

WRITE-IN

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with a for-profit entity like a funeral home while in the position, he said. New, one of the Primary candidates Gossett said he didn't want to run against previously, is affiliated with Southern Oaks Funeral Home. When asked about that, Gossett reiterated that it was his

friendship with Weddle and New that stopped him running in the first place, and added that he "liked" all of the previous candidates, with the only thing he had against Hibbard being the funeral home connection, which is the reason he entered the race at this time. Following his years with the coroner's office, Gossett stepped away in 2020, and has since worked as

a maintenance manager for a trucking company, but said if elected, he will work full-time as the county's coroner. Price noted that to vote for the write-in candidate, a voter will need to fill in the box specified for write-ins, then fill in the name of that candidate above the provided line. Gossett's name will not be on the ballot, but Hibbard's will.



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Current SPEDA President/CEO Chris Girdler sits in the background while (clockwise from upper left) Board Members Sarah Burnett, Brook Ping, Marshall Todd and Tina Hamm prepare to go into executive session.

SPEDA

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Member Neal Shoemaker. Board Member and Somerset Mayor Alan Keck did not attend Friday's meeting. He had earlier confirmed during a Somerset City Council meeting that he had applied for the position. Board Chair Ping said that due to Friday's meeting being a special-called meeting, no further discussion on the matter could take place at that time.

Therefore, the board will discuss the specifics of how to continue the search to replace current President/CEO Chris Girdler at the board's next meeting. Girdler declined comment about the decision directly after the meeting. In making the motion to extend the search, Todd thanked the candidates and finalists who were a part of this round of searching. In August of last year, Girdler announced that he would be stepping down as the head of SPEDA, saying that it was not an easy

choice to make, but that he did so with the best interest of the organization and the community in mind. He has continued to serve as president/CEO during the search for his replacement. The SPEDA board was joined at the meeting by Louisville attorney Brooks Herrick of law firm Dinsmore and Shohl. Herrick said that he had been "asked to come down and fill in as interim general council" due to the recent resignation of former board attorney Jeremy Bartley.

TAX

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this year will likely be paying a higher tax bill, despite the proposed lower tax rate. The council is looking to set the rate at 12.4 cents per \$100 of taxable property. That is down from last year's rate of 12.8 cents per \$100. Keck said that because of new state rules, the city will need to have a public hearing on the tax rate before the council's second reading and vote. That hearing will take place sometime before the council's next regular meeting, scheduled for September 14. Once passed, bills will be sent out. Property owners will have until November 1 to pay those bills with a 2% discount, or until January 1 to pay the full bill. Bills paid after that will be subject to a 20% penalty, and all tax bills paid from previous years will have 6% in interest added to it. Keck said that for those who have not had their properties reassessed this year, this will amount to a tax cut for them. But for those who did receive new assessments this year, Keck stressed that they will be paying more than last year. "We can't really fix that without lowering the whole global rating," he said. He reminded the public that the city



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Somerset Mayor Alan Keck, right, listens as City Clerk Nick Bradley, left, reads the ordinance that spells out the city's new tax rate. A second reading and vote on the rate will take place at a later date.

does not set property assessments. That is done through the Property Valuation Administrator (PVA) for each county, and that office must follow rules as set by the state. Keck added that he is thankful that property values are going up, noting that if values don't increase that it means the community is dying. "That said, I'm also very sensitive to the fact that there's a lot of folks in this community that can't afford new taxes and new assessments," he said, adding that he would love to see changes at the state level that would help those on fixed incomes or those who own their homes outright, rather than owe money on them.



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