

School board approves lighting projects for soccer, band fields

TVA grant to contribute to energy-efficient lighting

BY GRACE BOATRIGHT JACHIM
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Lighting upgrades and parking lot work took the primary focus of a special called Marshall County Board of Education meeting on June 24.

The meeting began with Director of Transportation and Facilities Allan Smith, who shared that he, Superintendent Bill Thorpe, and District Finance Director Brooke Gibbs had reviewed an energy savings grant available through the Tennessee Valley Authority. The grant would pay approximately 28% of the cost of installing new, energy efficient lights on sports fields.

Smith shared that currently the high school's soccer, football and band fields were all in need of new lighting, but he recommended beginning with the soccer and band fields. The estimated cost to the district for both fields was approximately \$74,000, with the grant funding covering the remaining cost of approximately \$21,000.

This puts the total cost of both fields at approximately \$95,000, which was also the estimate for the football field alone. Thorpe noted that the grant had a required



GRACE BOATRIGHT JACHIM | Tribune-Courier

The board unanimously approved lighting upgrades for the high school's soccer and band fields. A TVA grant will fund approximately 28% of the project.

completion date of February 2027, so the football field could be added to the project should the district find additional funds.

Smith noted that, while the project might still be deemed expensive, grants for athletic field lighting are not common, and the district may not find another opportunity for saving on the project.

The board unanimously approved the soccer and band field lighting upgrades.

Smith then brought the discussion of sealing and striping the high school parking lot. Smith said that, not only had MCHS Princi-

pal Evan Merrick mentioned the project to him, but that in the 22 years Smith has worked at the school, he has no knowledge of it having been sealed in that time.

Sealing the parking lot would protect the pavement, and should extend the life of the parking lot. Smith shared that, in terms of striping the parking lot, Merrick was interested in numbering the parking stalls. After the parking stalls were numbered, a system would be implemented where students would have an assigned parking space. Smith noted that faculty spaces would also be labeled.

While the project has to be bid out, Smith did have a quote from the same company that striped the technical center parking lot. That quote came in over \$87,000. The board unanimously approved the advertisement for bids on the project.

The board then approved the second reading of the updated district policies. The updates addressed changes required by the most recent legislative session.

The board regularly meets at 5 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of the month. The next meeting is set for July 16.

Marshall County sheriff warns of scam impersonating deputy

BY TRIBUNE-COURIER STAFF

The Marshall County Sheriff's Office recently warned of a new scam circulating within the community.

According to a social media post from MCSO, scammers are calling citizens in Marshall County claiming to be Deputy Tim Reynolds.

"The alleged reason for the call has changed from paying a bond on a warrant, restitution pay-

ment, or asking for personal identifying information," MCSO wrote.

MCSO reminds the public that deputies will never request money or identifying information unless a case report was requested.

If a call appears suspect, hang up and contact the sheriff's office directly at 270-527-3112, or phone the dispatch center after hours at 270-527-1333.

Ex-Murray law enforcement officer charged with 30 more offenses in sex crimes case

BY TRIBUNE-COURIER STAFF

MURRAY — A former Murray Police Department detective sergeant is charged with additional offenses following a grand jury indictment, according to Kentucky State Police Post 1.



Justin Swope

KSP arrested Justin Swope on May 20 and he resigned from the department shortly after. He is accused of engaging in multiple sexual encounters with an underage female in or around 2018.

He faced two counts of third degree rape and one count of third degree sodomy in Calloway County as well as two counts of third degree rape and one count of third degree sodomy in Trigg County. He appeared in court on May 22 and pleaded not guilty.

On June 26, KSP Post 1 stated that additional details into allegations against Swope were discovered through further investigation. Law enforcement presented the case to the Calloway County grand jury earlier that day and the grand jury returned an indictment against Swope for 30 total

charges:

- One count of first unlawful transaction with a minor — illegal sex act, under 16 years of age
- One count of first degree unlawful transaction with a minor — illegal sex act, under 18 years of age
- 11 counts of promoting a sexual performance by a minor
- Four counts of third degree sodomy
- 11 counts of third degree rape
- Two counts of first degree sexual abuse

According to KSP, a warrant was issued and served on Swope, who remains incarcerated at the Marshall County Detention Center.

The indictment states the abuse began in 2018, when the victim was 15, and continued through 2021. According to Attorney General Russell Coleman's Office, Swope sent the girl inappropriate pictures of himself, forced her to do the same, and later forced her to take part in sexual acts and sexual intercourse, sometimes in a parked car. Swope was employed with the Murray Police Department at the time.

KDFW officials say black bear sightings not unusual

BY TOM LATEK KENTUCKY TODAY

FRANKFORT — Sightings of black bears have recently been occurring in neighborhoods, backyards, urban areas and even on dash cams and doorbell cameras in areas of Kentucky not accustomed to seeing them.

Biologists and game wardens with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources want the public to know that this is normal bear behavior and encourage the public to learn more about bears to better understand and live safely with them.

In late spring and early summer, young male black bears get pushed out of areas where they were raised in eastern Kentucky by older and more dominant male bears for mating season. These juveniles may wander up to several weeks or more into unfamiliar territory in search of food, good habitat and prospective mates before instinctively returning to the mountains by the fall. Bears can travel 20 miles or more a day if left undisturbed.

"This is the time of year when young male bears are usually spotted outside of their normal home range in the mountain counties of eastern Kentucky," said John Hast, Bear Program coordinator for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "These young bears are just juveniles and are easily scared and confused causing them to wander into populated areas because

they don't yet know any better. They may hide during the day and leave the area at night only to be reported being seen again a county or two away within a couple of days. Residents should keep their distance, remove all food sources and let the bear move on when he feels safe to do so."

Black bears have a natural fear of people and dogs, and adverse encounters are extremely rare. Never approach or feed a bear and keep

a safe distance away. If a bear is posing an immediate danger, a person should yell and wave their arms to look more threatening to scare him off or call local law enforcement immediately.

Residents of an area where a bear has been spotted should secure their garbage in a garage or other building, not leave pet food outside, and clean and securely store barbecue grills. It is a violation of Kentucky law to feed bears

or knowingly leave unsecured food available for them to consume.

The website BearWise.org offers information and solutions to help individuals and communities coexist with bears, whether bears are just visiting or are permanent neighbors.

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