

Garden Club Hosts 78th Annual Mountain Laurel District Meeting

The Mountain Laurel District of the Garden Club of Kentucky is comprised of clubs from Barbourville, Corbin, Pikeville, Clay County, Rockcastle County, Middlesboro and London.

The 78th Annual District Meeting of the Mountain Laurel District was hosted by the Barbourville Garden Club (Barry Penn, President) on October 18 at the Knox County Extension Office in Barbourville, with Mountain Laurel District Director, Lee Parks,

of the Corbin Garden Club, presiding.

Presidents, delegates and members from all the clubs in the District were present as well as the Garden Club of Kentucky President, Sharon Burcham, 1st Vice President Debbie Skaggs, 2nd Vice President Carla Hawkins and 3rd Vice President Jackie Wagoner as well as the GCKY Recording/Corresponding Secretary Christie Angel (from London).

The Board of Governors

voted to place a Gold Star Memorial at the Bert T Combs US Forestry Building on U.S. 25E in Pineville, Kentucky. A Gold Star Memorial is a monument designed to honor the families of service members who have died in the line of duty. The Gold Star Memorials can only be commissioned by a federated garden club.

Jaxon Holland and Gage McClane represented the Knox County JROTC by presenting the colors for the meeting.



Above, from left: Susan Throneberry: Former President of Kentucky Garden Club and Guest Speaker, Lee Parks: Mountain Laurel District Director, Sharon Burcham: President of Kentucky Garden Club, Christie Angel: State and Mountain Laurel District Garden Club Secretary.

At top right, District Director Lee Parks addresses the audience. At right, Barbourville Garden Club member, Sarah Watkins, greets attendees.



SHERIFF

FROM PAGE A1

but no evidence of the review was found. The sheriff stated this condition is the result of a limited budget, which restricts the number of employees

the sheriff can hire or delegate duties to. The lack of oversight could result in undetected misappropriation of assets and inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies, such as the Department for Local Government.”

In consideration of the findings, Ball wrote, “We

recommend the sheriff separate the duties involved in receiving cash, posting to ledgers, and preparing reports.” In summary, the report recommends that the sheriff’s office separate cash-handling, recordkeeping, and reporting duties to improve oversight. If staffing

and funding limits prevent this, officials should implement documented cross-checks, such as having an independent employee verify deposits and reports against supporting records.

When questioned the audit findings, Knox County Sheriff Mike Smith

stated, “We can’t hire additional personnel due to budgetary constraints,” and shared that it is challenging to segregate duties, noting that they are personally targeted and often receive harsh criticism from the state for this issue.

Smith stated that there

is no quick fix, as they would have to acquire an increase in budget to address these issues. However, Smith managed to focus on the good as well, stating, “I’d just like to thank our staff for having a good audit and that all the money’s been accounted for.”

COUNCIL

FROM PAGE A1

a half years later, the bid has been awarded to Spirtas Wrecking Company of Valley Park, Missouri. Spirtas Wrecking Company’s bid of \$473,733, plus a \$100,000 contingency for potential asbestos removal, was accepted and was nearly half the cost of the only other bid submitted for the project. C2G Environmental of London, Ky., submitted a bid for \$897,000. In addition to the exceptionally high bid, City Code Enforcement Officer Corey Moren noted the company, C2G Environmental, although recommended by an environmental consultant, did not score well in their interviews.

Although the demolition bid has been awarded, work cannot begin until the federal government opens back up as the project is being carried out in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency. Moren stated, “We’re hoping thirty days after the government opens back up, we’ll be good to go,” noting the city would have everything ready to move forward as soon as possible. “We’re trying to get ahead of the game, that way we’re good to go when they do get back to work.” The EPA is affected by the ongoing federal shutdown, now historic in the number of days federal government agencies have been at a standstill.

In other actions, the city council awarded a blacktop bid to Hinkle Contracting. Councilman Ronnie Moore commented, “They’ve been fantastic in the past” to work with.

The council approved reappointing John Knox Mills to the Barbourville Utility Commission for another term, ending November 1, 2028. The council also reappointed Callie Dixon Mills to another four-year term with the Barbourville Housing Authority, to end December 31, 2029. John David King is stepping down from the Housing Authority board, and the council voted to appoint Teresa Corey to replace him for a one-year term to end December 31, 2026.

The council voted to allow Mayor David Thompson to sign the deed for property at 109 3rd Street in Barbourville. The same property was also declared surplus and will be auctioned with sealed bids advertised in the newspaper

of record. The council also voted to surplus office furniture from both the old municipal building and the temporary city hall office, which includes desks and leather chairs. Creative Realty and Auction will handle the furniture surplus sale.

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2025-6, “A Resolution Authorizing Mayor to Execute and Sign FEMA Application and Contract”, which was unanimously approved by the council. The resolution, as explained by Corey Moren, is regarding an application applying for federal funds to repair flood damage at Thompson Park.

The council heard reports from city officials, with Doug Dozier, Fire Chief, giving his department’s breakdown first. Dozier noted his department handled two structure fires, five vehicle accidents, one fire alarm, assisted EMS twice, attended to a brush fire, and a grease fire on the Court Square during the Daniel Boone Festival.

Police Chief Winston Tye reported 22 accidents (one with injuries), opened 15 cases, 171 citations for 398 charges, five DUI’s, 308 traffic violations, 68 arrests (11 of which were during the Daniel Boone Festival), and answered 375 calls for service.

City Code Enforcement Officer Corey Moren used his time to share more information about the EPA and the federal government shutdown, which is affecting the timeline of the Dixon building demolition.

Utilities Commissioner Josh Callihan shared several items of interest affecting utility customers. Callihan discussed one active water tank project and another that is about to be under contract, noting that the Gilliam Hill tank project is about halfway complete. A contract will be sought for the RECC tank replacement project within the next couple of months. He went on to note the transition to tree trimming. It’s a “necessity to keep the power on, not a tree-trimming service,” Callihan said.

Callihan went on to address a new undertaking for the city utilities: a prepay service. Noting conversations between Callihan and Mayor Thompson had been ongoing for several years, Callihan said the delay was getting the infrastructure in place due to Barbourville Utilities being a provider of

electricity, water, internet, sewer and sanitation, as opposed to a single utility service.

Callihan noted that Barbourville Utilities has 15 customers currently, and the system is working “really well,” noting that most of the commission’s electric service area is covered. Anybody should be able to get it except for the farthest-reaching areas of Artemus and at Smokey. “Everybody in the city definitely can have access to it... I think it’s really going to be beneficial” for people to manage their usage and finances. An app informs customers of their account balance on a daily basis, allowing them to add money at their own pace, either daily or weekly.

“What it’s going to do is keep people from getting a bill for usage that happened three weeks ago and realize that they owe \$400, and all of a sudden they can’t pay their bill,” Callihan said. “If they do it daily, I think it’ll be easier for people to manage.” All services, Callihan said, are rolled into one rate that calculates usage daily.

To get started with Barbourville Utilities’ new prepay program, a \$100 deposit is required, but there is no minimum balance to keep. Callihan noted the deposit is necessary because with utilities such as internet, there are equipment costs.

“When the balance hits zero that meter is going to turn off,” Callihan noted of the system. “But you’re going to get a text message every day telling you where you are” instead of being surprised by a high bill.

Callihan also added that older, past-due balances can be rolled into the daily charge, allowing people to work with them to restore services by creating a plan to pay off the balances over time using the daily charges. “It’s going to benefit a lot of people,” Callihan said. He went on to note the advantages of temporary residents, such as renters and college students, who frequently move back and forth.

The new prepay service, while having an initial \$100 deposit, will do away with large deposits that often be \$500 or more to establish utility service.

Next, Tourism Director Marcia Dixon presented a report for her department. “We had the best October ever I think, with the Daniel Boone Festival. It was super nice,” she shared, also thanking the

city council for its support of a new concert Tourism added during the festival.

Dixon shared that the annual Ghost Tours saw more than 300 people attend them, and over 700 people ventured through the Trail of Terror at Thompson Park.

Looking ahead, Dixon noted the upcoming Christmas Open House and Marketplace Downtown which will be November 23 and 24, followed by Christmas festivities downtown on December 4, 5 and 6.

Mayor David Thompson gave a report on behalf of Street Department Director Jason Lake. Thompson reported Street Department pickups remain around 20-25 per day; the Daniel Boone Festival went good; work has begun installing Christmas lights and will be up by Thanksgiving; sidewalk repairs on High Street are underway; LED lights at the City Ball Park have been installed, coming under budget by about \$6,000 due to a price drop on the hardware; the lights at the city’s pickleball courts will be replaced thanks to the Barbourville Jr. Woman’s Study Club at a cost of \$5,240; and several more projects throughout the city, including blacktopping projects and trimming

trees were shared.

A Baby Box has been installed in the side of the new City Hall office on the police station side (right side facing the building). Once available for use, the box will be an option for someone to drop an unwanted child off at the police station. A blessing of the baby box ceremony is tentatively scheduled for noon on November 21. Police Chief Winston Tye said his department

was in the testing stages, testing the alarm each day as it must alert police within a certain amount of time. “So far, we’re good on it,” Tye said. He said officers will have to undergo necessary training for the baby box before it can be utilized.

The next regular meeting of the Barbourville City Council will be Thursday, December 4 at City Hall, 196 Daniel Boone Drive in Barbourville.

GILBERT TIRE CO.

9252 US HWY. 25, CORBIN, KY
606-523-5782 606-523-5598

BRAKE SPECIAL

STARTING AT **\$89⁹⁵** FOR PADS INSTALLED

•LIFETIME WARRANTY ON PART 12/1200
LABOR WARRANTY

OIL & FILTER SPECIAL

PENNZOIL SYN BLEND
UP TO 5 QTS W/FILTER

STARTING AT **\$29⁹⁹**

5W/20

Help Save the “First State Bank” Building

“Rebuilding Appalachia” is raising donations to purchase and restore the historic First State Bank building at 222 Knox Street. 100% of all donations will go toward its purchase and rehab.

Please help us save this historic building and preserve downtown Barbourville! Any donations are greatly appreciated!

EIN: 92-1908858

Rebuilding Appalachia is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit and all donations are tax deductible. To donate, visit www.RebuildingAppalachia.org or call Chris at (606) 243.9991