

DUMPSTERS

FROM FRONT PAGE

what we contractually agreed upon.”

County Attorney Melissa Phelps explained that the flood debris disposal was an emergency and required a contract that met FEMA’s requirements.

“[Haulers] are allowed to negotiate rates,” she said. “The last two disasters that we had in 2021 and 2022, we did the same thing. ... These are less than what FEMA paid [Howell’s] before, but they are more than what is in the garbage contract.”

“We are paying him. Right?” Slone asked.

Phelps confirmed the county is paying Howell’s and will get reimbursed by FEMA.

“We always have been in the past,” she said.

Slone pressed further, asking whether Howell’s and other garbage contractors were up-to-date on their franchise fees to the county.

“No,” Melissa Phelps responded.

That drew a response from Judge Lafferty, who pointed out the county’s financial constraints.

“We operate on a shoe-string budget,” he said. “We pay our bills the third Thursday of the month, so we can’t wait three months or two quarters or three quarters. We can’t do that. We have to pay our bills on time—and we should, and so should everyone else.”

Phelps suggested that her office could send letters to haulers who are delinquent on franchise fees.

Slone remained hesitant about paying Howell’s invoices while the hauler’s franchise fees remained outstanding.

“I just find it hard to pay out \$20,000 or \$22,000 when they owe us probably \$10,000,” he said. “I’m just guessing. I would assume that’s what the commercial hauler might owe since the residential amount is about \$4,000 [per quarter]. I’d probably be in favor of waiting to pay that until we get our franchise fees.”

Phelps urged the court to approve the monthly bills.

“I think we need to go ahead and pay the bills at this point,” she said.

Slone moved to approve the monthly bills, excluding Howell’s invoices, but his motion failed for lack of a second.

District 4 Magistrate Junior Hunt then moved to approve the entire claims list of \$163,382, including the Howell’s Recycling invoices. District 2 Magistrate Kermit Howell seconded the motion. Hunt, Howell, Slone, District 3 Magistrate Tracy Spence and District 5 Magistrate Ronald Workman all voted in favor.

In other financial matters, the magistrates approved transferring \$147,729 between various accounts, along with

a cash transfer of \$2,540 from the General Fund to the LGEDF Fund to pay real property tax bills on property the county purchased last year.

On Monday, Martin County Solid Waste Coordinator Eric Phelps confirmed that Howell’s Recycling earlier in the day paid just under \$8,000 in franchise fees covering two quarters.

“As of now, he is up-to-date,” Phelps said.

According to Phelps, instead of using roll-off dumpsters at flood debris disposal sites, Howell’s is using tractor-trailers to collect and transport the debris directly to landfills.

“The tractor-trailers hold twice the amount of debris that the roll-off container holds,” said Phelps.

The price is \$400 each time a truck arrives and \$400 each time a truckload leaves, plus \$80 per ton of debris.

County Clerk’s annual order

The fiscal court approved Martin County Clerk Susie Skyles’ annual order setting the maximum salary allocation for deputy clerks and assistants at \$160,000. While state law allows fiscal courts to assist fee-based officials with expenses, Skyles’ office covers all its own costs, including salaries for staff.

Skyles’ 2025 budget, totaling \$3,092,575, was attached to the order. The budget outlined projected disbursements of \$2,729,850 to various entities, including the state, fiscal court, board of education, the cities of Inez and Warfield, the health district, library district, cooperative extension district, sheriff and county attorney.

After these distributions, Skyles will have \$362,725 to operate her office.

Asphalt bids deferred

The county opened four sealed bids for asphalt projects but deferred selecting a winning bidder. Judge Lafferty suggested that officials needed more time to compare the bids thoroughly, considering factors such as asphalt class, aggregate mixture type, thickness and other specifications.

County Attorney Phelps opened the bids and read them to the fiscal court.

R&L Paving of Tutor Key submitted a bid offering to mill areas, clean, apply SS-1h tack coat, furnish asphalt surface, haul and lay. Their pricing was structured based on volume, charging \$400 per ton for jobs requiring 3-9 tons, \$300 per ton for 10-24 tons, \$250 per ton for 25-49 tons, \$200 per ton for 50-99 tons, and \$190 per ton for projects exceeding 100 tons. Additionally, the company in-

cluded a mobilization fee of \$600 per move and a traffic control fee of \$250 per move.

Hinkle’s Blacktop of Tomahawk proposed installing blacktop on any Martin County road at a base price of \$150 per ton, with an additional \$2 per ton charge for material and road preparation. Unlike some competitors, Hinkle’s did not charge a mobilization fee.

BTI Contracting of Catlettsburg submitted a bid for delivering and laying in place various paving types, including Class 2, .38D, .50D, and .75D. Their pricing varied based on project size, charging \$154 per ton for locations requiring 100 or more tons and \$199 per ton for those requiring less than 100 tons. Their bid included material costs, cleaning and sweeping, tack coat application, trucking and quality assurance testing.

Mountain Enterprises of Eastern provided a tiered pricing structure for different asphalt types. Their bid for Class 2, .38D asphalt was set at \$196 per ton for jobs under 100 tons, \$153.73 per ton for projects between 100-299 tons, and \$138.65 per ton for those exceeding 300 tons. For Class 2, .50D, pricing ranged from \$204 per ton for less than 100 tons, \$162.25 per ton for 100-299 tons, and \$147.20 per ton for 300-plus tons. Their bid for Class 2, .75D, was set at \$210.76 per ton for jobs under 100 tons, \$168.42 per ton for 100-299 tons, and \$153.36 per ton for projects over 300 tons. Their bid covered preparation, including sweeping, tack coat application, delivery, placement and compaction.

Highway designations

Magistrates adopted a resolution designating the bridge on Route 1714 that crosses Wolf Creek at the mouth of Pigeon Roost as “Blackburn-Jude Bridge” to honor those families.

The Blackburn and Jude families, part of the Pigeon Roost community since at least the early 1900s, provided businesses and social scenes like the former James Jude Grocery. People shopped, sold ginseng, traded stories and knives, and hung out together in the business owned by James Jude and his wife Margie (Blackburn) Jude.

The court also designated the area on Route 40 between mile points 12.7 and 12.9 (Blacklog) as Destiny Brewer Memorial Highway. The designation honors the memory of Destiny, who died June 28, 2010, after her grandmother’s van was hit head-on by a drunken driver June 25, 2010. She was 10 years old.

Destiny was a talented child with a beautiful smile and a generous, loving heart. She loved

to sing and entertain wherever she went. She danced, cheered, played sports, and performed at many talent shows. Destiny was the first dancer from Martin County to perform Clara in Dance Etc. Studio’s “The Nutcracker” at the Mountain Arts Center.

Other action

In other action, magistrates:

- Rejected the Martin County Sheriff’s check for excess fees, with some magistrates choosing to mock the check that state law requires the sheriff to submit. (See that story in this edition of the newspaper.)

- Approved an agreement with Martin County Cal Ripken League to lease Frank Horn Park for one year.

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