

Fiscal court calls special meeting over road closing

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Watson said the county has another situation where a property owner has put up a fence.

He stated the county should declare imminent domain, have those landowners' properties appraised and take them.

County Attorney Jason Riley said there is a pre-trial hearing set on Mt. Springs Road for March 7.

The fiscal court scheduled a special meeting for May 4, 5 p.m. to discuss that road.

Jailer Bo Morris asked about restoring benefits to the jail transport officers. They were former deputy jailers until the jail closed.

The fiscal court was unable to take action on those benefits Thursday because it was not on the agenda of the special meeting. The regular meeting would have been

held on February 18, but it was President's Day.

Morris' request will be on the agenda of next Monday's special meeting.

Two items were approved for Estill Emergency Management Agency. Funding for these two items will be paid by CSEPP funds and not county funds, but they still require the fiscal court's approval.

The fiscal court approved a media contract between CSEPP and voted to advertise for a part-time employee, 20 hours per week.

Ronnie Riddell, director of EMA, said a part-time employee has taken another job.

Rob Forehand, fire chief of the Hargett Fire Dept., presented his annual report.

That department at the northern end of the county had 138 runs. Forehand said

that included 17 structure fires, seven mutual aid runs to Powell County and one to Clark County.

Forehand said the Hargett Fire Dept. shares volunteers with Irvine and Estill County fire departments.

"Spout Springs Road is one of the most dangerous roads in the county," Forehand stated.

He added that the state highway placed guardrails in the area of Harg Church of God, which has reduced accidents there by 80 percent.

He said that guardrails are being installed near a pond which is the scene of numerous wrecks.

Forehand said his goal is for ISO to come in and re-rate the fire department this year.

Derrick Muncie presented a report for this year for the Estill County Fire Department,

which covers the remainder of the county.

Muncie said the county firefighters had responded to five housefires, three of which were heat related, and 11 vehicle accidents.

He added that ISO has come in, but it will be about six months before they know the results. A lower ISO rating will result in a lower fire insurance rate for property owners.

Watson appointed Magistrates Mike Abney and Gerry Flannery to the Rail Advisory Committee. A retired railroad, Larry Farwell, was also appointed to that committee.

Myra Finney, chairperson of the recently formed Tourism Committee, introduced members of the committee.

The county collects a three percent tax on hotels, bed and breakfasts, and AirBNB,

with the money being designated for tourism.

Bill Wesley, Chaplain of the Ravenna Police Department, addressed the fiscal court about reopening the jail.

Wesley said he has people who are willing to do whatever it takes to get the jail reopened.

He was told the state requires a minimum of 150 beds for a jail.

Wesley plans to take his cause to Frankfort.

The fiscal court approved Rural Secondary Recommendations from the District Ten Highway office in Jackson.

The county was allotted \$1,025,980 in rural secondary funds with \$2,400 allotted to the judge/executive's fund.

Of the total, \$433,800 is designated for maintenance

and or traffic control.

The county road allotment is \$220,544, leaving a balance of \$360,236.

The state office recommended portions of three roads for resurfacing for an estimated total of \$390,000.

They were KY 1886, KY 851, and KY 499.

The plan on resurfacing of 1.682 miles of KY 1886 for an estimated cost of \$140,000.

Resurfacing on KY 851 is scheduled for one mile and will cost approximately \$85,000.

Resurfacing on KY 499 will also be one mile. It is estimated to cost \$165,000, because the road is wider than KY 851.

The state will take bids on these road projects. All roads may not be resurfaced this year, depending on the bids and budget.

Irvine approves agreement to take over RPD

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The Ravenna officer's starting salary and probation period will be the same as a newly hired police officer.

Mayor James Gross said that he had received a phone call from Danny Click who owns property on Kirkland Avenue about the ordinance that was passed two weeks ago pertaining to the discharge of firearms within city limits.

Gross said Click told him that he has problems with coyotes and other animals on his farm and sometimes it is necessary to kill one if they are after his livestock or his crops.

Davis said that the ordinance was not meant for that purpose; it is to keep people from going out in the backyard and target shooting.

Mayor Gross informed the council that two city employees had been offered a job making more money at the local landfill. He said he felt like the men would stay with the city if they were to get a raise.

Councilman Farmer said that every person who works for the city is very important and he would like to keep them if it all possible.

Councilman Billy Arthur said he would like to discuss the matter further when all council members were present. The discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Fire Chief Tony Murphy said he would like to apologize to anyone whose water was affected last week while city employees were flushing out hydrants before their ISO rating. He said there was some miscommunication on President's Day when the hydrants were flushed, and due to it being President's Day, employees of the water treatment plant were off work that day. This caused some murky water, and Murphy said that a few people complained that their laundry had been ruined by the water.

Murphy informed the council that the fire department had received a \$3,200 grant for thermal imaging equipment.

Firefighter Chad Neal said that the equipment actually costs \$3,400 so the fire department would take \$200 out of their budget to make up the difference. The firemen also reported that they had only made four runs over the weekend that were flood related. They also were called to cut down a few trees that had fallen due to the rain and high winds.



Water surrounded a small trailer in Ravenna on Sunday afternoon. It also covered the Kiwanis ballfields nearby.

Flooding closes roads: school gets called off

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A road that Barnes is very familiar with was closed for two water issues. He said water was over the Cressy Road in two places. One of those places was caused by a stopped up culvert.

Last Wednesday, Hudson Mill Road off Spout Springs Road was flooded due to a stopped up culvert.

A school bus had to back out the road to Highway 82. Because of the narrow road, there was no place for the bus to turn. Sheriff

Chris Flynn provided traffic control for the bus driver to back out onto heavily traveled Highway 82.

The river crested at 31.73 feet at 10:45 a.m. on Monday. It was expected to crest at 30.6 feet. Anything over 21 feet is considered flood stage.

Emergency Management warned that after the river crested, the water would be slower going down than it did coming up.

A state of emergency was declared in Estill County on

Sunday afternoon.

On Monday, Gov. Matt Bevin declared a state of emergency because of the flooding.

A state of emergency allows counties to obtain funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Barnes said that EMA was assessing damages to roads in Estill County on Tuesday.

Anyone with damages to their properties can contact Barnes at 723-6533.

Roads that were closed because of flooding include Driftwood Dr - Closed on both ends, Dark Hollow, Noland's Creek, Murphy's Ford, Maupin Hill, Red Lick, Little Doe Creek, Miller's Creek - Closed on both ends, Kirkland Ave, Clear Creek, Jakes Heavenly HWY, Sub Station Rd, Cob Hill - at the bottom on the Miller's Creek side, Cathedral Domain, Cressy Rd, Clay Isaacs Rd., Wooley Ridge, and Stump Rd - Coal Wash.



Water came up so quickly that this truck got caught in the flood at the River Restaurant. The restaurant and boat dock floated.

Superintendent Jeff Saylor Responds to Incident

On February 19th, 2019 during the Estill County vs. Owsley County boys' basketball game, there was a disturbance that took place during the 3rd quarter. Contrary to what was reported by news media outlets, there was no fight that occurred. Also, based on these early reports our Estill County fans have been viewed in a negative light without any type of investigation to determine what actually occurred. I have not been able to determine what led up to the initial event that started this incident, but here is what I have discovered during the course of my investigation.

An Owsley County Coach turned to fans sitting directly behind his bench and shouted obscenities toward a group of our middle school students. Language used by this coach was totally inappropriate and should not have been used under any circumstance. At that point, one of our parents confronted the coach concerning the language he had used, thus the beginning of the incident. ECHS school personnel were present at the game and they were the first administrators on the scene. Even though this parent was defending students in the stands from this type of language, he cannot have contact with coaches or players during an athletic event and the consequences for such action is removal from the gymnasium. The parent should have called on our administrators or game management to handle the situation.

I believe everything would have been fine until the Owsley County Sheriff, Brent Lynch, decided to go into the stands to confront one of our fans who was evidently shouting obscenities. At that point, there were two mistakes made that caused the situation to escalate even further. First, Sheriff Lynch, who is also an assistant coach for the Owsley County Girls' Basketball Team was dressed as a coach and was not dressed in uniform. Being dressed in uniform or showing a badge is always the best practice in this situation. Second, what made the situation worse is that he had identified the wrong person. A lady was confronted, grabbed by the arm and given no chance to plead her case. Her little girl who was sitting beside her was terrified and began crying be-

cause of the incident. I think it is ironic that the Owsley County School District posted a PSA on their website concerning school employees being protected under KRS 161.190 when the only school employee that was injured was this lady who is a second grade teacher at Estill Springs Elementary.

Finally, the post to the web site asks employees to contact school administrators or law enforcement officers immediately if an issue like this arises, and I completely agree with that statement. As a matter of fact, if the Owsley Coach had followed this protocol, this entire incident could have been avoided.

I believe that both schools have a lot to learn from this incident. It seems we are living in a time that attending a game and cheering for our team has taken on an entirely different meaning than what it should be. Fans should concentrate on encouraging their team to victory and not focusing on putting down the other team, its coaches or their fans.

Fans should understand that officials are doing their best to be fair. We should realize they are human and will make mistakes, but in the course of a game there are too many factors that occur for us to ever put the blame on them for a teams' loss. Without officials, these athletic contests we love so much will come to an end. Recent research confirms that the decline in the number of officials is a direct correlation to fan behavior towards them during athletic contest.

Finally, during the next few months, our school district is going to develop a plan of action to address the overall game atmosphere when the Engineers take the field or court during athletic competition. This process has already started in some of our meetings with coaches and administrators. We will begin engaging our student athletes, parents and boosters in order to create a better atmosphere at all of our events. We talk a lot about Engineer Pride in our school district and community, and we take full responsibility in knowing this means that what we do matters all the time, even if no one else is looking.

Jeff Saylor, superintendent Estill County Schools

Supt.'s contract extended

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Mr. Saylor said that he didn't expect any traffic impacts this year for the remainder of the school year but did expect them when school begins in August.

The district staffing policy and school staffing policy was approved by the board. Mr. Saylor said that this had to be approved in order for the upcoming draft on the budget in May.

He said they have added a CMA at the middle school, the school law enforcement officer, and then an athletic trainer. He said that Bluegrass Orthopedics and Marcum and Wallace Memorial Hospital have partnered with the district on the athletic

trainer who will be present at all home sporting events.

Saylor added that the district is in better shape with health services than they've been in a long time and he believes that's instrumental on having good attendance at the schools.

The board approved changes to the current calendar extending the last day of school by two days. Mr. Saylor said that could change due to the weather and the board should be prepared to take the last two days of spring break if school is cancelled anymore.

The 2019-2020 calendar was approved with the first day of school being on August 6th. Students would also

have a fall break, a spring break, and two full weeks off for Christmas vacation. New law requires that a committee set the school calendar now instead of board members.

Mr. Saylor said that the start and ending time of school will be moved back to the way it was last year. School will begin at 8 a.m. and will dismiss at 3 p.m. He said there had been some major issues with the later start time that included parents dropping students off for school and also getting the bus routes reworked. With all the issues he felt like it was better to move the start time back to the way it was last year.