

Current Continuations

Fulton

were necessary after errors were discovered from previous years.

Officials were encouraged that the city’s unrestricted deficit had declined significantly compared to the prior year.

“Hopefully, by the time we do 2025, we may already be well into a positive number,” Humphrey said.

The report still identified several internal control and compliance issues, including: budget noncompliance within the tourism fund; failure to reconcile interfund accounts; untimely closing of accounting records; missing invoices and inadequate purchasing documentation; and failure to reconcile inventory records with the general ledger.

On the upside, Humphrey said management has already begun addressing many of those deficiencies.

“If y’all have multiple questions... I’ll be glad to respond individually,” Humphrey told commissioners.

Commissioners held the first reading of Ordinance 2027-18, which would officially rename Bankers Place as Banana Boulevard.

The ordinance cites the city’s desire to celebrate its Banana Festival heritage, strengthen community identity and promote tourism.

Because Bankers Place serves relatively few properties, city officials said the impact on residents and emergency services would be minimal.

If approved on second reading, city staff will update maps, records, street signs and notify postal and utility agencies. Property addresses would keep their existing street numbers.

Commissioners approved an order allowing the city manager to advertise for bids on a comprehensive gas utility operations software platform funded through the city’s federal PHMSA grant.

Fulton’s Grants and Project Specialist Mike Gunn explained the software will significantly improve documentation and regulatory compliance.

The platform will automatically generate work orders whenever required inspections reveal deficiencies and will track maintenance across city assets.

“The problem we’ve had over here is we’ve done a good job of fixing a lot of things, but we hadn’t done a good job of documenting,” Gunn explained.

Although initially focused on the gas system, Gunn said the software eventually could manage inspections for parks, playground equipment and virtually every city asset.

The action amends budget allocations within the approximately \$12.9 million PHMSA grant after federal approval of revised spending categories.

It was stressed that the overall grant amount remains unchanged.

“We knew what we were asking for. We didn’t know about pricing,” city officials explained. “When things come in cheaper... we moved that around inside the budget.”

The revised action also allows the city manager to execute an updated contract with Bacon, Farmer, and Workman reflecting the new budget allocations.

Commissioners unanimously approved hiring Jeff Gentry as Fulton police chief following interviews with five finalists.

Lamb said all applicants were qualified, but Gentry distinguished himself during the interview process.

“We had several very good... all of them were great, but one stood out to the interview panel,” the city manager said.

After commissioners approved the appointment, Gentry thanked the city leader-

ship.

“I just want to say thank you to our city manager and the commission and to the citizens and the community of Fulton,” Gentry said. “I’m looking forward to getting on board and working with the dedicated men and women in the city police department.”

Gentry is scheduled to officially begin work Monday, Aug. 3.

Commissioners approved renewing the city’s annual joint funding agreement with the U.S. Department of the Interior for operation and maintenance of the Bayou de Chien stream gauge.

Lamb said pricing has remained essentially unchanged for several years.

Lamb announced the city’s work under the federal American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund program has been completed.

The city has received official notice confirming close-out of the grant.

Lamb noted records must still remain available if the U.S. Treasury elects to conduct a future audit.

One of the evening’s lengthiest discussions centered on the city’s ongoing disagreement with the Fulton Independent School District regarding school resource officer staffing.

Following a recent meeting with Superintendent Dr. Darrell Witten, city officials reported little progress toward reaching a new agreement.

“It is still not looking promising that we will staff two school resource officers,” Lamb told commissioners.

Commission members reaffirmed they will not support returning to a single SRO.

Lamb argued two dedicated officers are necessary for student safety and also prevent excessive strain on the police department.

“We agree that we do not want to have one SRO,” the

city manager said. “We want to have two SROs.”

The revised memorandum of understanding prepared by the city reflects that position.

The proposal also: removes overtime billing language that historically had never been used; provides coverage for the requested 171 school days; details procedures if one officer is absent; and establishes payment schedules.

Under the proposed agreement, the school district would pay in two installments, with the first payment due upon execution of the agreement and the second due in December.

Assistant Police Chief T.J. Kirby explained assigning two dedicated officers already stretches department staffing.

Without adequate personnel, patrol coverage throughout the city suffers.

“There is some concern about if we do set two SROs, the strain that that will put on the department,” Lamb said.

Officials estimated maintaining two full-time

SRO positions effectively require staffing equivalent to four officers to cover vacations, illness and other absences throughout the year.

Because no new agreement has been signed before the school year begins, commissioners acknowledged there will not be dedicated officers stationed full time inside the schools.

Instead, patrol officers will visit campuses when available while remaining responsible for responding to calls elsewhere in the city.

Fulton police officer Natalie Elliot, a FISD SRO, emphasized officers still intend to maintain relationships with students.

“It’s not that we don’t want to be in school,” Elliott said. “We actually love being in school.”

City Attorney Allison Whitledge emphasized residents should clearly understand the situation.

“I think it’s important that the public understands that the school has not renewed a contract with the city,” Whitledge said.

She warned parents should not expect dedicated officers to remain on campus throughout the school day.

“The dedicated service that the school has gotten accustomed to... will not be there at the same level,” she said.

Mayor Prater repeatedly emphasized the disagreement is not about generating revenue.

“This is absolutely not a financial issue that the City of Fulton is requiring,” Prater said. “The City of Fulton wants to have two SROs because we believe it’s a safety issue.”

Although Lamb acknowledged approval by the school board appears unlikely, they agreed to forward the revised memorandum of understanding, anyway.

Public Works Director Steven Weiser reported crews successfully resolved a sewer pump station issue near the city’s new Acee’s service facilities.

Weiser also reported that the city is working to stay on top of mowing, but also noted the extreme heat and heavy rain the area has experienced is slowing things down.

Fire Chief Steven Lang reported:

The city’s tower truck is undergoing scheduled maintenance in Shepherdsville.

He noted radio repeater repairs are underway after communication issues during a recent fire.

Lang also told the commission that the department has advanced through two peer reviews for a federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant.

If awarded, the approximately \$360,000-\$370,000 grant would fund new radios, air packs and other equipment.

“That’s a win for the City of

continued from page 1

Fulton if we get it,” Lang said.

Lamb announced demolition is expected to begin in early August on the former service station across from Pizza Hut after the property was sold.

Commissioners also discussed creating a chronic nuisance ordinance targeting repeat code violators.

At Whitledge’s urging, it was decided for Lamb to will continue researching whether stronger penalties would receive support from the county attorney before presenting a proposal.

Commissioners approved a contract allowing Jordan’s Way to host a nationally streamed fundraiser benefiting the Fulton animal shelter on Aug. 11.

Commissioner Darcy Linn, who works at the Fulton animal shelter, said the online event has raised more than \$14 million for shelters nationwide.

The initial fundraising goal for Fulton is \$15,000, expecting funds with much-needed shelter repairs. As the commission approved the fundraiser, Linn will provide more concrete information on the event.

Commissioners directed staff to explore soliciting bids for private mowing services because staffing shortages continue affecting Public Works operations.

Commissioners concluded the meeting by approving a resolution, accepting approximately \$586,000 through Kentucky’s Local Assistance Road Program for street resurfacing.

Lamb noted the project must be completed within three years and will coordinate with ongoing gas infrastructure work to avoid unnecessary pavement replacement.

The meeting adjourned following brief closing comments from Prater welcoming Gentry and his family to the community.

continued from page 1

BOE

nancial constraints.

Employees will still receive salary increases for:

Additional years of experience, rank changes and step advancements.

The board also reviewed revisions to the district’s extra-duty stipend schedule.

Among the changes:

Creation of a Supervisor of Instruction role, addition of a Dean of Students/Assistant Principal stipend and adjustments involving middle school cheerleading and fifth-grade teacher responsibilities.

The board unanimously approved the amended Fiscal Year 2027 payroll calendar.

The calendar continues the district’s practice of paying employees twice each month.

One of the evening’s most significant discussions centered on restoring the district’s partnership with the Four Rivers Foundation.

Dr. Witten explained that after meeting with Foundation representatives, Judge Executive Craig Clymer and Foundation leadership, the district negotiated a new memorandum of understanding designed to expand dual credit opportunities for students.

He said the relationship had deteriorated in previous years, preventing students from fully benefiting from resources.

The agreement restores support for dual credit coursework offered through the regional community college.

“We are blessed here in this region. There are school districts that would kill for this kind of support.”

Students can earn college credit in courses such as English 101 and 102, Communications, Mathematics and Psychology

The superintendent emphasized students could graduate high school having already completed many freshman college requirements.

“This is an amazing opportunity.”

However, he stressed the district must properly supervise students and faithfully implement the program.

“Not only do our kids take part in this, but we want them to be successful.”

He also encouraged community members to thank Foundation representatives for their continued investment in Fulton students.

The board unanimously approved the memorandum of understanding.

The board discussed considerable approval of a Leader in Me program contract.

Dr. Witten described the leadership program as a district-wide framework built around Stephen Covey’s “Seven Habits,” teaching students responsibility, leadership, organization and workplace readiness beginning in elementary school.

“This structurally provides us with a foundation.”

He noted employers frequently identify deficiencies

in graduates’ soft skills.

“They don’t have the time management. They don’t have the work ethic. They don’t show up to work on time.”

Funding for the district’s \$63,928.10 share will come through a School Improvement Grant after a separate foundation reduced the overall cost.

Board members Dean and Gossum questioned whether the investment represented the best use of grant funding.

Dean suggested mentor teachers might better support beginning educators.

“I think this program is good. I just don’t know if I think it’s good for this school this year.”

Dr. Witten acknowledged successful implementation would require complete staff commitment. “You can buy any program. I don’t care what its name is. If you do not implement it with fidelity, it will not work.”

He said administrators are committed to ensuring consistent implementation. “This is one of the best overall programs.”

The board ultimately approved the contract on a 3-2 vote, with Ferrell, Bransford and Pettigrew voting to approve the program implementation and Dean and Gossum voting against the program.

The board approved, allowing Dr. Witten to organize a future board retreat focused on governance, team building and long-term planning.

The superintendent proposed a three-hour training session designed to help board members develop consensus and strengthen communication.

Scheduling will probably occur in September after members showed August conflicts.

Rather than rush completion, the board voted to table both the Student Handbook and Teacher Handbook until the next meeting.

Dr. Witten said administrators are carefully reviewing expectations to ensure district policies are realistic and consistently enforced.

“We want to get those right the first time.”

He noted some handbook provisions had existed for years but were not consistently enforced.

The board conducted the first reading of many policy updates developed by the Kentucky School Boards Association following the 2026 legislative session.

Dr. Witten explained KSBA reviews new legislation each year and prepares policy revisions for local districts.

He noted Fulton is slightly behind schedule because of administrative transition but remains in compliance.

Among the changes highlighted: Legal notices must include both Eastern and Central Time; Board members must complete expanded ethics, finance and open meet-

ings training; Superintendent contracts cannot exceed employee percentage pay increases; School websites must display required information more prominently; Additional transportation requirements for non-school bus drivers; Prohibitions against using taxpayer funds for political advocacy; Updated district budgeting timelines; and Parent rights regarding requests for alternative curriculum assignments in certain circumstances.

The board acknowledged the first reading, with final adoption expected later.

The board approved adoption of the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) Superintendent Framework, which establishes standards used to evaluate Kentucky superintendents.

Dr. Witten explained the framework reduced previous standards from seven to five and includes mentoring and professional development requirements for new superintendents.

Discussion of the School Resource Officer memorandum of understanding with the City of Fulton concluded without action.

Dr. Witten reported ongoing conversations with city officials, law enforcement and state school safety personnel regarding a revised agreement.

Among the issues discussed were the number of officer workdays, contract costs,

state reimbursement funding, response times, and compliance with Kentucky school safety requirements

The superintendent questioned paying officers for 260 days when students attend school approximately 171 days.

He indicated a special-called meeting may be necessary before school begins if negotiations conclude after the next regular meeting.

During closing comments, Dr. Witten announced several administrative improvements aimed at increasing transparency and giving board members more time to review information before meetings.

Future agenda packets will be prepared earlier, with a goal of delivering materials by Thursday rather than Friday before meetings.

He also proposed transitioning to digital board packets while continuing to provide printed copies for members who prefer them.

“My commitment to you... is trying to be transparent, trying to get you timely information.”

Witten praised the district’s administrative team and expressed optimism about the year ahead.

“I’m excited about being your superintendent. I’m excited about what we can do for our students.”

With no public comments presented, the board adjourned. After approving all the remaining business.

continued from page 1

EMS

amendment to the fiscal year 2026 budget, including increases in run revenue and grant funding. The amended budget reflects excess revenues of \$46,745.

Jones and Fortner requested approval of \$25,000 in performance incentive pay for employees, citing cost savings from reduced sick time usage and lower vacancy backfill expenses.

The board approved \$20,000 in incentive pay for

staff and up to \$5,000 for administrators. Employee incentive amounts will be based on performance evaluations and hours worked. A committee consisting of Murphy, Gray and Martin will conduct evaluations of Jones and Fortner.

The board approved the fiscal year 2027 budget, which includes projected run revenue of \$765,000, \$978,499 in salaries and wages, \$183,267 for health insurance and

\$38,000 in service contracts.

A revised fee schedule was also approved, marking the first major update since 2022. Changes include new allowable charges for motor vehicle accident responses, disposable supplies and oxygen administration. Mileage rates and base charges will also increase, while the No Treat/No Transport response fee will increase from \$180 to \$204.

Officials said the adjust-

ments are intended to better recover costs while maintaining financial sustainability.

The board also approved a new five-step pay structure for clinical employees designed to improve recruitment and retention. The program considers experience, years of service and performance evaluations.

Current hourly wages of \$12.75 for EMT Basics, \$14.50 for Advanced EMTs and \$18 for Paramedics will

increase under the new scale to: EMT Basic: \$13-\$14 per hour; Advanced EMT: \$15-\$16 per hour; and Paramedic: \$19-\$21 per hour

The board discussed establishing an operational reserve policy to provide financial stability during revenue fluctuations, unexpected expenses or emergencies. Officials discussed creating a restricted reserve fund of approximately \$450,000, representing three months of expenses.

The board also approved switching fuel card providers from Gulf Fleet/WEX to RCPA, which is expected to provide annual savings through reduced fees and fuel rebates.

With the upcoming retirement of Fulton City Manager Mike Gunn, the board approved appointing Benita Fuzzell as credit card holder, bank signatory and John Hancock Plan Trustee, pending her acceptance.