

Fiscal court discusses grant for inclusive playground

FEMA funding secured for road repairs

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Discussions of grant funding, road projects, and park changes took center stage during the March 3 meeting of the Marshall County Fiscal Court.

The meeting opened with Parks Director Brian Harper presenting a request to apply for a crumb rubber grant for the inclusive playground to be built near the Miracle League Field of Dreams facility.

Despite the grant being referred to as a “crumb rubber grant,” Harper said the funds could be used for the intended poured in place rubber needed to keep the playground accessible and inclusive.

“The part that we could apply for, for the grant, is the poured in place playground,” said Harper. “That’s what we’ll be doing. The deadline to apply is April 1, and then the grants will be awarded the middle of May.”

Harper described



Parks Director Brian Harper presented a request for a grant application to the fiscal court.

the grant as being a 75/25 match. The total cost is estimated to be \$106,800, of which the grant is expected to cover approximately \$79,000. Because the grant would be awarded in mid-May, Harper said it would fall in line with the expected timeline for the project.

The court is set to hold a groundbreaking ceremony at 11 a.m. on March 17, immediately after the fiscal court meeting that morning.

County employees will begin preparing the site shortly thereafter. The court hopes to have the project completed by the end of July.

The court unanimously approved for Judge/Executive Kevin Spraggs to sign the necessary documents for the grant.

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The court then moved into a discussion about repairs for Bryant Road. The road closed in early 2025 after flooding damage. The court elected

to secure FEMA funding for the project. Spraggs shared that the court was expecting to receive a deposit from FEMA that week.

The court approved for Spraggs to sign the state issued contract for the work. Spraggs also noted that the county’s own road department would handle any “final touches” needed. Road Department Superintendent Roy Wadkins said that could include paving, guardrails, or

other aspects.

The organization sent by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet will handle bank stabilization to prevent the area from washing out again, and other work. Wadkins stated that the projected timeline of the project was four to six weeks from the time work begins on stabilizing the bank.

Work is expected to begin near the beginning of April, but Wadkins noted that it would

be weather dependent.

The court also had the first reading of an amendment to the administrative code, which amended the county policy regarding compensatory time, verbiage around drug testing, and more.

The court also had the first reading of a budget amendment to account for unexpected income from grants, surplus items, and other instances, as well as related expenditures.

The court rescheduled two meetings. The May 19 meeting was moved to May 15, and the July 7 meeting to July 2. Both meetings remain at 9 a.m.

Before adjourning, Spraggs shared that the court will hold a rededication for the statues at the Veterans Plaza at Mike Miller Park, which comes after the repairing of one statue following an act of reported vandalism. Spraggs stated that the second statue was being “freshened up” as well. The rededication will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 28.

The court regularly meets at 9 a.m. on the first and third Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is set for March 17.

HOSPITAL

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was going to reach out to the physicians in Paducah, and I have seen an improvement in her number of surgeries for February. I still think February’s going to be ugly, but Rome wasn’t built in a day. We have to come up with some way to get revenue.”

Kelley noted that, ultimately, the need comes down to the number of patients coming in the door.

“As we’ve said, we need more volume,” said Kelley. “Our costs are pretty much fixed. You have to have minimum staffing. We’ve got to staff the ER 24/7. We’ve got our staffing requirements, and if our volume continues to fall under, I mean, that is the problem. For the month of December, we had 523 ER visits for the whole month, in a 31-day month.”

Additionally, the hospital is facing staffing issues and has been relying on contract labor to fill those gaps. Tubbs noted that the issue lies with a lack of applicants, and even the acute care and ICU directors were sometimes working night shifts to fill those gaps.

“These positions have been posted for some time — the problem is there are no applicants,” said Tubbs. “It isn’t that you have applicants, you interview them, and you can’t pay them enough. You’re not even actually getting anybody apply.”

The noted issues all come as Kelley is preparing for the hospital’s annual audit, as auditors are expected to be on site beginning on March 16. The board approved the monthly financial report before moving into a discussion about an invoice from a vendor from a failed project.

“Experian is a national company out there,” said Kelley. “We signed the contracts, the project failed. We owe the

money.”

Mann stated that the company did not fulfill its end of the contract, and suggested the matter be discussed with the board’s counsel.

Ultimately, the board opted to have the invoices accrued on the books for the sake of the audit, but to have incoming CEO Steven Luther discuss the topic with Kelley and potentially the board’s counsel about how to handle the issue moving forward.

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The meeting opened with a request to approve the minutes of the Feb. 3 meeting. Board member Heather Davis requested that an additional note be made.

“We might need to put something about the minutes — the financial report being accurate,” said Davis. “That I said that the numbers are what they are, and you [Mann] said, ‘Yes, they are.’”

Board chair Lauren Mann took no issue with Davis’s request, but did offer a clarifying point regarding the budget discussion had at the previous meeting.

“I do have a clarification on that,” said Mann. “So that was cash that was lost, it wasn’t a net operating profit that was lost. There is a difference.”

Davis then stated that the “narrative that [Mann] put out” through a press release and Facebook post had several pieces of information omitted from it. When Mann asked for clarification, Davis gave few details.

“Well, I haven’t gone through it step by step, but it was a created narrative instead of the total financial picture,” said Davis.

Mann noted that the post included the hospital’s audited net revenue from the summer of 2025, and asked how

that might be a narrative, as the audit had been approved by the board in July of 2025. Davis responded by saying that no one had approved Mann’s post, and noted that she had not intended for the financial information to sway the public’s opinion about a potential sale.

“OK, and that’s your opinion,” said Mann. “That was the net revenue from our audit, numbers by numbers, and that’s what we all approved.”

Ultimately, no addition was made to the February minutes, but Howell stated that she would make it known in the future if she wanted anything to be noted in the minutes. The February minutes were approved unanimously.

The board then had a discussion about whether or not to establish a policy to establish guidance on sending flowers or a gift to the funeral

of former hospital board members. Historically, the responsibility has fallen into the discretionary spending of the CEO.

Ultimately, no policy was adopted, and the board agreed to continue with the precedent set to allow the CEO to make a donation to a charity listed in the obituary or to make a donation to the Hospital Foundation if none is listed.

Outgoing CEO David Fuqua was not present, so Chief Clinical Officer Tiffany Tubbs provided the management report, during which she shared that the new HVAC system was installed on Feb. 16, but noted that the hospital was waiting to find out how much of the cost would be covered by insurance.

Tubbs also shared that the cafeteria gate failed, and that Fuqua had already signed off on the purchase of a new one.

Currently the hospital has received one quote, but awaits more quotes. Tubbs also noted that the addition of new practices had led to a considerable “positive impact,” for the hospital.

The board also voted to seek requests for proposals for the hospital’s financial services, beginning in June, to be discussed at the August meeting. The vote was four in favor with board member Peyton Porter abstaining from vote, citing a conflict of interest.

The board then entered executive session to discuss pending or possible litigation. Following the return to open session, the board voted to amend Luther’s contract, moving his start date from April 1 to March 9.

The board regularly meets at noon on the first Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is set for April 7.

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