The County Commission of Lewis County and Upshur County, West Virginia, held a special joint meeting/session at the Lewis County Commission meeting room on Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. Gilmer County Commission representatives were not present. Lewis County Commissioner, Agnes Queen called the meeting to order. There were present from Lewis County, Agnes Queen, Commissioner; Roderick Wyman, Commissioner; Cynthia S. Rowan, County Clerk and Cindy Whetsell, Administrator; and from Upshur County; Terry Cutright, Commissioner; Troy A. Brady, Commissioner; Sam Nolte, Commissioner; Carrie L. Wallace, Administrator; Tabatha R. Perry, Assistant Administrator and Jacqueline Dinklocker, Secretary. The meeting began with a moment of silent meditation and prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. All motions passed unanimously, unless otherwise stated.

Attorneys Alan Pritt, Pritt and Spano, PLLC and Rusty Webb, The Webb Law Centre, PLLC made presentations concerning proposals for litigation against drug manufacturers who have permeated the State of West Virginia with large quantities of prescription drugs. Representatives from Greene, Ketchum, Bailey, Farrell and Tweel, were not present.

Alan Pritt presented data and information concerning prescription drug abuse and death rates and statics both locally and nationally. Mr. Webb provided similar and additional information and provided a slide show and handout showing some of the statistics and effects of the drug epidemic.

West Virginia is among the top five states in the nation in overdose deaths. In addition to mortality, the cost to counties includes increased jail bills, increase of 911 calls, decrease in tourism, employment costs associated with not being able to fill jobs with local workers and consequences too numerous to list. The attorneys advised that participation in a successful lawsuit against the drug manufacturers/distributors could be a “boom” for counties which have suffered losses.

Mr. Pritt and Mr. Webb both stated that their fees to represent the counties will be 25% (of the award). Mr. Webb would charge a filing fee and Mr. Pritt would also charge a filing fee and service of process fee.

No decisions were made at this time. The item will be placed on a future agenda by the individual counties for discussion.

With no further business, per general consent rule, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.