

THE WOODFORD SUN

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Board debates replacing SROs at middle, high schools

By BOB VLACH
 WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Concerns about replacing school resource officers (SROs) employed by the Versailles Police Department at the middle and high schools with SROs employed by Woodford County Public Schools were discussed prior to the Woodford County Board of Education approving the creation of those positions on April 28.

Board members KT Gould and Sherri Springate, who voted in opposition to creating the new positions, asked why the current SSROs are being replaced after this school year when they have established relationships with students, and if an increased cost was a factor.

They were told VPD Chief Rob Young and Versailles Mayor Laura Dake met with school leaders about moving the city’s officers out of the schools. “We were not looking to change anything,” said schools Superintendent Danny Adkins. But he said district leaders are comfortable expanding its police force in order to free up those VPD officers to provide other services in the city.

WCPS has its own police department, which employs the SROs at the elementary schools and Safe Harbor Academy. “We’re not losing anything,” board Chair Adam Brickler told the other board members. “It’s just a restructuring and we are providing all of the positions.”

After listening to the responses from him and Adkins, Gould said she was still troubled about losing SROs who have built long-lasting relationships with students. She also said it’s crucial to have SROs who understand the value of building relationships with students and have the tools to effectively do their job.

Timothy Webb, a Woodford County Middle School teacher, described Versailles Police Officer Scot Cottingham as an integral part of the middle school’s community who keeps everyone in the building safe. He said students know and trust Cottingham, who was there for him when he recently had a heart attack.

In an email to the board, Woodford County High School freshman Blake Porter urged the board to create three new SRO positions so no school is without an SRO when their SRO is absent. “I do agree we need to talk about a third (new SRO) position,” said Brickler.

WCPS Police Chief Steve Sutton said SROs in his department have the same law enforcement training as VPD officers, and he anticipates having a quality pool of applicants for the new positions.

“To be a school resource officer, it takes a certain type of person and we’re really strategic in trying to find the right person” for a school, said Assistant Superintendent Garett Wells. He noted WCMS has had other SSROs and “each one that they’ve had has been a valuable, loved member of that school community.”

During his quarterly safety update, Wells talked about the various ways that the Ver-

sailles Police Department continues supporting the schools. That partnership includes officers providing traffic control at schools, supervision at athletic events and having remote access to the security cameras in the schools. That relationship won’t change when the middle and high schools have SROs employed by the district, he said.

Gould also asked Wells about traffic patterns at the middle and high schools during pickups and drop-offs. Specifically, she talked about her concerns related to a four-way stop at the middle school and having a plan to put someone there to direct traffic to keep everyone safe and prevent a traffic accident. “Those are ongoing conversations that are happening constantly,” Wells said.

Ag barn, new high school

The board approved spending money out of the contingency fund for the new high school on a new agriculture barn. The total cost of the barn is \$234,990, of which \$50,000 will be covered by grant awards, the board was told.

Chief Operating Officer Shane Smith said there is about \$1 million remaining in contingency. He said those dollars are restricted and can be spent on projects on the district facility plan.

Board members Sarah McCoun and Springate voted against using contingency money on the barn when other facilities such as the middle school (a roof) will need improvements in the near future.

“I want us to have (the barn), but I want us to be responsible and look at the big picture, and really see if that’s something that we can do,” said Springate. McCoun said her big concern was spending the contingency dollars on a barn when there are other facility needs and limited dollars available to make those improvements.

Brickler said the cost of the barn will go up if the project is delayed. He also did not see a reason to table a decision to support what he described as a successful program.

WCHS agriculture teacher Tracy Probst said a barn supports hands-on experiences for students, including students with special needs. The agriculture barn will be located near the greenhouse in the back of the high school, Smith said.

During his monthly update, construction manager Clay Ratliff said seeding and sod work has finally been completed at the new high school. With rain in the forecast, “hopefully that’ll help us achieve some substantial growth,” he said.

Other than finishing casework and the installation of sinks in the health science classroom, the project is nearly complete, Ratliff said.

The grandstands for the track and field facility have a final completion date of July 11, and he was told that installation would take five weeks. He said the concessions and restroom facility are also nearly complete.

See BOARD p. 9

TRC reviews construction plans for Troy Pike development

By BOB VLACH
 WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Construction plans for a development at 1735 Troy Pike were reviewed by the Technical Review Committee (TRC) on April 24.

The plans for the Anderson Troy Pike, LCC development have a connection to Troy Pike, an internal roadway and an infrastructure for multi-family residential lots, which will be developed before the commercial lots, TRC was told.

Last November, the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission approved a subdivision plat for the 54.147-acre site, located near the Falling Springs Boulevard intersection. Development plans for a WaWa convenience store/quick-serve restaurant and a residential community with 220 one- and two-bedroom apartment and townhouse units were also approved.

With no detention basin in the plans, Planning Commission engineer Mary Beth Robson said a large amount of green space is shown on the plans for stormwater drainage. Also, she pointed out that an encroachment permit for an entrance on Troy Pike has not been approved by the state. Erosion controls need to be in place before site grading and tree removal can begin, she said.

Planning Director Steve Hunter asked Mike Craft and Clay Johnson, who are

working on this project for developer Dennis Anderson, to stay on the Zoom call after the meeting to discuss the timeline for construction and other issues, including an approval of the plans so the project on Troy Pike can move forward this summer. It cannot move forward until an encroachment permit has been approved.

At its April 10 meeting, the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission did not open a public hearing on a request to rezone 22.5 acres at 1470 Troy Pike from agriculture (A-1) to high-density (R-4) residential. It was tabled at the request of applicant Vision Engineering, LLC (Jihad Hallany).

Applicant attorney Scott Shuette asked for the one-month postponement to talk to the neighbors. Telling them, “We’re going to set a meeting up between now and that next hearing date when we can all sit down and go over this plan.”

The current concept plan for 1470 Troy Pike, located across from Helmsley Lane, south of Southside Elementary School and near Falling Springs Boulevard, shows 18 single-family lots and 17 townhouse lots, and 192 apartment units in phase 2.

One person among a large crowd at the April meeting voiced his displeasure with making neighbors wait another month when “to some degree whatever form you put this development in we don’t want it.”

From Our Files

10 Years Ago

April 30, 2015

Rev. Melissa Bane Sevier retired from her position as head pastor at Versailles Presbyterian Church after 10 years of service. Looking back over the many accomplishments of the church under her leadership, she said “I may have sometimes been a catalyst or an encourager, but (the members) were the ones with the best ideas and they’re the ones who execute their ideas, and they’re the ones who make it happen . . . they are wise, smart, generous, caring, and gifted, and they just care about each other and this community. It shows in everything they do.” Sevier plans to spend more time ith her husband, take on more writing projects, and travel with her husband in their mini-camper.

The debate over the funding of a countywide Emergency Management Agency continued to dominate fiscal court, as it has for several months, when they decided to not act on the Midway and Versailles councils’ offer to resolve the impasse. Judge-Executive Bear Coyle dissolved the negotiating committee with no plan on what to do next except the county go it alone. Magistrate Mary Ann Gill, after recognizing the points Coyle made about the shortcomings in the two cities positions, said she still wanted to pursue a deal, “It will not be the local governments that will be hurt if we do not keep this thing together. It will be the people out in the community (who are harmed in the event of a disaster).”

Gill also published a column this week making her points.

Columnist and reporter John McGary’s weekly column focused on how cell phone use and driving was becoming dangerous.

Brad Praria, a freshman at WCHS, won the 2015

Congressional Rt Competition with a drawing with colored pencil of Natural Bridge. The drawing will hang in the U.S. Capitol for a year.

Joanna Carr, a WCHS senior, won a silver medal at the National Junior Olympic Championships in Colorado Springs in the three position small-bore shooting event and has hopes for ultimately qualifying for the Olympics.

The Lady Jackets softball team continued a dream season, currently ranked 5th in the state with big District win over Franklin County 5-0. The baseball team, on the other hand, is still struggling losing to Western Hills where manager, and role model, Justin Royal was tossed for arguing and must now serve a three game suspension. Without their manager, the Jackets beat both Danville and Frankfort.

25 Years Ago

May 4, 2000

A contest has been launched to name the new community recreation center on which construction will begin later this year.

Allen E. Paulson’s Brookside No. 2 farm on Frankfort Road has been sold to Memphis Limited, based in the Channel Islands along the coast of Great Britain, for \$8.335 million.

Task force workshops on developing design standards for Woodford County will begin on May 18. Task force co-chairs are Tony Wilhoit and Joe Graviss.

Dr. Allyson Handley, president of Midway College and a native of Canada, became an American citizen in a ceremony at the college on May 1.

Dr. Mark E. Gormley Jr., a native of Versailles and a physician at a children’s health-care facility in St. Paul, Minn., will meet with other experts in Milan, Italy, on June 9 to discuss and

recommend treatments for cerebral palsy and other childhood neurological conditions.

Clay Mattingly of Versailles has been named a by the U.S. Achievement Academy as a national award winner in football for his accomplishments as varsity place kicker for WCHS. He was also named an All-American Scholar for his outstanding grade point average.

40 Years Ago

May 2, 1985

William Henry Graddy II, 62, a prominent Woodford County farmer and landowner, died Saturday morning at his residence, Welcome Hall, on the Clifton Pike.

Street and sewer construction preparations are beginning in the Colony Subdivision on McCowan’s Ferry Road.

Tamra Gormley has been accepted by the University of Kentucky College of Law and will enter studies there this fall.

Bob Klier was honored for academic achievement in the UK College of Business and Economics last week.

Julie Rodgers, a UK junior, has been initiated into Omicron Delta Kappa, a national scholastic and leadership honor society.

Midway College’s Mountain Laurel Festival candidate is Tonya Lynette Sanders of Paris.

Woodford County champions at the Fort Harrod Area Demonstration Contest last week were Jean Kouremetis, Christy Elam and John Lodmell.

Woodford County High School students who attended Washington Close-Up recently were Stephanie Farley, Barbara Botkin, Mark Schimmoeller, Dana Bland, Evan Bledsoe, and Vaughn Murphy.

Clippings from our past...

Editor’s Note: This week’s Clippings marks the last summary of the Woodford Pennant . . . April 20, 1861, is the last edition in the Woodford County Library and no other archive has later editions. Based on many, many comments and emails we’ve received, it appears people have found following Woodford County’s history in the months leading up to the Civil War both interesting and revelatory. Next week, we will continue our deep dive with corresponding week of the Woodford Weekly – like the Pennant, not in our direct lineage – in May, 1870.

The Woodford Pennant

April 20, 1861

Intense excitement has existed in town and through the county since the opening of hostilities at Fort Sumter. Crowds of people throng the streets every day. Party lines are not strictly drawn yet, and while persons have always been radical Southerners, many remain hopeful for a reconstruction yet we cannot but believe that all are acting for hat they consider the best interests of Kentucky.

A lengthy front-page article was titled “The Origin of the Gypsies,” which began: The Gypsies are not Egyptians, as is commonly supposed, but are of the lowest class of Indians amongst the estates of Hindustan, commonly called Pariahs or Sundars. They are found in Persia, Turkey, Russia,, Hungary, and most of the continental nations amounting to more than 700,000. They all speak one language, differing only in slight degree from each other with provisional accents. The features of the gypsies plainly showed their Eastern origin; but, they had so well contrived to dupe the European inhabitants that, till the advancement of Oriental literature, their country could never be clearly traced. For example, in England, where they arrived during the reign of King Henry VIII, they met the taste of the vulgar by pretending to be skilled in astrology, and the art of palmistry, bringing with them their native tricks of juggling.

The rod of a constantly growing animosity between the two factions of the Union has been stretched over the national sea so the waters have rolled back to remain congealed forever. The line of demarcation is plainly drawn, and there cannot now

be any “halting between two opinions”. The only question before all of us is, Are you for the South or the North?

On the one side is arrayed the aggressor and wrongdoer – the people, who, though bound together by national memories and battlefields, have been for years leaving no means untried, no expedient undeviseed to hasten the dire catastrophe that is soon to be at our doors. Here, too, is a cowardly, traitorous, treacherous, lying knave of a President, whose lack of honesty and patriotism is only equaled by his contemptible weakness and deliberate villainy. Under the cloak of peace he has hidden the iron mask of war, and showed, in the place of the most deliberate promises, a worse than Punic faith. His call for troops has been warmly responded to in that portion of the nation so-called, favorable to his nefarious and unrighteous designs of subjugation and soon we may expect this legion and swarm from Northern Vandals and Visigoths to come pouring upon the fields and plantations of the South.

On the other side is arrayed an aggrieved and outraged people – the loyal, chivalrous, and heroic South. Their petitions were spurned, their offers of peace rejected, and they now stand ready to to defend their rights against every unjust and unholy aggression. A statesman of tried ability and experience ls at the helm of the South’s affairs, warriors covered with stars won in the cause of liberty are in command of the armies, and thousands are in ranks to defend their hearths, their households, and their property against insidious federal despotism. They add to their armor because they fight in a just cause, and warm

is their generous blood with freedom’s holy name.

What says Kentucky with her unstained reputation and her brilliant annals of great achievements? We believe there is but one course, and this we will adopt. With the South, Kentucky will cast her lot for weal or woe. Burnishing their helmets and whetting their swords, their sons will come forth like the warriors of a Highland clan, and march shoulder to shoulder with their Southern brethren.

For the benefit of many persons who have made inquiry as to the regulations of the Confederate States army, we publish the following items:: 100,000 volunteers can be accepted who will be subject to rules governing a regular army. Term of service will be 12 months. All volunteers must be tendered by the Governor of the State. Each regiment will be composed of ten companies each led by a captain, three lieutenants, four sergeants, four corporals, two buglers, and ninety privates. The pay for colonel is \$195 a month; lieutenant colonel, \$170; major, \$150; captain, \$130; first lieutenant, \$90; second lieutenant, \$80; first sergeant, \$21; other sergeant, \$17; corporals and artificers, \$13; privates, \$11, with yearly allowance for clothing and one ration per day. Volunteers are expected to furnish their own uniforms and will be paid in Confederate Government issued by the Confederacy.

On Tuesday, April 30, Robinson & Lake’s great Southern Menagerie and Circus, with 170 men and a huge waterproof tent will be in Versailles for two weeks. They have unicorns,, rhinoceroses, Hippopotami, two fairies, and three famous clowns. Admission is 50 cents.

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