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STATE AND COUNTY road crews, as well as many volunteers, responded to the weekend snow storm and worked tirelessly to improve road conditions in Union County. This photo on U.S. 60 near Union County High School shows a Kentucky Department of Transportation snow plow removing snow from the highway. This photo was provided by Union County EMS Director Lee Baird.

U.S. House Of Representatives Votes To Maintain Job Corps; Senate Vote Coming

In late May and early June 2025, just days after Earle J. Clements Job Corp Academy in Morganfield celebrated its 60th anniversary, campus personnel and students learned that the facility would close on July 1, due to Congress withdrawing funding for most job corps facilities across the nation.

Federal budget cuts to the Department of Labor enacted by the Trump administration's DOGE were expected to impact about 300 local jobs along with the impact closure of ECCJCA would have on local businesses and vendors. Thousands of young people would also lose their job training skills classes and the possibility of joining the workforce. In Union County the students from ECCJCA have long been part of the community working at community events, providing an honor guard for

many parades, dinners and other activities throughout the county. The culinary department has long been one of the county's most used services for catering and serving at numerous events.

As the nation's largest job corps facility, the closure of the Clements Center would mean the end of programs that have long enabled students from across the country to learn job skills, enter the military and find their way in a society that had often failed them.

The local academy and community acted quickly, promoting a letter writing campaign and phone campaign to Congressmen to stress the importance of job corps to not just Union County but to the country as a whole. In the last quarter of 2025, funding was restored and ECCJCA began once again taking students and filling a variety of job vacancies,

but the status of the center remained unclear.

Tessa Gough, the Director at Earle C. Clements, notified The Sturgis News late last week that the U. S. House of Representatives passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026 by a bi-partisan vote of 341-88; the bill maintains Job Corps' current funding level for program year 2026 (July 1- 2026 through June 30, 2027).

The passage of the bill also includes new statutory language limiting closures of Job Corps Campuses, a move that will see the Job Corps programs continue across the nations. The bill moves to the Senate this week where it is hoped a favorable vote will be recorded.

Gough noted in her announcement "We're a step closer to the culmination of our campaign to Save Job Corps."

Morganfield Council Hears Citizen Concerns; Updated On Project Work

The Morganfield City Council met in regular session Thursday evening where council members heard a complaint from a local resident, a request from a community sports group, an update on projects and an announcement of council committees.

After the opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, the council approved the minutes of the previous meeting. All six council members and Mayor Greenwell were present.

Mayor Greenwell then appointed the council member committees along with the other city appointees. The committee and members include Finance-Brittany French and Brian Humphrey; Fire and Police-Brittany French and Ronnie Burkins; Downtown-Jeremy Collins and Brian Humphrey; Property-Brian Humphrey and Jeremy Collins; Streets, Parks and Recreation-Tommy Berry and Jeremy Collins; Gas, Water and Sewer-Tommy Berry and Russell Wyatt and Public Works-Russell Wyatt and Ronnie Burkins. Scott Clements continues to serve as the City Administrator; Rick Millikan as fire chief; Chad Voss as police chief; Chris Buckman as street superintendent; David Tapp water treatment superintendent and Lindsay Durbin city attorney. At the present time, the city does not have a designated waste water treatment superintendent or an assistant city administrator.

Following the announcement of board appointments the council heard from local citizen

Kathy Ford who complained about the noise along Crutcher Blvd. She told the group has lived there 44 years and the traffic noise has gotten worse in the last couple of months. She suggested that the city put a flashing light on Crutcher Blvd where trucks would not have to stop. The council decided that would cause a very dangerous situation and would not be an acceptable solution. Mayor Greenwell said that he would put a camera and a noise meter on this intersection and then they could see what time the problem occurred, and the city could then address any issues. Police Chief Chad Voss said they routinely patrol the area and will continue to do so.

Representatives of the little league football program also addressed the council about several repairs and improvements that need to be made at the concession stand, restrooms, and the storage building. The park committee of Jeremy Collins and Tommy Berry along with Mayor Greenwell said they would look at the area and address the concerns as the weather permits.

Several citizens who live on West Spalding and Jeffries Street were concerned that some complaints were not addressed. Police Chief Voss and City Attorney Lindsey Durbin advised them to make sure the complaints are filed in a timely manner and they would attempt to get them handled in the system.

Mayor Greenwell updated the city on a few projects. He emphasized that Phase 3 of the sewer

separation project was mandated by the EPA, and the city is several years out of compliance and has been lucky to avoid the \$1000 a day fine. He stated that this project will move much slower than the other 2 phases because of all the obstacles. Mayor Greenwell said because they are putting in two four foot sewers and trying to work around the AT&T conduit that sometimes they just have inches to spare. He invited the council to watch some of the construction work to see how intense the project is.

The mayor also reported that the splash pad project is going smoothly and the contractors are now putting tiles in the bathrooms and will be installing the fence and the landscaping as the weather permits.

Before closing Mayor Greenwell read a letter where GRADD representative requested that Morganfield sign up for Parade's Magazine Small Community of the year. According to the request Morganfield is the only city the agency notified. GRADD filled out the paperwork and Morganfield paid the entry fee. Readers can go to (americasfavoritesmalltowns.parade.com) and vote for Morganfield once a day. Mayor Greenwell said that just the fact that they were requested to enter was a tribute to the citizens and businesses of Morganfield.

The next Morganfield City Council meeting is scheduled for February 26.

UCBOE Meets For Work Session

The Union County Board of Education met for their monthly work session on Thursday, January 22 with Superintendent Dr. Terra Hancock and all board members present. Member Donnie Gatten attended the meeting via Zoom.

Normally at the work session, board members discuss the agenda for the regular meetings, which are scheduled the fourth Monday of each month. However, last week, the board changed the agenda and discussed several items because of the weekend storm which hit the area.

Following approval of the agenda, Dr. Hancock presented her monthly report to members. January is "School Board Member Appreciation Month", and she thanked members for their interest and contributions to the betterment of the Union County Schools.

She also reported several Union County High School attended the "final beam signing" for the construction project at the Union County Vocational School. Dr. Hancock reported that Abby Wheaton, the gifted and talented coordinator at UCHS is the newest member of the Kentucky Department of Education State Advisory Council for gifted and talented.

According to the superintendent, work on the new maintenance buildings near the school bus garage is scheduled for completion by February, weather permitting.

Representatives for the Union County High School cheer squad attended the meeting requesting permission to leave two days early for a national competition in Orlando, Florida. Originally scheduled for departure on Sunday, January 25, the request was made to leave after school on Friday, January 23. Board members expressed concern about the late departure and approved the group leaving for the trip at 9:00 A.M. on Friday. They will return the first week of February.

Board members approved the December financial report, the payment of bills, and the expenses for the superintendent's office.

Teresa Jones with Alford, Nance & Jones, .LLP of Madisonville, Kentucky was present at the meeting and discussed the audit report for fiscal year 2024-2025. She told members the school district's total assets increased from the previous year, and current liabilities have decreased. She emphasized that much of that asset increase is in restricted funds associated with the capital projects currently underway in the district.

Ms. Jones added that the net position for the district has increased. The hard copy of the audit report, presented to members on Thursday, was 83 pages in length. Ms. Jones urged board members to review the report and contact her with any questions. Board members approved the audit report on a 5-0 vote.

District Finance Officer Amy Morris reviewed the draft budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. The school district is required each January to approve the draft budget. In her discussions of the draft budget, Ms. Morris presented several items which will have to be considered by board members before the working budget is submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education in May.

Several variables affect the working budget. Among those are the annual state budget which will be drafted in the current 2026 legislative session; fiscal year 2026 SEEK is not yet finalized; staffing projections are not due until March 2026; raises for certified and classified staff are being considered; and SEEK enrollment is expected to be impacted by the Union County. Virtual Learning Academy and enrollment at the Earle C. Clements Job Corps Center.

Ms. Morris also noted there are several expenditure considerations which will be presented to the board before the working budget is finalized. Among those are instructional needs, facility and maintenance needs, transportation needs, food service decisions, and daycare concerns. The board approved the draft budget.

Board members also approved 13 items on the consent agenda. Those include travel reports, requests for fund-raisers, trip requests, leaves of absence, a dental and vision contract, acceptance of an offer of assistance from the School Facility Construction Commission in the amount of \$29,780, a declaration of surplus property, a hiring transition plan for a payroll specialist and finance specialist, U.S. Marine Corps toys for tots Title I book grant for Uniontown Elementary School, the 2026 board meeting schedule, sick leave bank committee members, and the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan for Union County Middle School.

The meeting was adjourned after a more than 90 minutes session.

The next regular meeting of the Union County Board of Education will be Monday, February 23, 6:00 P.M.