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The American Legion Riders held an event for Wreaths Across America. See page 3.

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Tri-Valley Development has received a grant to fund a Friendship and Dating Program. See page 5.

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Members of the FSCC men’s rodeo team are competing this week in the College National Finals Rodeo. See News Hound on page 4.

Last FSCC President finalists speak during forum; trustees to decide this week

BY JASON E. SILVERS
The Fort Scott Tribune

The last two finalists for the position of president at Fort Scott Community College discussed their backgrounds and goals for the college during public forums Monday on the college campus.

Dr. Jack Welch and George McCrary were among the four finalists identified by the FSCC Board of Trustees, which is receiving assistance from the Southeast Kansas Education Service Center at Greenbush in the presidential search process. Two finalists, Dr. Larry Guerrero and Dr. Anthony (Tony) Kinkel, spoke during forums on Friday. (See the Saturday, June 14 Tribune.)

The board evaluated each candidate and conducted interviews in closed sessions prior to the forums. Each candidate also met with the board, cabinet members, faculty and staff.

During their regular meeting Monday, trustees took no action following a 15-minute executive session to discuss non-elected personnel to protect their privacy. Board Chairman Bryan Holt said the session involved discussion on the candidates for the president position.

On Tuesday, Holt told the Tribune Greenbush representatives will help the board with contract negotiations and the board will “hopefully” reach a consensus on a candidate later in the week. He said once the board has chosen a candidate, the process will not be finalized as the next step will be working toward a contract.

Holt said his hope is to have the position filled and the new president on campus by July 1.

George McCrary

McCrary, who has a bachelor of science in engineering degree in exercise science from the University of Kansas, currently serves as public outreach coordinator for the Office of the Attorney General Kris Kobach. McCrary has also been a business owner and operator and worked in business development for various organizations in Kansas.

“The college needs a leader to bring some juice to the campus nobody has ever seen,” he said.

McCrary said he attended FSCC in 1984-85 and was the quarterback for the football team and participated in a work study program.

“They took a chance on me,” he said. “Nobody in my family had gotten a good education.”

McCrary said he and his wife have two grown children and have lived in Baldwin for more than 20 years. He was raised in Kansas and has family throughout Kansas, including the Fort Scott area.

McCrary said he would approach the position of president with a “business mentality,” rather than an “education mentality.”

“I’m a project kind of guy. Fort Scott is going to be a lot of work,” he said, adding the results should be beneficial for both the college and community.

In discussing supporting students, McCrary said Kansas ranks high in teen suicide and teens are “turning to their phones” rather than talking to people.

“We need to change that,” he said, adding he



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

Dr. Jack Welch, finalist for the president position at FSCC, speaks during a public forum Monday at the Danny and Willa Ellis Family Fine Arts Center.

would like to work with other entities to bring an internship program to the community. He said internship courses could be available to students and business owners.

When asked about his plan to draw students to FSCC, McCrary said he would pursue programs at the high school level and expand on those programs.

“Getting kids on campus is critical,” he said.

One avenue to draw students to the college is through gaming, an activity popular with young students. Another is a wrestling program, which could attract a large number of students and be more cost efficient than other programs. He said he would talk to local superintendents about drawing students to

these programs.

He said it is important for businesses to let college officials know of their needs in order to offer the most appropriate programs. He said he would work to expand the college’s current offerings.

“We need to get kids engaged in the community,” he said. “The community has to feel like they can trust the school.”

McCrary said the president position at FSCC is a “very critical position in a very critical time.” He said he would work to build relationships on campus and in the community and the college needs a leader with “integrity.”

“There’s broken trust in the community,” he said.

McCrary was asked how FSCC can educate students



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

George McCrary, finalist for the president position at FSCC, speaks during a public forum Monday at the Danny and Willa Ellis Family Fine Arts Center.

in a rural community. He said the college has less students and is facing “more schools and competition.”

“We need programs to keep kids. It’s more competitive in the education field than ever,” he said.

Trades schools have increased more than 25% the last five years, McCrary said.

McCrary also discussed working with the college’s other campuses and other institutions to address issues.

He said FSCC could get youth on campus by hosting championship sporting events on campus.

McCrary was also asked about the loss of the college’s football program, and his views as a former football player on reinstating the program.

“It’s costly,” he said, adding he would pursue a program that is cheaper to operate and would bring more students, such as a marching band or cheer.

“Would I like to see football back? Yes. Am I stuck on football? No,” he said.

He said with a football program, it would be important to make sure the program is “not in the red.”

McCrary was asked how long he feels it will take to make the college more stable financially and bring a feeling of confidence in the college back to the community, as well as why he chose to apply for the position. He said he has heard talk of closing the college and others across Kansas.

SEE FSCC FINALISTS ON PAGE 8

Motion to establish Certified Local Government passes commission, 4-1

BY JASON E. SILVERS
The Fort Scott Tribune

Fort Scott City Commissioners on Tuesday moved forward with establishing a Certified Local Government and historic preservation and resource commission.

The commission approved by a 4-1 vote a motion by Commissioner Matthew Wells to proceed with adoption of an ordinance adopting a seven-member historic preservation commission and to eliminate an item in the draft of the ordinance concerning the interior of buildings, and to move forward with registering as a certified local government.

Wells and Commissioners Dyllon Olson, Kathryn Salsbury and Tracy Dancer voted yes with Mayor Tim VanHoecke, who participated

ed in the meeting via teleconference, being the only no vote. Salsbury presided over the meeting as commissioner.

The ordinance adopted is No. 3782 titled “An ordinance for the purpose of establishing the Fort Scott Historic Preservation and Resource Commission to the City Code of the City of Fort Scott, Kansas.”

Commissioners heard feedback from Kathy Dancer and Martha Jane Gentry, members of the Design Review Board, on their concerns with the ordinance, and discussed the pros and cons of the CLG concerning historic preservation, as well as the role of the Design Review Board and the impact on historic districts. The commission also discussed the draft of the ordinance put together by

City Attorney Bob Farmer as compared to an ordinance for the city of Independence which was used as a template.

After the meeting, Wells told the Tribune the historic preservation commission will eventually replace the seven-member Design Review Board, which remains an active city advisory board.

During their June 3 meeting, commissioners voted to proceed with drafting an ordinance with any modifications or amendments they wished to add. Commissioners discussed what the language of a potential ordinance would look like as well as enforcement of regulations and protecting the historic district.

Wells has said a benefit of the CLG is it would streamline the approval process for

modifications within the historic district and reduce the need to wait for approval by the State Historic Preservation Office, which can take several months. He said business owners can present information, obtain a building permit and order materials for projects without going to the Design Review Board or SHPO.

During a city commission work session in 2023, commissioners and citizens asked questions about the city joining the CLG program. Some who attended expressed concern the program would invite more bureaucracy while others said the city is already meeting most of the requirements for the program.

According to the Kansas Historical Society website, a national historic preservation program began in 1966

as a partnership between the federal government and states. The National Historic Preservation Act was later expanded to include local partnerships with the state and federal government. Under that law, the State Historic Preservation Officer and Secretary of the Interior certify local governments to participate under several federal standards.

The goal is to give control of historic preservation to local entities, according to Katrina Ringler, CLG coordinator and deputy State Historic Preservation (SHPO) officer, who presented information about the program during the 2023 work session.

Local governments adopt a historic preservation ordinance, which establishes a historic preservation commission, defines all relevant

terms, and specifies the number, composition and duties of the members of the commission, the Kansas Historical Society website states.


Fort Scott has two historic districts – one is national and the other is local. Ringler has said state law does not apply to the local district. She said the CLG would include historical landmarks or buildings throughout the city.

In 2023, after several individuals called for the commission to disband the Design Review Board in July, Mayor Matthew Wells recommended the city become a CLG and place the design review board’s responsibilities with the planning commission.

More on Tuesday’s discussion and other items from the meeting will appear in a future edition.

WEATHER

A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 82. Winds could gust as high as 22 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40%.



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