Government

Butler City plans for emergency management director

By Nila Harris

BUTLER — Butler City Council voted to hire a part-time city emergency management director to oversee and manage significant emergencies. A job description and posting will be posted in the Outlook.

Although those in attendance agreed that the mayor, police and fire departments did well in the recent flooding crisis, it was determined that having an EMD on site would ensure that requests are made and fulfilled for the city.

During the flooding event, Mayor Mason Taylor, Northern Pendleton Fire Chief Adam Fuller and Butler Police Chief Kenny Hale looked at historical data and developed a plan for evacuation of Front Gate and River Valley Nursing Homes, as well as evacuation of city residents. Council praised the ac-

tions of the team. Fuller presented the fire report of 18 first responses with no fire alarms.

A fire truck was pur-

TIMELINE

Continued from Page 1

Ernst attended the meeting and after refusing several times to leave, was arrested on a charge of trespassing.

Hart, who was acting as an administrator in the absence of a mayor, said that he and council had consulted with the Kentucky League of Cities for legal advice before the arrest and were told that the city was within its rights to do so.

Council already had begun the process of not renewing City Attorney Brandon Voelker's contract, and Voelker, who later spoke out against Ernst's arrest, resigned shortly af-

TUESDAY, APRIL 15

The city issued a statement, which reads in part: "Ón April 14, 2025, Sebastian Ernst, the impeached former mayor of Falmouth, was arrested by the Falmouth Police Department for criminal trespassing in the third degree following a series of escalat-

from the Lachased Grange fire department for \$35,000, Fuller said. The truck is estimated in value at \$75,000 to \$80,000 with an additional \$25,000 to \$30,000 worth of equipment installed.

The truck was scheduled to be picked up on Monday and will need to be rebranded with the Butler Fire Department logo.

Hale reported that police had 68 calls for service, no accidents, one fire assist, one vacation check and 38 business checks.

He recently attended training in Bowling Green.

Hale received a Spirit of the Blue grant, which supplied the department with a 9 mm handgun and extra ammunition.

He praised the different departments who assisted during the flooding — Pendleton County Sheriff's Office, Falmouth Police Department and the Campbell County Sheriff's Office.

The mayor told council that a 2014 Ford Explorer police cruiser needs to be

sold as surplus equipment, and sealed bids will be accepted at the May 5 meeting. Hale stated that all law enforcement gear will be moved from that vehicle to the other police cruiser.

Mary McDowell of the Pendleton County Red Cross reported that she helped people get information on shelter services during flooding.

McDowell, who also serves as recreation director for the city, talked about an upcoming citywide yard sale in May and Battle of the Bands scheduled for June 14, with several bands lined up, along with food trucks and craft vendors.

Tami Vater, county economic and tourism development director, informed the council about the Boo Singleton River Sweep on June 7.

She requested council support for a watershed grant project honoring Singleton, who grew up in Butler. The council appropriated \$1,000 in support of the project, which will cost an estimated \$15,000.

up about what happened on Monday afternoon, and to hopefully set the record straight on the statements put out by City Hall and the Falmouth Police Department. Earlier today, I met with the former Mavor, Sebastian Ernst, to talk about what led to his arrest at City Hall on Monday night.

with me of what happened at the police department which completely contradicts the claims issued in the public statements that were put out on the official city platforms. In the video, Mr. Ernst doesn't raise his voice, doesn't disrupt anything, and doesn't threaten anyone. In fact, it's the opposite. He was calm and respectful while Chief Hart appeared angry and threatened to arrest him, even though he broke no laws. He only showed up to seek the return of his personal property, which he had clearly proven was his.

Detailed plans on the project will be unveiled later.

Resolution 91 Hazard Mitigation Plan was read and accepted. It outlines goals and actions to reduce and eliminate hazards.

Appendix A outlined all the road systems in Butler. Resolution 93 Municipal Road Aid was read and accepted. This will provide three distribution payments totaling \$15,101.96 from the road aid fund for street improvements.

Road paving bids will be accepted for blacktopping Matilda, part of Peoples, and Main Streets. Councilwoman Terri Bush stated where a streetlight needed to be replaced on Bradford.

Councilperson Pat Taylor wanted to know if patching could be done on some of the Butler streets that were not getting paved. The mayor said that he will be doing a damage assessment when the weather breaks.

Councilman Gerald McElfresh asked if any paving would be done on

2026 elections for a new term as mayor.)

THURSDAY, APRIL — Councilwoman 17 Joyce Carson explained how the sheep statue managed to find its way from the old Conrad Hardware Store that has changed hands multiple times over the past.

Tim Morrison had a land contract in 2022 to purchase the Conrad Hardware, where the sheep statue originally was. Morrison offered to give the painted sheep to either the tourism council or Carson. Carson said she took the sheep so that it could be on display in front of city hall. "There was nothing in writing.

'I asked Ron (Stinson, the mayor at the time) if we could put it in front of city hall. He said yes."

According to reports, three men in a band playing at neighboring Shenanigan's stole the sheep statue. "I thought I'd never see that sheep again," Carson said.

When the sheep was recovered in another county, it was placed into evidence in the basement of the poe department.

South Street. The mayor said that it was paved last vear.

McElfresh explained that the lower half of the street was not paved and "was a mess." Ĥe asked if city workers could clear out the gravel that extended onto the street. The mayor said he will work on getting the gravel swept up.

Councilwoman Bonita Bonar asked if the river gauge is getting fixed. The mayor stated that he was going to an Emergency **Operations** Center meeting and would express that it is crucial that the river gauge be fixed.

Bonar also asked about problems with sidewalks.

The mayor stated that Stephanie from Precisions will be doing a sidewalk assessment.

Bonar also maintained that the dumpster was filling up quickly and asked if it would be possible for the dumpster to be moved and have residents show an ID before filling.

No action was taken on this.

mouth Middle School/Falmouth School center property at 500 Chapel St., and the hiring of a new water plant operator.

Here are highlights of his comments to council:

• "I was illegally trespassed off city property, why am I allowed to stand before you tonight?"

• "Regarding the middle school, the city has invested roughly \$350,000 in the middle school property to build a community center for our children. ...

"I want to ask the public, do you all want to take a loss on this property and have it torn down, or do you want to provide the opportunity for our children, and relocate our city operations out of the flood zone.'

• (Addressing interim Mayor Sabrina Hazen) "What is your relation to the water plant operator?" Hazen: "He is my fian-

ce.' Ernst, after remarking that the new appointment to the water department smacks of nepotism, and that the new operator does not hold the required Class

Tourism group discusses funds, training, boards

By Jim Thaxton

FALMOUTH — After David Billings presented the treasurer's report to the Pendleton County Tourism Commission last Thursday, the board redirected their attention to the funds set aside for the Kentucky State Fair, shifted unused funds to marketing, and set a date for the Budget Committee to meet prior to its June 1 presentation Fiscal Court.

Rachael Wright opened discussion regarding board member training, terms of office, officers and meeting dates. Meeting dates will be adjusted to allow board members to attend Pendleton Tourism Council Meetings.

Randy Wells was suggested to continue with the Chamber of Commerce, Angela Vanlandingham Horn to the Restaurant Committee and David Billings to the Lodging.

The board voted unanimously to join the Licking Valley Adventures group.

ly habitable without major renovation work. It is not ADA accessible. The building will be open and available for viewing on April 29th from 1 to 3 p.m. Potential bidders may enter at their own risk. The City of Falmouth would recommend any potential bidder who is viewing the property to bring their own flashlight, and PPE (i.e. gloves, dust mask, steel-toe boots, hard hat)."

Also, since Councilwoman Sabrina Hazen was appointed by council to fill the unexpired term of Mayor Luke Price, who was appointed, then elected to fill the unexpired term of former Mayor Sebastian Ernst, the city posted:

"Falmouth Mayor and City Council will seek applications for the vacated council seat. The form/application can be found on the city website under City Boards and Commissions. This form is to serve as the application to submit your interest in serving.

"Those applications will be taken until May 5. You may also drop off the form and any supporting doc-City Hall_: 230 Main St., Falmouth, KY. "A Special Called meeting will be held on May 8 to review applications and conduct interviews of candidates. You must reside in the City of Falmouth and have been a resident for at least one year."

rectives, Mr. Ernst returned to city property later in the day in violation of the issued trespass order. When approached by officers and again asked to leave, he refused to comply and attempted to provoke another disruptive confrontation. Mr. Ernst was subsequently placed under arrest for violating the lawful trespass

warning. "It is important to note that while Mr. Ernst previously held the office of mayor, he received no preferential treatment...

The city attorney and the Kentucky League of Cities have been informed of the incident and are monitoring the situation."

16 — Ernst declined several requests from the Outlook for comment. Here is a portion of the statement he released to and that was reported by Bret Buganski of Channel 9 in Cincinna-

"I was arrested at a public city council meeting, not for breaking the law, but simply for exercising my right to be there. I was invited by a city council-

tactic. Chief Marty Hart,

the brother of State Repre-

sentative Mark Hart, used

I feel it's my duty to speak

WEDNESDAY, APRIL

"Mr. Ernst shared a video

"I believe that the contradictions between the details that were presented in the public statements, and what I saw in the vid man, remained peaceful, eo could potentially put and caused no disruption. the City of Falmouth at serious legal risk. The City Yet police proceeded with Attorney, Brandon Voelker, the arrest, even after both resigned shortly after the the city and county attorneys instructed them to incident involving Sebasstand down. This was not tian Ernst's unlawful arrest, a matter of public safety, it which I feel speaks volumes was a political intimidation about how serious and wrong this situation is. "At Monday night's City Council meeting, Chief Hart ordered two his authority to silence dissent and discourage public officers to arrest Mr. Ernst for 'trespassing.' What the news hasn't mentioned is that I personally invited WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16 — This is a portion of Mr. Ernst to attend the city statement posted by Councouncil meeting to discuss the possibility of him fill-"As a current member of ing the mayoral vacancy, something many people in the Falmouth City Council, the community have voiced support for over the past week." (Editor's note: Ernst won the election for mayor in 2022, served all of 2023, but was impeached by City Council on Jan. 2, 2024, on allegations of misconduct, which Ernst denied. A court ruled that Ernst cannot be brought back to serve any of the remaining four-year term for which he was impeached, but he is free to run again in the

"Earlier that day, Mr. Ernst entered the Falmouth Police Department and engaged in behavior that escalated into threats directed at city employees. Due to the disorderly and offensive nature of his conduct, Mr. Ernst was trespassed from all City of Falmouth properties by the Falmouth Police Department and instructed to vacate the premises.

"Law enforcement officers made it explicitly clear to Mr. Ernst that he was not permitted to enter or remain on any property owned by the City of Falmouth...

"Despite these clear di-

The Falmouth Outlook ISSN: 0891-8694

NEIL BELCHER **OWNER / PUBLISHER**

MARILYN BELCHER **OWNER / CFO**

participation."

cilman Craig Owen:

Phone: 859-654-3332 Fax: 859-654-4365

Main Email Addresses:

news@falmouthoutlook.com / ads@falmouthoutlook.com

Website: www.falmouthoutlook.com

Published weekly by Nemar Media LLC, 210 Main Street, Falmouth, Kentucky 41040

Subscription rates: In-county \$44/ yearly; Out-of-county \$54/ yearly; Out-of-state: \$62/ yearly; E-edition \$44/ yearly. Single copy price \$1 plus tax

- ADVERTISING RATES UPON REQUEST -

Neil Belcher: Publisher

Burton Cole: Editor

Jessie Beckett: Advertising / Graphic Designer

Sam McClanahan: Reporter / Advertising Sales / Sports Layout

Jenny Quitter: Bookkeeper / Billing / Receptionist

Matt Sorrell: Advertising Sales

Jim Thaxton: Government Reporter

Correspondents: Nila Harris, Stacey Meyers, Hannah Thomas,

Janet Scanlon, and Jennifer Redden

Jimmy Tate: Delivery Susan Sorrell: Custodian

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT FALMOUTH, KENTUCKY; PERIODICALS POSTAL PERMIT USPS 185-060. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGE TO: THE FALMOUTH OUTLOOK, P.O. BOX 111, FALMOUTH, KY 41040.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Service Commission of Kentucky issued an order on January 21, 2025, scheduling a hearing to be held on May 13, 2025, at 9 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time, in the Richard Raff Hearing Room at the offices of the Public Service Commission located at 211 Sower Boulevard in Frankfort, Kentucky, for Case No. 2024-00326. This is an examination of the Electronic 2024 Joint Integrated Resource Plan of Louisville Gas and Electric Company and Kentucky Utilities Company

This hearing will be streamed live and may be viewed on the PSC website, psc.ky.gov

Public comments may be made at the beginning of the hearing. Those wishing to make oral public comments may do so by following the instructions listed on the PSC website, psc.ky.gov.

Louisville Gas and Electric Company and Kentucky Utilities Company 2701 Eastpoint Parkway Louisville, Kentucky 40223

"I didn't know what to do with it. That's why it's been there so long," Carson said, adding, "I don't want the thing. I want it to be on the streets of Falmouth."

Meanwhile, Morrison forfeited the Conrad building, and it was later sold to Ernst. The sale included all contents.

Ernst contends the sheep should be his because it originally was in the building. There is a question whether Morrison had a right to give away anything in the building. The police chief said that's a question for the courts to decide, if it comes to that.

THURSDAY, APRIL 17 — Ernst, along with a group of supporters, attended the regular meeting of City Council. This time, while there was strong police presence at the meeting, Ernst was not arrested, and was permitted to address council and Interim Mayor Sabrina Hazen over a number of issues he has with council, including his arrest, Trinity Southern Baptist Church's request to purchase the vacant Fal-

operator license have an unqualified person running the water treat-

ment plant."

APRIL 17 — Former Mayor April K. DeFalco, who attended the Thursday meeting, wrote, "I think they (council) did a great job! Sabrina included council to talk with firefighters to decide on chief and city attorney. They kept order. It was productive. I am very proud of the mayor and council working together."

FRIDAY, APRIL 18 — Following up action taken at the meeting, City Council submitted legal ads, including:

"Notice is hereby given pursuant to K.R.S. 82.083 that the City Council of the City of Falmouth, Kentucky ('City') will accept bids for the sale to the highest and best bidder, plus all costs including advertising costs, of fee simple title to the real property located on 500 Chapel Street in Falmouth...

"Buyer beware. The existing building has been vacant for many years. It is approximately 70,000 square feet and is sold as is. The building is not like-

APRIL 18 — Pendleton County Attorney Stacey Moore Sanning posted this statement after choosing not to pursue the trespassing charge against Ernst:

Kentucky's Under Open Meetings Act, members of the public have a virtually unconditional right to attend all meetings of a public agency. A person also has a constitutional right to petition the government for their grievances. For this reason, I have decided to use my prosecutorial discretion to not pursue trespassing charges against former Mayor Sebastian Ernst.

"Just because I dismiss a charge does NOT mean that the police had no probable cause to arrest him or that it was an unlawful arrest. Chief Hart has built a team of officers at the Falmouth Police Department that I believe is the best we have had in decades."

