

**HENRY COUNTY FISCAL COURT
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2025**

The Henry County Fiscal Court met in Regular Session on January 21, 2025, at the Henry County 4-H Building in New Castle, Kentucky, with the following in attendance:

Scott Bates, Judge/Executive
Kassidy Dees, County Attorney
Esquire Brad Fisher
Esquire Ed Frederick
Esquire Roger Hartlage
Esquire Kevin McManis
Esquire Danny Shain
Esquire Carl Tingle

RE: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Judge Bates led the Court in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

RE: PRAYER & PREPARATION

Judge Bates offered the evening's prayer.

RE: CALL TO ORDER

Judge Bates called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. noting that all magistrates were in attendance.

RE: APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2024, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion by Esq. Tingle and second by Esq. Shain, it is ordered to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2024, regular meeting.

Motion carried unanimously

RE: NEW BUSINESS

RE: ROADS

1. Director's Monthly Report

Judge Bates announced that he has selected Zach Smith as the Road Department Supervisor. He has been with the department for a good while and has greatly helped during the time we have had a vacancy in that position. Judge Bates added that the crew is getting along great, and he feels it is best to hire from within. Mr. Smith will be getting a work cell phone and his number will be shared with the magistrates, but until that time please contact Judge Bates who will relay messages.

Judge Bates reported that the weather has caused a rough time with the snow, ice, and extremely cold temperatures. He quipped that over the weekend they have had 5 trucks on the road and 4 in the ditch due to the extremely difficult conditions and cautioned folks not to criticize the workers doing the plowing on our roads. The crew put in 80 hours that first week and has been working as hard as they can. Judge Bates estimated that we spent approximately \$60,000 during that first snow. The salt supply was all used, we got more and spread that last week, and have since gotten 2 more loads today. We have been mixing salt half and half with cinders which seems to be doing well. Judge Bates acknowledged Toby Berry, Daniel Brown, Travis Buchanan, and all the magistrates who helped along with other citizens. He stated that he could not say enough good things about all the people who have assisted, but knows there will always be complaints.

2. Road Committee Report

Esq. Fisher reported that the Road Committee met this afternoon and checked on the equipment which all seems to be going well. Amanda Ricketts has put together a file to keep up with maintenance records. He congratulated Zach Smith and stated that he feels he will be great and is up to the position. Esq. Fisher thanked all the employees including Judge Bates and Deputy Judge Buchanan for their work.

Esq. Hartlage stated that all areas have had issues to address and thanked Judge Bates for his efforts to address them. Judge Bates added that some spots were damaged with the plowing and will have to be repaired in the spring.

RE: PLANNING & ZONING

1. Administrator's Monthly Report

P & Z/Solid Waste Administrator Jason Stanley was unable to attend due to his need to be at the Campbellsburg City Council meeting regarding the County's Comprehensive Plan. Deputy Judge/Executive Travis Buchanan reported that 21 electrical and 15 building permits were issued during the last month. The Board of Adjustments will meet at 7 p.m. on January 27 at

the 4-H Building at 1106 Castle Highway, Eminence. The P & Z Commission is scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. on February 12, 2025, at the Henry County 4-H Building, however, there is nothing on the agenda.

2. Bond Reduction for Arborview Subdivision

Deputy Judge Buchanan stated that Arborview Subdivision in Eminence has requested a reduction in their required bond since the only remaining work is the final layer of blacktop and the sidewalks. The builder's estimates and our research place the value of these at \$20,000 for the sidewalks and \$42,000 for the final 1.5 inch layer of blacktop on 3,300 yards and 20 feet wide. The recommendation for bonding is a rate of 125 percent. The County proposes that we lower their bond to \$77,500.

Upon motion by Esq. Fisher and second by Esq. Frederick, it is ordered to reduce the required bond amount for Arborview Subdivision in Eminence to \$77,500.

Motion carried unanimously

RE: PARKS & FAIRGROUNDS

1. Director's Monthly Report

Parks Director Toby Berry reported that the Parks Department has been very busy shoveling and salting all the parking lots and sidewalks. They have completed odd jobs as they have been able.

RE: ANIMAL SERVICES

1. Director's Monthly Report

Animal Services Director Danielle Ashcraft reported the following receipts for the month of December: 9 adoptions totaling \$1,700, 1 surrender/reclaim fee of \$50, and donations of \$5,725 resulting in a total of \$7,475.

2. Animal Services Committee Report

Esq. Hartlage stated that the Committee met with the Trimble County magistrates. They discussed additional propane heaters to complement the existing system which is not very efficient. They also considered replacing the dog doors and the roof. Trimble County will address the drainage issue in the back. The Committee wants to purchase a topper for the truck to haul dogs and supplies which will be less than \$2,000 and white or amber safety lights for it which will be less than \$500. Esq. Hartlage added that there was money in the budget for these purchases, but would like Fiscal Court to approve them.

Upon motion by Esq. Hartlage and second by Esq. Tingle, it is ordered to approve purchases for the Animal Services truck of a topper for less than \$2,000 and lights for less than \$500.

Motion carried unanimously

RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Esq. Hartlage stated the Economic Development Committee did not meet, but the Council met prior to the Fiscal Court meeting. They held a business type of meeting as they continue to do housekeeping with the articles and bylaws. They are trying to steer the Economic Development Council to what it can do and how it can best operate.

RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL VACANCY

Judge Bates stated that there is a vacancy on the Economic Development Council to be appointed by Fiscal Court. Esq. Hartlage suggested that the Economic Development Committee convene and have a recommendation for that spot at the next Fiscal Court meeting.

RE: MEDICAL CANNABIS POLICY FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Esq. Shain, Chair of the Personnel Committee, stated that the Committee met and has developed a medical cannabis policy for the County. He read the policy pursuant to the powers in KRS 218B.040 which prohibits the use of medical cannabis by County employees and states the discipline for doing so.

Upon motion by Esq. Fisher and second by Esq. McManis, it is ordered to adopt the Medical Cannabis Policy prohibiting the use of medical cannabis by County employees and the resulting discipline up to and including termination in the event of testing positive for cannabis.

Motion carried unanimously

RE: SHERIFF'S MONTHLY REPORT

Sheriff Keith Perry reported the following activities for the month of December: 380 KSP dispatch calls, 137 Sheriff's office calls, 76 citations/criminal summons, 46 criminal arrests, 17 warrant arrests, 79 all court paper service, 1 MIW transport, 60 vehicle inspections, 10 carry conceal licenses, 3 DUI arrests, and 1 drug charge arrest.

Sheriff Perry thanked Toby Berry and Daniel Brown for their work in clearing the parking lots and sidewalk at the Sheriff's Office.

RE: CLAIMS & TRANSFERS

Upon motion by Esq. McManis and second by Esq. Fisher, it is ordered to approve the following claims:

General Fund	\$345,053.73
Road & Bridge Fund	86,196.44
Jail Fund	47,178.50
LGEA	89.06
Opioid Settlement	39,839.20
ABC	2,250.41
County Clerk Document	6,090.00
Fair Fund	1,006.36
Angel's Envy Sewer Project	<u>301,947.59</u>
Total	\$829,651.29

Motion Carried Unanimously

RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Judge Bates opened the floor for public comments.

Steve Douglas, Vice Chair of the Henry County Ambulance Taxing District (HCATD), addressed Fiscal Court and those citizens in attendance to provide an update on the status of the operation. The HCATD met last night and the decision was made to sever the services with Baptist Health LaGrange beginning March 1. Fiscal Court does not oversee the ambulance service and has not since 2020 when we contracted with Baptist.

The decision to switch from Baptist to Ameripro EMS was based solely on funding and issues with the contract. There was no intention to be hostile to Baptist, and Mr. Douglas read the requirement regarding communication from the contract with which we complied. He reiterated that there was not a problem with the employees, it was an issue with the contract that stated Baptist would manage services for approximately \$30,000 per month. The HCATD is responsible to pay for losses and the cost has risen to \$54,600 monthly. Expenses have continued to go up, and we were informed that the deficit for 2024 is \$127,589. The HCATD Board has requested that the contract be amended, but there was no willingness from Baptist to adjust it.

Mr. Douglas stated that the contract with Ameripro will amount to a reduction of 50 hours per week. The coverage would have been reduced regardless of the provider. The HCATD will watch closely before we raise taxes or change coverage. They want to stabilize the service and will be required to pay the losses to Baptist at the end of their contract. They will get the new service going and make the evaluation of where we are. The HCATD is concerned about the citizens, but wants to insure we do not head into bankruptcy and have no EMS services if they make no adjustment.

Judge Bates thanked the HCATD Board for the work in trying to resolve the dilemma. He understands the concern about how many ambulances we have running. Once we get settled with Baptist, we can hopefully run 2 ambulances 24/7 which is better than what we have now. Ameripro gave us 3 plan options and would prefer to start at this level and increase coverage instead of lowering it. Ameripro will also look at a district-wide plan with other counties to enhance coverage should there be a need.

Esq. Fisher thanked Steve Douglas for his many hours addressing this situation.

Hugh McBurney asked whether Fiscal Court is over the HCATD and why there are not updates given at the Fiscal Court meetings since there are magistrates on the Board. Judge Bates responded that we do not have reports from any of our independent taxing districts. Judge Bates also added that due to contract restrictions, no information on this change could be shared publicly. He stated that the employee situation is difficult because they were just informed; however, we could not communicate with them due to the Baptist contract. The notice of separation was provided at 60 days, and the Baptist announcement was not made until last Thursday.

Mr. Douglas stated that the issue in this situation is that the HCATD realized that the contract was not workable. When they have approached Baptist stating that we would have to look for someone else, we were not allowed to publicize this as Baptist would take the lead.

Deputy Judge Buchanan stated that updates at Fiscal Court meetings would provide a false expectation to the public regarding EMS. Concerns need to be addressed at the HCATD's meetings which are held on the 3rd Monday of every month.

Olivia Herrell of the County Clerk's office expressed her thanks to Toby Berry and Daniel Brown for their clearing of snow and inquired about the dripping gutters as the melting has begun.

Dwayne Berry voiced his opinion that the 4-way stop at the Courthouse in New Castle should be changed to a traffic light. Court members responded that it was previously a stop light and the KY Department of Transportation changed it to the 4-way stop.

RE: COURT COMMENTS

Esq. Tingle expressed concern about large trucks on Union Church Road. Judge Bates and Esq. Fisher stated that this was a case of a citizen needing rock and that was the only way to access the property.

Esq. Hartlage stated that the required funding for the EMS Taxing District shows the need for economic development to welcome companies into the County and keep tax rates the same while increasing money to fund services.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Esq. Shain and second by Esq. Frederick, it is ordered by the Court to adjourn and each Magistrate, the Judge/Executive, and the County Attorney shall receive a typed copy of these Minutes prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Motion carried unanimously

S/ Denise Perry
DENISE PERRY
FISCAL COURT CLERK

S/ Scott Bates
SCOTT BATES
JUDGE/EXECUTIVE

Date Approved: **February 18, 2025**