

# Current Continuations

## Fulton

municipal order that would grant Prater the authorization to sign the Municipal Road Aid Cooperative Program Agreement between the city of Fulton and the Commonwealth of Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the Department of Rural and Municipal Aid. Gunn explained that this is the standard cooperative agreement the city makes with the state to receive road aid funding.

Gunn said that it is an agreement that states the receiver funding equal to 7.7% of the city's fuel tax revenue. He said that by participating in this agreement, more funding should a street emergency occur.

The agreement states the street aid funding can be used for construction, reconstruction and maintenance of urban roads and streets. This funding can't be used for any other purposes. The amount of funding agreed upon in the contract will be \$51,460.18 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.

Commissioner Linn asked if that was the amount of funding the city received last year and Gunn explained that the number fluctuates because while the standard of 7.7% of fuel tax revenue stays the same, the amount of fuel tax revenue generated by the city changes each year.

There were two separate line items that appeared on the agenda regarding this agreement, but Gunn called the commission's attention to the redundancy of the two items. The first item was to have a reading of a resolution to adopt and approve the execution of the program contract, while the following line item was to allow Prater to sign the contract. As the reading of the contract was also included in the authorization for Prater to sign the contract, it would be redundant to do it for both. The commission and Whitledge agreed and recommended they combine the two-line items into one, which the commission approved, along with the authoriza-

tion for Prater to sign the agreement.

The commission heard the first reading of a proposed amendment to a city ordinance that will allow a 3 percent transient room tax to be levied on the rental of any accommodation for 30 consecutive days. This includes hotels, motels, inns, tourist camp, tourist cabin, campgrounds, recreational vehicle parks or any other accommodation location within the corporate city limits of Fulton. The first reading took place on May 13, but a second reading will need to take place before the amendment can be published and take effect.

The commission set an ABC public hearing to review the alcoholic beverage fee to comply with the city ordinance requirements for June 10 at 5 p.m. at city hall. The commission's first June meeting will immediately follow the hearing at 6 p.m.

The commission usually meets two times, the second and fourth Monday of each month. While discussing the possible dates to schedule the ABC public hearing, it was acknowledged that there will only be one commission meeting in May as the fourth Monday falls on the Memorial Day holiday and government offices will be closed.

The Fulton city commission deviated from its traditional meeting structure for the first time, allowing each of the city's department heads to report on their department's activities. At the April 22 commission meeting, Gunn had asked for the reports to become a permanent addition to the commission's two monthly meetings.

Poole reported the police department had nothing out of the ordinary to report on. Lang reported that the fire department had aided the South Fulton Fire Department with a residential fire on Forestdale Ave. Unfortunately, it was a fatal fire, with one fatality and one person severely injured at the time of the meeting.

Wiser reported the public works department had started the prep work on lift station A by installing the safety fencing. He said they expected to break ground sometime next week, depending on the weather.

Vaughn asked about the expected time on the project. Wiser said it will definitely take a considerable amount of time and Gunn noted that the project will require digging down 27 feet deep.

Lamb then mentioned that mowing season was in full swing and keeping him busy as code enforcement officer. He said the ribbon cutting for the Community Ventures house on Pearl St. had taken place and that he was expecting the work on the other Community Ventures projects is on track to get underway.

Etherton said the Tourism Commission has a lot of exciting plans in the upcoming months. The band Overwatch will perform on Pontotoc Stage on June 1, as part of the Summer Concert Series. He said the first Movie in the Park will be held on June 15 with the family friendly "Paw Patrol Movie" showing.

Etherton said the Community Ventures Artisan Village is well underway. One of the vendor building units is almost ready, Etherton said, with it only needing to have the floor installed.

Etherton said there were four applicants awaiting the vendor units' completions, and he had been told one or two other artisans have asked about the project.

Etherton also said he had been received a large amount of questions on the village project and he wanted to be clear that this is not a yard sale, flea market or a retail pop-up store. The applicants must be selling their own handmade merchandise only.

Gunn had a few points of discussion at the meeting, one being the city employee healthcare plan renewal for 2025. Gunn said the city had not increased the amount the employees

pay since 2011. He said if there was an increase, the city would just absorb the increase.

Gunn said that looking at the budget, he doesn't think the city will absorb that difference in 2025. Gunn told the commission that looking at the different plans and came up with a \$54 per month increase for the family plan, a \$45 per month increase for the employee-spouse plan, \$24 per month increase for an employee and children plan and a \$12.40 per month increase for a single plan.

Gunn said the highest plan is the family insurance plan and city employees are currently paying \$27 per pay period. He said that the city would still need absorbing most of the increase on the plans, but that with the budget, it would be near impossible for the city to absorb the full increase.

The commission approved the proposed increase in employee health insurance plan with Forrester, Vaughn and Linn voting to approve and commissioner Reilly voting against it.

Reilly said he didn't agree with putting the increase on the employees because he said he felt the deductibles and fees the employee must pay were already too high.

Also, Gunn told the commission that he had noticed that several things about the city's facilities that desperately need updating. According to Gunn, the conference room and the larger commission room can no longer support the city's growth. The conference room is too small to accommodate committee planning meetings and the commission room has obsolete equipment and unnecessary features.

Gunn said he has some preliminary ideas to update the facilities to better meet the needs of a modern Fulton to discuss at a future meeting, but he wanted everyone to be aware of the consideration to update the facilities and to contribute ideas for potential updates.

Gunn then told the commission that he felt the city's logo needed a refreshing. Working with Lang, Gunn showed the commissioners a proposed image that would be used at the top of letterheads and other items at city hall.

The proposed seal image was received well by the commissioners that they chose to adopt it as the official city logo.

Gunn told the commission that as he has been working on the city's budget for the upcoming fiscal year, and the U.S. Department of Labor had reached a final rule for the annual salary-level threshold within the Fair Labor Standard's Act.

The previous minimum salary requirement to be considered an exempt employee is currently \$35,568, but will increase on July 1, to \$43,888 per year and then the amount will increase again to \$58,656 per year on Jan. 1, 2025.

Subsequently, this salary threshold will increase on July 1, 2027, and every three years thereafter. In addition to the salary threshold, employees must have certain job duties and responsibilities. For most city employees, these are the executive, administrative, and professional exemptions.

These exemption tests remain unchanged despite the Department of Labor amending the salary threshold.

Employers need to identify impacted employees and determine whether to increase the salary of those exempt employees who earn above the overtime threshold under the old standard but below the new standard. This way, these employees could remain exempt.

Employers who choose not to raise current exempt employees' salaries who are under the new \$58,656 salary threshold will need to pay overtime to these employees when they work more than 40 hours in a work week. This ruling will impact a city's budget, Gunn said.

Ultimately, the budget

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will be written to accommodate the ruling and Gunn just wanted to make the commission aware of the ruling and will speak more on the changes at a future meeting.

Commissioner Reilly said he was concerned about the state of some of the city's yards. He said he understands Lamb is very busy and is working hard on a multitude of things but that he wanted to mention the issue and ask him to keep an eye out on these before they get much worse.

Reilly also asked about the sign replacement at both the Lion's Club Park and Greenlea cemetery. He had noticed 2x4 planks had been strapped to the rust-damaged signs and was concerned that they were broken. Gunn satisfied the concerns by explaining that the planks are a safety measure for removing the signs with less risk of damaging them. The wrought-iron signs are to be restored and must be removed carefully.

Finally, Reilly asked for an update on improvements to Fulton's Benny Gordon Park. At a previous meeting a group of concerned citizens had complained on the high level of neglect to the small park.

Gunn said that things are progressing and improvements will start becoming evident soon. The park will be receiving new lighting and installing fall protection around the park's playground equipment is awaiting the preparation of railroad ties to be used to contain the fall protection around the equipment. New basketball nets had already been installed on the park's basketball goals.

The commission meeting was then adjourned with the reminder that the next meeting will be held June 10 at 6 p.m. with the ABC public hearing to preempt the meeting at 5 p.m. There will be no meeting held on May 30 due to city offices being closed in observance of the Memorial Day holiday

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the process of formulating a capstone project, a requirement for the CPM Program, which she is currently in the process of completing.

She said she planned to study options for fixing the bulk pickup procedure within the city or fixing the communication system between the city and city customers.

She reported the second bulk disposal weekend provided for city residents went better than the initial event held the preceding month, as city staff members were on site both Friday and Saturday to monitor disposals. She said those using the dumpster positioned at the rear parking lot of the municipal complex, this time, were conscious of what items to dispose and abided by regulations pertaining to prohibited items to leave in the roll-off dumpster.

The bulk disposal will continue on the second weekend of each month in the same location.

Commissioner Pruett commended city workers for continuing to perform pickup services to citizens for limbs.

Resolution 2024-01, as approved by the Commission, authorizes the establishment of new water and sewer rates for the city's utility customers.

South Fulton Municipal Code allows the city to adopt rate and fee schedules for water service as well as for sewer service, through resolution.

As the result of the city under an agreed order with the state, rates must be periodically adjusted to maintain both the water and sewer service.

During the May 16 meeting, the commission approved an increase in the usage charge per 1,000 gallons of water, to \$3.09 for city customers, and \$5.08 for rural customers. The base rate remained the same, with no increase, at \$20.20 for city customers and \$24.55 for rural customers.

The sewer rate, base charge remained the same for city sewer customers, at \$24.20, and the per 1,000 gallons rate was raised to \$7.81.

A contract for the city's Fire Department, for rural fire service to citizens outside the South Fulton City limits, which was drafted and reviewed by City Attorney Kirk Moore was approved, which included an increase in the annual rural fire protection fee, to \$100, from \$75.

With an annual rural fire fee paid, the customer will receive one free fire call during the effective period. Any subsequent fire calls made to any covered property will result in a fee of \$750.

If the city's fire department responds to any call or request for a response by or on behalf of a non-covered property the fee will be \$5,000, payable to South Fulton City Hall within 30 days of a bill transmitted. The customer's insurance may

be billed, however the customer shall always remain responsible for the payment of the fee, or any portion thereof not paid within 30 days.

According to South Fulton City Manager Joyce Gray and SFFD Chief John Curtis, most local area fire departments have transitioned to increased fees as well.

Gray was authorized by the Mayor and Commissioners to apply for a 2024 Multimodal Grant for the proposed construction of sidewalks starting at the South Fulton Municipal Complex and proceeding south on Broadway to the Dollar General store. Gray said in the information to be provided for the application process, she would include that a medical clinic is also located in the area where the sidewalk is proposed to be installed.

The officials also approved the purchase of a copier for city hall, as Gray provided information compiled by Finance Officer Alex Hicks, comparing the leasing cost previously expensed to the city over a period of time for copiers, as opposed to the outright purchase of the equipment. Gray said the information showed a substantial savings if the copier was purchased out right, amounting to \$12,000 in savings over time, if purchased for \$8,218.

During the review of the monthly financials, Commissioner Cody Caksackkar abstained from vot-

ing for their approval, as he reported the company with which he is employed performed some work for the city during the previous month.

Ordinance 2024-04, Adopting the Annual Budget for the City for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, was heard for the first reading. A second reading and approval will be required for adoption and Gray stated the budget would also be published in the newspaper.

In the budget proposed, total cash receipts for the General Fund were projected at \$1,765,036, up from fiscal year 2024 actual, which was at \$1,477,038. Total appropriations were projected at \$1,656,527 for FY 2025, as compared to FY 2024 actual, at \$1,449,373.

For the supplemental fire fund, total cash receipts were projected at \$1,500, FY 2025 and total appropriations, \$1,500 for FY 2025.

For the drug control fund, FY 2025 proposed for total cash receipts was at \$8,100, and total appropriations, \$6,500.

For the ambulance fund, projected for FY 2025 total cash receipts was \$265,000 and total appropriations, \$260,000.

The State Street Aid fund reflected proposed FY 2025 total cash receipts at \$91,775 and total appropriations, \$91,775.

In the Solid Waste Fund, total cash receipts and appropriations for FY

2025 were projected at \$208,500.

In the Water and Sewer Fund, total operating and non operating revenues proposed for FY 2025 were at \$1,653,500 and total operating and non operating expenses, \$1,575,679.

For the Gas Fund, total revenues were projected for 2025 at \$1,303,200 and total expenses, \$1,238,296.

At the end of the current fiscal year estimates or deficits in fund balances include: General Fund, \$1,386,544.04, Drug Control Fund, \$22,022.79, Ambulance Fund, \$106,888.31, State Street Aid Fund \$356,200.03, Solid Waste Fund, \$379,816.74, Gas Fund, \$8,341.870.30 and Water and Sewer Fund, \$2,926,456.34.

The Commission, along with Obion County Commissioner Kenny Mayo, present for the Commission meeting, discussed updates and the status of possible solutions to issues along the John C. Jones Parkway, where both the South Fulton Elementary School and South Fulton Middle/High School are located.

Issues currently being addressed range from short increments of various speed limits, often not allowing for large semis to be able to reduce speeds adequately, to excessive parking along the parkway when elementary school dismissal for car riders occurs each day,

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as well as parking on the school campus for various programs.

Mayo said a stronger police presence in the areas of the schools is appreciated and seems to help with the speed issue. He said he sees the current signage as being outdated with upgrades needed, to allow more time for slowing speeds, and he has been in contact with Rep. Rusty Grills about options.

Mayo said he know the county is looking into options about the parking, and Obion County's Director of Schools Tim Watkins has consulted with an engineer regarding land use in the area of the schools which could possibly serve as a location for additional entrances, exits and parking. He also thanked City Manager Joyce Gray for her held in finally being able to make repairs to city streets, with the county's assistance.

Commissioner Wilcox asked about the scheduling of a Housing Fair to be located at the Municipal Complex, for public information and Gray reported the date had been set for June 6 at 6 p.m., open to the public.

Mayor Lamb commended the city departments and employees for their service and Commissioner Caksackkar echoed Mayor Lamb's compliments to the city staff, also expressing his appreciation to the dedication shown by Finance Officer Alex Hicks.