

The Inter-Mountain

Pesky pigeons produce problems in Upshur County

Amanda Hayes | For The Inter-Mountain | January 11, 2019



The Inter-Mountain photo by Amanda Hayes Pigeon spike strips like these located under the walkway that connects the Upshur County Courthouse to the annex will be installed around the dome and cupola as part of a plan to discourage pigeons from damaging the structure.

BUCKHANNON — Pesky pigeons have become more than just a nuisance at the Upshur County Courthouse. Their droppings are causing problems with the most iconic feature of the 1899 structure — its dome and cupola.

Commissioner Terry Cutright said, *“They are damaging the dome. The feces they are dropping is acidic and we are afraid that it is going to start eating holes in the dome.”*

County administrator Carrie Wallace said that comparing photos of the dome and cupola from a year ago to more recent photos is *“astounding.”*

More pigeons began roosting around the courthouse after their access point to another nearby building was closed off.

To shoo away the pigeons, the commission has tried other measures such as a noise machine.

“The county already purchased a noise machine that was basically guaranteed to take care of the pigeons,” she said. *“It has not worked. They basically just moved up a story.*

“This is needed to prevent further deterioration of the dome and cupola,” she said. *“They have tried other avenues with the pigeons that have not worked. At this point, it’s either install the spikes or have to renovate the dome again in another few years.”*

On Thursday, the Upshur County Commission approved a request for proposals to go out for a dome cleaning and pigeon spike installation project.

All sealed bids must be received no later than 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 12. For more information and a bid packet, visit www.upshurcounty.org/government/commission-office/bid.php.

“It is estimated that 1,200 linear feet of spikes will be required to do all the locations where the pigeons are perching or could possibly perch on the dome and the cupola,” Wallace said. *“There is also the unknown of where the pigeons are going to relocate.”*

Maintenance director Greg Harris expects there to be 500 linear feet left over that could do some of the window sills and other areas where the pigeons like to be, including right outside county clerk Carol Smith’s office.

The sealed bids will be opened at the Feb. 14 commission meeting.

The commission also approved a request for bids for the Community Oriented Policing Services camera surveillance project. All sealed bids must be received by 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 5 and will be opened at the March 7 commission meeting. The Upshur and Lewis County School Systems received a U.S. Department of Justice grant of just over \$309,000 to fund the project.

The Upshur County Commission was the applicant for the grant on behalf of the schools.

Commission president Sam Nolte said, *“This is a great project; it’s nice that we got the grant.”*

In other business, the commission:

- Agreed to allow the Buckhannon Planning Commission to place a survey box to help plan the direction of the city and its 2025 plan in the courthouse annex foyer during January.
- Approved the appointment of Richard Kitzmiller to the Upshur County Civil Service Board Law Enforcement with a term to expire Dec. 31, 2022.
- Approved a request to extend Taylor Rolenson’s paid part-time internship through the spring semester. Rolenson will be compensated from the day report center’s cash match once her initial 12-week period has expired. As previously approved during the regularly scheduled commission meeting held on Sept. 27, 2018, Rolenson will work up to 16 hours per week at the rate of \$8.75 per hour
- Approved the employment of Danny R. Gould as part-time circuit court bailiff at the pay wage rate of \$11.50 per hour, effective Jan. 20. Gould will work no more than 19 ½ hours per week.
- Announced it still has an open spot on the Upshur County Enhanced Emergency Telephone Advisory Board for an unexpired term to end June 20, 2020. This can be filled by a community member.
- Announced there is an open spot on the Buckhannon-Upshur Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for an unexpired term ending June 30, 2019. This will be a city of Buckhannon appointee.

The next regular meeting of the Upshur County Commission will be Jan. 17 at 9 a.m.