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Midway Mayor Stacy Thurman resigns

SCOTT WHITE
MANAGING EDITOR

Midway Mayor Stacy Thurman announced her resignation effective May 9 at Monday's Midway City Council meeting. Her tenure will come to an end immediately prior to the convening of a special city council meeting to be held May 9 at 5:30 p.m. at which time the council will consider appointing a new mayor. The council has 30 days to fill the vacancy. As required by city ordinance, the resignation was in writing. Under Section 31.11 of the Code of Ordinances, the mayor serves a four-year term. Thurman took office on January 1, 2023, following her election. The new mayor appointed by the council will serve the balance of Thurman's term, which expires on December 31, 2027. City Attorney Sharon Gold said a new mayor does not need to come from the council, but "can be anyone."

Other than private conversations with council members over the past weekend, Thurman's plan was not known to anyone other than her family. Thurman read heartfelt, moving remarks from her resignation letter, "As you know, I work full-time for the Woodford County Library. . . . When I decided to run for mayor, I never dreamed that I would take over the responsibilities of the city and the library within six months of each other. (Thurman was named the library's executive director in August 2023.) At the time, I was determined to make it work, to do both jobs and to do them well. While I have done my best to juggle the responsibilities of both positions, it has come with a price. I have sacrificed precious time with my family and friends and have struggled with my mental health. . . . I know in my heart that I have to give up something in order to truly focus on my family and myself. Absolutely no one benefits from me being over-extended, certainly not

the community for which I am committed to serving. . . . I want to be clear that there's no ulterior motive here, no drama, no hard feelings. I am simply bowing out before I burn out. . . . Midway is greater than all of us and will thrive long beyond our terms, it will always be a special place that I am blessed to call home." Thurman emphasized how she had been honored to serve and that she believed the city is in a good position with outstanding staff, council members and community partners, singling out several. Several members of the large crowd attending the meeting cried while the council gave Thurman a standing ovation. Councilmember Patrick Hall said, "I'm tempted to tell everyone you are resigning to run a STR! Seriously, the only reason I am on council is you asked me to run. The library is in very good hands." Councilmember Sara Hicks said, "Thank you for being our mayor. . . . I really



MIDWAY MAYOR Stacy Thurman announced at Monday's city council meeting that she will resign effective May 9. The council has 30 days to fill the vacancy. "Midway is greater than all of us and will thrive long beyond our terms," said Thurman. "It will always be a special place that I am blessed to call home." (File photo)

aplaud you for your decision. . . . you've shown courage and made a good example." Councilmember Kaye Nita Gallagher said, "It has been a pleasure serving with you on council and while you

have been mayor. . . . When you've raised the kids, come on back." Councilmember Mary Raglin said, "I support you. I respect you. I stand behind you 100 percent." Councilmember Logan

Nance said "Stacy, I am absolutely so proud of you. I'm proud of how you recognize and know your limits and have a lot of courage to do what's right for you, your family and the city."

Versailles City Council hears Edgewood training center ordinance

SCOTT WHITE
MANAGING EDITOR

The Versailles City Council convened earlier than normal on May 7 to allow time for a lengthy agenda involving four significant matters: the first reading of an ordinance for the city to issue general obligation bonds to assist with the development of a standardbred horse training center (harness racing) as part of the development of the Edgewood Farm property; a revamp of four sections of the code of ordinances to address gaps and housekeeping related to zoning, variances, conditional use applications and medical cannabis (marijuana); a synopsis of Mayor Brian Traugott's proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-

2025; and, the purchase by the city of 6.16 acres of property between Paynes Mill Road and U.S. 60 still owned by the Hardin Field Family Trust. **Harness Racing training facility** The council heard the first reading of an ordinance to transfer ownership of 134 acres of city-owned land at Edgewood Farm to the Versailles Public Properties Corporation (PPC). This will then allow PPC to enter into a lease-purchase agreement with the privately owned Versailles Standardbred Group, LLC (VSG) for the construction and operation of a state-of-the-art standardbred training facility. Stan Kramer, who has been contracted by the city to "look out for (the city's)

financial interests" according to Mayor Brian Traugott, provided a summary of the financial deal and answered several questions. Councilmember Lisa Johnson asked given the city has "a general fund carryover of \$12.3 million and a carryover of \$12.8 million in the enterprise fund, why would we bond the project instead of paying for it?" Kramer explained, "First, some of the money (in those funds), as you just heard from the auditor's annual report, is tied up from a project in 2022, \$9 million. Also, the entire cost and liability of doing the project can be transferred off the city by entering into the lease-purchase agreement

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FAMILY AND FRIENDS gathered in front of a Woodford County Road Department tractor to celebrate the life of Henry Childers. Pictured center holding check, Emily Childers, at her left Woodford County Judge -Executive James Kay, at her right Michael Childers and directly behind her Woodford County magistrate and foundation board member William Downey. (Photo by Scott White).

Henry Childers Memorial Foundation hands out first grants

SCOTT WHITE
MANAGING EDITOR

Henry Childers was only three years old when he tragically died leaving an "unbearable grief" for his parents Emily and Michael Childers, family and friends, according to family friend Di Boyer. Boyer and his aunt Jennifer Lucido organized a project last year in Henry's memory, placing nearly 500 small, painted rocks around Versailles last spring as a way to celebrate and pass on the joy that Henry generated in all who knew him. The "Kindness Rocks for Henry"

were hand-painted with his initials "WHC" and painted with dinosaurs, boats, toys and the thing he loved most – tractors. And, "tractors" are the symbol for the next step in Henry's continuing legacy. Henry's favorite toy was a child-size John Deere tractor he loved to ride and "pop wheelies" on, said Lucido. Soon after Henry passed away, Emily and Michael decided to create the Henry Childers Memorial Foundation as a grant-making foundation with the mission of supporting projects and entities in keeping with

See CHILDERS p. 4

Commonwealth's attorney Woodford, Scott FOPs endorse different candidates

BY BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Two of the three Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) lodges in the 14th Judicial Circuit (Scott and Woodford counties) have endorsed candidates for commonwealth's attorney. Those endorsements for different candidates as well as posts on social media compelled the Kentucky State FOP to write a statement on April 26 to "clarify a few issues" on the "hot button" endorsement situation before Republican voters go to the polls for the May 21 Primary Election.

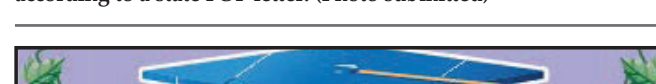
In March, the Royal Springs FOP Lodge in Scott County endorsed current Commonwealth's Attorney Sharon Muse-Johnson. In mid-April, the Castle FOP Lodge in Woodford County endorsed one of the candidates opposing her, Kelli Kearney. The other candidate is Keith Eardley. All are Republicans. Muse-Johnson's campaign signs stating she was the "only candidate endorsed by the FOP" were accurate until the Woodford County FOP endorsed Kearney, according to the State FOP letter. "Since she was the only FOP candidate for 40 days, the FOP does not feel it appropriate to ask her to remove or modify her signs . . . in light of this information."

Sometime between last Friday afternoon and Monday morning, Muse-Johnson's signs were modified when the Scott County FOP logo was placed over the word "only." Her campaign signs in Woodford County were not modified as of Tuesday morning, based on the Sun's observations of her signs in both counties. In a May 6 response to a civil suit filed by Kearney against Muse-Johnson in Scott County related to the campaign signs being inaccurate, attorney Sarah D. Reddick wrote that her client was "in the process of placing stickers on the campaign signs so that the word 'only' is no longer visible, but that process is not yet complete." In an April 29 letter to Muse-Johnson, Kearney's attorney Luke Morgan requested "you immediately cease and desist from making

the incorrect statement that you are the 'only candidate endorsed by the fraternal order of police.'" If the "false statement" is not corrected by May 1 at 5 p.m., he said, "Kelli will take all necessary action to help the public receive accurate information." *Special Judge Hunter Daugherty was scheduled to hear arguments in the lawsuit filed by Kearney against Muse-Johnson on Tuesday morning, May 7. Look for updated information about any order entered in the case next week.*

In the concluding remarks of his letter, Kentucky State FOP President Bert Perdue Jr. said Muse-Johnson was endorsed by the FOP in Scott County and Kearney was endorsed by the FOP in Woodford County, and Bourbon County's FOP has voted to abstain from the endorsement process. "We encourage both campaigns to refrain from continuing to discuss the endorsement process via social media," he wrote, "and encourage each candidate to share with the community why they are the best choice

for Commonwealth's Attorney." Al Cross, a political commentator and retired University of Kentucky journalism professor, told the Sun an endorsement by the FOP can be a signal to some voters about a candidate's worthiness. "A commonwealth's attorney is a law enforcement officer," Cross said, "and to have the FOP endorsement should be helpful to a candidate." He said it's not uncommon for an organization in a county to endorse a candidate from their home county. In this race, all three of the candidates live in Scott County. Asked about the Kentucky State FOP's statement, Cross said, "They're addressing the status quo ante (the state of affairs that existed before) – not the current situation." According to fop.net, the Fraternal Order of Police is the largest and oldest law enforcement labor organization in the United States and the nation's most prominent voice for law enforcement.



CAMPAIGN SIGNS stating Commonwealth's Attorney Sharon Muse-Johnson was the "only candidate endorsed by the FOP" were accurate until the Fraternal Order of Police in Woodford County endorsed Kelli Kearney as the 14th Judicial Circuit's next commonwealth's attorney, according to a state FOP letter. (Photo submitted)

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with a personal ad in the Graduation Special Section of The Woodford Sun's May 23 issue.
Deadline: May 13.
Call 873-4131
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GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

- Thursday, May 9 P&Z meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, May 16 TRC meeting at 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, May 14 Woodford Fiscal Court at 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 14 Budget Work Session

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