



Traditional Bank

Welcomehome
PROGRAM

OPENS APRIL 6 AT 8AM! Qualified home buyers may be eligible for grants up to **\$20,000** to help buy a home.

FUNDS WILL GO QUICKLY!

Learn more at traditionalbank.com/welcomehome



You must have a signed purchase contract on an eligible home.



MENIFEE COUNTY

Menifee Ambulance Service asks City to partner

By Cecil Lawson
KyNewsGroup
cecil@kynewsgroup.com

Frenchburg City Commissioners held a lengthy rescheduled March meeting last Wednesday evening.

The meeting was rescheduled following the passing of Commissioner Jennifer Wells on March 2.

Mayor Stacy Smallwood announced that Wells' husband, Tracy Wells, had agreed to fill out his wife's terms on the City Commission. Smallwood administered the oath of office to Wells, and afterwards Wells expressed his gratitude to the city following his wife's passing.

Ethan Fryman, project manager for Kentucky Engineering Group, said a secondary renovation project at the Menifee County wastewater plant is now awaiting approval from the Kentucky Division of Water. He said if the project is approved, it will be advertised for 21 days, and bids will be opened before the next Commission meeting. Commissioners can then accept the bid at the next meeting. He also said he has been in contact with Slater Brothers, who conducted the renovation of the plant, to remove a trench box from a residence as well as to make two asphalt repairs to a home and business.

Menifee County Ambulance Service Director Sam Rogers and County Judge/Executive Hector Alcala gave a 45 minute presentation on the financial status of the county's ambulance service.

Rogers said this is an "opportunity for a partnership for the future." He said about 20 percent of their ambulance runs take place in the city limits, and about 90 percent of the car accidents they respond to are in the city.

Rogers said the county has 1 ambulance for advanced life support (ALS) and 2 for basic life supports (BLS) and in the Fiscal Year 2024-25, there were 485 ALS runs. The types of runs they made included 120 falls, 113 breathing emergencies, and 8 drug overdoses. He said the ambulance service is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their newest ambulance is a Ford Transit, purchased with assistance from the Menifee County Fiscal Court, and their other two ambulances are a 2015 Chevy box truck and a 2019 Chevy, which is currently in the shop. Rogers called it "a rapidly aging fleet."

Rogers said the ambulance services revenue sources for Fiscal Year 2024-25 are from their property and motor vehicle taxes (\$238,317), insurance reimbursements (\$737,331), Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo) reimbursement (\$17,417), and the Menifee County Fiscal Court (\$398,939), state payments (\$11,802), and others sources (\$43,213), for a total income of \$1.4 million. He said this still left the ambulance service short



Photos by Cecil Lawson
Tracy Wells was sworn in by Frenchburg Mayor Stacy Smallwood to take the Frenchburg City Commission seat of Wells' late wife, Jennifer, who passed away on March 2.

by \$30,000 in the fiscal year.

Judge/Executive Alcala explained that half of the population of Menifee County is on Medicare or Medicaid, and he noted that reimbursement rates for those programs are low. He noted that 1 bill for \$188,000 was reimbursed by Medicaid for \$66,000. He also added that all ambulance service employees are part-time with no benefits, live in other surrounding counties, and often work as full-time employees in other counties. He also said the ambulance tax district raised its property tax rate this past year to 10.0 cents per \$100 of assessed value, the highest it was able to raise it.

Alcala noted that the previous ambulance service director was hired in February 2023, but "he did not know what he was doing." He said that by June 2023, the ambulance service started asking for financial assistance from the Fiscal Court, and since that time, the Fiscal Court has provided \$657,287 from the General Fund. He said Rogers was named director in September 2024 and began scaling down as much as possible to cut expenses and got a loan from KACo for \$140,000 for operational expenses. He said they should be able to pay off the loan in their next budget, and they have paid back \$78,000 in debt to the county. Alcala noted that the \$657,000 from the General Fund could have been used for other things, but he did not want to see the ambulance service go down to just 1 vehicle.

Rogers then said he had slashed all overtime, made partner deals with medical supply companies, have open shifts for the director at no additional cost, a new van had cut fuel costs in half, only essential spending on medical supplies, started a regular vehicle maintenance schedule, and started a quality control program which has resulted in 20 percent saving. At the same time, he noted that Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements are at an all time low, fuel prices are increasing, and medical supply costs have risen by 500 to 800 percent.

Rogers added that he wants to work to cultivate more community involvement for the ambulance service, including new uniforms, have more presence at local events, and create a training institute to provide education for staff and the public and work to recruit future local ambulance staff.

Alcala said the county will assist the ambulance service by covering its utilities, about \$14,000 a year, in the 2026-27 FY budget, as well as with a monthly stipend to help with payroll.

Mayor Stacy Smallwood said the city will be having its budget workshop soon, and they can look at how the city might contribute.

Menifee County Coroner Megan Smallwood Peck also provided a short presentation for commissioners. She said she has served the last 3 years along with deputies Shannon Lawson and Alan Michael Peck, and she had begun to professionalize her office. Now she has 2 transport vans, office space, and modern record keeping. She currently receives \$5000 per year salary, which is supplemented by \$3000, and she



Menifee County Ambulance Service Director Sam Rogers and County Judge/Executive Hector Alcala conducted a presentation about the Ambulance Service for Commissioners last Wednesday.

is requesting an additional \$8000 per year. She said she is working on a grant for iPads for her office. Her wish list includes additional personal protective equipment, a cooler, and a 4-wheel-drive vehicle.

Peck said proposed legislation, House Bill 138, to increase coroner's salaries, will likely not pass during this session. She noted that the public only sees her office "on their worst days," and Menifee is one of five counties in the state where the coroner makes less than \$10,000 a year.

Mayor Smallwood said her request will have to go through the city's budget process, and commissioners will discuss it at their budget workshop later this month.

Following a request by Menifee County Tourism Board members Jennifer Murphy, City Commission-

ers agreed to amend the rules governing the Farmers Market to allow Menifee County Tourism to be able to use the Farmers Market property for vendor events, like the Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioners also discussed the upcoming July 4 parade to celebrate Menifee County's veterans and America's 250th anniversary. Mayor Smallwood said he had recently met with Tourism Director Carrie Lawson and Menifee County Job Corps to discuss the construction of a sign for the rededication of the City Park as Veterans Memorial Park. He said the cost to the city would be less than \$3000.

Mayor Smallwood said one of the largest complaints he has received since becoming mayor has been with notifications and notices from City Wa-

ter and Sewer. He said he has been getting estimates from a company TextMyGov, about putting in place a system to be able to send out various text messages to customers regarding bills, late notices, and boil water advisories. He said the system can be customized to send messages to the different areas affected by boil water advisories. The system will cost \$7875 for the first year and \$5250 annually. Commissioners voted to approve the purchase of the system.

Commissioners also voted to close out the bank account used for the Big Woods water tank project. Leftover funds, \$43,000, will be used to begin purchasing new water meters to replace older meters that whose batteries are wearing out.

They also voted to set the date, Monday, March 23, at 6:30 p.m. for the town's annual budget workshop. They also agreed to hold a public budget hearing beginning at 6:15 p.m. before the next regular meeting on April 2.

They also agreed to advertise for a position after City Water worker Steve Smallwood have his two weeks notice. Applicants must have their water and sewer handling certifications, and the pay starts at \$15/hour and is based on experience.

Spring

Driving Horse Sale

5194 Ewing Rd. Ewing, Ky 41039

March 28th 2026

Early Consignments



6 Yr Old Percheron Mare
Broke Single or Double



7 Yr old Gelding 57" Tall
Pony X Hackney
Broke the best, TSS



4 Yr Old Gelding 58" Tall
Morgan X Hackney
Broke the best, Good to hitch, TSS



4 Yr Old Mare
Mohegan Hanover X
MR LavecBalanced Image
Broke, TSS



8 Yr Old Mare
Shetland X Hackney
Lots of Action



4 Yr Old Gelding
MR Anson X Peter Z
X Royal Strength
Been in buggy 1.5 Yrs, TSS

Not Pictured:

6 Yr Old Mare
Sweeping Victory X
Dreamland

4 Yr Old Mare
Don't Let Em X Crazy X
Muscle Yankee

3 Yr Old Mare
Dreamster x SJ'S Cavier

Consign Today! Calvin Kemp (606)202-0719 Edwin Kemp (606)206-0471