


INSIDE:

It's salad season and Jeanie Hart shares her own recipe. Se page 4.



INSIDE:

Lightning strikes a local church, and not for the first – or last – time. See Items from the Past on page 4.

SPORTS:

The Fort Scott High School Tiger baseball and softball teams hosted Field Kindley in doubleheaders Thursday and Friday. See page 10.

Commissioners approve purchase of replacement sheriff’s vehicle

BY JASON E. SILVERS
The Fort Scott Tribune

After a discussion on funding, Bourbon County Commissioners Monday decided to use money from the jail sales tax fund for the purchase of a new vehicle for the sheriff’s department.

All commissioners voted in favor of Commission Chairman Brandon Whisenhunt’s motion to spend \$66,914 from the jail sales tax fund to purchase a 2025 vehicle which will replace a 2014 vehicle involved in a two-vehicle accident April 4 in Allen County.

The commission tabled the matter last week in order to review budget numbers and determine funding for the vehicle.

Sheriff Bill Martin has said insurance funds would help the county offset the cost of the new vehicle, but how much money is received will depend on the outcome of negotiations between the county’s insurance carrier, the Kansas County Association Multi-line Pool (KCAMP) and the other insurance provider involved.

Monday’s discussion involved commissioners, County Clerk Susan Walker, Martin and former Allen County Sheriff Bryan Murphy, who now works as a deputy and advisor for the Bourbon County Sheriff’s Office.

“I think we just spend it out of the sales tax fund for now as a one-time expense, and get back what

we can from the insurance,” Whisenhunt said. “And we start having other discussions come budget time.”

Commissioner David Beerbower’s motion early in the discussion to fund the purchase “until insurance comes in,” using money from the general fund, was seconded by Milburn but no vote was taken.

Beerbower later suggested discussing the matter in more detail during budget talks.

Walker said the purchase is not a budgeted line item in the general fund “so you don’t have any extra money sitting there like in the past. It was spent way down.”

Whisenhunt asked if funds are available in the general fund.

“That’s a loaded question,” Walker said. “All you do is reduce your cash reserves.”

Beerbower said the county will receive money from insurance, but Walker said that will likely be “not very much.”

“We need to fund that vehicle,” Beerbower said. “They need that on the road.”

Walker recommended the purchase be made using money from the jail sales tax fund and she provided commissioners with more information on that fund. Commissioner Mika Milburn-Kee said she understood there was money available in that fund.

Martin said there are state statutes regarding vehicles for the sheriff’s department. He cited K.S.A. 28-107(b) which involves the “purchase, lease or pay-

ment of compensation for use” of vehicles for sheriff and deputies. He said Beerbower was “on the right road” concerning financing the vehicle.

A portion of the statute reads, “For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this section, the board of county commissioners may either purchase or lease and finance the operation and maintenance of such vehicles ...”

The statute also states the commission “may make provision for automobiles, motorcycles or other vehicles necessary for the sheriff and his deputies for the proper discharge of their duties.”

“The statute doesn’t say anything about taking anything from any other funds, jail or VIN funds,” Martin said. “This is the statute that governs that.”

Walker said other funds are available as the general fund is currently “so tight on money,” she would not recommend commissioners use money from that fund.

“Technically, the sheriff’s funds are part of the general fund,” she said. “In all reality, if we were to move those funds back to the general fund where they should be because we have not ever adopted a resolution for them to be split out on their own. As you are bringing in inmate dollars for reimbursements of services, those would technically be in your general fund revenue.”

Walker said she was not recommending taking money from the sheriff’s operating expenses, but from sales tax operational funds, which has been used



Bourbon County Commissioner David Beerbower, left, and Sheriff Bill Martin, right, listen as Bryan Murphy speaks during a discussion Monday on funding a replacement vehicle for the sheriff’s office.

for other vehicle purchases. She said there is a “little bit of a surplus” in those funds.

“This makes more financial sense for you as a commission for you to do this today,” she said.

As county officials work through the budget, Walker said she has contacted the representative for Raymond James Financial Services – the county’s financial advisor for bonds – to compare numbers and “make sure we’re both on the same track.”

In discussing the county’s total debt service, which is increasing each year, Walker said about \$300,000 worth of work needs to be done on the courthouse. She said \$250,000 has been budgeted to move from the sales tax fund to “help fund jail operations” out of the sheriff’s operating budget.

“So we make a transfer every year for that,” she said, adding it was determined during budget meetings with the previous commission “that’s not sustainable.” She said commissioners at the time did not want to raise property taxes.

“We need to wean ourselves off of that (funding jail operations.) Over time, you see that number go down each year about \$25,000 and that says jail operations. We get down to the very end where we’re no longer doing it.”

Walker said the county can make up that funding

through “actual property tax” or revenue generated from inmates at the jail, which she said has risen “significantly.”

“Those types of increases could help offset this move,” she said. “I’ve been conservative in our sales tax projections compared to what Raymond James is showing. He has a little bit of an increasing amount in his sales tax. I keep mine level.”

SEE PATROL CAR REPLACEMENT ON PAGE 4

County employee policies, procedures under review by commissioners

BY JASON E. SILVERS
The Fort Scott Tribune

Bourbon County Commissioners on Monday discussed policy and procedures for employees and elected to wait on naming a new liaison for human resources.

The commission voted unanimously to approve a motion by Commissioner Mika Milburn-Kee to adopt a resolution that will be added to the employee handbook.

Milburn-Kee made a motion to “adopt and employ procedures for deviation and a deviation form” to be adopted as an addendum to the employee handbook through a resolution “for employee procedures

to improve overall function with the procedures.” She said three forms will accompany the procedures; a personal improvement plan, corrective action plan and formal written warning.

Commissioners briefly discussed the matter after Commissioner David Beerbower seconded Milburn-Kee’s motion. Milburn-Kee said the handbook, called the Employee Policy and Procedure manual, is dated April 2002. She said the addendum will be to the end of the handbook “to support multiple functions of the handbook and to supersede all previously written policies and procedures pertaining to the same likeness, the function of the new procedures.”

County Clerk Susan Walker said she will bring

the resolution to the next commission meeting. She said she will not be present but will make sure her clerk “understands what needs to be explained.”

The commission chose to gather more information and bring the topic of HR back to the table next week.

Beerbower said he wanted more clarification on what the duties of former commissioner Leroy Kruger were as the commission’s HR liaison. The liason position has not been filled since Kruger’s resignation from the commission.

Walker said the county has taken on the payroll and benefits portion of HR, but the part that is missing is the “disciplinary piece.”

“Where do employees go for complaints on disciplinary issues?” she said.

“There are procedures in the handbook that deal with grievances. There needs to be a person identified where grievances are taken.”

Commission Chairman Brandon Whisenhunt said the commission could designate a liaison now until they can make a decision on long-term plans for human resources. There was some discussion on hiring outside the county for HR work as well as in-house HR services.

Walker also presented information to the commission on worker’s compensation and benefits. This topic will be brought back to the next meeting.

More on Monday’s meeting will appear in a future edition.

Swap meet weekend



Belinda Smith, left, and Linda Bower sort through items on their tables during the Pioneer Harvest Fiesta swap meet Friday evening at the Bourbon County Fairgrounds. The swap meet, which opened Friday, offers a variety of flea market and garage sale items, antique auto parts, farm tractors and parts, farm equipment and accessories, and other items. Gates open at 8 a.m. today.

WEATHER

Sunny, with a high near 66. Wind chill values as low as 42 early. North wind 6 to 11 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

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