

City council ousts London mayor

BY MCKENNA HORSLEY
KENTUCKY LANTERN

LONDON The city council in this Eastern Kentucky town ousted embattled Mayor Randall Weddle after an hours-long hearing at the local courthouse Friday.

Heading into the hearing, Weddle faced nearly a dozen charges of misconduct and willful neglect of duty, but the six London City Council members ultimately agreed to remove him from office on only three of the charges.

The council approved charges that alleged Weddle refused to publish an enacted ordinance and then delayed its timely publication, did not fill vacancies on the city's ethics commission in a timely manner and signed a \$5 million mortgage without council approval.

Nevertheless, Weddle told reporters after the meeting he plans to appeal the removal in circuit court. He also pointed to the hundreds of citizens in the city and county who signed petitions in favor of keeping him in office as a sign that residents were against the council's decision. London, a town of about 7,500 people, is the Laurel County seat.

"They don't care. They have an agenda," Weddle said of the city council.

Weddle had previously contended that the votes were stacked against him, as the council appointed a new member to fill a vacancy earlier this week.

After voting, the city council appointed a new London mayor — Tracie Handley. According to her social media accounts online, she is a local artist.

Friday's removal of Weddle is the latest in a months-long brawl between London City Council members and Weddle. City Council meetings became public spectacles as the former mayor and the council members argued back



MCKENNA HORSLEY | KENTUCKY LANTERN
Supporters of London Mayor Randall Weddle wear T-shirts that say "We voted him in!" during his impeachment hearing at the Laurel County Judicial Center on Sept. 5.

and forth about the allegations. Plus, citizens packed meeting rooms to show their support for or opposition to the mayor.

The clashes have also spilled over onto social media. Facebook livestreams for recent city council meetings have gained hundreds of comments. Weddle has also posted Facebook statuses about city meetings, such as uploading a circus flyer for one meeting, complete with city council members' faces superimposed on clowns.

After a council meeting earlier this week, Weddle vowed to run for reelection in 2026 and: "We're going to give 'em hell."

The courthouse hearing was no quiet affair. Most of the audience members inside the room were supporters of Weddle who clapped for him whenever he entered the room and donned T-shirts that said, "I stand with Mayor Weddle."

The audience was mostly quiet as witnesses testified but emotions erupted between council member Kelly Smith Greene and one of the witnesses, Phil Smith, her cousin and the chair of the London Tourism Commission, as she spoke near the end of the hearing during the council's deliberations. Bailiffs removed Smith, who had earlier defended the \$5 million

mortgage, which had been sought to support the tourism commission. Weddle supporters cheered him on.

"You neglected to ever communicate with council members. You came in like a bull in a china shop," Greene said to Weddle. "You were the boss and you didn't get our opinion."

Other witnesses included Weddle himself, the acting city clerk, a former city clerk, local Housing Authority workers and Chief of Police Bobby Day. Much of the testimony included questions about if Weddle acted appropriately in various situations.

Some of the charges that fell short of the necessary unanimous approval from council members alleged that Weddle had erroneously removed members of the London Housing Authority board and had directed the authority's employees to not follow laws and regulations.

While on the stand, Weddle expressed concern about another appointment to an office — this time the mayor's office — that is typically on the ballot. At present, three of the council members have been appointed instead of being elected by citizens.

"People see the chaos in London and I think that both branches (of government) are to blame for some things and we both have to take blame for where it

belongs, but one of the biggest chaoses in this city is that people's voices are not being heard," Weddle said.

Former Kentucky Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph Lambert presided as the hearing officer for Friday's city council meeting.

Weddle also has made headlines for his political contributions to Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear and the Kentucky Democratic Party during the 2023 race for governor.

The Kentucky Lantern reported in April 2023 that Weddle's family and his company's employees had given more than \$300,000 to support Beshear, including \$2,000 contributions from people who had never before made a political donation. The Beshear campaign later returned \$202,000 in donations that Weddle had put on his credit card and that had been made in the names of other people, a violation of campaign finance laws.

The state Registry of Election Finance continues to investigate the donations. The registry staff earlier this year recommended that the board find Weddle unknowingly violated the law. In February, the board unanimously deferred action on that recommendation and asked the registry staff to provide additional information, including about actions of the Beshear campaign and Kentucky Democratic Party.

When Weddle's excessive contributions came to light during the 2023 primary campaign, then-Attorney Daniel Cameron, who was a Republican candidate for governor, asked the FBI to investigate.

In Laurel County, a police shooting in December has fueled dissatisfaction with Weddle's administration. London police shot and killed Doug Harless, 63, in his home while serving a warrant for stolen property at the wrong house.

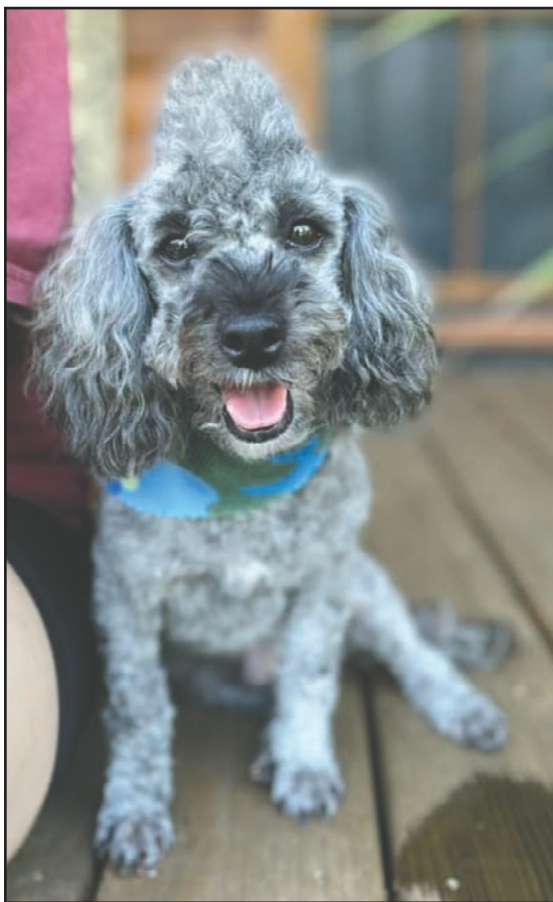
TOP FIVE STORIES

Aug. 31-Sept. 6

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following headlines were associated with the top five most-read stories on dailyindependent.com. Search any headline on the website to read the story.

Rank Headline

1. Every Dawg has their day: Lawrence takes advantage of Tomcat turnovers
2. Bare asks for notification of EDC activation
3. GED program in Greenup jail finds success
4. Sparks and Recreation: Something Brewing again at Raceland
5. Multi-state fugitive arrested in Boyd



SUBMITTED PHOTO

PET OF THE WEEK: FELIX

Felix is The Daily Independent's Pet of the Week. He is a 4-year-old blueHe's approximately 4 years old. He is a blue Merle toy poodle. His owners rescued him from Homeward Bound Animal Rescue. "We got him from a foster and they took excellent care of him," his owners wrote." He is living his best life now. He's the baby of the house and has the zoomies often!" Felix is one of dozens of submissions into the newspaper's Facebook contest.

Congressional votes, week of Aug. 29 to Sept. 4

BY TARGETED NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON Here's a look at how area members of Congress voted over the previous week.

Along with roll call votes this week, the House also passed: the International Traffic in Arms Regulations Licensing Reform Act (H.R. 4215), to require the Secretary of State to promulgate expedited and fixed timelines for the decision-making process to license the export of certain defense articles and defense services; the Uyghur Policy Act (H.R. 2635), to support the human rights of Uyghurs and members of other minority groups residing primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and safeguard their distinct identity; the ARMOR Act (H.R. 4233), to modify provisions relating to defense trade and cooperation among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; and the Undersea Cable Control Act (H.R. 2503), to require the development of a strategy to eliminate the availability to

foreign adversaries of goods and technologies capable of supporting undersea cables.

HOUSE VOTES

House Vote 1: OVERSEAS MILITARY SALES: The House has passed the Made-in-America Defense Act (H.R. 4216), sponsored by Rep. Sheri Biggs, R-S.C., to require the State Department to annually review whether goods and services sold to foreign governments by the U.S. military under the Foreign Military Sales program could also be sold under the Direct Commercial Sales program. Biggs

said the bill "strengthens domestic manufacturing. It supports our allies, and it advances our national security, all by cutting through the Washington bureaucra-

cy that too often slows us down." The vote, on Sept. 2, was 395 yeas to 20 nays.

YEAS: Barr R-KY

SEE **VOTES** | A4

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR BOYD SD4 GENERATORS

Boyd County Sanitation District #4 is accepting proposals for the supply and installation of three (3) standby generators and automatic transfer switches at the three Boyd County SD4 lift stations. Full RFB will be available through the online DFS Portal at dfs.bonfirehub.com, as well as erassist.com/work. Bids shall be submitted no later than 12 p.m. on September 15th, 2025 through the DFS Portal and will be awarded at a special session meeting of the District at a to-be-determined date and time. A public notice will be posted in the Portal when scheduled. All companies, including women, minority, and veteran owned businesses are encouraged to submit a Bid. Published: September 1 & 8, 2025

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