20 years experience in various positions, such as his current role monitoring county assessors for compliance on behalf of the Property Valuation Training and Procedures Commission (PVC).

Musick said Michael's experience with the PVC is "very important to us because he knows what the PVC committee is looking for and he knows what we need to be in compliance and how to get us there."

Michael, who will likely head up commercial assessments, brings another interesting perspective to the job as well — that of a former county commissioner in Tucker County.

Musick said he feels like he hit a bull's-eye in hiring the pair.

"They will be sitting down with Tyler Technologies in the meantime, reviewing stuff and getting prepared, because they will be the ones sitting through anything that's going on in February with the board of review," he said.

The commissioners

were very complimentary of both hires.

The hires were made using a portion of the \$620,000 that will be saved by ending the Tyler Technologies contract signed by former Assessor Rodney Pyles 14 months early.

Pyles signed the contract in 2012. It originally kept Tyler Technologies in Monongalia County until Feb. 28, 2015, for a cost of \$1.7 million.

Musick said hiring field deputies to work with Liller and Michael was next on his agenda.

In other news from Wednesday's meeting, MECCA 911 Director Mike Wolfe recommended one of two bids for a mobile command unit for the county's emergency services.

Wolfe recommended the lesser of the two bids, \$255,000 for a self-contained unit built on a Ford F650 chassis by Nomad Global Communications, based in Montana.

The vehicle is funded largely using a \$233,700 Homeland Security grant through the Port Authority of Pittsburgh. Wolfe said Granville Town Manager Ron Snyder helped secure an additional \$40,000 "to cover the full cost of this."

Wolfe explained that once the vehicle is ordered, it will be between 160-180 days before delivery. Once delivered, Wolfe said it would take a week or so to get it set up and

was aiming at Mountain-Fest as a goal to have the unit up and running.

"We also will have some in-kind equipment that we already have, so that we'll be able to outfit the unit," Wolfe said.

The losing bid was from Sirchie Vehicle Division for \$395,000.

Also during Wednesday's meeting:

■ Sheriff Al Kisner announced the resignation of two deputies, including Matthew Stemple.

Stemple was placed on administrative leave, with pay, after an arrest for domestic battery in June.

Previous reports indicate that Stemple was with the sheriff's department between three and four years.

■ The commission was advised by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Phil Magro that the county would have to pay for an outside agency to examine a plot of land in Westover — formerly known as Thorn Cemetery No. 1 — to determine how many graves are present. Commissioners asked last week if they could get the property's owner, the city of Westover, to cover the cost.

Kisner said he was able to get the money, \$8,695, from his budget to cover the costs, but asked the commission for consideration down the road for the utilized account if it became necessary.