FISCAL - FROM FRONT

to provide 24-hour coverage. McKee Police Chief Zack Bryant accompanied him to the meeting. An agreement exists on paper but is not official; it would be carried out through an interlocal agreement, which the county and city attorneys are now reviewing. Staff would keep their jobs and pay. Both the city council and the fiscal court must still approve the plan, ideally before December.

Court explores loan as insurance bill looms

Magistrates approved a motion to "explore" a loan of up to $500,000 from KACo, the county's insurer. The vote was exploratory only, and a final vote is expected at the next meeting after more details have been obtained and provided to the Magistrates.

The county's annual KACo insurance bill, about $460,000, is due by the end of December. Special grant and line-item funds for the ambulance service and fairgrounds were previously borrowed from in order to meet payroll needs and pay employees, though a $140,000 borrowing from the New Fair Grounds grant has been repaid. Interest terms on the possible loan are not yet known.

Judge Hays also provided the court with a financial summary for the month of September 2026. Financial figures for September showed the road department with $690,434.89 in revenue and $283,057.44 in expenditures. The transfer station took in $100,861.14 and spent $216,966.13. The 911 and emergency management office reported $8,001 in revenue against $19,976.58 in expenditures, and the detention center about $98,618 in revenue against $228,046 in expenditures. The general fund reported $474,509 in revenue and $275,329.76 in expenditures, and it covers any department shortfall.

Roughly $1 million in old and current bills has been repaid since July, and garbage bill collection has climbed to about 95 percent, up from 75 to 80 percent.

Jail, roads and other departments

Jailer Brian Gabbard reviewed programs offered at the Jackson County Detention Center, including chaplain services, a pre-release group, GED classes, Project Restart and a Thanksgiving meal for inmates and their children. The jail houses 84 state inmates. State housing payments totaled $64,212.78 and class completions brought in $17,800, for total revenue of roughly $83,000 for the month.

At the transfer station, scrap metal sales brought in $8,235 this month and about $13,500 over two months. The county is pursuing a grant for an open-box system. On roads, paving bills are being paid one at a time because state reimbursement comes after payment. Bunkum Road work is postponed to next summer because of active logging, and Smith Road is next. The Forest Service will fund $10,000 of gravel for Sparks Ridge Road, with the county providing labor.

Officials said the AOC audit is complete with no issues. Staffing is down to about 102 employees, with monthly personnel costs near $390,000. Quarterly financials were sent to the state for information only.

Projects move forward

A new time clock system is targeted to go live December 1, with manager training starting November 20. For the old jail incubator project, community meetings were held October 14 and November 4. Revised plans are expected next week, and officials aim to seek approval and advertise for bids at the next meeting. Phase two of the fairgrounds, a $3.6 million project, is waiting on architectural plans and state certification.

Road Department Projects

Judge Hays informed the court that repaving had been completed on Wolfe Pen Branch Road. Approval from the courtwas required to pay the bill. The paid bill would then be sent to Frankfort and the county would be reimbursed. The road department is repairing cross drains and doing some ditching on Smith Road in preparation for repaving. The work on Buncomb Road will have to be delayed due to an ongoing logging operation. It doesn't make sense to repave the road whie logging trucks are using the road on such a heavy basis. Several roads have been forwarded to the Department of Transportation for approval in 2027.

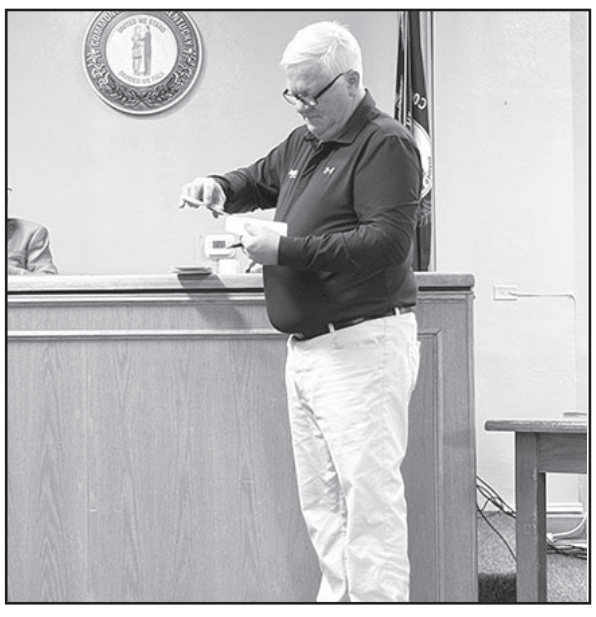
Other actions

The Magistrates also opened sealed bids on Annville kitchen property, approve time policy cap and hear updates on jail, roads and fairgrounds

The court accepted the highest bid, $226,001 from Travis Hignite, for the Jackson County kitchen property in Annville. Closing is to occur within 30 days, with extensions allowed if financing requires them. The sale is as-is, with no warranty coverage.

Magistrates also:

- approved the prior minutes;
- approved a memorandum of understanding covering insurance for one Industrial Development Association employee, up to $250 a month;
- approved the bills and transfers as read, including utilizing grant funds for $24,124 for courtroom HVAC (Affordable Service Solutions, Inc.), $29,934 and also for base ment mold repairs (KY Disaster Resto ration), a road salt agreement of up to 100 tons and election worker pay;
- approved mailing the August–November trash bills; No penalty for unpaid bills for these months, Mike Numikoski answered questions from those present
- approved trading in the John Deere tractor, valued at $17,000, toward a new road depart ment excavator;
- approved Wes Finley as county building inspector at no cost to the county;
- approved payment of the Cave Springs Road paving bill;
- approved up to $5,000 per fire department, one time, toward insurance;
- selected Megan Ward to fill the library board of trustees vacancy; and
- approved an amended accumulated time policy with a 240-hour (30-day) cap, with all employees under it by the end of 2027.



Tal Jones opens the sealed bids sent to the fiscal court containing bids on the Kitchen Property

Next steps

Officials said the KACo loan terms will return for a formal vote at the next meeting. Incubator project plans will be sent to attendees next week, and the interlocal agreement between the Jackson County Sheriff's Office and the City of McKee Police Department will go to the attorneys for review. Remaining paving bills will be paid as reimbursements arrive, the time clock rollout and training will be completed, and minutes will be delivered to magistrates at least 24 hours before meetings.

During public comment, Ronald Vaughn described plans for a community theater. No action was requested. The court's next meeting is December 10 at 1:00 p.m.



Road Department Gets New Mini Excavator

The Road Department was excited to recently pick up a new mini excavator! By trading in an older piece of equipment, we were able to offset a portion of the purchase cost and make good use of our available road funds.

We are thankful for the opportunity to invest in equipment that will better serve our Road Department crew. They work hard every day to maintain and improve our county roads, and they have assured the Fiscal Court that this new addition will be a valuable asset, helping increase productivity and efficiency.

We appreciate the hard work of our Road Department and look forward to seeing this equipment put to good use throughout the county!

Jackson County Fiscal Court

BRIAR - FROM 4

the next. Dressing up for Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, or just about any occasion brought him joy, and there is no doubt he brought smiles to the faces of others, especially children, when he would sport a new look. He would often stop by the paper and get us to take a picture of him in his latest getup. We were always happy to see him and happy to oblige.

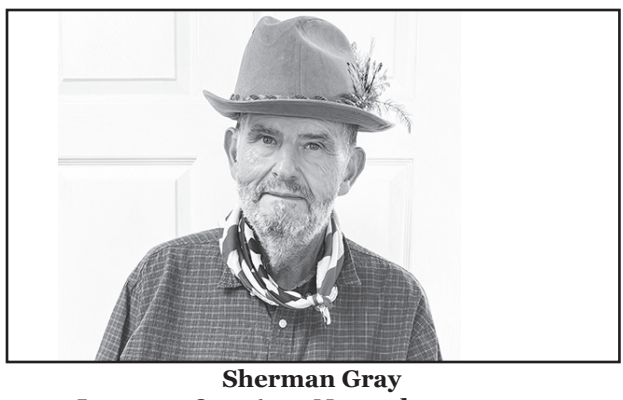
To say that we will miss him is an understatement. Today, on the way to work, I imagined his spirit was walking down the road, and we stopped to pick him up. I said, "How you doing Sherman?" though I knew he was gone and I imagined what he would say back. "I'm good, youngun, (he always called us younguns, though we were a bit older than his 60 years) "Are you cold?" I said. "Do you want a ride?" "No," he said, "The cold don't touch me no more, and I can walk from here to heaven without getting tired. I don't have any pain or sickness in this body."

"Where are you headed?" I said. "I'm on my way to see my Momma. I sure have missed her and the others who have gone on before me. I really wasn't expecting to join them this soon, but I can't say I'm sad to have parted with this world. It has been both a joy and a struggle, but there's no darkness now, only light." In my mind, we told him how much we would miss him, and he said, "Don't worry, youngun, I'm alright now, and there will always be a part of me walking down this road. Thank you for all the times you eased my burden and showed me friendship. You guys were one of the bright spots in my life."

It was just an imaginary conversation, but if it had really happened, I'm willing to bet it would have gone a lot like that.

I wanted to share a few of the pictures we've taken of Sherman and all his "faces" through the years.

Good night dear Sherman. Rest well. We'll be seeing you.



Sherman Gray
January 18, 1965 - November 13, 2025



In Loving Memory

"I Am the Love that I Live"
Carmen Leah Abner

NOTES - FROM PAGE 4

The 2014 Bundy Ranch Standoff: The feds took an unusually "hands-off" approach. But what if a cocksure President Newsom sends federal agents into southern/western states who refuse to allow federal enforcement of new federal laws which those state and/or local governments declare are clearly unconstitutional? (Supreme Court justices aren't the only Americans with the gift of comprehending the English language.)

Much has been made of the militarization of state and local police forces around the nation during the GWOT decades. The next Ft. Sumter could occur when federal agents move against those heavily armed state and/or local paramilitary organizations. Do you really believe after the Civil War the US Government simply "forgot" to put Jefferson Davis on trial for treason? That's referred to as a "clue" in the investigations world.

Next Week: President Martin Van Buren's Foreign Policy Big Idea

Shane Morris is a retired soldier and teacher. Contact at sigm11@yahoo.com (Subject: NtC)

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