

Hillview says no to gas tax exemption

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

HILLVIEW — City officials in Hillview have taken no action to extend Governor Andy Beshear's executive order pertaining to motor fuels tax.

Beshear's order went into effect on May 11 and is set to expire in 30 days unless extended.

According to Hillview mayor Jim Eadens, each Kentucky county and municipality had an option to extend the tax reduction of 10 cents per gallon on gasoline and diesel fuel.

The attempt was initially made by the governor to ease the high fuel costs for Kentuckians.

Following a video conference call Eadens participated in with state officials, he said the 10 cents amounted to "a Value Meal at McDonald's" for each Kentucky family.

With the tax order expiring June 10, Eadens said the city council had the option to extend the order further. If the council took no action, the order would expire.

"It's also supposed to stop price gouging," he added. "But that's gone on for years."

According to Eadens, Bullitt County judge/executive Jerry Summers said Bullitt Fiscal Court would not extend the order. However, he said all 120 Kentucky counties and over 400 cities had their own option to extend the order.

Eadens mentioned that the 10 cents order resulted in a loss of \$30 million in overall Kentucky Municipal Road Aid funding.

"Each county, and city, that passes this still affects our own road money," he said. "If we don't pass it, and everyone else does, you still lose. There will be less money in the bucket." (Money generated from gas taxes are collected by the state and then distributed to each municipality)

"If you're not for it, then no action needs to be taken," Eadens reminded the council. "If you vote for it, then we need to file before June 10."



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Council member Wes Stafford said gas prices have already lowered since peaking at the start of the United States war with Iran. He said he heard the prices were supposed to continue to drop.

"We have to hope the other cities in the state feel like we do," Stafford added.

No action was taken by the council to extend the order.

In other business:

- The council voted to approve a contract buyout for a police officer from the Springfield Police Department.

Eadens said the city had an opportunity to buy out \$41,000 on the officer's contract. He said the Hillview department remained short on officers, adding that transferring the current officer would be cheaper for the city than paying for police academy and other various trainings.

Council member Alice Keister wanted to make certain the candidate came with a clean resume, while council member Randall Hill inquired about the officer's experience.

Hillview Police chief Bill Mahoney said the officer was two years out of the academy, adding that other Hillview officers spoke highly of

the candidate. Mahoney said the officer would still need to participate in some local department training.

Mahoney added that past lateral move attempts by the city and the department fell through. Eadens admitted he would not be interested in a lateral that still needed a lot more training.

According to Mahoney, the candidate would ride along with current officers for a period of four to 10 weeks to learn standards and expectations. He said the officer could be released even sooner if immediately up to speed.

"Our training is more in-depth, detailed and significant," Mahoney said. "They would be considered a brand new officer."

Eadens noted that if the candidate left Hillview at any time over a four-year period, the city would be reimbursed based on how long the officer stayed.

"In our experience over the past decade, (transfers) turn out to be either Superman, or to be a whole lot less."

Stafford said he was in support of the candidate if Mahoney and the city's officers were happy. Mahoney said he valued his officers' opinions, with officers feeling the

candidate would "be a good fit and reliable."

- Council members discussed potential upgrades to the city's fence ordinance.

Hill said the council felt more legalese was necessary regarding swimming pools and fences so that city code enforcement officer Angie Hurst could better enforce.

"We need more of what can be done and what can't," said Hill. "We have fences blocking easements and not using proper materials."

Council member Robin Triplett said she didn't want the city to turn into a homeowners' association. Eadens noted that illegal fencing could have an impact on the property values of neighboring residents.

No action was taken to upgrade the ordinance.

- Eadens thanked students from the Bullitt County Area Technology Center who created and donated bicycle racks to the city's recreation department.

ATC has also donated bike racks to the cities of Mount Washington and Shepherdsville. The racks were part of a school project designed to allow ATC students to implement their learned skills within real world settings.

- Triplett thanked Dr. Mitchell

and Maryville Dental for donating several dentistry items to the city's Boxes of Love food pantry.

Eadens mentioned that the pantry continues to increase in services, with a previous distribution totaling 150 vehicles and benefiting 163 families.

The city collects canned goods and non-perishable food items, along with other items in need including personal hygiene items such as shampoo and conditioner, soap, body wash, and dental products.

Donations can be made at the Hillview Government Center between 8 am and 4:30 pm weekdays and as late as 8 pm Thursdays.

Dare to Care food distributions take place on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, 4:30-6 pm, at the Eadens Resource Center, 1191 Hillview Blvd.

Also, signups are underway for the Supplemental Commodities for Seniors program. Ages 60 and over with a monthly income limit under \$1,995 eligible. For more information call (502)957-5280.

- The next Hillview City Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 15, 7 pm, at the Hillview Government Center. The public is invited to attend.

A contrary Pioneer Village will not see its garden grow

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

PIONEER VILLAGE — The field in question was not designated for sports, but it was theoretically the cause of an ejection.

Pioneer Village resident Russell Wilson was officially removed from Becknell Hall during the city council's May meeting by order of mayor Gary Hatcher.

The incident occurred as city clerk Micheale McCauley completed a reading of the minutes from a raucous April meeting in which representatives of a community garden, provided by the city, argued with city officials regarding its proper use.

Wilson, representing the garden volunteers, shared concerns and personal displeasure with the city in April. At the end of that meeting he apologized for losing his temper, adding that the garden was very personal to him.

As Hatcher asked the council to approve the April minutes, Wilson announced that information regarding his conversations were incorrect. Hatcher gavelled a request for order. When Wilson continued to speak out, Hatcher asked city police chief Mark Riley to escort him from the building.

"If you approve the minutes as written, you're all liars," Wilson shouted as he exited. The council

voted 5-0 to approve the minutes, with council member Don Howell absent.

Later in the meeting, discussion was reopened by the council regarding a request for additional land to add a pumpkin patch to the garden area. The council first discussed the issue in April following public comments.

Garden volunteer Alisha Fewell had first presented the pumpkin patch proposal in April. During that meeting, Fewell received a removal warning from Hatcher for speaking out of order, but was not ejected.

Hatcher mentioned that no discussion would be allowed from the public at the May meeting, as the public hearing regarding the topic already took place in April. He said it was now the council's decision on future garden use and the potential pumpkin patch addition.

Council member Jim Burke said he spoke with many involved and felt the best course of action was remaining status quo until the next administration change in January. He made a motion, seconded by council member Peggy Druin. The council voted 4-1 in favor with council member John Mast opposed.

Hatcher later said the city would stick with the council agreement and nothing new would take place

involving the garden until the end of the growing season. He added that he was aware some residents and volunteers were upset with him regarding the issue.

"I understand that a lot of residents don't understand all this," he said. "The mayors have to follow council decisions. And I know it makes me look like a bad guy."

In other business:

- The council approved the 2026-27 Fiscal Year budget that will go into effect July 1.

The budget included a \$795,000 carryover from the previous year, along with \$45,000 in Municipal Road Aid Funding. A total of \$1.912 million in revenue includes an estimated \$776,000 in property taxes and \$267,000 in occupational taxes.

The city police department totaled \$1.1 million in anticipated expenses, with \$407,000 allocated toward general government funding. McCauley said new police equipment and personnel additions led to increases.

- City attorney Mark Edison presented the first reading of an ordinance to create and establish duties for the city clerk/treasurer and deputy city clerk/treasurer positions.

Edison also presented the first reading of an ordinance to establish police department personnel benefits. Changes included time

and a half payment for working on holidays, along with provided paid time off with five days advanced notice unless there was an emergency.

The ordinance also secured allotted vacation time based on an employee's years of service.

Also presented was the first reading of an ordinance establishing vacation day limits for all city employees. According to Edison, once an employee reached 20 vacation days, there would be no more time to accrue.

McCauley said the purpose of the ordinances was to update the general rules, regulations and procedures. A second reading and a vote to approve or deny all three ordinances is scheduled for the next meeting.

- The council approved the rezoning of property along E. Enterprise Drive, owned by Terry Hardwick, from B-1 Business to R-1 Residential.

- The council approved a resolution to accept the entirety of Shepherds Way into the city's roadway system.

According to Hatcher, the city did not initially accept the entire roadway but did help to maintain it. He said the city could accept the rest of the road following improvements made by Little Flock Baptist Church.

Edison said the city would now

officially provide all appropriate signage and services.

- Riley announced that the police department responded to 78 calls for service during the month of April.

- Hatcher said city Planning and Zoning representative Tony Thompson was not seeking re-assignment to the position.

Thompson's term officially ended as of June 30. Hatcher said anyone interested in the position should contact the city. Edison reminded that the individual must be a city resident and that the position required annual training. For more information call (502)957-3800.

- Hatcher announced that a cease and desist petition was available to sign at the meeting regarding a potential trucking center in Hillview along W. Hebron Lane. The mayor noted that the location would mostly impact city residents within the Deer Run subdivision.

Edison mentioned that the Kentucky Department of Transportation District 5 had not been presented with an encroachment application by the property's owners as of one week prior to the council meeting.

- The Pioneer Village City Council will meet Tuesday, June 23, 7 pm, at Becknell Hall on Summit Drive. The public is invited to attend.

Board endorses grant requests for LJ, Nichols

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THE PIONEER NEWS

PIONEER VILLAGE — If the pool at the Maryville Park is going to reopen in the near future, it might have to do so without the immediate endorsement of the Bullitt County Parks and Recreation advisory board.

While the members in attendance agreed that it would be ideal to reopen the now-shuttered swimming pool, the consensus during a previous vote of the board was that it would be seeking grants to advance projects in Lebanon Junction and Nichols.

The June meeting was largely a discussion on grant

opportunities.

Ethan Schrage, a community and economic development planner for the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Area District, reviewed some of the grant opportunities which will soon become available to apply for.

And thanks to the state legislature, there is assistance to help local communities with any grant portion they might be responsible for matching.

Two primary grant funding sources are through the recreational trails program and the land and water conservation program.

The land and water grants have a maximum of \$1

million available. The other has a maximum award of \$250,000.

Board member Terry Bohannon said magistrate Karen Johnson had contractors lined up who would do the work to reopen the pool at a much lower cost.

There was also a \$245,000 grant awarded to the county for the pool but it was returned.

The cost of getting the pool open ranged from \$2-\$4 million.

Bohannon, the retired parks and recreation director for the city of Hillview, said a lot more kids would benefit from a pool at Maryville and splash pads are good for the smaller children.

She suggested that maybe Lebanon Junction could apply for a grant to renovate its playground equipment at the park and the county could look at the pool issue.

Board chairperson Jo Coffman said the group had voted previously to work on projects in Nichols and Lebanon Junction because both areas needed improvements.

In Lebanon Junction, Coffman said it appeared that upgrading the playground equipment in the Wall Street Park seemed like the logical project.

In Nichols, the county was donated 14 acres behind the former Nichols Elementary, she said there is space to

develop.

Playground equipment was discussed for that facility, which has already gotten a new pavilion from the county, as well as cleaning up the property.

Bohannon said she understood those projects but added that Johnson did some social media polling and a vast majority of those responding wanted to see the pool reopened.

The board will return at its July 11 meeting to discuss finalizing projects to apply for funding. Fiscal Court would make the final decision on any park board recommendation.

At a recent meeting, fiscal court members said they

would wait for a recommendation from the parks board on any projects, including the pool.

In the 2026-27 budget, which could be approved at the June 16 meeting, the parks and recreation department had a budget of \$759,000, which is about \$600,000 less than the current fiscal year.

The county budget proposes \$250,000 for special projects and another \$250,000 for park construction.

The next parks board meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, July 10, in the courthouse. The public is invited to attend.