



A community meeting was held in Wayland on Jan. 15. Blake Moss, public administration specialist for the Big Sandy Area Development District, attended to inform those present of the \$1.3 million grant the Mountain Sports Hall of Fame Foundation will be applying for to clean out the inside of the old Wayland High School.

Floyd Chronicle and Times photo by Devin Kidd

Community meeting held to discuss \$1M Wayland school grant

By Devin Kidd
Staff Writer

Wayland held a community meeting on Jan. 15 at the Wayland Community Center to discuss a nearly \$1.5 million grant the Mountain Sports Hall of Fame Foundation will be applying for to clean up the inside of the old Wayland High School.

Blake Moss, public administration specialist for the Big Sandy Area Development District, has been helping with the project and attended the meeting to present information about the grant.

"The brownfield grant we're discussing is used to clean up contaminated properties," Moss said. "It started in 1973, mainly with petroleum sites, and expanded over the years. We're trying to use this grant to clean up the old high school. We've already used \$45,000 of funding to do the assessment, figuring out what all is wrong with the school. Now, we're trying to apply for

\$1.3-\$1.5 million that can be used to clean up the inside of the school."

Moss explained he had helped the foun-

dation apply for the grant last year, missing getting the funding by three points.

"Last year, we applied for this and missed it, mostly because we tried to get a roof built," he said. "Now, we've changed the application to clean it up in a waterproof sort-of-way.

This is only to clean up the inside; the Brownsville program doesn't provide funds to redevelop the property. So, we'll clean it up, then apply for more funding to redevelop. Right now, the building isn't

investable; you'd have to spend a lot to get

it to where it's a blank slate. So, this will give us that blank slate, and allow the building to be more investable."

Moss said the plan is to use the money, originally meant for the roof, on shoring the building.

"This is essentially making sure the four walls stay up," he said. "So, we'll be shoring the four walls and removing the materials inside in a legal and proper way. Afterwards, it will be an investable building."

Moss said the plan is for the application to go in on Jan. 28.

"If we're given the grant, we'll create a request for proposal package," he said. "So, we'll get proposals from whoever wants to submit one; they'll have to inform us what landfill they're taking the material to, how they're disposing of it, etc."

Wayland Mayor Jerry Fultz added that as part of the initial assessment piece, two structural engineers came and provided a report as part of the regional application.

"Yes, they made a document, which is being finalized," Moss said. "It includes a study on the building for future uses. It will help guide the future; this certified document will help get loans and grants."

Moss said there are three options:

- Do nothing;
- tear down the building (\$563,000); or
- remediate the building (\$1.1 million).

Everyone present was in favor of option three.

"Looking forward, the key things are first, how does this benefit the city?" Fultz said.

"Second, how does it benefit the region? Lastly, beyond regionally, how can it benefit central Appalachia? I believe that one building can provide all three of those avenues. It could house visitors and folks in case of an emergency. I believe there's real opportunities there for the housing piece, and I think we could find some money to do it."

"In state tourism meetings, they always say bring something in to keep folks for two to three days" said Doug Kretzer, who attended the meeting.

"Right, we want to bring them to Wayland and keep them here for a day or two," said Fultz. "It's economic and community development."

Ted Hall, who also attended the meeting, acknowledged that Fultz was able to get the Mountain Sports Hall of Fame started.

"Wayland was just

about gone until Jerry took over; now, it's known all over the state because of that one building (gym/ Mountain Sports Hall of Fame)" Hall said.

Fultz also acknowledged that two different people came to look at the high school building.

"I know one of them was from Texas," Fultz said. "They had enough interest to come. To my understanding, both of them said when the building is ready and cleaned out, let them know. So, there's interest there, with people wanting to invest."

Fultz thanked Moss and the Big Sandy Add for what they do.

"The Add is critical for small cities; we wouldn't be here without them" he said.

Fultz said he sees opportunity for growth that he believes could go beyond Wayland's borders.

"There's opportunities here for us, but I want to see it grow beyond Wayland," he said. "We're going to get there, and we're moving in the right direction, but there's so many little areas in Eastern Kentucky just like Wayland; we just need a little bit of life."