

# Hart: Lawmakers prioritize healthcare

## House update

### Rep. Mark Hart

During the 2025 Regular Session, lawmakers prioritized improving healthcare and expanding access for all Kentuckians.

As someone who has devoted most of his life to providing emergency medical care through EMS, I know firsthand that a healthier population is key to a stronger, more prosperous Kentucky.

The General Assembly passed impactful legislation to strengthen care statewide and support our dedicated healthcare workforce, and made improving the state's Medicaid program a priority.

Medicaid is the state's second-largest budget category, behind only K-12 public education in the amount of tax dollars we spend to provide care to more than a third of our population.

We are working on the

budget we will consider next session and, as a member of the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee, I can tell you that we are hoping to identify ways to make Medicaid more effective at helping Kentuckians lead healthier lives, while also becoming more efficient at providing services.

As we look ahead to the upcoming interim meetings and continue work on the budget, I want to highlight several important measures from the House Standing Committee on Health Services that are now law:

**Expanding Funding Opportunities for Ambulance Providers:** HB 152 allows eligible public ground ambulance providers to receive additional federal funding for transporting Medicaid patients by creating a voluntary Medicaid supplemental payment program for public ground ambulance providers.

**Improving Emergency Response to Sexual As-**



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**sault:** HB 219 mandates that hospitals offering emergency services develop and provide training for emergency department staff on sexual assault emergency response requirements, protocols, and resources.

**Helping Military Healthcare Personnel Transition to Civilian Careers:** HB 303 directs the Kentucky Community and Technical College System to develop pathways and programs to reduce the time needed to earn healthcare credentials.

**Ensuring Uninterrupted Patient Care:** HB 501

creates guidelines for the care of pharmacy patients when a prescribing physician dies.

**Ensuring Proper Use of Opioid Settlement Funds:** HB 537 strengthens oversight of the Opioid Abatement Trust Fund, ensuring that financial resources are directed toward evidence-based treatment, recovery services, crisis intervention, and other programs that provide real solutions for those struggling with addiction.

**Modernizing Medicaid Services:** HB 695 establishes a work requirement for recipients who are physically able and not directly providing care to a child or disabled adult; moves the pharmacy rebate fund to the Medicaid program, and introduces data collection and submittal requirements for Medicaid services, specifically behavioral health, and managed care.

**Improving Support for Sexual Assault Survivors:** HCR 20 directs the Legislative Research Commission to study access to

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) in emergency care settings.

**Improving Support for Kentuckians with Parkinson's:** SB 27 creates a Parkinson's Disease Research Registry, and advisory committee, in order to confidentially collect data to improve treatment and research.

**Improving Medicaid Efficiency:** SB 25 creates the Medicaid Oversight Advisory Board, a legislative panel comprised of stakeholders and aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the taxpayer-funded health insurance program for the poor and those with ongoing conditions.

**Improving Access to Pharmacy Providers:** SJR 26 directs the Department for Medicaid Services to provide the legislature with a report regarding pharmacist payment parity.

Although these measures are law, Section 55 of the Kentucky Constitution states that, unless a bill includes an emergency clause

or a specified effective date, it takes effect 90 days after the legislature adjourns. This year, most new laws will take effect on June 27.

Across Kentucky — from doctor's offices to state-of-the-art hospitals — dedicated professionals work to ensure access to quality care. Throughout our history, we have expanded healthcare because good health is key to a stronger future and a thriving state. This session we focused on improving access.

Challenges remain, but we're continuing to invest in hospitals, providers, and communities so Kentuckians can live healthier lives. Healthcare has shaped our past and present, and by strengthening it today, we're building a healthier tomorrow for all.

As always, I can be reached anytime through the toll-free message line in Frankfort at 1-800-372-7181.

You can also contact me via email at [Mark.Hart@kylegislature.gov](mailto:Mark.Hart@kylegislature.gov).

## Falmouth chooses new councilman

By Jim Thaxton

FALMOUTH — In a pair of special meetings last week, Falmouth City Council appointed a new councilman and Pendleton County Fiscal Court balanced its budget.

ended after discussion regarding the request for proposal to replace the city attorney. City Attorney Brandon Voelker resigned last month as council already was taking steps to not renew his contract.

**CITY COUNCIL**

Falmouth City Council called a special meeting on May 8 at 6 p.m. The agenda included a Closed Session per KRS 61.810(1)(f) for which might lead to the appointment of an individual member. This exception shall not be interpreted to permit discussion of general personnel matters in secret.

Council discussed the applications and interviews for a vacant council seat, then selected Stephen Edward "Red" Gales Jr. from 11 applicants.

He will fill the unexpired term of Sabrina Hazzen, who was appointed mayor last month after Mayor Luke Price resigned.

In a Facebook post on the City of Falmouth page, council reported "a lot of great applicants and some great interviews."

The post invited all those who interviewed or "even just thought about it" to come to the committee meetings on the first and third Thursdays of the month. The committees meet at 6 p.m.

The special meeting

**FISCAL COURT**

On May 6, Judge Executive David Fields called a special meeting of Fiscal Court to review the county's budget.

In the past, the annual budget meeting would often go on for hours. This meeting covered line item by line item the revenue, where the money was coming from, and the appropriations where the money was going.

Magistrates managed to get through it in just a little over an hour. The budget was balanced. The judge will provide a summary of income and expenses to the Outlook.

There was considerable discussion about the rising cost of prisoner lodging, transport and medical expenses, and options for reducing these expenses.

At its next meeting — which is set for 6 p.m. today, May 13 — the court will vote on the County's cost of living and salary adjustments for 2025-26 fiscal year. The cost-of-living increase was reported to be 2.7%.

This meeting will also address black top bids for



Stephen "Red" Gales Jr.

county road maintenance. Some of the road slipping and pothole issues were also discussed.

After the meeting ended, Magistrate Rick Miner noted that closing the county's 911 dispatch last year and contract with state police was met with controversy. He pointed out that the 2025-26 budget projects more than \$400,000 in savings from the move.

Post adjournment discussions also addressed the rising cost of prisoner lodging, transport.

Regular scheduled Fiscal Court meetings are the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the county courthouse. Special meetings are called as needed to address county business.

## Butler awards paving bid

By Nila Harris

BUTLER — City Council decided last week on Riegler Blacktop to pave the streets of Main, Matilda and the 200 block of Peoples.

Three sealed bids promised a milling of 2-inch depth, but Riegler would furnish a 1 1/2 inch top of blacktop vs. the other two at 2 inches topping. At a cost of \$43,000-plus higher, council believed it should go with the lower bid, and that the lower depth would help with water drainage since this would make the streets lower than the existing sidewalks.

Police Chief Kenny Hale's report stated that the department had 110 calls for service, including four state and two city citations, no auto accidents, two fire runs, 60 business checks, two vacation checks and extra patrol helping with the evacuation of two nursing homes and bringing residents back into the city during flooding.

Northern Pendleton fire Chief Adam Fuller's report stated that there were 22 runs, no fires but three fire alarms, 14 hazardous materials calls and five basements pumped.

Prompt actions taken by fire department personnel to complete and submit damage assessments caused five situations initially determined as minor to be upgraded to major by FEMA.

A \$1,000 Home Depot grant provided four hu-

midifiers and shop vacs for residents.

A second estimate of the Freightliner fire truck was 55% less than the first. The truck purchased from the LaGrange fire department will be labeled this week. The fire department will be assisting with upcoming recreation events.

Pendleton County Red Cross Director Mary McDowell expressed concern that her department was not notified to come and assist during the major flooding that occurred in March. Although McDowell herself was unavailable at the time due to family illness, she had other team members who could have assisted.

McDowell, as recreation director, discussed the upcoming Battle of the Bands on June 14 which will feature bands, vendors and food trucks.

Councilwoman Terri Bush expressed concern at the cost for one band, especially since there was a low turnout for the March BBQ supper. It was explained that by having a known band come in, there may be a bigger draw for a crowd.

Several stated that more advertising needs to take place to get people into the town.

Butler resident Wayne Lambert expressed concern that the city's backhoe was being used without permission. He also stated that street parking on Williams was a concern, especially if a fire truck needed access.

The mayor stated that he would investigate the parking situation.

A first reading of the 2025-26 budget was held.

The mayor stated

that he had applied for a grant from the Gary Sinise Foundation and emailed them every day this past week for information.

The city will apply for a Water Foundation Fund Grant, which could help expand the park playground and proposed nature trail. Fuller explained how a CVG grant could be written to make the city building ADA compliant and move the community center out of the flood zone.

An appeals committee needs to be formed to ensure that all voices are heard, according to council. Three Butler residents and one alternate are needed. Contact the city of Butler at 859-472-5015 for more information.

Councilman Gerald McElfresh asked about the river gauge. The mayor stated that according to Mike Moore, they are working on it. There is a problem with the gauge receiving GPS data and sending the information to the National Weather Service.

McElfresh asked if the dumpster needed to be moved, and would they like to have the dumpster in the city more often. It was determined that, if possible, the city would like to have a dumpster there every quarter.

Councilwoman Smith stated that the pump station needed to be moved out of the flood zone. The mayor acknowledged that it was a good idea but costly. The newly hired engineering firm will be helping the city with this problem.

McElfresh stated that the Earth Day clean up went well and 21 bags of trash were collected.

Ordinance Appeals Committee Posting for Butler Residents

The City of Butler is pleased to announce the formation of the Ordinance Appeals Committee, exclusively for residents of Butler. The committee aims to provide a fair and equitable platform for residents to appeal to any municipal ordinances that they believe warrant reconsideration. The committee three members of the public to serve with one alternate member also of the public in the event of sickness or other emergencies.

Purpose of the Committee

The Ordinance Appeals Committee will review appeals submitted by residents concerning local ordinances. The goal is to ensure that all voices are heard and that ordinances serve the best interests of the entire community.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be residents of the City of Butler.
- Must be at least 18 years old.

Responsibilities

- Review submitted appeals from residents.
- Conduct thorough evaluations of the contested ordinances.
- Provide recommendations to the City Council based on findings.

Application Process

Interested residents should submit the following:

- A letter of intent describing why they wish to join the committee.
- Any relevant experience or qualifications.

Deadline

Applications must be submitted by 06/02/2025.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact:

- Email: [cityofbutlermayor@outlook.com](mailto:cityofbutlermayor@outlook.com)
- Phone: 859-472-5015
- Address: City Hall, 102 Front Street, Butler, KY 41006

Join us in ensuring that Butler remains a city where all residents have a voice in their local government.



Mason D. Taylor  
Mayor

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859-654-3332

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NEIL BELCHER  
OWNER / PUBLISHER

MARILYN BELCHER  
OWNER / CFO

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

Main Email Addresses:  
[news@falmouthoutlook.com](mailto:news@falmouthoutlook.com) / [ads@falmouthoutlook.com](mailto:ads@falmouthoutlook.com)

Website: [www.falmouthoutlook.com](http://www.falmouthoutlook.com)

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## Commodities distributed

FALMOUTH — Commodities are distributed 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. the second Monday of the month at 200 W. Shelby St.

People may participate even if they are involved with other distributions in the county. Participants should bring their own bags or boxes.

LEGAL NOTICE

PENDLETON COUNTY CODE ENFORCEMENT

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT ON April 2, 2025, Pendleton County Code Enforcement issued a citation pursuant to Pendleton County Ordinance o. 1011.1 regarding certain property located at: 127 Mader St. Butler, KY. 41006, Said property is believed to belong to BETTY COOPER (Estate)

If you are the owner or believe you have an interest in the property described above, please contact the Pendleton County Judge/Executive's office by no later than (7 days from 2nd publication, May 13, 2025) at: 233 Main Street, Falmouth, KY 41040. (859) 654-4321 in order to obtain a copy of the citation.

Failure to file an appeal by May 20, 2025 will result in a final and unappealable Order that said property is in violation of the Nuisance Ordinance and a lien shall be placed upon the property of \$100 per day. Each day the property remains in violation constitutes a separate offense and another fine. The County may also take measures within thirty (30) days of such Order to abate the nuisance and to file a lien against the real estate in the amount of the County's expense.