

# SEBREE BANNER



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## WC Fiscal Court Approves Purchase Of Land

After spending about 45 minutes in a closed session per KRS 61.810 (1)(b) to discuss the acquisition or sale of property, Webster County Fiscal Court on Monday gave Judge/Executive Steve Henry the authority to execute a purchase agreement and deed of conveyance on 40.54 acres located along Highway 670 near Donan Road. A \$2.3 million grant the county received two years ago will also fund the installation of new water and sewer

lines from Donan Drive to Hwy 630. Discussions about the development of the area have been ongoing for several months, but the area will likely be used for industrial development.

The court also opened and approved a bid for a rescue boat for the county's emergency management search and rescue agency. The only bidder, Rescue One Connect-A-Boat of Southside, AL, submitted a bid of \$44,240 for the boat, light racks, LEDs,

motor and trailer. After EMA director Jeremy Moore confirmed the bid meets all of the specifications, the court gave the go ahead for the purchase. Payment for the boat comes through a Homeland Security grant Moore secured.

During their Monday meeting, magistrates also approved advertising for bids for 9-1-1 consolidation equipment in preparation for the merging of Webster County and Providence's 9-1-1 cen-

ters. According to Moore, the county and Providence have received \$200,000 each to make the necessary upgrades for the merger. Webster County will add a third station and put in additional consoles and purchase the equipment necessary. Moore also advised that the county will have to add an additional phone line at their center. Bids are being advertised March 12 and 19 and will be opened on March 24, during the regular fiscal court meet-

ing. Other court business included declaring a Ford F-250 pick-up truck as surplus property. That truck will be available to the city of Slaughters for use there. The court also approved claims, transfers, and purchase orders during Monday's session.

The next regular meeting of the Webster County Fiscal Court is Monday, March 24, at 9:00 a.m.

## WCBOE Gets Update On District's HVAC Systems

An update on the condition of the Webster County Schools HVAC systems paints a picture of improvement needs, the board of education learned at their Monday night meeting. Jimmy Arnold and Bob Miles, representatives from TRANE who completed a study of the district's HVAC equipment in 2023 the board that information from that survey shows that overall five of the district's facilities are on or beyond their expected life of their HVAC systems.

The board was provided a graph showing the age and the life each building's system. That information also included the type of systems in each facility. WCBOE had hoped a nickel tax would help offset the cost for meeting facility needs, but when that failed earlier this year, it left the district in a tight financial situation to meet facility needs.

Arnold told the board that their best option is to change out what they can modular-

ly rather than at this time changing an entire system, something that is sorely needed at Dixon Elementary, a school with a GEO thermal system that was put in in 2001, but is presently failing to work as it should. Arnold said he anticipates the needed improvements that need to take place with the Dixon Elementary HVAC will come in the form of a bonding project dollar wise because the entire system will need to be replaced.

At Providence Elementary, some of the rooftop units date back to 1992, and their life expectancy is "day to day," Arnold said, but making improvement to that system would be modular and could be done a unit at a time.

Some units in the district use R22, a cooling agent that is no longer available, so those units would have to be replaced.

Sebree Elementary has just had the system controls upgraded, and the much needed chiller at Clay was replaced last week, but that still



**REPRESENTATIVES FROM TRANE addressed the Webster County Board of Education Monday night concerning the condition of the district's HVAC in each building. Most of the units are aged and in need of repair or replacement, according to Jimmy Arnold, right.**

leaves older units that need work or replacement at the high school, middle school, annex and technology center.

In the plan of action TRANE proposed, Arnold suggested that the district begin with Providence where rooftop units can be replaced individually and tackle the Dixon project which includes GEO wells that are not working properly out as long as possible due to that project including an complete system change. If that is the case, an engineer would need to be hired for the

design phase to determine what will work in the school and what will meet the district needs.

In his report later in the meeting, superintendent Aaron Harrell told the board that he and treasurer Brandi Burnett recently went through the budget to review recurring expenses and determine cuts or reallocations that can be made. "With the nickel tax off the table, we have to find ways to meet our maintenance needs," Harrell told the board. The expense report he shared Monday

night shows recurring expenses through February 1. The duo first looked at professional services which reflect a recurring cost through February 1 of about \$150,000. Those cost include periodic inspection of the fire suppression systems, lights, HVAC maintenance, etc. "We are trying to determine if there are cuts that can be made," the superintendent said.

Harrell and Burnett also looked at the cost of utilities which totals \$400,000 to date for the year. The superintendent noted that the district is using energy efficient bulbs and working to cut back usage, but especially on the Dixon campus the "buildings are running all the time with athletics, ABA activities, etc.

Repairs and maintenance costs were also reviewed and Harrell said that the district maintenance employees try to take care of most issues but sometimes outside help must be called in. Through February 1, \$116,00 have be spent on HVAC repairs, \$23,000 on plumbing \$175,000 on general maintenance (paint, flooring, masonry work); \$5000 on vehicle repairs, \$10,000 on bleachers, \$18,000 on the Sebree intercom system and \$45,000 on flooring. While the district has a rotation for painting in schools (three rooms per school per year), the total spent on miscellaneous maintenance totals about \$313,000. Custodial supply costs are at about \$58,000.

Harrell estimates the district has spent about \$1,000,000 on general operations through February 1. "It's an expensive operation to run," he told the board, adding that while things are being looked at to reduce costs, the district is already using state bids on many purchases. By using the state bid list, the district can avoid advertising costs and buy items at a lower cost.

"We are looking at these things to try to reduce costs, but not reduce services to kids," Harrell added. "Our budget for next year is to do everything we can for our professionals and at the same time

maintain our facilities at the highest level." In his first years as superintendent, the district focused on insuring students receive high quality instructional materials, but now the shift is to insure they have the types of buildings and grounds they need, the superintendent noted.

Harrell also told the board, "We are trying to get the most value for our dollar, but I'm not 100 percent certain we can trim the fat enough to do what we want to do."

In other board business Monday night, assistant superintendent Greg Bowles reported that district received three bids for student accident insurance. Zurich, the present carrier, had the lowest bid and Bowles will recommend using that company again for the 2025-26 school year. Zurich submitted a bid of \$22,111. Munich and Hartford also submitted bids for the insurance, but their bids exceeded \$25,000 and 24,141 respectively.

Bowles also provided a report on the need to replace/repair rooftop units on the library. He told the board that with the imposed federal tariffs, the costs for parts and equipment--\$52,146-- could go up by 20 percent. Bowles asked the board to consider avoiding the tariff by ordering the parts and equipment now to lock in the price ahead of the tariff to save money. The unit, which is not presently functioning, would be installed at additional costs. A vote on that request will be made at the March 24 meeting.

Regarding other maintenance items, Bowles reported that the chiller at Clay Elementary was installed last week and the control system at Sebree is being put in place.

Bowles also reported that the district has five buses, four of which are operational but have high mileage, that need to be sold. He recommended the board sell the buses through KISTA, adding that the district will still have four extra buses and two other they can pull parts from.

The board is expected to vote on all three of Bowles requests at their next meeting.

## Dixon Commission Passes Ordinances, Resolutions

The Dixon City Commission met in regular session on Monday night with Mayor Terry Webb presiding. All commission members were in attendance. City Attorney Lindsey Durbin was also present.

Following approval of the minutes from the February meeting and the bills and claims, the commission quickly disposed of several agenda items in a session that lasted about 20 minutes.

Mayor Webb told commissioners the costs for opening the spray feature at Baker Park is approaching \$1,000. The city has already purchased a permit to operate the spray park. That permit comes at a cost of \$190.00. The mayor noted that Public Works Director Matt Cobb has indicated another \$700.00 to \$800.00 will be needed to get the feature operational.

Commissioners expressed concern about the cost of operation for the spray park. Last summer, there were incidents of vandalism which were costly to the city, and according to Commissioner Peggy Poole, the cost of water for the park over the course of the summer was over \$6,000. Although there is no indication that costs will decrease, the spray park is expected to open in late May.

In other business, commissioners approved two resolutions which will allow city officials to apply for grant funds to be used on various projects in the city.

The first of those resolution deals with a GRANT grant application, which would provide some \$58,000 in funds with the only cost to the city being \$600.00. The second resolution concerns an application for a crumb rubber grant. That funding would be used to provide a crumb rubber base in the playground area at Baker Park.

Earlier in the year, city officials asked for and have received letters of support from citizens concerning the grant application. On Monday night, Mayor Webb said additional letters would be welcomed and would be a needed step toward acquiring the grant funds.

The commission passed second reading of two ordinances. The first of those abolishes the city's tourism board. The second ordinance combines the tourism board with the parks, playground, and recreation commission in the city. The commissioners also approved the transfer of \$2,878.98 in tourism funds to the parks, playground, and recreation fund.

Committee reports for the water department showed the City of Dixon purchased 2,500,400 gallons of water in February. The city sold 1,852,260 gallons of water over the same time period. Some 600,000 gallons of water were lost in the month. The city's water loss in February was over 20%. Public works employees are searching daily for water leaks; however, the recent rainy

weather has made locating leaks nearly impossible. Residents are urged to contact with hall if they suspect a water leak on or near their property.

Commissioner Robert Brown reported a speed limit sign in the city has been struck and needs to be reset. Mayor Webb told commissioners that members of the Dixon Volunteer Fire Department responded to 23 runs in February.

He also reported Fire Chief Jeff Yates needs a high pressure pump replaced. Estimates for that replacement are about \$11,200. The request was approved with payment coming equally from the city's general fund and the fire department account.

Mayor Webb also informed commissioners a state inspection of the dam at the lake in Baker Park has resulted in the necessity of placing additional rip-rap and gravel along areas of the dam. That work will be done in the next few days. He also reported a solution is needed to solve the problem of water runoff on the pavilion building at Baker Park. Bids have been sought for guttering on the back side of that building, and the matter will be addressed at the meeting in April.

No further business came before the commission, and the meeting adjourned at 6:21 P.M.

The next regular meeting of the Dixon City Commission will be Monday, April 14, 6:00 P.M.