

COMMUNITY

City Council approves first reading of \$900,000 budget reduction

By Cecil Lawson
 KyNewsGroup
 cecil@kynewsgroup.com

Morehead City Council held a special-called meeting last Thursday evening and approved the first reading of a substantial budget reduction and rejected an ethics complaint lodged against a member of the city’s Ethics Board. Morehead City Council members approved a first reading of a budget amendment that would cut around \$900,000 from the city’s 2026-27 budget. During discussion of the amendment, Mayor Laura White-Brown said they would have to “tighten our belts.”

Council members voted in June to approve a nearly \$15.2 million budget for the city.

Council member Darrell Littleton asked Mayor White-Brown about some of the proposed reductions.

One item cut was a second K-9 unit for the Morehead Police Department, for \$25,000.

Other cuts included a reduction in amounts budgeted for health insurance. White-Brown said the health insurance rates were budgeted higher in June, but they were now lowering them to match the actual rates, and they also adjusted the amount of money budgeted for employee HRA (health reimbursement account) accounts based on what was spent last year.

White-Brown said that the new city council next year will have to decide whether to fund those HRA accounts, because they are used by employees.

She said no employees

would be cut, but some city services would be affected.

Littleton also noted that the city’s professional services have been reduced, while funding for a TIF Board has increased.

White-Brown said the TIF Board funding refers to the North Morehead property, or Polo I, which includes Hucks, McDonalds, Cattlemen’s, and Huey Magoo’s restaurants. She said based on the money those businesses had generated, the amount the city budgeted was too low. She said the Downtown Morehead TIF Board is a separate entity.

TIF refers to tax incremental financing, and it is an economic incentive for business developments to make improvements to a municipality’s infrastructure in exchange for future property tax revenue.

Council member Yvonne Baldwin said the making decisions like these to cut services is “always a painful process” when citizens decide that reducing taxes is a priority.

One audience member asked what the net amount of the reduction was, and White-Brown said it was around \$900,000.

Council member Littleton said he was not in support of transferring “that much” in funding to the TIF. Mayor White-Brown said the city was obligated to do so. She said it was not a problem because the property development has increased property taxes and occupational taxes, and the city is under agreement to provide that amount back to the developer.

“This is money they have brought in, and we

have agreed to pay them back X percent,” she said.

City Clerk Helen Smith added that they really don’t know what the amount will be from one year to the next until they report it to the city and county.

City Planner Rodney Fouch said there are limits on the term of the repayment and maximum amounts paid each year. He said the term is 30 years, and the amount is \$11 million.

Council members met in closed session for about 40 minutes to discuss a personnel matter, with council members Lincoln Caudill and Edna Schack recusing themselves due to conflict of interest. Upon returning to open session, council members took no immediate action.

The next agenda item was a resolution related to an ethics complaint. Council members who attended the closed session voted to reject the complaint as it was not in the jurisdiction of the ethics board and was a private matter.

Council member Darrell Littleton added, “I don’t know if we can name names, but it appears to be a private matter.”

This reporter was later informed that the ethics complaint was filed by candidate for Morehead Mayor Jim Tom Trent against Ethics Board member Leanne Potter on October 1.

In the complaint, Trent accused Potter of violating city ordinance 40.18, Falsely Impugning Reputation, for accusing him in a September 27 Facebook post of having a history of harassment and domestic violence.

Rowan County Property Transfers

September 24 – October 2, 2026

Gary Pope and Phyllis Pope to Whitlea Wall, parcel on Big Brushy Road/ KY 785, no monetary consideration

Secretary of Veterans Affairs to Diana L. Rogers, property on Big Caney Creek at the end of W. P. Mabry Road, \$140,000

Loretta J. Sheffield to Loretta J. Sheffield, Lot 19 of Lakewood Acres Subdivision, no monetary consideration, quit claim

Thomas J. Meadows and Elizabeth A. Meadows to Sunny Meadows Farm, LLC, permanent easement

Randall Bruce Adkins and Patty A. Adkins to Christopher Furnish and Michelena Furnish, Lots 87 and half of Lot 88 of the Tolliver Addition to the City of Morehead, and tract on Water Avenue, \$249,000

Dominique Miller and Seth Miller-Williamson to Rikki Leeann Creech, Lot 53 of Greenfield Estates Subdivision, \$265,000

Estate of Dixie Louise Blythe, by and through Eva Jane Little and Tammy Baker, Co-Personal Representatives, to Tammy Baker, parcel on Cranston Road, \$20,000

Mark Nickell and Melissa Nickell to Mark Nickell and Melissa Nickell, Co-Trustees of the Nickell Living Truste, Lot 29, Beechtree Section, Eagle Ridge Estates, Unit 3, quit claim

Judy Rae Pettit to Judy Rae Pettit and John W. May, tract on north fork of Triplett Creek and KY 377, in consideration of vesting title to the property to parties of the second part as tenants in common

Rodney G. Plank and Terry A. Plank to Rocky Lee Stacy and Teresa Lorane Stacy, property in Rowan County, \$70,000

Estate of Marvin Randall Caudill, through Phyllis Irene Dunaway, sister, heir-at-law, and beneficiary, to Phyllis Irene Dunaway, property address, 67 Clayton Lane, per terms of last will and testament

Esther Burnette, Ju-

lie Scott and Larry Scott, Dorothy Stacy, Linda Berryman, and David Kenneth Burnette and Patrina Mary Burnette, to David Keith Burnett and Patrina Mary Burnette, tract on Clay Lick, no monetary consideration

Estates of Joan B. Cox, by Deborah Canales, daughter and Administrator of the Estate, to Deborah Canales, house and lot at 92 Rosenberg Drive, heir at law

Warren Coe Meadows and Sandra Kaye Meadows, Trustees of the Meadows Family Living Trust, to Commonwealth of Kentucky for the use and benefit of the Transportation Cabinet, tract on KY 801, \$7125

Brian David Barker and Timothy Gordon Barber to William R. Leadingham and Jennifer L. Leadingham, tract between McBrayer Road and Triplett Creek, \$150,000

Brian Barker to William R. Leadingham and Jennifer L. Leadingham, property address, 73 Fyrl Street, Clearfield, \$50,000

Harry Clark and Pamela Mabry to Steve Griggs and Garbielle Griggs, tract on Rock Fork Road, \$6000

Enoch Blair to Enoch Blair and Melinda Blair Sturgill, tract on KY 32, no monetary consideration

Brian K. Moore to Shui Quan Lin, Lots 6 and 7 in the Morehead State University Subdivision, \$65,000

Anna Mary Plank to Brian S. Plank, tract on waters of Triplett Creek, \$64,500

Buddy R. Salyer, Master Commissioner of the Rowan Circuit Court, for and on behalf of Dwight Blake Barnett, Courtney Kay Barnett, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and Commonwealth of Kentucky, by and on behalf of Secretary of Revenue, to Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance, Inc., \$63,400

Ellen Proctor Morgan and Bradford Arlen Pelfrey to Katlyn Sorrell and Aaron DeHart, Lot 36 of Sherwood Forest Subdivision, tract with mobile home on KY 173, \$180,000

Verity Holdings, LLC, to Commonwealth of Kentucky, for the use and benefit of the University of Kentucky, tract on Main Street, Morehead, \$820,000

Ann Mullins and Eddie C. Mullins to Matthew D. Eden and Candy D. Eden, tract on Brinegar Road, on Sparkman Branch, \$185,000

Brandy Esham to Benita Spencer, Lot 71R of The Lakes at Hickory Pointe Subdivision, \$320,000

Thomas Cooper and Margaret Cooper to Larce-na Powell, tract on Clear Fork Road, \$232,000

Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, to Adam Brayden Warner, property address, 124 Pleasant Valley Road, \$33,250

Gary Ray Moore and Oleta Jewell Moore to Tony Moore and Peggy Moore, tract on waters of Craney Creek, in consideration of the grantees assisting the care of the grantor for their lifetime

Robinson & Son Properties, Inc., to Carolyn Martin, property address, 229 McClure Circle, Morehead, \$115,000

Janice Hamilton to Brandon Weddington, tract on Bull Fork, no monetary consideration

Maxine Pennington to Donald Brian Pennington and Susan Elaine Pennington, tract on Bull Fork Road, no monetary consideration

Archie D. Adams to Shanna Leighann Dotson and Christopher Scott Dotson, tract on Hwy 158, \$150,000

Green Valley Properties, Inc., to Martha B. Walter and Steven Richard Walter, tract on Igo Road, \$85,000

JTH Holdings, LLC, to Kenley Kappes and Drema Kappes, tract on KY 519 and Morgan Fork Road, \$33,000

Mark Steven Patrick and Priscilla Patrick, Jeffrey David Patrick and Melissa Patrick, and Leslie Ann Patrick Cecil and Bruce Cecil, to PRL Properties, LLC, Lots 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31 of Meadowbrook Subdivision, no monetary consideration

PURSUANT TO KRS 424.290, “MATTERS REQUIRED TO BE PUBLISHED,” THE FOLLOWING RACES AND QUESTION WILL APPEAR ON THE VOTING MACHINES AND PAPER BALLOTS IN THE PRECINCTS LISTED IN ROWAN COUNTY FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION, NOVEMBER 3, 2026.

STRAIGHT PARTY
☐ Republican Party
☐ Democratic Party
☐ Kentucky Party
 UNITED STATES SENATOR (Vote for One)
☐ Andy BARR Republican Party
☐ Charles BOOKER Democratic Party
☐ Christopher CAMPBELL Kentucky Party
 Write-in
 UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE in CONGRESS 5th Congressional District (Vote for One)
☐ Hal ROGERS Republican Party
☐ Ned PILLERSDORF Democratic Party
☐ Mikel WEIN Independent
☐ Gerardo SERRANO Independent
 Write-in
 STATE REPRESENTATIVE 99th Representative District (Vote for One)
☐ Richard Lee WHITE Republican Party
☐ Iva Markicevic DALEY Democratic Party
 Write-in
 PROPERTY VALUATION ADMINISTRATOR (Vote for One)
☐ Carmen Eldridge SWIM Democratic Party
 Write-in
 COUNTY JUDGE/EXECUTIVE (Vote for One)
☐ Harry CLARK Democratic Party
 Write-in
 COUNTY ATTORNEY (Vote for One)
☐ Cecil R. WATKINS Democratic Party
 Write-in
 COUNTY CLERK (Vote for One)
☐ Kristi Smith BAILEY Republican Party
☐ Brian MASON Democratic Party
 Write-in
 SHERIFF (Vote for One)
☐ Matt SPARKS Democratic Party
 Write-in
 JAILER (Vote for One)
☐ Wes COLDIRON Republican Party
 Write-in

CORONER (Vote for One)
☐ John P. NORTHCUTT Democratic Party
 Write-in
 COUNTY SURVEYOR (Vote for One)
 Write-in
 ALL PRECINCTS
 MAGISTRATE 1st Magisterial District (Vote for One)
☐ Richard EASTON Republican Party
☐ Kevin ANDERSON Democratic Party
 Write-in
 CONSTABLE 1st Magisterial District (Vote for One)
☐ Scottie JUNIPER Republican Party
 Write-in
 NORTH MOREHEAD, BRUSHY, COURTHOUSE, FLEMING, AND PINE HILLS
 MAGISTRATE 2nd Magisterial District (Vote for One)
☐ Darrell GLOVER Democratic Party
 Write-in
 CONSTABLE 2nd Magisterial District (Vote for One)
☐ Harry R. "Randy" STEELE Democratic Party
 Write-in
 UPPER FARMERS, THOMAS ADDITION, BLUE STONE, AND LOWER FARMERS
 MAGISTRATE 3rd Magisterial District (Vote for One)
☐ Charlie WINKLEMAN Democratic Party
 Write-in
 CONSTABLE 3rd Magisterial District (Vote for One)
 Write-in

MAGISTRATE 4th Magisterial District (Vote for One)
☐ Joshua Dale PLANK Republican Party
☐ Rob HAMM Democratic Party
 Write-in
 CONSTABLE 4th Magisterial District (Vote for One)
☐ Larry Joe STEVENS Democratic Party
 Write-in
 RODBURN, EADSTON, PINE GROVE, AND CHRISTY
 NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL BALLOT (Vote for One in Each Division)
 DISTRICT JUDGE 21st Judicial District 1st Division (Vote for One)
☐ William "Willie" ROBERTS
 Write-in
 DISTRICT JUDGE 21st Judicial District 2nd Division (Vote for One)
☐ Don BLAIR
 Write-in
 ALL PRECINCTS
 NONPARTISAN "SCHOOL CANDIDATES" MEMBER BOARD OF EDUCATION 1st Educational District (Vote for One)
☐ Jeffrey D. PATRICK
 Write-in
 HOGTOWN, RODBURN, AND CHRISTY
 MEMBER BOARD OF EDUCATION 5th Educational District (Vote for One)
☐ Gabe BROWN
 Write-in
 NORTH MOREHEAD, COURTHOUSE, FLEMING, AND THOMAS ADDITION

I, ELWOOD CAUDILL JR., COUNTY CLERK OF ROWAN COUNTY, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE FACES ON THE VOTING MACHINES AND PAPER BALLOTS AS THEY WILL APPEAR IN THE PRECINCTS LISTED IN ROWAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026.

ELWOOD CAUDILL JR., CLERK
 ROWAN COUNTY, KY

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Rowan County General Election Sample Ballot

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 1
 Are you in favor of limiting a Governor's ability to grant pardons or commute sentences by prohibiting him or her from granting pardons or commuting sentences during the time period beginning 60 days prior to the general election at which the Governor is elected, and ending when the Governor is sworn in for that term by amending the Constitution of Kentucky as stated below?

It is proposed that Section 77 of the Constitution of Kentucky be amended to read as follows:
 (1) The Governor shall have power to:
 (a) Remit fines and forfeitures; and
 (b) Commute sentences and grant reprieves and pardons, except:
 1. In case of impeachment; or
 2. For the period beginning sixty days prior to the date of the gubernatorial election and ending the fifth Tuesday succeeding the election.

(2) The Governor shall file with each application therefor a statement of the reasons for his or her decision thereon, which application and statement shall always be open to public inspection.
 (3) In cases of treason, the Governor shall have power to grant reprieves until the end of the next session of the General Assembly, in which the power of pardoning shall be vested; but he or she shall have no power to remit the fees of the Clerk, Sheriff, or Commonwealth's Attorney in penal or criminal cases.

☐ YES
☐ NO

ALL PRECINCTS