

THE FORT SCOTT TRIBUNE

Serving Bourbon County since 1884



www.fstribune.com

141ST YEAR NO. 60

6 N. Main St. • Fort Scott, Kansas 66701 • 620-223-2110

INSIDE: 1B-4B



BELOW

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has rescinded boil water advisories for the city of Uniontown and Bourbon County RWD 2C.

SPORTS:

The Fort Scott Dragoons of the Mid-America League will begin their season May 26. See page 7.

County commission weighs bids for comprehensive plan

Jason E. Silvers
The Fort Scott Tribune

On Monday, Bourbon County Commissioners and members of the Bourbon County Planning Commission discussed setting up interviews with firms that have submitted requests for proposals for the county's comprehensive plan.

Brian Ashworth, planning commission member, said five firms responded to the RFP, and the fees range from about \$38,000 to \$117,000. He said the scope of the plan submitted by each firm also varied. A comprehensive plan is a step toward implementing zoning in the county.

"We met last week with our consultant and came up with a list of recommendations for interviews for three firms," Ashworth said.

The three firms the planning commission recommends interviewing, as well as the associated fees, are Confluence, \$105,600; MPC, \$98,000, and Foster and Associates, \$38,000. Ashworth said Foster and Associates is the least expensive, but also offers the "least amount of scope."

"Confluence seemed to have the most comprehensive scope with MPC following behind that," he said. "In all of the fee breakdowns, they said it's negotiable for the three we chose to recommend."

All of the firms also offer a timeframe of about 12 to 18 months, Ashworth said.

Commissioner Mika Milburn-Kee asked if the planning commission had a favorite of the three firms. Ashworth said the planning commission wanted to inter-



Brian Ashworth, second from left, member of the Bourbon County Planning Commission, speaks during Monday's meeting of the Bourbon County Commission. Also pictured are Bourbon County Commissioner David Beerbower, left, and Jason Yount, planning commission member.

Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

view those three firms as "it seemed like they could be a good fit."

Ashworth said MPC, based in Nebraska, has worked in several counties in Kansas. He said Confluence, based in the Kansas City area, had a "very comprehensive" presentation. Foster and Associates, based in Wichita, has done some work in the area and completed a zoning plan for Labette County.

After reading through the proposals, Ashworth said with Foster and Associates, "a lot of work falls on the county" and confirmed the Confluence proposal is more inclusive. He said there are questions to be asked of the firms.

"This is what we need to ask some questions about and they understand what exactly we need," he said.

He said the planning com-

mission determined a list of questions and planned to meet Wednesday to discuss those questions.

"We wanted to talk to the commission and update you on the process, a breakdown of the numbers we saw for commissioners to review," he said.

Ashworth said he thinks a budget is needed, and asked for the county commission's approval to schedule the interviews and for the county commission to have a presence at the planning commission's meeting.

"I think it's worthwhile to get a budget together and talk about what the commission thinks is acceptable," he said.

In discussing the price ranges, Commission Chairman Samuel Tran said Foster and Associates' proposal also includes expenses of \$2,200 to \$2,500 for "meals,

mileage expense, travel meals, and map printing, if needed." For that proposal, the hourly rate for the chief landscape architect is \$85 per hour, \$70 per hour for the graduate architect planner, and \$65 an hour for a graphic artist, Tran said.

Ashworth said the price ranges provided are dependent on what work the firms are asked to do, and could fluctuate.

"There's roughly a \$65,000 difference from the lowest priced to the highest priced," Tran said. "We're comparing apples to oranges. On the lowest priced we're looking at time and a material contract. On the other one, we're looking for lowest price technically acceptable."

Ashworth said the planning commission agreed Confluence provided the "most comprehensive

scope." He said part of the interview process is asking questions to determine what the county needs, and "making sure we're comparing apples to apples."

The goal is to review proposals and then proceed with scheduling interviews, Ashworth said.

Jason Yount, planning commission member, said four of the five proposals submitted were within \$20,000 "and one was much less." Ashworth said a firm from Minnesota submitted a \$117,000 proposal, which also had a "pretty extensive scope," but the price was \$20,000 higher.

Commissioner Gregg Motley said he would prefer to leave the matter of choosing a firm to the planning commission.

"It's impossible for us to set a budget on this. We have a limited understanding of the scope that is necessary," he said, adding he would like to see the cost under \$100,000, as well as the planning commission's first, second and third choices, and the cost after negotiations.

There was some discussion on differences in fees and extent of the proposals. One part of the process is community engagement, which is expensive, as the planning commission learned from their consultant, Ashworth said.

Ashworth said Confluence is currently working on a comprehensive plan for Cherokee County, and there was a low response from the community. He said there are various ways to engage the community, such as through websites and town hall meetings, and this would be an important ques-

tion to ask the firms during interviews.

Yount said a preliminary copy of Cherokee County's final plan could be obtained for commissioners if they wish. Ashworth said Confluence has also worked with nearby counties.

Commissioner David Beerbower said he would support the planning commission continuing with the interview process and making a selection.

County commissioners thanked the planning commission for their work to date. Tran said there will be more work moving forward.

"This is a very heavy life, and it's not going to get any lighter because this is just the beginning," he said. "After the RFP gets processed and the project gets off the ground, it's going to be you guys again that are going to continue."

Tran said he understands members of the planning commission will prefer different versions, "but somewhere in there we have to figure out what's best for this community because ultimately, that's what it's about."

"As big of a deal as this is for our county, and for the rest of our county's future, I'm not going to squabble over the best deal," Milburn-Kee said.

Ashworth said the final document for the county can be used for "more than just zoning." Tran said the study could be helpful to the county and city, with one benefit being drawing jobs.

"It's a very impressive document we could show other people in the state, this is why you want to come to Bourbon County," Tran said.

Sprucing up downtown for spring



Deb Lust with the Fort Scott Garden Club, on the ladder, is pictured with volunteer Allyson James assisting with flower planting during the Fort Scott Area Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Downtown Cleanup Wednesday. James' husband, Kansas State Rep. Rick James, was also one of the many volunteers who assisted during the event.

Marti Wells-Smith photo



Janet Miller, owner of Hedgehog Books, paints a light pole during the Downtown Cleanup event Wednesday afternoon. The event was hosted by the Fort Scott Area Chamber of Commerce.

Marti Wells-Smith photo

KDHE rescinds boil water advisories for Uniontown and Bourbon County RWD 2C

Submitted to
The Tribune

TOPEKA —The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has rescinded boil water advisories for the City of Uniontown and Bourbon County Rural Water District 2C public water supply systems.

The advisories were issued because of a waterline break resulting in a loss of pressure in the city of Fort Scott's distribution system. Failure to maintain adequate pressure may result in a loss of chlorine residuals and bacterial contamination, according to a KDHE news release.

KDHE announced the advisory for Bourbon County RWD 2C had been rescinded Thursday, and the advisory for the city of Uniontown on Friday.

Public water suppliers in Kansas take all measures necessary to notify customers quickly after a system failure or shutdown.

Regardless of whether it's the supplier or KDHE that announces a boil water advisory, KDHE will issue the rescind notice following testing at a certified laboratory, the KDHE news release states.

Laboratory testing of drinking water samples collected from the City of Uniontown and Bourbon County RWD 2C water systems indicated no evidence of bacteriological contamination and all other conditions that placed the systems at risk of contamination are deemed by KDHE officials to be resolved, according to KDHE.

For consumer questions, contact the city of Uniontown water system at 620-756-4742, the Bourbon County RWD 2C water system at 620-223-1110, or KDHE at 785-296-5514. For consumer information visit <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/468/Disruption-in-Water-Service>.

Second-half county property taxes due May 10

Staff Report
The Tribune

Bourbon County Treasurer Jennifer Hawkins reminds taxpayers that second-half property taxes for 2025 are due May 10.

According to submitted information from Hawkins' office, no statement will be

mailed for second-half taxes. The treasurer's office will have extended hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, May 7 and Friday, May 8.

The treasurer will accept payments at the following locations in the county from 5 to 7 p.m.:

Monday, May 4 – Garland Community Center

Tuesday, May 5 – Mapleton Community Center
Wednesday, May 6 – Uniontown High School
Thursday, May 7 – Fulton City Hall
Friday, May 8 – Bronson Community Building

Taxes can also be paid online at <https://www.kansas.gov/propertytax/>. To make online payments, taxpayers

will need a county property tax statement; a form of payment such as Visa, Mastercard, Discover or e-check; a KanAccess username and password (sign in or sign up on the website.)

For questions, contact Hawkins at 620-223-3800, extension 192, or by email at jhawkins@bourboncountytks.org.

WEATHER

A mix of clouds and sun in the morning followed by cloudy skies during the afternoon. High 78F. Winds ESE at 10 to 15 mph. Mostly cloudy skies early will become partly cloudy late.

