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## City of Hickman sets new meeting protocol

Megan Dame

The Hickman City Commission on Monday devoted significant attention to redefining how the public may address city leaders during meetings, adopting a new municipal order establishing formal rules for public comment amid a tense and emotional exchange with a speaker later in the meeting.

Hickman mayor Heath Carlton, commissioners Robin Amberg, James Bridges and John Wiley-Gannon heard city attorney Leanna Wilkerson present the newly revised municipal order putting a definitive set of rules on how order will be kept during the public comment portion of its meetings, culminating with a special called meeting held last week in which the commission had considered eliminating public comment completely. Mayor pro tem Richard Holloway was absent from the meeting because of illness.

Carlton and all the commission members, except Gannon, who was absent, had agreed that taking away the public voice was not the best action to take, and set clearly defined expectations and consequences of failing to abide by those rules.

These actions coming after several recent commission meetings became emotional and had to be called to order by Carlton during

the time set aside for public input and questioning on various issues.

The commission unanimously approved Municipal Order 26-001, which outlines time limits, behavioral standards and procedural requirements for public comment during commission meetings.

City officials said the rules are intended to promote fairness, efficiency and orderly conduct while remaining compliant with Kentucky's Open Meetings Act.

"This is about maintaining order and decorum while still allowing the public to be heard," Carlton said prior to the vote.

Public comment rules adopted

The order clarifies that the City Commission is not required to provide a public comment period at every meeting, but if one is offered, speakers must follow specific guidelines. Under the new rules, speakers must be physically present, recognized by the presiding officer, and state their name, place of residency and any group affiliation for the record.

The total public comment period is capped at 20 minutes, with individual speakers will be allotted 3 minutes each, and speakers may not transfer or yield

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**TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES** – Local students participated in the Truth and Consequences Program last week, which is sponsored by FRYSC, the Fulton County Extension Office, and many community partners. This program helps students understand the importance of honesty, responsibility, and decision-making. By learning how choices lead to consequences, students gain valuable skills that support personal growth, positive behavior, and accountability. This program encourages reflection, respect, and making better choices for a successful future—both in school and beyond. For more photos, see page 6. (Photos submitted)



**LITTLE DRIBBLERS** – Students in second grade through fifth grade at South Fulton Elementary School showed off their dribbling and basketball skills for the audience during halftime of the South Fulton High School Red Devils' home game against Dresden Fri., Feb. 6 in the South Fulton High School gymnasium. Little Dribblers is a skilled-based basketball programs for boys and girls in second through fifth grade. During this program, participants actively participate and learn skills that will be valuable for their future in basketball. (Photos submitted)



## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Editor's Note: The following was submitted by Sharon M. Lynn, of Mount Vernon, Wash.)

### Safety, Support and Love at South Fulton Rosenwald School

It's the summer of 1954 and my grandparents have decided to retire to their home in South Fulton, Tenn. Since they were my primary caregivers, at six years old, I too arrived in South Fulton. I had no idea of the momentous Supreme Court decision that had just been handed down, ending separate but equal in public education; however, in August of 1954, I started first grade at the segregated South Fulton Rosenwald School.

I have heard about first-day-of-school anxiety felt by most children going off to school for the first time but I felt none of that. I knew nothing of being racially segregated. All the kids looked like me and all the adults looked like my grandparents. It was a safe, protected environment with teachers who actually cared about the students, their education and the future they wanted for us.

The basic foundation of education was reading, writing and arithmetic. At South Fulton Rosenwald, we learned how to read with an understanding of the academic information being presented, as well as the pleasure of reading a good story for entertainment. We were taught what is now a rare and dying art, cursive writing. And arithmetic when one plus one equaled two.

There was nothing more idyllic than the safe and loving environment that South Fulton Rosenwald school and the community it served and was support-

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