COMMUNITY

School Board addresses Attendance, Instruction, and Facilities at Nov. meeting

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Members of the Rowan County Board of Education, including Superintendent Michael Rowe, met for their regularly scheduled monthly meeting, on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2026, at 6:00pm, which was broadcast live on the Rowan Schools YouTube page.

The meeting was called to order with attendance; the Pledge of Allegiance; and a presentation regarding Clearfield Elementary School, entitled Beyond the Desk, with the focus that every child receives the instruction, support, relationships, and opportunities that they deserve at CES.

The board approved the regular business items, which included the approval of the minutes from the previous regularly scheduled and special-called meetings, held on Oct. 20th and Nov. 16th; and approval of the payment of monthly claims.

The board approved the consent agenda, which included the approvals of the boys basketball overnight trip to West Virginia; baseball overnight trip to Atlanta, Georgia; softball overnight trip to Gulf Shores, Alabama; employee unpaid leave; UK Healthcare MOA (Memorandum of Agreement); youth ambassadors' program; and technology surplus.

The board heard instructional updates, and discussion regarding small victories throughout the district, which include visibility in classrooms, curriculum coaching strategies and feedback, student growth and instructional support, as well as teacher support, and lighthouse teams.

The board heard the treasurer's report; heard the attendance report, which includes a rise in absentees due to sickness, enrollment updates, and district attendance goals.

The board approved a shortened school day/week for two students; and after some discussion approved to consider and hire an architectural firm, who had previously worked with Rowan County Schools, for work that needs done on the multi-purpose field, which includes issues on the track,

Before going into closed session, the board heard the Superintendent's report.

Following the closed session, regarding a student expulsion hearing, the meeting was subsequently adjourned.

Retired Olive Hill teacher continues to serve community through business

After 27 years in the classroom, including 25 years at Olive Hill Elementary School, Pam Kinney undoubtedly knows a thing or two about making a difference in the lives of others.

Even after her 2022 retirement, she continues to pour into her community, now through BrickHouse Consignment, her locally owned consignment shop.

"Retirement was a transition," Kinney says. "It felt odd not going to work or not getting my classroom ready during summer. I constantly felt like there was something I was forgetting to do. It took several years of being retired for that feeling to go away."

She says the idea for BrickHouse Consignment came about somewhat unexpectedly.

After remarrying shortly before retirement, Kinney and her husband found themselves combining two households, each with plenty of belongings of its own. With her husband's farm becoming their new home, Kinney began working to downsize.

"My husband asked, 'What are we gonna do with all this?' I made a joke and said, 'We have so much stuff, I could start a thrift store,'" she says.

What began as a joke quickly turned into an idea worth pursuing, and Kinney decided to open the store.

BrickHouse Consignment opened in the summer of 2022, just a few months before Kinney's official retirement on Sept. 1 of that year.

The business now has approximately 120 consignors.

For Kinney, consignment was a natural fit. She says she had previously helped a friend who operated a consignment store in downtown Olive Hill, so she recognized a need for that type of business and saw an opportunity to start a business with manageable overhead.

The transition from teacher to business owner, she discovered, wasn't quite as dramatic as it might seem.

"I actually joked with my former principal about how I hadn't realized teaching first grade got you ready to run your own business," she says.

Four and a half years into the business, Kinney says she's surprised by just how much she enjoys being her own boss and getting to visit with the people who come through the shop.

But she says some of her favorite moments are the unexpected reminders of her years in education.

"Sometimes, my customers have ended up being past students who are now adults or in high school and they come in to find an outfit they need for a club event or a homecoming or prom dress," she says.

Those encounters allow Kinney to remain connected to her former students and their school activities, something she says she particularly enjoys.



She even jokes that the store comes with its own childcare perk for former students who bring their children into her shop.

"Most of my former students are now grown, with families of their own. So I get to see my grand-students," she says. "They'll come in with their babies and I'll take the baby while they shop. I joke and tell them I'm the only shop around with a built-in free babysitting service. Baby snuggles are definitely a work perk."

The shop has also become a gathering place for current and retired educators, many of whom were once Kinney's colleagues. She says on Saturday mornings, it's not unusual to find a room full of teachers catching up and visiting.

Beyond those familiar faces and friendships, Kinney says the business has created opportunities to help people in ways that extend well beyond shopping. The consignment ar-

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Charles Column cont. from pg. 9

Edward O'Neil of Barterville, also in Nicholas County, is no longer with us.

Ed was a faithful Marine who served honorably with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment, 3rd Marine Division.

He survived the Battle of Guam and later survived the Battle of Iwo Jima.

He was one of the lucky ones.

He lost many friends on Guam and several of those who survived were later killed on Iwo Jima.

But Ed survived both battles, and he told me about it during a Jan. 28, 2006, interview at his home.

I had been writing about a young Marine, Franklin Sousley, another hero of mine, who was born and raised in Hilltop, among the rolling hills of Fleming County. Sousley is buried in Elizaville Cemetery. Sometimes I visit his grave on my way home from work, when I need to remind myself why I do what I do.

Ed had read columns that I'd written about Sousley and wanted to talk.

He sent me a letter that I received Jan. 4, 2006.

"I spent 44 days on Iwo Jima and was earlier in the invasion of Guam, and out of 60 men in our platoon, half were killed or wounded, but I was lucky," he wrote. "I am 83 –and-a-half-years old and have been living on the same farm (excluding my military service) since 1937."

He later invited me to that farm, and into his home to talk about his experiences on Iwo Jima, the tiny island where Sousley had helped Rene Gagnon, Harlon Block, Ira Hayes, Doc Bradley and Michael Strank raise an American Flag, and they had their photograph taken in the process as the battle raged around them. The photograph, taken by Ed Rosenthal, remains one of the most iconic and recognizable images in history, but Strank, Block and Sousley, never saw it.

They died on Iwo Jima before the battle was over. Hayes, Gagnon and Bradley survived the battle.

They were the lucky ones.

Below is a brief excerpt of my interview with Mr. O'Neil.

We talked all day. Many of the things he told me I will take to my grave without ever sharing.

They are simply too sorrowful and painful to speak or write of, and I don't think Mr. O'Neil would approve my sharing them. He trusted me and unburdened himself and seemed relieved when he stopped.

I won't betray his trust.

But I will share the following, and I sure do hope he looks down from Heaven with approval.

"I saw truckloads of dead bodies on Iwo Jima.

I saw truckloads of dead Marines.

Some were my friends. Their bodies were in all kind of shape; some were missing limbs, some rotten, some really nothing more than a few body parts.

Some nights our foxholes would fill up with rainwater, and you'd sit there all night, terrified, up to your neck in water, waiting for the Japanese to come for you.

My thoughts on Guam and later, especially on Iwo Jima, were the same. I was just thinking about surviving until the next day. The Japanese liked to attack at night. Many nights I rubbed mosquito lotion into my eyes to help me stay awake."

The freedom of the press is a freedom I hold dearly, and its one of the few things in my life that has been given to me on a silver platter. Just like all of my freedoms. Just like all of your freedoms: Freedoms that were paid for with blood. Blood spilled from Bunker Hill, Blue Licks and Baghdad, to Shiloh, Iwo Jima and Kabul. Blood spilled from folks who lived in Carlisle, Barterville and Hilltop, and folks who have in the past, and still today call Fleming, Bath, Nicholas and Robertson County, home, though they currently protect our freedoms abroad.

The freedom of the press is one I will never willingly compromise just because it makes a few folks uncomfortable when I ask tough questions or write painful truths. And though in every community there are those who seek to control information for personal gain, and some do this quite successfully, I do not condone or support that belief, nor do I believe my heroes would.

They understood that terrible, awful price that comes with freedom.

So do I.

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LIVE IN PERSON AUCTION
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 27TH - 5:00PM
7327 MT CARMEL RD FLEMINGSBURG KY 41041
JAYCO MOTORHOME:2017 CHEVY PASSENGER VAN/2013 FORD PASSENGER VAN/FURNITURE/COLLECTIBLES/ & MORE!!
KEVIN BOLING AUCTION & REAL ESTATE



Friday November 27TH starting at 5:00PM Kevin Boling Auction & Real Estate will be conducting a LIVE IN PERSON ONLY AUCTION consisting of a 2017 Chevy Passenger Van/Jayco motor home (Less than 30,000 miles) 2013 Ford Passenger Van/Furniture/River Boat collectibles/Household Items/Christmas Decor/ Collectibles and more!! Keep watching for full listing and photos. Go to www.Auctionzip.com user ID 20528. Call Kevin at 606-748-2696 with any questions.

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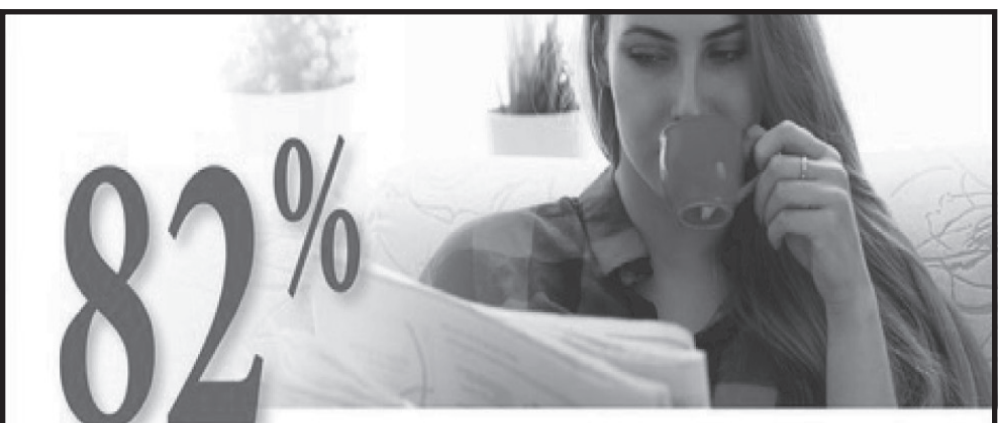

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*Kentucky State Study 2023; conducted by Coda Ventures