

THE

PIONEER NEWS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

WWW.PIONEERNEWS.NET

VOL. 143, No. 69 \$2

Cease fire: Amended voting plan avoids school closure

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE – The final vote has not been taken and the Bullitt County Public School System is hoping a last-minute campaign will change the way elections are held this spring.

And those wishes were granted on Monday morning at a special meeting of the Bullitt County Board of Elections.

By a 3-1 vote, the board opted to change its plan for the upcoming primary elections. This will avoid

a confrontation between the elections board and the school system.

The change of direction came after the Bullitt County School Board discussed its request for the public to voice its displeasure over the shutting down of instruction in the May primary due to three schools being used for early voting.

The May 14-15 shutdown would fall in the middle of the state testing window. There is also national AP testing which is done during that period.

Bullitt County Clerk Kevin Mooney said that he had heard

comments from the public about their displeasure with the plan that was also used during the 2024 elections. Several election board members had also received feedback from the community.

The school district had supplied e-mail addresses for several individuals with ties to the state board of elections in order for the public to express its displeasure.

“The pushback is severe,” Mooney said of the feedback. “I’m going to listen to what the people are asking for.”

The hope is that the altered plan

will work and give his successor something to work with in 2027. Mooney is retiring after five terms in office.

Under the proposed plan, Mount Washington Elementary, Mount Washington Middle and Zoneton Middle would have been used for early voting locations.

Last week, Mooney said he started to visit sites in the east and north where early voting locations might be found.

Evaluating each of the potential locations, Mooney said that he felt that the First Baptist Church in

Mount Washington, Pleasant Grove Baptist between Mount Washington and Shepherdsville, and the Jesse Schott Gymnasium in Hillview would have the space needed inside and the parking area outside to make them viable sites.

Paroquet Springs Conference Centre would remain a voting site for early voting and election day voting.

On election day, the early voting sites would be supplemented with other locations.

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Stephen Thomas

Republican Party hosts forum of speakers

The Bullitt County Republican Party hosted a daylong forum on Saturday. Speakers running for office were allowed to talk to the audience at Paroquet Springs Conference Centre. In addition to the local candidates, Daniel Cameron spoke about his run for the U.S. Senate seat. One of his major opponents, U.S. Rep. Andy Barr, was supposed to speak later in the evening but organizers shut down the evening early.

Retired teacher imparts life lessons in memoir

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE — A local parent and retired teacher decided to step up with a memoir providing colorful insight into the life journeys of herself and her son.

“Standing Silent Secrets” was written by Shirley Sparenberg Lakes, known in Bullitt Countians as a long-time music teacher, with 36 years of teaching middle school.

Sparenberg Lakes’ memoir is two-fold, covering the journeys of both herself, who experienced a brief first marriage, and her son, who is gay. She hoped to share what she has learned in that span of life with others to help educate society and eliminate both fear and bigotry.

The former educator also hopes that her story and her son’s journey will assist both

parents and children in similar situations, helping them to realize they are not alone.

The story begins during Sparenberg Lakes’ senior year of college in 1969, where she met her first husband, who abruptly left her after just three months.

“At that time, you didn’t get pregnant without being married, and you didn’t get divorced,” she said. “I didn’t date for a long time after that.”

Eventually her twin sister insisted on her dating again, and she eventually met her second, and current, husband.

“He told me not to tell his family about my first marriage,” she said. “I said, ‘Why, I didn’t do anything wrong, he walked out on me,’ and he said, ‘We don’t have divorce in our family.’”

With in-laws in rural Eastern Kentucky, Sparenberg Lakes went along with the request. She didn’t

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Fox Chase looks to honor country's birthday

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

FOX CHASE – In honor of the country’s 250th birthday this summer, one northern Bullitt County city is looking at a way to observe the celebration.

Fox Chase councilman David Selby said he had a flag pole donated if the city wanted to install it at the entrance on Fox Chase Drive.

Currently, the city has signs welcoming people into the community and Selby said it would be a good location.

He said the only maintenance would be to replace the flag every couple of years. Organizations like the VFW Post 5710 in Shepherdsville commonly have flags which could be supplied.

Councilman Wayne Muscar had a question about who actually owns the property where the city has its signs currently.

City attorney Mark Edison said he would have to research the question.

“This would be a wonderful spot,” Selby said of the flag pole.

With four lights in that area, that should take care of keeping the flag illuminated at night.

No decision will be made

until the property ownership question is solved.

In other business:

*The city took no action on a text amendment to place a definition for transitional housing in the zoning regulations.

Edison said that if the issue is currently being studied by a regulations committee, there is no sense publishing the ordinance and then having to change it at a later date.

The text amendment was born in the city of Shepherdsville after a concern over possible litigation. The resolution would allow the creation of a transitional home in any residential zone.

Edison said there are a lot of questions about transitional housing that need to be addressed.

The city’s planning representative, Mark Krauss, said there was a lot discussion by planning commission members at its last meeting. It is also to be discussed by the group working to revise regulations.

*A question over the minutes from the December meeting led to a 4-1 vote, with Selby in opposition.

He felt the two sets of minutes – the regular meeting

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White Flag shelter open 24/7; volunteers, donations sought

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE — Remnants of the latest winter storm hung around Bullitt County for over a week. Therefore, so has the white flag.

Mark 12 Ministries made the decision just prior to the start of the major storm to open the White Flag shelter for 24 hours at First Baptist Church in Shepherdsville.

Volunteers worked the shelter non-stop for at least 10 days, providing warmth, meals, and other various assistance and resources to those in need throughout the duration.

Mark 12 executive director Perry Cooke said the shelter’s efforts were both successful

and beneficial, with an average of 15 individuals assisted per day.

“We wanted to be open prior to the storm,” Cooke said. “First Baptist has been so gracious to allow us to use their entire gymnasium. We were able to provide a place for families that lost power to stay warm, get a nice meal, and provide them with some assistance.”

Cooke mentioned that the shelter assisted both families and individuals who lost power or heat during the week, as well as homeless individuals persevering through the winter weather.

According to Cooke, three referrals were made to Mark 12’s Pathway Home Program, which provides mentorship

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