

Fiscal court gives tentative approval for opioid abatement fund spending

Clinton County Fiscal Court gave tentative approval for use of more of its share of federal/state Opioid Abatement funds, as well as discussing several other items of business at its regular meeting held on Thursday, August 20, with all magistrates present.

The court, on a motion by Magistrate Mickey Riddle, first approved the minutes of previous meetings, with the exception of action taken on the sheriff's office Opioid Abatement fund proposal that had been presented last month.

Following the vote, Magistrate Terry Buster made a revised motion pertaining to the sheriff's proposal, supporting a Peer Support program applied for with the stipulation that the county pay the first allotment of \$61,500 on September 1 of this year, with the progress of the program to be reviewed and renewable on a yearly basis. All magistrates voted in favor.

On advice from County Treasurer Cindy Thrasher, a separate motion was made to approve a cashier's check in the aforesaid amount dated September 1, with the funds coming from the separate Opioid Abatement monies the county has on hand. That motion also passed unanimously.

The court had previously approved the sheriff's office proposal for use of the funds, contingent upon whether such use would be allowable under federal and state guidelines set for use of Opioid Bbatement monies.

After approving the monthly treasurer's report, the court approved four cash transfers totaling \$126,000, all from the Occupational Fund.

Transfers, approved on separate motions, included \$35,000 to the jail checking account; \$60,000 to the ambulance checking account; \$30,000 to the general checking account; and, \$1,000 to the DES account.

While approving the transfers, Judge/Executive Ricky Craig explained to those present that per the recommendation of auditors, the county should hold two meetings monthly.

He further explained that the duplicate transfers made at special and call meetings go to help pay bills and fund employee payrolls. "The Occupational Fund pays the bills," Judge Craig noted.

The judge then said road aid funds from the state had decreased 13.7 percent this year alone, and expects that trend will continue in the near future.

After voting unanimously to pay claims and bills, the court members were presented a request for use of Opioid Abatement funds from Dr. Julie York, Director of Pupil Personnel for the Clinton County School District.

York spoke on behalf of the school system's Family Resource Youth Service Center (FRYSC), whose program serves to remove barriers for families and children to encourage kids to come to school.

The Youth Service Center is funded by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and York noted Clinton County was fortunate to have such a program here.

She noted that the Family Resource Center and Opioid Abatement funds could serve families affected by opioid or other drug abuse problems in a home.

"Some children are raised by guardians and other family members due to parents being incarcerated or in rehab due to drug addiction," York said.

The school official requested a total yearly amount of abatement funds of \$100,000, with the breakdown being \$30,000 used at the high school, middle school, and Albany Elementary and \$10,000 at the ECC (Early Childhood Center).

York also gave a review of some programs other counties are using the opioid funds for and noted the program had a major impact in Floyd County.

Funding from the opioid abatement program, she added, would go to help meet basic needs of children affected by problems associated with drug addiction in the home, such as purchasing eye glasses, food, helping pay utilities, just to name a few.

Judge Craig who, along with the rest of the court, favored the proposal, asked York if she could get confirmation from Lauren Carr, an official with the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Program, to confirm such a program would meet the criteria of how the funds are used.

York noted she had already discussed the program with Carr and said she was all for it, but would get some official confirmation back to the court.

Following the presentation, Magistrate Tony Delk made a motion to approve York's proposal for funding to assist the FRYSC in the amount of \$100,000 to be renewable annually -- contingent upon confirmation from Kentucky Opioid Abatement officials that the program meets state and federal guidelines. The motion was seconded by Magistrate Terry Buster and passed unanimously.

A second request for funding from the Opioid Abatement Fund program was then presented to the court for consideration.

A spokeswoman from Operation UNITE, Narcotics Intervention Team, addressed the court pertaining to applying for opioid funding, noting the program now has clubs in schools and other areas.

She gave a breakdown on the total amounts that would be used per program Operation UNITE offers, such as drug use prevention in schools, etc., with her total request being around \$49,300.

Judge Craig gave the UNITE representative the same advice, asking she get confirmation from Kentucky Opioid Abatement officials confirming the programs she is requesting funds for meet specific requirements, which she agreed to do.

Following the Operation UNITE presentation, Magistrate Riddle made a motion to allot them \$50,000, also contingent upon opioid abatement officials clarifying their criteria for use of funds is met. The motion passed unanimously.

Although recent studies have shown most of Kentucky counties had used little or none of their allotted

Opioid Abatement funding from a settled lawsuit from pharmaceutical companies, Clinton County -- in the past couple of months -- has now approved funding for three programs they hope will help with the opioid addiction problems.

In each of the approved programs for funding, it was noted that the fiscal court can review the progress of each program on a monthly or quarterly basis to determine if the funding is a success and should be renewed.

The court then took up the issue of acknowledging tax rates for the 2027 tax year.

The court was presented the Clinton County Health Department, Soil Conservation District, and Clinton County Public Library tax rates, with all taking the compensating rates and all being unchanged from last year.

A motion was also made and approved to set the county tax rate at the same rate as the current year, with the compensating four percent rate.

Tax rates are acknowledged by the court without necessity of a vote and are only to allow the taxes to be added to the county tax bill. Rates for each taxing district and the county are publicized in the legal pages of the Clinton County News once approved.

Adrian Piercey, representing N & P Tow Service, then addressed the court requesting his business be placed on the call list for towing services to be used by the county by first responders when vehicles have to be towed, such as from accident scenes, crime scenes, etc.

Piercey noted he and his business partner, Cole Nelson, had recently bought out Rains Towing and basically asked that his business replace the former towing service on the services call list.

Magistrate Terry Buster made a motion to add N & P Tow Service to the list, which passed by unanimous vote.

Judge Craig then informed the magistrates of some unwelcome news pertaining to the Transportation Cabinet's FLEX funds and road aid money, not only to Clinton County, but apparently across the state.

As previously noted, the county's road aid funds were reduced again this cycle, with Judge Craig noting FLEX funding for Clinton County roads this year was only \$100,524.00.

This is about a \$36,000 reduction from last year and at least the third straight year of fund decreases.

The county has six magisterial districts, meaning each district (or magistrate) will have only \$16,700 to spend on roads from annual FLEX funds.

Judge Craig advised magistrates to pick "the worst" roads possible in their districts and number them in order as the state will apparently choose which one to repair with what little funds are available.

The judge also said the state plans on using \$168,374 in state funds to make repairs to 1.2 miles of road on Indian Creek Road.

The road aid plan has to be approved annually and a motion was made by Magistrate Jason Pitman to approve the 2027 road aid plan, passing unanimously.

A representative from the Transportation Department was scheduled to attend last week's meeting, but was not present.

The court then approved an inter-local agreement between Clinton County and Russell County on behalf of the Clinton County Sheriff's Department, which basically allows local law enforcement to act in Russell County in areas where they

are closer to an emergency than Russell County first responders are.

It was noted by Sheriff Ricky Marcum that part of the area at Marina at Rowena is in Russell County. However, authorities from that county cannot reach the area except by boat, creating delays. The agreement allows the local department to act as authorized law enforcement in those situations.

The sheriff noted Clinton County has such agreements with Wayne and Cumberland counties as well.

The court then heard various department head reports, with Clinton County Jailer Bruce Stearns giving an update on inmate intakes and releases. He noted the county has four inmates in Russell County and three in Wayne as of last week, a bit lower than usual.

The jailer also noted inmates had picked up 43 bags of trash along county roadways over the past month.

When speaking of trash along county roadways, court members also reminded groups and organizations that under the Litter Abatement Program, a group, such as a ball team, school group, church, etc., could earn up to \$1,000 by picking up trash at \$100 per mile of road cleaned.

For more information on how to participate in the program, contact the judge's office at 606-387-5234 or Solid Waste Coordinator Renea Wells.

Also under department head reports, Judge Craig gave an update on the road department, saying it is in its third of four rounds of mowing and are cutting back limbs along roadways as far as they can reach, along with other duties.

Sheriff Ricky Marcum then gave the monthly SO report, noting his office had received a total of 659 calls, 559 through dispatch and 100 office calls. The department also issued 44 citations and made 26 arrests during the month.

The sheriff also praised the work of Operation Unite, saying his department had been working with that organization and they had assisted in a recent case. Marcum thanked them for their assistance and noted his office was working with other federal agencies on some ongoing cases.

Magistrate Pitman then stated it was good to see everyone that wanted to work together on the opioid funding situation, with entities such as the sheriff's office, schools and others working on ways to help.

Magistrate Delk then briefly discussed the hot button issue of data centers, asking what the county could do to prevent them from coming here.

Judge Craig said no further information about data centers had been learned since the last regular meeting, but he would be open to imposing a one-year moratorium to halt such facilities from locating here.

He added he had not been approached by any entity interested in putting such a facility in the county as of yet.

Delk also asked if the county had any type of nuisance ordinances in the county pertaining to unsightly property.

Sheriff Marcum said there were some statutes that control such situations along right-of-ways leading into property, but indicated there isn't much that can be done about private property.

The county does not have such an ordinance, but it was noted that one could be put in place if the county had some type of planning and zoning ordinance in place.

He said that is some-

thing (Planning and Zoning Board) a new administration may consider.

There was also a question raised about the status of work on the new Clinton County Judicial Center.

Judge Craig said that all contracts were apparently signed and the project was ready to proceed. He noted the local PDB (Project Development Board) that helps oversee the project was to have met the following

morning and more information was expected to be learned at that time.

(More details on that meeting and an update on the Judicial Center project will be published in next week's NEWS)

The one-hour meeting was then adjourned.

The next regular meeting of Clinton Fiscal Court is scheduled for Thursday, September 17, at 5 p.m.

PROPOSED TAX NOTIFICATION

The Clinton County Board of Education is proposing a general fund tax levy of 59.7 cents on real property and 59.7 cents on personal property.

The General Fund tax levied in fiscal year 2026 was 59.6 cents on real property and 59.6 cents on personal property and produced revenue of \$3,146,354.88. The proposed General Fund tax rate of 59.7 cents on real property and 59.7 cents on personal property is expected to produce \$3,381,521.59. Of this amount, \$465,244.30 is from new and personal property. The compensating tax for 2027 is 57.3 cents on real property and 57.3 cents on personal property and is expected to produce \$3,245,581.02.

The proposed rate is expected to generate more revenue than received in the preceding year. The general areas to which revenue of \$235,166.71 above 2026 revenue is to be allocated are as follows: Cost of collections, \$9,406.67 and instruction, \$225,760.04.

This information is published pursuant to KRS 160.470. The proposed tax rate is not subject to recall under KRS 132.017.

The General Assembly has required publication of this advertisement and information contained herein.

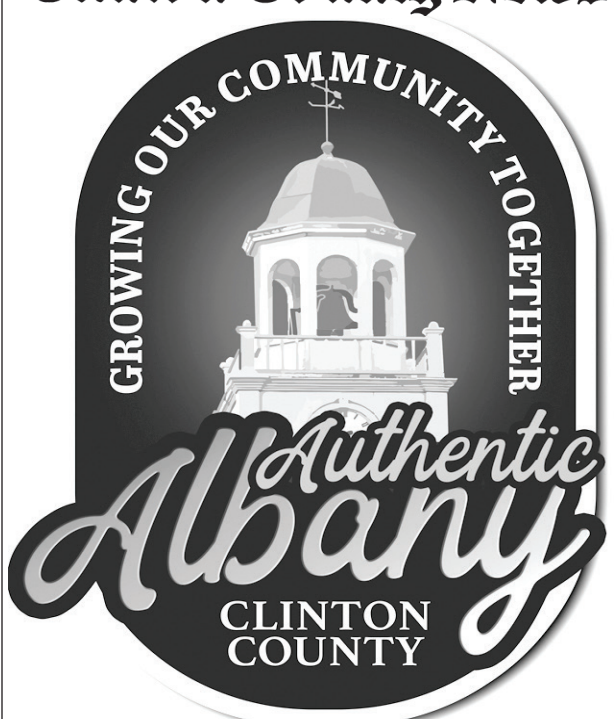
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