

Hospital Board discusses finances, updates EMS process

BY GRACE
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An increase in patients, updated financials, and changes in ambulance decisions were all discussed during the Aug. 4 meeting of the Marshall County Hospital Board.

During the finance report, Chief Finance Officer Janice Kelley shared that, while the hospital is still behind budget for the year, at this time there are some outstanding reimbursements due to the hospital, which will help close that gap.

“Year to date, yes we’re behind, but again, you make your big payment in January,” said Kelley. “We know we have \$400,000 that we’re owed for stop loss insurance. We still have a cost report out there. So, there’s several things. I feel much better about how we will end up looking, but it’s timing right now.”

Kelley also noted that for the month of June there was an increase in the amount of days of cash on hand. She also pointed out that, while surgery numbers are down, that is being offset by other programs in the hospital.

Following the finance report Kelley spoke about the hospital’s bank services. In a prior meeting



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The Marshall County Hospital Board regularly meets at noon on the first Tuesday of the month.

the board had elected to put out a request for proposals for banking services in order to evaluate the options.

Kelley shared that currently the majority of the hospital accounts are at Community Financial Services Bank, though a limited number of accounts are at Regions, and an account for debt service is at US Bank. Kelley noted that the US Bank account should not be moved. Based on the information received about the existing accounts, Kelley recommended moving the Regions accounts.

The responding banks were CFSB, Regions, First

Financial, FNB, and First Kentucky. Kelley shared that the banks were “pretty comparable.” As the discussion went into more detail, Kelley specifically noted the comparability of CFSB, FNB, and First Kentucky, which she deemed to be the best options. Because of the similarities, Kelley went so far as to say that the decision would be “very hard” if the hospital were just beginning.

Because of the hospital’s existing accounts and the difficulty of changing those, Kelley recommended continuing with CFSB and moving the existing accounts at Regions

to CFSB. The board approved the recommendations with four votes in favor. Board member Peyton Porter abstained, as he is employed by CFSB.

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Chief Clinical Officer Tiffany Tubbs provided a variety of updates in her report, including an update to the method through which nursing staff is giving report at shift change. Nursing staff have begun giving report at the bedside where the patient and family can be present. Tubbs reported “mixed reviews” thus far.

“We began trialing a new patient hand off process between nurses,” said

Tubbs. “We are currently trialing handoff where nurses give report at the bedside with the family present and the patient hearing what the nurses are saying happened throughout the night and reporting to day shift. I have mixed reviews from it. I’ve done it multiple ways as a nurse throughout the years. It is best practice in a lot of facilities now to do it at the bedside.”

Tubbs noted that the nurses have been receptive, but that some patients have not been, due to the early hours during which shift change usually happens.

Tubbs also shared that in August the ambulance service will fully implement a “decision tree” regarding when to bring patients to the hospital and when to go to other hospitals while still factoring in patient preference.

Tubbs hopes to see this increase the number of patients coming to the emergency room and to be a more efficient use of hospital resources. It also added a system to record why it was elected to bypass going to Marshall County Hospital in favor of another facility. Previously there was no record as to whether transportation to another hospital was for a clinical reason or based on

patient preference.

CEO Steven Luther also noted that, during these discussions, it was learned that ambulance staff was unaware that some procedures could be handled by MCH and would transport elsewhere. Luther also added that in the past ER staff was not always receptive to EMS bringing patients to them. The decision tree is intended to provide accountability to both EMS and ER staff.

As the meeting concluded, Luther gave his management report, which included an update on the swing bed program, which has been among his primary focuses since taking on the role of CEO in March.

Luther shared that, year to date, there have been 207 days of swing beds compared to a total of 136 days in 2025. This program allows patients to continue recovering closer to home following treatment at another hospital.

The board also approved the tax rate, maintaining the same rate as the previous year. The board concluded the meeting after entering executive session, and took no action following the return to open session.

The board regularly meets at noon on the first Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is set for Sept. 8.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AUGUST 8

• St. Matthew by the Lake, 3955 U.S. Hwy. 641 N, outside Draffenville across from the old Catfish Kitchen location, will host an all you can eat meal of biscuits and gravy, eggs, hashbrowns, sausage, ham, pancakes, coffee, milk and orange juice from 7-9 a.m. Adults \$8, children \$4. The funds collected will help support Bright Life Farms. Thank you for helping us share God’s love!

AUGUST 10

• The Western KY/TN

Stitchers Chapter meets monthly at the Marshall County Public Library. The meetings are scheduled on the second Monday of each month at 10 a.m. Their monthly projects include cross-stitch, red work embroidery, wool applique and stitched cards. They welcome new members interested in all types of needlework. Call Beverly Barnes at 270-293-0908 or Mickey Horcher at 270-205-9804 if you have any questions.

AUGUST 11

• The Hardin Homemakers group meets at 10 a.m. every second Tuesday of the month at the Marshall County extension office. Come join us for fellowship, community outreach and fun. Call President Linda Mitchell with any questions at 270-210-6258. The Marshall County Sanitation Board will meet at 2 p.m. at the Marshall County Public Library in Benton, Room A on the second floor.

• The Marshall County Republican Women will meet at 11:30 a.m. in Republican Headquarters on the Benton Court Square.

Future activities will be discussed. A light lunch will be provided. Anyone interested is invited to attend.

AUGUST 12

• The Calvert City Fire Training Board will meet at 1 p.m. at the Calvert City Fire Training Center.

Dripps charges consolidated as trial approaches

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Aaron Dripps continues to track toward a November trial date facing charges of murder, unlawful imprisonment, terroristic threatening, and more in relation to the 2024 death of Stephen Odom.

The case began in late January that year, when first responders were called to Dripps’ residence following a report of gunfire. Upon arrival, Odom was found dead from an apparent gunshot wound. Dripps was taken into custody at the scene and, following an investigation, was charged with murder and possession of a handgun by a convicted felon.

Dripps has remained lodged in the Marshall County Detention Center since then, while the case has seen a number of changes, including a change in his representation and a trial set for June 30 through July 3, 2025, which was later vacated. Additional charges were also added after the case was presented to a grand jury early on. The addition-



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Aaron Dripps faces a number of charges including murder, unlawful imprisonment, and drug related charges connected to the January 2024 death of Stephen Odom.

al charges resulted in Dripps facing two separate cases from the same event.

During a July 28 appearance in Marshall Circuit Court, the two cases were dismissed in favor of the charges being consolidated into what the attorneys referred to as the “superseding indictment.” Dripps was arraigned on the superseding indictment, where he faces charges of murder; being a convicted felon in possession of a handgun; trafficking in controlled substance, first degree, first offense, less than four grams of cocaine; buy/possess drug paraphernalia;

possession of marijuana; two counts of third degree terroristic threatening; and first degree unlawful imprisonment.

No new charges were added at this time, the superseding indictment simply combined the existing charges into a single case number. Following the consolidation of the charges, Dripps’ attorney Victoria Wright and Commonwealth’s Attorney Dennis Foust both expressed their intention to maintain the established Nov. 4, 5, and 6 trial schedule, with a final pretrial hearing set for Oct. 13.

A status hearing was also set for 8:30 a.m. on Sept. 15.



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