

Laurel Fiscal Court passes 2026-2027 budget

BY MACEE SWAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

LONDON — The Laurel County Fiscal Court met for its second regular meeting of the month Thursday, unanimously approving the second reading of the county's 2026-27 budget ordinance.

Following the request for approval of the second reading of Budget Ordinance 222.99 by Laurel County Judge/Executive David Westerfield, County Treasurer Katelin McPeek presented the \$51 million budget summary and line-item appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027.



Laurel County Fiscal Court convened last week for its second regular meeting for the month of June. | PHOTO BY MACEE SWAFFORD

The approved budget includes: — General Fund: \$20,638,216

- Road Fund: \$6,116,062
- Jail Fund: \$14,100,000
- Local Government Economic Assistance (LGEA) Fund: \$37,020
- Forestry Fund: \$9,003
- Occupational Tax Fund: \$9,229,564
- Opioid Settlement Fund: \$1,183,000
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Fund: \$6,504
- County Clerk Storage Fees Fund: \$176,060.

The total budget is listed as \$51,495,429.

Following McPeek's reading of the ordinance, Fiscal Court unanimously

approved the second reading without discussion, officially adopting the county's budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

During the communications portion of the meeting, Westerfield addressed an agenda item regarding the appointment of a new member to the London-Laurel County Tourist Commission to fill the vacant seat left by longtime board chairman Tom Handy, who passed away in April. Judge Westerfield announced the appointment would be delayed until the court's July meeting to allow for additional review.

Later in the meeting, Westerfield also responded to questions he had received regarding recurring transfers into the Jail Fund.

"Where we have the federal inmates at the Laurel County Correctional Center, they send this money to the fiscal court, and we have to transfer it to the Jail Fund," said Judge Westerfield. "That's why we have to do this each month. We try to get them to send it directly to the correctional center, but that doesn't always happen. We have to do this each

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London-Laurel County Communications Center Board approves budget, receives grant updates



911 Board members begin the meeting. | PHOTO BY ANIYA JAMES

BY ANIYA JAMES
STAFF WRITER

LONDON — The London-Laurel County Communications Center Board approved the second reading of its 2026-27 budget and received updates on grants, personnel changes, technology upgrades and emergency response initiatives during a special-called meeting June 23 at the Laurel County Extension Office.

The board unanimously approved the second reading of the fiscal year 2026-27 budget, which remained unchanged from the version presented during the previous meeting. According to Director Larry Walls, pro-

jected revenues include \$500,000 from the city and county, approximately \$1.1 million from 911 fees, \$1,500 in miscellaneous revenue and \$370,000 in Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) funds.

Walls reported that required budget notifications had been submitted to local government officials following the board's first reading of the budget.

The board also received an update on the implementation of automatic mutual aid for the Laurel County fire departments with dispatch software being updated so that when a structure fire is reported, two fire de-

partments are automatically paged instead of one.

Officials said all agreements have been completed and the system is now operational. According to reports from local fire officials, the automatic mutual aid system has been functioning successfully since being implemented.

The communications center recently received two grants through the Kentucky 911 Services a Board.

The first grant — totaling

\$9,494 — will fund a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system. Walls said the upgrade will integrate administrative and emergency phone lines into a single system, allowing dispatchers to answer calls more efficiently while replacing equipment that is more than a decade old.

The second grant — valued at \$16,590 — will fund the purchase of a network master clock system. The equipment will synchronize

time across dispatch computers, radio systems and recording devices to improve accuracy throughout the center. Both grants require a 10 percent local match.

Board members also approved several personnel actions including the resignation of a full-time dispatcher, the resignation of a part-time dispatcher, and the promotion of a part-time dispatcher to a full-time position. Members also authorized staff to begin the hiring process for

a new part-time dispatcher.

Walls provided an update on the center's transition to Next Generation 911 technology, a state-funded upgrade designed to modernize emergency call delivery and improve system redundancy. The upgrade was completed during the previous month and has operated without issues.

The board also discussed repairs to the tornado si-

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