

Midway Council adopts 2025-2026 Budget

By SCOTT WHITE
MANAGING EDITOR

The Midway City Council adopted its Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget at the June 2 meeting. In summary, the total General Fund revenues available, plus the prior year carryover, is \$2,579,133; the street fund is \$458,032; the sewer fund is \$411,658; and the water fund is \$716,565. The appropriations from these funds are \$2,221,161 General Fund (which includes payments on a bond issue and debts to Kentucky American Water and two Kentucky Infrastructure Authority loans); streets, \$458,032; cemetery and perpetual fund, \$270,000; sewer, \$353,100; and, water, \$610,000. This leaves balances of unappropriated funds of: General Fund, \$357,972; cemetery and perpetual fund, \$254,816; sewer, \$58,558; and, water, \$106,465.

Mayor Grayson Vandegrift highlighted a variety of projects for the next year, including a part-time grant writer, which Vandegrift said could pay for itself and create more project or program opportunities for the city with grant funds; \$180,000 for street paving in the northern sector of the city; \$40,000 for stormwater improvements; \$32,000 for improvements at Walter Bradley and Blue Jay parks; \$15,000 towards a new pavilion at Blue Jay park to be matched by private donations; a new pump station on Newton Street; repairs to the existing Carriage Lane pump station; and work on water lines and replacing key water valves to improve water pressure.

116 E. Main Street
Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Director Steve Hunter provided

an update on the ongoing saga involving the restoration of the historic African-American Odd Fellows building located in the heart of Main Street. The neglected state of the building, and its owner's numerous plans and representations, as several councilmembers noted, have been for several years a thorn in the community's side and an eyesore.

Hunter said the Board of Architectural Review, which has jurisdiction over historic buildings in Midway, will receive an update on the progress since it issued a conditional permit several months ago. The board provided the owner a deadline of 18 months to complete a variety of specific items such as stabilizing the building so the exterior could be restored; wrapping the building to prevent debris from falling onto common areas; the placement of windows and doors; and, various other tasks. Hunter said he was in Midway to generally look over the site and take photographs for the board's use. The deadline is Thursday, June 5.

Hunter said he anticipates the owner, who is receiving assistance from the Kentucky Historical Commission, will request additional time to continue to work on the required punch list and begin work on the exterior. If the extension is denied, then Hunter and the Commission's building inspector will conduct a formal inspection on Friday and issue any notices of violation. If issued, then the violations will proceed through the City of Midway's code enforcement process.

Vandegrift pointed out that if notices of violation are issued and then presented for penalties via the Midway Code Enforcement Board, then the stronger, expensive penalties adopted in the last year by Midway will be used.



THE JOSEPHINE ABERCROMBIE MENTOR OF THE YEAR, for the second year in a row, is Tanairi Luna (left) (total of 816 hours served), pictured with founder and executive director, Lisa Johnson. The award includes a \$2,500 scholarship award which honors the memory and legacy of education embodied and inspired by Josephine Abercrombie. (Photo courtesy of Mentors & Meals)

MENTORS AND MEALS recognized the WCHS graduating seniors for their outstanding volunteer service as mentors over their four years of high school. Below, from left, Julio Marroquin (94 hrs), Wyatt Porter (295 hours), Samantha Ballard (397 hours), Executive Director Lisa Johnson, Tanairi Luna (816 hours), Abigail Courtney (103 hours), Araseli Disciplina (110 hours) and Anahi Garcia (455 hours). (Photo courtesy of Mentors and Meals)



BOA approves conditional use permit for short-term rental

By BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

The Board of Adjustments (BOA) unanimously approved a conditional use permit on Monday allowing Walter (Trey) Schott and Elaine Schott to operate a short-term rental at 1975 Scotts Ferry East Road.

The existing two-bedroom house is in the A-1 agricultural zoning district. Schott told the BOA that up to six people could stay in the short-term rental, but he does not foresee having more than four guests most of the time.

The owner of a short-term rental is required to obtain a business license and register with the Woodford County Tourism Commission, Planning Director Steve Hunter told BOA members.

When BOA member Tandy Pryor asked how many short-term rentals are located in

the county, Hunter said he's heard different numbers (80, 90, 125 and 130), "but we don't have an actual count."

Other conditions are no amplified music and no events like weddings.

No one spoke in opposition to the request during the public hearing.

With BOA Chair Tim Turney and Vice Chair David Prewitt not present, the meeting was chaired by Ken Winkfield.

Variance for porch

The BOA approved a 70-foot front-yard setback variance so James Fowler can reconstruct a porch on an existing single-family residence at 1519 Hedden Road.

The .922-acre legal non-conforming lot is located in the A-1 district. Fowler said he applied for the variance so he could re-build a wider porch that'll create a more usable and enjoyable space.



WOODFORD COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT firefighters were out last weekend, May 30-31, and again this weekend, June 6-7, at the intersection of Lexington Road and the U.S. 60 Bypass, hoping to fill empty boots with donations for the 73rd annual WHAS Crusade for Children. According to its website, the charity funds programs to make life better for children with identified health care, educational, and emotional wellness needs by inspiring generosity. (Photo by Scott White)

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(for the council to consider). It isn't ideal, and it's not the original agreement," she said.

In an interview following the June 3 meeting with the Sun, Duke confirmed she supports Midway's request.

"Midway reached out to us and asked for a reprieve from what is a 68% increase in their share in the last two years. (In preparing the budget), I thought for the good of the county, to keep us all together under a single police department, this was the right call and we can renegotiate the agreement," she said. "If Midway decides to go their own way, we will lose its contribution and be forced to look at reducing the police force."

At the work session, Councilmember Fred Siegelman did not support Midway's request.

"Nothing against Midway... but, here is the thing to understand. Our responsibility is to the Versailles taxpayer... a lot of work and risk went into this (interlocal)... Midway is already getting a sweetheart deal... if KSP can't do it. I don't think Midway citizens want this," he said.

As to any budget decreases caused by Midway leaving, Siegelman said, among other things, "We can absorb some of it through officer attrition as they leave or retire."

He also suggested Midway should pay the agreed

amount, and the interlocal can then be renegotiated.

Councilmember Ann Miller said, given Duke indicated the county would cover its share of the deficiency (38%), "This is like splitting the difference... I'm fine with this, I don't want to risk losing \$450,000 and I don't think KSP will do it and we can't hold Midway hostage when we run the police."

The interlocal provides for Versailles to operate the department via budgeting and personnel, and Midway has no role in either.

Councilmember Lisa Johnson added, "This seems like a huge hit (for Midway). It seems fair to give them a little grace given its \$52,000 (and we split this with the county)."

Smith asked Versailles Police Department Chief Rob Young for his opinion.

"I guess I can respond to specific questions... Midway's needs are small in terms of things like barking dogs, speeding, we provide a lot of services I don't think KSP will be able to do," he said. "This is really into a political area, and my job is to bottom line what it takes to operate (the department)."

Young said the rate, as he understands it, is 6.5% of the budget based on population, and Midway represents 12% of the total call volume. Young said the department provides excellent service to Midway and has had no complaints.

Vandegrift told the Sun in an interview following the

Versailles City Council meeting that he foresaw this issue last summer, as the amount of the Midway percent was increasing "dramatically, and no metric supports it... I explained it to (then Versailles Mayor Brian Traugott and Mike Murray, then Chief of the Versailles Police Department), and they assured me that Midway's portion would not be over \$404,000. This amount is \$50,000 over what we were told, and we can't responsibly budget in this way. We are willing to honor the \$404,000."

Though Vandegrift emphasized Midway wants to preserve the interlocal, "We've been receiving exponential increases - 378% in ten years... at this rate we will be paying \$700,000 in just a few years. This means we can't do the things we want to do, (too many funds are) being diverted to this (police department interlocal)."

Vandegrift was emphatic this was not about the quality of policing. "It's about... fair budgeting," he said. Vandegrift said Midway will explore its options if it has to back out of the interlocal, including an agreement with the Kentucky State Police or restarting its own Midway Police Department.

Woodford County Judge-Executive James Kay said in a text message, "(Midway, Versailles, and the county) are working well together on public safety... we will continue to work with Chief Young to fully support VPD and keep Woodford County



MAX DAVIS, front right, is the new Battalion Chief for Training and Fire Science at the Versailles Fire Department. He was introduced to the Versailles City Council by Fire Chief T.A. Rankin, front left. Councilmembers and Mayor Laura Duke are in the back row. (Photo by Scott White)

safe.

"The amount in the (county proposed fiscal year 2025-2026) budget was the amount given at the budget meeting where I asked Chief Young point blank about this very situation. He responded saying it was the same as the Midway contract. That is what we passed. It does not cover (Midway's request to lower its amount)," Kay said. "I've supported both sides to help find a resolution... there are 365 days in a budget, and this is a \$52,000 discussion in a multi-million-dollar budget. I'm sure we can work together to get this done."

Contracts

Council approved the following contracts: \$9,900 to Dave Leonard Tree Spe-

cialists for the removal of seven trees in the Versailles Cemetery. (Miller, chair of the Cemetery Committee said it is already at work on identifying the best trees to replace these.); \$9,030 to S&L Contracting for street and rail crossing stripping and stop bars; and \$105 per ton for road salt from Morton Salt Company, with an expected purchase of 200-250 tons for the 2025-2026 winter.

Bill Phelps honored

Versailles Fire Department Chief T.A. Rankin recognized Bill Phelps for his 60 years of service as a volunteer Versailles firefighter.

"Bill is a real example to all of us of commitment. All of our folks really appreciate him for all he has done and is

doing," Rankin said.

Rankin also announced the Safe Haven Baby Box will be dedicated and blessed at an event on June 26 at 10 a.m. at the Locust Street Fire House. The box, which many municipalities have, are designed to allow a person to safely and anonymously drop off an unwanted baby.

Rankin also introduced new hire Max Davis as the new Battalion Chief of Training and Fire Science.

"I am really excited about this new position," Davis said. "I come from a neighboring fire department, and it has been my dream to come here and work in the community I live in and love."

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