

Community News/Religion

County commission plans work session on new budget

BY JASON E. SILVERS
The Fort Scott Tribune

Bourbon County Commissioners on Monday discussed the process for final review and adoption of the county’s 2026 budget.

County Clerk Susan Walker said the hearing on the Revenue Neutral Rate is set for Aug. 25, but she must also publish a hearing on the budget. A budget advisory committee formed in June is also preparing to present recommendations to the commission.

“I have to have a good idea for the budget hearing,” Walker said. “It will help the budget advisory group know when they have to be done.”

During a discussion on dates when commissioners will be available for work sessions and hearings, Walker said the publication date “really drives when everything has to be done.”

Commissioner Mika Milburn-Kee said the advisory committee planned to finalize their recommendations Wednesday and submit their advice on the budget to commissioners. She said commissioners should schedule work sessions with the committee to discuss any changes proposed by commissioners or committee members, and to get advice from the committee.

Walker said both hearings cannot take place on the same date.

“You have to publish 10 days before the hearing so you’re past that,” she said. “It’s based on the hearing date when I have to publish.”

Walker said if the commission is comfortable with the budget numbers by Aug. 25, the publication would be Aug. 27 and the budget hearing could be Sept. 8. Commissioner Sam Tran suggested a work session Aug. 22.

After a discussion, commissioners agreed to conduct a budget work session at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 21 with committee members who wish to participate. Commission Chairman David Beerbower said commissioners can plan another work session and then inform Walker of a date for the hearing.

“We will get the clerk a date as soon as we know where we’re heading,” he said.

Walker said she wanted commissioners to be aware of timelines for the budget. She said the budget publication could be Aug. 27, Aug. 30, Sept. 3 or Sept. 6.

Gregg Motley, representing the budget committee, said the committee prefers to make recommendations “in budget document form,” then let commissioners work through changes to the budget without the committee.

“We have put a ton of work in,” Motley said, the challenge for the committee has been working with “dif-

fering priorities.”

“We’ve tried to balance the five people’s priorities together and come up with a consensus,” he said.

Motley said eight people working at the table on budget priorities could create a situation where there are “too many cooks in the stew.”

“Let the commission put their touch on it, this is where we would be,” he said. “The best way to do that is give the commission the budget and say here’s where we think the numbers ought to be, the commissioners add their signature and priorities to it. That’s my recommendation.”

Motley said the budget is ultimately based off the commissioners’ priorities, which has made the committee’s work “a little awkward” as committee members do not know those priorities.

“Every dollar you decide to spend, you’ve got to cut somewhere else and that’s a priority decision,” he said.

Milburn-Kee said she hoped to get priorities to the commission before the committee’s recommendations are finalized. Motley said commissioners determine which areas to spend dollars.

“My priority was no mill levy increase,” Motley said.

Motley said the committee has discussed deficits in such areas as cash reserves, equipment reserve, as well as deferred maintenance at the courthouse and other

expenses that have led to “playing catch up.”

“It’s hard to do that in one year,” he said.

Motley talked about cutting some of the commission’s “higher priorities” as well as the importance of cash reserves and funds for equipment and courthouse repairs.

“You spend all that money you’re cutting operating dollars here and there,” he said.

He said due to depleted cash reserves, commissioners may want to look into capital improvement bond issues later this year or early next year due to anticipated decreases in rates for bonds.

Motley said he did not think all five committee members should attend the work session. Tran said he would like some of the “functional experts” to be present, at least to observe, as commissioners may have questions.

“The decision-making process is going to be on us,” Tran said.

“After we hash through these priorities, it will be difficult to hear it get chopped up,” Motley said.

Beerbower said commissioners “respect” the time and effort put in by the committee.

Milburn-Kee said she

hopes to incorporate the committee’s suggestions into the budget.

“We’ve been open to everybody’s priorities,” Motley said. “I want this to be effective and get done well. We want to serve you guys, too.”

Motley said the committee wanted to delve deeper into individual expenditures but “didn’t have time to do that for \$18 million in expenditures. Next year we can get started earlier hopefully and have more time to be thoughtful on this.”

Tran said he has been observing the committee’s meetings and the “team has done a great job.”

“It’s been very difficult,” Motley said. “We spent a lot of time looking at numbers. We all understand, at the end of the day, no one is going to be happy because you can’t take care of all priorities.”

Walker said she must have final numbers in the budget document in order to do the publication.

Later in the meeting, Walker and commissioners discussed a possible work session to review financials.

Walker said letters on the revenue neutral rate hearing have been mailed out, and the state will reimburse the county for the expense this

year.

“We will be reimbursed for printing and postage, but we’re unsure about next year,” she said. “Every year, we don’t know if that’s going to get reimbursed. If we’re not reimbursed next year, you’re looking at about a \$20,000 bill.”

Election information

Walker said the deadline to register to vote or update voter registration information is Oct. 14; advanced ballots will be mailed out Oct. 15; early voting begins at the courthouse Oct. 20 and Oct. 28 is the last day for advanced voting ballots. The general election is Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Walker said voters should check new voter registration cards for voting locations as several people have returned their cards to the clerk’s office. She urged voters to mail the card back with a “return to sender” notification.

“That lets us know it’s rejected,” she said. “We can’t accept it and send people to the post office. If you get one that doesn’t live in your home or you’ve changed addresses, send it back.”

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

Classifieds

1st Presbyterian Church

This Sunday at First Presbyterian Church

Worship participants
Pastor: Rev. Sarah Gengler

Music Director: Dr. Greg Turner

Usher: Deb McCoy

Worship Leader: Jeanne Randles

Greeter: Edward Scott

Coffee Fellowship: Tim and Jeanne Randles

First Reading: Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19

Second Reading: Luke 12:49-56

Breakfast and Jesus, formally known as Waffles with Jesus, will start up again Sept. 14.

We are starting an Adopt a Grandparent this fall. If you are interested in being adopted by a First Presbyterian elementary student, reach out to Denise or the church office.

Fall kick off is Sept. 7 with Intergenerational Faith Information at 9:30 a.m. After service will be a pot-

luck. Sumo Showdown will take place during Intergenerational Faith Information Sept. 7.

We are looking for gently-used items for the church garage sale Sept. 20. See Denise or Michele about any donations you may have.

Sign-ups

Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex for the Worship Leader, Greeters, and Coffee Fellowship. Your help is very appreciated.

Diapers and school supplies

We are still collecting diapers for the Beacon. Diapers can be left in the Library. The box on the back table is for school supplies; donated supplies will be taken to the High School. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Linda Jackson or Leah Lewis.

Families with children

We are glad your kids are here! Kids are asked to come to the front during Time with Children.

Caregiver support group

Sherman Sisco, Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker and caregiver for his wife, has started a caregiver support group at First Presbyterian. The next meeting date is Tuesday, Aug. 26. The group will be meeting in the parlor and the meeting will begin at 10 a.m. and last for an hour or an hour and a half, depending on the number of participants. All caregivers are welcome, and anyone with interest or questions can contact Sherman Sisco at 785-317-4440 or simply show up.

Church calendar

Today

Worship – 10:30 a.m.

This week

Tuesday, Aug. 19, Presbyterian Women Meeting at 9 a.m.

Thursday, Aug. 21, Prayer Group Meeting at 10 a.m.

Next Sunday

Worship - 10:30 a.m.



Face to Face

Patty LaRoche

www.fstribune.com

The Woman They Could Not Silence

Should you ever go through Springfield, Ill., I encourage you to visit the Elizabeth Packard Mental Health Center. It is now on my Bucket List. After completing the book The Woman They Could Not Silence about Elizabeth’s heroism, I am recommending the museum to everyone I see.

With the author’s portrayal of this remarkable woman, I learned much, particularly how spoiled we are because women in the 1800’s, having no legal rights, sacrificed much to make a difference. Women then were beholden to their husbands, and she was his property. Thus began the story of Elizabeth Packard.

Married for 21 years to a controlling, Confederate-sympathizing pastor, she disagreed with his teachings and took the bold step to attend a different church, taking her six children with her. With that decision, Theophilis, her husband, had her committed to a mental asylum in Jacksonville, Illinois. There she encoun-

tered Dr. Andrew McFarland, a man who not only was threatened by her keen intelligence but proved to be even more dangerous than her traitorous husband. Little did she know she would spend years trying to regain access to her children as she spoke out against the savage injustices.

I could not put the book down. Her story made me ask myself at which point I would have broken: freezing from lack of heat; sleeping on a straw, urine-filled cot; watching fellow inmates tortured; fighting for the hundreds of women – as sane as she – who were subjected to years of mistreatment because, they, like she, had done something to annoy their husbands.

Elizabeth’s life is a testament to the power of one person who was determined to do what she believed God called her to do.

There are others who have no institution named after them who also made a difference. Mordecai Ham (1877-1961) was a tent evangelist who converted over

300,000 men and women to Jesus. At one revival, two fourteen-year-old boys heard the commotion and decided to check out what was happening in the nearby tent. Realizing there were no available seats, they left but were stopped by an usher who assured the boys that he would find them a seat together. And he did.

At that meeting, both young men made a declaration of faith and asked Jesus to be their Lord. Their names? Billie Graham and Grady Wilson. Graham went on to lead millions to Christ, and Wilson stayed by his side, doing whatever Graham needed him to do. No one knows the name of the usher. He was the unknown man who did what he could to make sure those two teens had a seat to hear Ham’s teaching.

I don’t know about you, but I can’t wait to get to Heaven and meet these heroes/heroines, some with names that live in infamy and others who have no public claim to fame. All I know is, God uses both. We don’t have to live the life of a celebrity to be used by God. We just need to have the desire to usher others into His eternal kingdom. After all, my job probably is not to change the world. My job is to change someone else’s world.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN and installation, property cleanups, leaf removal, stump grinding, shrub trimming and shaping, gutter cleaning, gravel driveways, lawn dethatching, overseeding and aerating. Redbud Farms & Nurseries. 620-223-1811.

LAWN MOWING: Fort Scott area. Reasonable rates. Call or text 620-224-8774.

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HELP WANTED



NOW HIRING

Currently seeking a talented and experienced cook to join our award-winning culinary team in creating memorable meals for using fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Our offerings include daily breakfast and dinner service, occasional lunch, and specialty items such as picnics, grazing boards, and chocolate-dipped treats. Located just 25 minutes north of Fort Scott in Pleasanton, KS.

Responsibilities

- Prepare and serve up to three meals per day when needed
- Cook from-scratch meals for guest counts ranging from 2 to 30
- Accommodate a wide variety of dietary restrictions and food allergies

What We're Looking For

- Prior professional cooking experience (**required**)
- Strong baking and from-scratch cooking skills
- Reliability, responsibility, and the ability to work both independently and as part of a team

Compensation

Pay ranges from \$20-\$25 per hour, depending on experience. We pay quarterly and annual bonuses. Looking for Full or Part-Time help.

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LEGAL PUBLICATIONS

NOTICE OF REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE HEARING AND BUDGET HEARING

2025/2026

The governing body of

Fort Scott Recreation Commission

will meet on September 3rd, 2025 at 12:00 P.M. at Buck Run Community Center for the hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of funds. Detailed budget information is available at Buck Run Community Center and will be available at this meeting.

SUPPORTING COUNTIES

Bourbon (home county)

BUDGET SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES

The proposed budget year expenditure amount is the maximum expenditure limit for the

Fund	Prior Year Actual 2023/2024	Current Year Estimated 2024/2025	Proposed Budget Year 2025/2026
General	375,000	380,000	430,000
Employee Benefit	45,000	45,000	45,000
Totals	420,000	425,000	475,000

Lease Purchases:	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
July 1,	0	0	0

Revenue Neutral Rate as defined by KSA 79-2988	2.074
Total Proposed Estimated Tax Rate	4.325

Lucas Kelley

Recreation Commission Director

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