



Jordan Brock's "00" Is Retired
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Harlan County's Tri-City News

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Harlan Council Approves Sale of Whitfield Mansion; Reviews Ongoing City Projects

Tri-City News Report

The Harlan City Council has approved moving forward with the sale of the Whitfield Mansion, a city-owned property located at 415 E. Mound Street, following action taken during its regular February meeting

held last week.

After convening in executive session to discuss the matter, the council returned to open session where Mayor Joe Meadors requested approval to sell the historic property through a sealed-bid process. The council approved the mo-

tion, allowing the city to advertise for bids with no minimum bid requirement. City officials will retain the right to reject any and all bids for any reason.

The discussion of the sale of property is one of the few exceptions to the state's Open Meetings Law.

To protect the city's bargaining position or the property's value while discussing whether to sell, how to sell, or what terms might be acceptable, the council was lawful in meeting behind closed doors, especially if discussing:

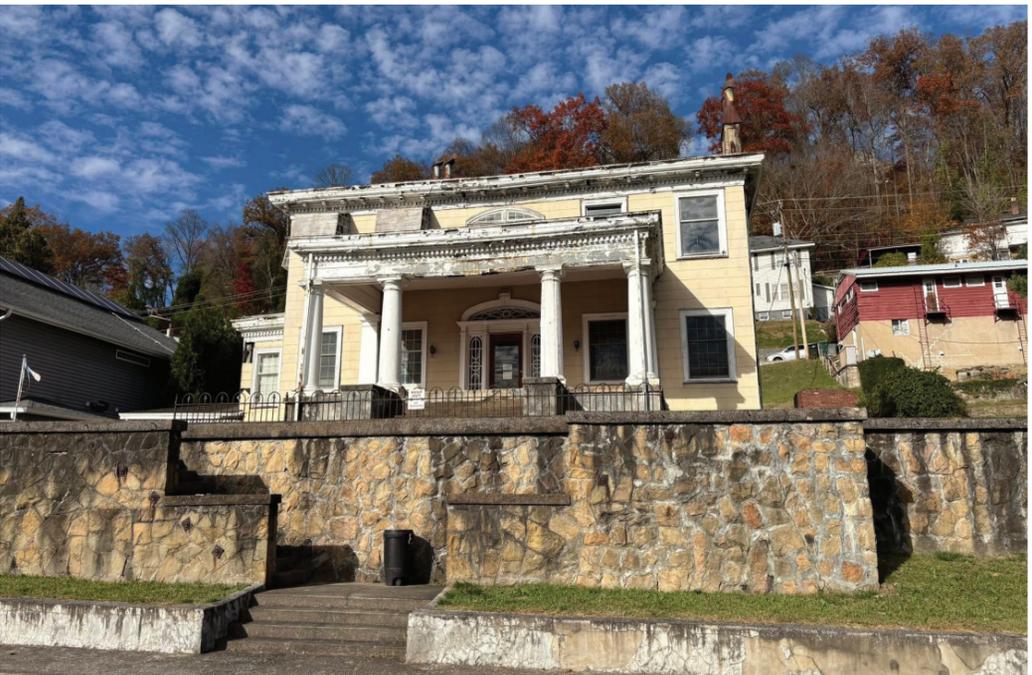
- Whether selling the property is in the city's best interest;
- Potential impacts on market value if discussions were public;
- Strategy related to timing, method (sealed bids vs. auction), or conditions.

The city purchased the property two years ago for a reported \$80,000.

The mansion is described as a former residence of a prominent local family and later served as a law office. The, often described as "spooky" house, features a grand entrance, a full basement, and a view of the nearby Nelson Rich Funeral Home. While currently in rough condition, it holds potential for restoration or redevelopment.

In other business, Mayor Meadors provided updates on several ongoing and proposed

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The Whitfield Mansion in Harlan was purchased by the city two years ago for \$80,000. The Harlan City Council voted last week to sell the property through a sealed bidding process with no minimum bid requirement.
 /Facebook Photo by Jim Kinzer, Blountville, TN

NEWS IN BRIEF

Federal Parole Violator Arrested in Sukey Ridge Raid

The U.S. Marshals Service, assisted by local and state law enforcement, arrested Dwayne Harris, 59, Thursday morning at a residence on Sukey Ridge Road in Harlan County on a federal parole violation warrant. Harris has an extensive criminal history, including a conviction for criminal facilitation to commit murder in connection with the 2002 killing of former Harlan County Sheriff Paul Browning Jr.

Harlan County Sheriff Chris Brewer said Harris had been back in the area following his release on parole and was considered a danger to the community. The arrest was part of a multi-agency operation involving the Harlan County Sheriff's Office, Kentucky State Police, DEA, and the Bell County Sheriff's Office. After Harris was taken into custody, a search warrant was executed at the residence as part of an ongoing drug trafficking investigation.

Reports of gunfire during the raid were incorrect, Brewer said, noting that non-lethal flashbang devices were used and no injuries occurred. An ambulance was on scene as a precaution. Additional charges may be forthcoming as the investigation continues. In a separate incident Thursday, U.S. Marshals also apprehended John Madden, 50, of Evarts, on a fugitive warrant.

Chamber Hears About Child Abuse Prevention Initiative

A new statewide child abuse prevention effort was highlighted during the Feb. 11 meeting of the Harlan County Chamber of Commerce, held at Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College. Leslie Adkins-Howard of the Boys & Girls Club of Appalachia spoke about Upstream Kentucky, a program of Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky aimed at preventing abuse and neglect through education and early intervention.

Suspected child abuse or neglect can be reported to the Kentucky hotline at (877) 597-2331 or online at ky.gov.

In other chamber news, Chamber President Brandon Pennington announced a candidate forum is scheduled for March 24, with additional forums planned. The chamber's annual Awards Gala will be held Nov. 5 at the Harlan Center.

Law Enforcement Leads Domestic Violence Donation Drive

Officers with the Harlan County Sheriff's Office joined volunteers recently to collect donated supplies for victims of domestic violence during a community drive at local grocery stores. The effort, held at Don's Super Saver and Food City, encouraged shoppers to purchase needed items for domestic abuse shelters.

Deputies, Drug Court participants, and community leaders worked together to fill carts with donated goods, which were transported to a shelter in London.

HCHS Celebrates Esports State Championship

Tri-City News Report

The Harlan County Board of Education recently honored the state champion Harlan County High School Esports Team.

They became the first team from Harlan County High School to capture a KHSAA team title since the school opened in 2008. The school has had runner up finishes, but this was the first championship.

Coached by the Rev. Sean Daniels, the HCHS Esports

Championship team consists of three main players Benjamin "Ben" Smith, J.T. Osborne, and Landon Bailey. Colton Gross is the substitute. Dylan Johnson is the team manager.

Coach Daniels has noted that "this was an amazing team to watch!"

They had a great season and were in the top 5 ranking in the entire state for most of the season.

Coach Daniels said that when the playoffs came, "our team stood strong and played some very good teams from across Kentucky."

For the final four, they traveled to the University of

Lexington.

Game 1 was a very competitive game against a very good team from Russell High School. After this win, they advanced to the Championship against an undefeated and multi-year State Champion Trinity High School. It was a battle, but the HCHS team won, becoming state champions.

Coach Daniels and the players relayed that being in that room with a large crowd rooting them on, including the other Esports players from Harlan, former Esports players from Harlan, friends, family, and our own fellow Harlan Countian Jordan Smith (Ben's uncle) was an exciting

atmosphere that would rival the same excitement as any other sporting event!

Esports is no different than any other athletic team.

Coach Daniels stated that these young men all had to have physicals. They coordinated, used quick reflexes, planned, practiced, made sacrifices, and more just like any other athlete.

There's much more that goes into Esports than one can imagine. Even this coach who rarely yells or screams, jumped up and down, hooping and hollering over this victory!

"It was so very special. What an honor to be able to bring that State Title back to our Mountain Home," he said. "Harlan County has a lot to be proud of with this team. We also hope that this will begin to show that Esports may be new, different, yet it is here to stay and it has already produced in just a few years a State Title for Harlan County."

Superintendent Brett Johnson commended the team, noting that the board and administration wanted to recognize them publicly for the great success this season.

"We are very proud of your accomplishments and wish you the best in all of your future endeavors," said Johnson.



The Harlan County High School Esports Team brought home the KHSAA State Championship for their school. The school's first ever state championship since it opened in 2008.