

THE

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Cities join county to protest Zoneton EMS tax

THOMAS J. BARR

THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE — It may come as no surprise that Bullitt County government would contest an upcoming application by the Zoneton Fire Department to establish its own emergency medical service.

But several of the smaller cities are throwing their support to those efforts by Bullitt County Judge/Executive Jerry Summers to fight the issue of a certificate of need for the new EMS agency.

Several months ago, Zoneton VFD announced plans to seek the CON for the creation of an EMS, which would cover its current service area. Two ambulances would be the first phase, with another unit in the future.

As part of that creation, taxpayers in the fire district would also be subject to a new 10-cent per \$100 tax. In essence, it would double the current fire tax, which is also set at the state maximum.

The discussion, which has also included the city of Hillview, gained

some new parties last week.

After executive sessions, the Hebron Estates City Commission and the Fox Chase City Council approved resolutions supporting the county's protest to the CON application to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. That matter would be held in Frankfort in 2026.

The resolutions stated that the current Bullitt County EMS not only met but exceeded the needs of the community. It also stated that the cities did not agree with the premise that the county failed to meet those needs

and wanted the county to continue to be its primary ambulance.

Finally, the resolution stated that the tax rate would increase if the license was granted.

During the Hebron Estates meeting, the commission went into closed session for about 35 minutes. Summers and county attorney Tammy Baker were part of the discussion.

There was a unanimous vote in favor of the resolution; however, the commissioners made no public comments.

A short time later on Tuesday, the

Fox Chase City Council met and there was a bit more discussion prior to the executive session for pending litigation.

With Zoneton Fire chief Kevin Moulton present, mayor Owen Taylor opened the floor up for questions.

Councilmember Sandy Higgins asked the basis of seeking the EMS license.

Moulton said that he has several years of data showing the response time of the county EMS and times in

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The reason for the season



Thomas J. Barr

The Shepherdsville Farmers Market provided a venue for prayer and singing by members of Bullitt Lick and Cedar Grove Baptist churches.



Thomas J. Barr

The crowd was bundled up for this night of holiday singing and prayer.

Sheriff's budget wins court funding, approval

THOMAS J. BARR

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SHEPHERDSVILLE — In what turned out to be a much more discussed matter than in years past, Bullitt Fiscal Court did finally agree to the 2026 calendar budget proposed by sheriff Walt Sholar.

The approved budget will be \$12.6 million, an increase of around \$1.3 million.

That big increase caused several

magistrates to ask Sholar a few questions.

In the budget, which includes both the sheriff's office and the Central Dispatch, Sholar said patrol deputies would receive a 10 percent pay increase in July.

The need for the larger-than-normal raise would be so the sheriff's office can remain competitive with other law enforcement agencies. He cited the pay at the Shepherdsville Police Department as part of the competition.

In addition, he said Shepherdsville and Mount Washington police departments have collective bargaining contracts. In Shepherdsville, officers are guaranteed an 8 percent increase in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

To recruit and to retain good employees, Sholar said the rate of compensation must be a part of the package.

Other employees are also slated for pay increases. He said Central Dispatch would receive a flat \$3 per

hour increase.

Court security personnel and the administrative office staff would receive a 5 percent increase.

After a study by the state Administrative Office of the Courts was conducted, Sholar said there was a recommendation that the court security workforce should be 33 deputies.

Instead, Sholar felt that 26 employees

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Patio homes win over traffic concerns

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SHEPHERDSVILLE — It was probably the same argument developers of the St. Andrews Crossing development heard when they proposed that subdivision years ago.

Highway 44 can't handle any more traffic.

And that argument has been raised on most developments along the heavily-traveled east-west connector in Bullitt County.

On Thursday, residents, many of whom now actually live in St. Andrews Crossing,

were upset with members of the Bullitt County Joint Planning Commission and the applicant, RDH Properties.

The developer is desiring to build 48 single-family town homes on property across from the existing subdivision.

The message for the past 30 years has been that there

is too much development along Highway 44 from Shepherdsville to Mount Washington. The same held true on a snowy night in the courthouse.

According to attorney Mark Edison, his client sought to rezone 14.3 acres of a total 48-acre tract from R-1 Resi-

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Clermont distillery will pause production in '26

CLERMONT — With a record number of barrels of bourbon aging in Kentucky warehouses and with an international market which has had to endure tariffs, one of Bullitt County's oldest industries will make a major change to its local distillery.

In a release from Suntory Global Spirits, parent company of James B. Beam Distillery in Clermont, it was announced that distilling operations at the local plant would be halted all of 2026.

The facility would continue its bottling and warehousing operations. While the company has over 1,000 employees at its various Kentucky operations, there were no details on if the change would affect anyone at the Bullitt County operation.

"We are always assessing production levels to best meet consumer demand and recently met with our team to discuss our volumes for 2026," said a statement from the company. "We've shared with our teams that while we still continue to distill at our Freddie Booker Noe craft distillery in Clermont and at our larger Booker Noe distillery in Boston, we plan to pause distillation at our main distillery on the James B. Beam campus for 2026 while we take the opportunities to invest in site enhancements."

Business First of Louisville first announced the company's plans.

The Boston facility is located in Nelson County, east of Lebanon Junction. It recently worked with the city of Lebanon Junction and Louisville Water Co. to improve its water supply to that plant.

The facility also installed a digester system to handle waste products from the

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