

EDA approves maintenance contracts for Yokohama

By BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Costs associated with maintaining the Yokohama building after the property at 105 Industry Drive is acquired by the City of Versailles and Woodford County governments were discussed prior to contracts being approved at the May 23 meeting of the Woodford County Economic Development Authority (EDA) board.

EDA Executive Director/consultant Lucas Witt explained the contracts associated with maintenance, including building insurance (\$51,000 annually), grounds maintenance for mowing, trimming and weed control (\$15,245.78 for the year), HVAC preventive maintenance (\$2,300 a month or \$27,600 a year) and preventive maintenance on the roof (not to exceed \$1,400 per quarterly visit including minor repairs) prior to those contracts being approved by the EDA. The maintenance (or carrying) costs will be paid with a portion of a bond and a \$2 million Kentucky Product Development Initiative grant from the state, Witt told the Sun.

As those contracts come up for renewal, EDA board member Austin Wingate emphasized that bids from local businesses will be considered. Also, EDA board Chair Michael Michalisin said costs associated with maintaining the Yokohama property had been discussed publicly prior to their meeting.

Witt said the contracts will not go into effect until July 1, with insurance taking effect on the closing of the purchase, which is anticipated to be June 24. He pointed out that a portion of those expenses will be passed through to Yokohama for a short period of

time while it leases a portion of the building. The "lease back agreement" with Yokohama for 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of the 147,000 square-foot building is being finalized, Witt later told the EDA.

Budget update

Treasurer Maria Bohanan updated the EDA on a budget for the next fiscal year. The EDA will end this fiscal year with close to what was projected in revenue and spend about \$15,000 less than what was projected last year, she reported. The EDA will be asked to approve a budget for the next fiscal year at its June meeting.

The draft budget for fiscal year 2027 is projecting \$32,350 in expenditures, with an ending balance of \$110,950, according to Bohanan. She said the proposed budget includes \$10,000 for an audit, so the EDA has a baseline before spending any program funds and prior to the acquisition of the Yokohama property. EDA members did not disagree with the need for an audit, but did discuss the scope and cost of doing one.

Financial report

The EDA approved a financial report for the month of May with a beginning balance of \$143,335.17 (as of May 19) and an ending balance of \$140,975.50 after paying \$2,502.49 in bills. In its (Community Development Block Grant) program fund, the EDA received \$29,149.84 from Bluegrass Distillers and \$21,832.32 from Rick & Still, according to Bohanan's monthly report.

The EDA approved paying bills this month, including \$530 for website maintenance, \$630 for its intern and \$1,742.42 for insurance.



The wonders of tap water

By ELIZABETH DOWLING
KENTUCKY DIVISION OF WATER

In recent years, bottled water has come to be viewed as healthier or safer than tap water. But few realize all the incredible 'behind-the-scenes' work that goes into making our tap water clean, safe, healthy and great-tasting; nor do most realize the relatively lower amount of oversight that bottled water has by comparison.

Drinking water systems, including our own Versailles Municipal Water, are responsible for being in compliance with over 20 national drinking water regulations, in addition to state regulations. As you can see in the annual Water Quality Report (which you can find a link to in your water bill this month or at <https://bit.ly/VMU2025CCR>), Versailles Municipal Water has been regularly testing our water for 92 contaminants to ensure that, if present in the source water, they are filtered out before leaving the treatment plant.

Those tests reveal that almost without exception, our treated water has been below federal contamination limits for over 10 years. The water plant's filtration system is also capable of removing countless other contaminants that aren't required to be monitored.

Versailles Municipal Water operators are also going around town every day and testing the water in the pipes for microbial contaminants and to ensure there is sufficient disinfectant. If there ever was an issue of contamination, or if the operators ever failed to test the water sufficiently (not that they do!), the Division of Water would be informed about it in short order and require a public notification and correction of the issue.

Can you say the same for bottled water? Most bottled water comes from a municipal source – they turn on the tap just like anyone

else, and use it to fill plastic bottles. There is less oversight over water bottling operations compared to the regulation of municipal water plants, because they aren't regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Additionally, there have been many, many studies in the past 15 years demonstrating that people who drink bottled water are regularly exposed to hundreds or thousands of times more microplastics than those who drink tap water. And don't forget the impact of the accumulation of plastic bottles in our world, over 90 percent of which don't get recycled.

The miracle of our tap water is also that it is reliable and so affordable! A gallon of tap water only costs a few pennies, and it is available anywhere in town, any time we turn on the tap. Even when there are storms and floods, like the one that happened in April 2025, tap water is the most reliably available utility. There are hundreds of miles of water pipes running under our streets and through our town, and because of the hard maintenance work of our water system operators, they continually supply water to everyone.

Water is the one utility that we cannot live without, and may be the one most unappreciated. When storms happen, everyone frets about potential electric outages, but we know water's usually available and so we don't give it a second thought. Think about how much more of a disaster it would be if we had to go three or four days without being able to shower, flush the toilet, or cook.

Thankfully, the folks at Versailles Municipal Water are always working hard to ensure we have continuous access to this most wondrous substance.



A CHECK PRESENTATION CEREMONY was held at the South Woodford Water District office to celebrate the district's receipt of \$8.7 million in state funds for four major and needed infrastructure projects. From left, Dale Gatewood, the Water District's operations manager, Linda Popp, Judge-Executive James Kay, Water District board member Allison Richardson, Sen. Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Rep. Dan Fister, Woodford County Fiscal Court Magistrates Kelly Carl, Mary Ann Gill, Liles Taylor and Darrell Varner, Woodford County Conservation District board of supervisors chair Michael Duckworth, Denny Wilson, Magistrate Jackie Brown, Woodford County Fire Department Chief Melvin Montgomery, Chris Hooten and Josh Kight, with Boyd Wilson holding the umbrella. (Photo provided by the Kentucky House Majority Caucus)



THE WOODFORD COUNTY REMEMBRANCE COALITION held its third teach-in at the Woodford County Public Library on April 26. Building on telling the story of Woodford County's history of racial violence in the service of moving towards justice and healing, Milan Bush (pictured) and Micah Lynn with the coalition told the horrific story of the lynching of James Henderson, who was taken from the Woodford County jail by a masked mob to the crossroads of Frankfort and Midway pikes, the Fishback Farm, and hanged from a tree on Aug. 21, 1890. Henderson had been charged with the murder of a white farmer, his former employer, who also employed his wife, Jane, as a cook. But the circumstances, even as reported by the Lexington paper at that time, made it clear Henderson had both a strong case for self-defense, and the event was triggered by the white farmer "taking liberties" with Henderson's wife while returning her home from work on a stormy night. Unsurprisingly, this was the same site and tree where Richard James was lynched in 1921 and would have been eight years old at the time of the Henderson lynching (James was the topic of the second teach-in). The Remembrance Coalition is working with the Equal Justice Initiative to erect memorials in memory of four men lynched in Woodford County, with the expected site at the Courthouse Annex, the former location of the Versailles jail. The next teach-in will be held on June 7 at 2 p.m., again at the Woodford County Library. The Woodford Sun is a member of the coalition. (Photo by Sioux Finney)

WATER

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biennial budget process.

However, Fister said in an email that the efforts to secure loans or grants is different than a straight appropriation, which must come from action in the legislature, and "this kind of

thing requires a request from a House member and I made it."

In a text from Gill, she told the Sun it was Varner who collected the project information from the Water District in January and provided it to Fister, who then included it in House Bill 900 in January 2026, which passed and was sent

to the Senate. Fister included the proposed appropriation of funds from the Budget Reserve Trust Fund for the projects, and then forwarded the information to Mays Bledsoe, who then "took it up on the Senate side, and together they got it across the finish line."

The "finish line" involved the passage of a Free Conference Committee Report that was negotiated by members from the House and Senate. The two chambers had declined to agree on each other's budgets, which is nearly the case during every budget session. Thus, the two chambers were required to negotiate a budget both sides could agree to in a "free conference committee" process. Critically for the Water District, Mays Bledsoe was a member of the Senate negotiating team in the free conference committee. Both the House and Senate then passed the free committee report, with Fister and Mays Bledsoe both voting "yes" and Gov. Andy Beshear signing it into law on April 13.

Kay said, "Credit doesn't matter. I'm grateful to Sen.

Mays Bledsoe and Rep. Fister for securing these much-needed funds for the Water District."

"Water systems are one of those things people don't always think about until something goes wrong," Mays Bledsoe said. "It's a basic infrastructure need for families and also for prospective businesses. This investment helps make sure families and businesses in Woodford County can rely on that infrastructure every day; while also supporting the kind of steady growth we're seeing in the area."

Summer Reading Kick Off Party!
FRI. JUNE 5
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at the MAIN LIBRARY and MIDWAY BRANCH (FAMILIES)

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SUMMER READING SIGN-UPS BEGIN!

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