

**BOURBON COUNTY FISCAL COURT/ JOINT CITY COMMISSION
JOINT BUDGET WORKSHOP
AGENDA
PARIS/BOURBON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
701 High Street Paris, Kentucky
COMMUNITY ROOM
April 2, 2026
6:00 pm**

HONORABLE: JUDGE MICHAEL R. WILLIAMS

CITY MANAGER: MATT BELCHER

PARIS MAYOR: JOHN PLUMMER

**MAGISTRATES: SCOTT WELLS, BART HORNE, LOUIE STUBBLEFIELD,
HENRY LOVELL, BILL CONNER**

COMMISSIONERS: WALLIS BROOKS, TIM GRAY, SHARON FIELDS, STAN GALBRAITH

Others in Attendance: Kathleen Stone (Court Clerk), Warren (Citizen News), Dana Boone (Bourbon Co. Treasurer), Dana Mingua (Deputy Judge), Tony Asbury (Bourbon Co. Sheriff), Michelle Thornsburg (Planning & Zoning) Gordon Wilson (EDA), Brad Oberlander (CPA), Mark Burden (Paris City Police Chief), Bobby Gray (Bluegrass Narcotics Task Force)

- I. **Call to order:** Judge Williams sounded the agenda @ 6:00pm.

- II. **Welcome message and introductions – Welcome from Judge Williams** - We will be focusing on FY2027 budget for all the entities that we jointly fund. We (Judge Williams, Dana Boone, Matt Belcher) will need to meet in a few days to agree on what we are going to fund. We have until the end of this FY to have a budget in place, July 2026. The budget must be approved by May 1 before we can move forward. This is a public meeting. We have four quarterly joint meetings scheduled; this is one of those meetings. We will stay on track with our timeline. Always remember we are spending our citizens money.
Entities presenting: Economic Development Authority (EDA), Joint Parks & Recreation Board, Planning & Zoning, EMS, Enhanced 9-1-1, and Bluegrass Narcotics Task Force.
We will not be voting on anything; informational only to guide each government's budget development.
Fiscal Court: draft budget to magistrates by May 1; first and second readings in May; submit to Department of Local Government; final approval required by July 1, 2026. City and County leadership to meet promptly post-session to align on FY27 funding decisions.
Operating principle: Stewardship of public funds—seek clarity, maintain transparency, and meet timelines.

III. Joint Economic Development Authority (EDA) – Gordon Wilson

- **Funding request: City and County Total \$303,114.00, \$151,557.00 from each.**
 - Request from each government remains unchanged from the current year (no increase).
- Business retention and expansion
 - Easy Gardener – building sold to Lawn & Garden: now sold again to unknown company, working toward a lease solution to remain in Paris; corporate HQ in Texas engaged; outcome appears promising.
 - Western Pacific Storage Solutions: headcount growth noted (from ~85 to over 100); retention efforts previously included state involvement.
 - Sekri (20th Street): steady at ~150 employees.
 - Divine Spirits: moving bottling to the former Old Spears property; ~25 to 50 jobs; coordination underway.
 - CMWA (prospective): preliminary study for a possible 2027 expansion; indicated headcount +~200 if approved (not confirmed).
- Industrial Park and infrastructure projects
 - Industrial Park improvements:
- Street lights at the T Intersection and ending at the Paris By-Pass installed (~\$40k).
- Pond restoration: engineering and bank stabilization completed. Area was seeded and mulched, along with erosion control measures. (~\$50k).
- Parcel "28/5" graded, fenced, and moving toward pad-ready status; consulting engineer to finalize preliminary and regular plans to maximize site usability.
 - Access and safety:
- Rail crossing upgrade application (Red Oak Timber crossing): new vehicular and pedestrian passage with signalization; ~60-foot crossing structure proposed.
- Service road extension progressing.
 - Utilities/fire protection:
- Ongoing work with the City of Paris to improve water pressure for fire suppression at Divine Spirits and related sites.
- Community planning and large-scale development
 - Strategic plan (2026–2030): kickoff targeted for late May/early June; broad stakeholder engagement across community partners and jurisdictions; aim to complete by year-end.
 - Bridlewood at Houston Oaks (~500 acres): conceptual planning with Landform Development/architect team; seeking roadway improvements to manage a future development. Exploring funding for initial segments.
 - Bourbon Recreational Park/trail: federal advocacy materials submitted (Congressionally Directed Spending); concept includes trail connectivity and concessions; scope and budgets refined pending funding decisions from US Senator Mitch McConnell's office.
Total Project Estimate - \$2,933,100.00
- Decision highlight:
 - Maintain current-year EDA funding levels; continue project execution and planning without additional local appropriation.

IV. Joint Parks and Recreation Board – Brad Oberlander

- FY27 budget overview
 - Funding Request for City and County \$489,270.00, that's from \$244,635.00 each.
Total budget expenses ≈ \$517,679.00.
- Combined City + County contribution ≈ \$489,270 (≈\$244,635 each), ~+\$100,000 over current year to cover added scope.
 - Balanced budget for FY26 and projected balanced FY27; no reliance on fund balance.
- Staffing and responsibilities
 - New Program Director position: base salary targeted at \$60,000 plus benefits.
- Clarified scope: oversight of programming across all parks, not limited to Millersburg Road Park.
 - Seasonal/part-time maintenance support for the new facility.
 - Facilities Director (existing): continues to oversee physical maintenance across all parks—separate from programming.
- Operations and maintenance
 - Maintenance budget ≈ \$339,000 allocated across parks.
 - Elimination of third-party mowing contract; City and County to assume mowing, redirecting funds to program capacity.
 - Utilities trending upward; budgeted accordingly.
 - Millersburg Road Park: +\$35,000 for maintenance (operations only; not capital).
- Programs and fees
 - Fireworks placeholder \$20,000, largely offset by sponsorships (revenue not yet forecast).
 - Youth/adult program costs reduced in anticipation of in-house programming by the new director.
 - User fees for the new park not forecast for FY27 pending policy direction.
- Cross-cutting cost pressures
 - Health insurance cost planning assumption at +10% (final rates pending); retirement rates projected and budgeted.

2027 Budget \$517,679 total budget, 100,000 increase from what they anticipated. \$35,000 maintenance shortfall. We haven't allotted for user fees yet, will add in next year. \$244,635. Personnel costs, program director \$60,000. Operating expenses \$56,404. Utilities separate. \$138,840 Parks Building & Maintenance. Total expenses for 2027 \$517,679. Stan G concerned about employee's health insurance. We have plugged in a 10% increase for the budget, we hope it will be less than that. Sharon Fields – program director will be hired to run the Millersburg Road park. The intent that they will oversee all park property. Louie – Facilities director is Judy Hutson. Program Director and Facilities director has to be two different people.

V. Bourbon County Joint Planning Commission – Michelle Thornsburg

- Activity metrics (Jan–Dec '25 reporting)
 - Planning & zoning applications: increased from 86 (2024) to 120 (2025).
 - Building permits (selected data): structures and inspections trending up; 2025 investments ≈ \$17M (2024 peak ≈ \$21M due to Magnolia Trace phases).
 - Code enforcement: citations paid decreased (positive compliance trend); work orders down (city 140→61→53 over 2023–2025).
- Revenues and fees
 - Total 2025 revenue ≈ \$75,700 (planning/zoning apps ≈ \$22,550; building permits ≈ \$34,500; electrical permits ≈ \$7,175; citations ≈ \$11,500).
 - Permit fee schedules updated to be current with peer communities; minimal pushback reported.
- Developments and reviews
 - The Infirmary/Lindsay Way: nearing build-out; ~88 lots remain.
 - Magnolia Trace: Phase 3 forthcoming (~93 single-family + 15 duplex units).
 - Divine Spirits: current plans resubmitted and under review.
 - New Vista: development plan approved; moving to engineered plans near the Speedway corridor.
- Ordinance modernization and floodplain management
 - Comprehensive updates to all four zoning ordinances planned via external consultant; address legislative changes and internal inconsistencies.
 - CRS (Community Rating System): ongoing point-earning measures to lower flood insurance premiums within Paris flood zones.
 - Board of Architectural Review: monthly meetings; progressing on historic overlay design standards.
- Staffing, equipment, and tools
 - Hiring needs: Building Inspector and Receptionist/Planning Assistant to handle volume and support surveys/plats.
 - Longstanding issues with the existing Jeep; seeking replacement.
 - Software: tailoring system workflows with IT to improve efficiency and cross-departmental usage.
- Budget notes
 - Biggest new expense: long-range planning to update zoning ordinances.
 - Continued reliance on Board of Architectural Review for engineering (no in-house engineer).
- FY27 Budget Overview
 - P&Z presented a proposed budget expense of \$548,810.00 for consideration; however, the exact amount to be contributed by each public entity was not defined.

Current projects, zoning ordinance updates and Board of Architectural review. Future goals, staffing! Building Inspector and Receptionist. Replacement vehicle for code enforcement, updating software.

VI. Joint EMS Board – Brad Oberlander

- FY27 budget summary
 - Funding Request for City and County \$1,640,000.00, that's \$820,000.00 from each.
 - Revenues ≈ \$3.0M; operating expenses ≈ \$2.4M; positive net projected.
 - Fees for service: ~\$1.1M–\$1.29M; modest growth anticipated.
 - Combined City + County contribution: \$820,000 proposed.
- Operating need ≈ \$705,000; additional \$125,000 included to begin repaying the City for prior payroll advances.
- Liability repayment
 - Outstanding payable to City ≈ \$900,000 (built over FY22–FY24 due to rising costs and mandates).
 - FY26 budget stabilized deficits; FY27 initiates repayment plan (~\$250,000 total in FY27 across both governments).
- Personnel and cost trends
 - Salaries/benefits ≈ \$2.0M; planned 3% wage increase placeholder; hazardous duty pay applies.
 - Benefits (health insurance) modeled at +10% pending final rates.
 - Fuel and medical supplies expected to rise; operating lines held steady where feasible.
- Capital and debt
 - Medical equipment lifecycle: monitors (~\$50k–\$55k each) and AutoPulse CPR devices (~\$14k each) reaching replacement cycles; capital outlay ≈ \$198,000 targeted with grant pursuits.
 - Ambulances: significant cost escalation; debt service increasing to ≈ \$146,000 (from \$84,000) with fleet replacements staggered; next unit timing aligned with older debt maturing.
 - Manager vehicle replacement under consideration (~\$56,000; likely financed).
- Economics of service delivery
 - Average charge per run ≈ \$1,345; average collection ≈ ~\$400.
 - True cost per run (fully loaded) estimated at ~\$3,000–\$4,000—structural gap typical statewide/nationally.
- Medical Director transition
 - Current volunteer Medical Director, Dr. Swiney, intends to step down around end of calendar year; service cannot operate without a licensed physician sponsor.
 - Expected cost to secure a paid Medical Director: ~\$20,000–\$50,000 annually (to be researched and budgeted).

FY2027 Budget proposed \$2.97million Total Revenue. We anticipate growth in fees for services. Personnel cost \$2,005,000.00. Operating costs \$2,428,960.00. Fuel cost and medical supplies will be more. 3% increase across the board. Key operating line items: Insurance, Maintenance & Repairs, med supplies, training, etc. We owe the city \$900,000. We are looking into grant funding.

Ambulances have monitors that need to be updated. AutoPulse devices and batteries will need to be updated. Capital outlays, a new vehicle for the Major at close to \$56,000.

Q. Stan Galbraith - long term date, we will pay off ambulance debt on Page 31 of report.

A. Brad Oberlander - payoff will be august of 2027.

Matt Belcher – We may need to be looking for a new medical director. Dr. Swiney has been a volunteer so far, we won't be that lucky with a new hire. We will need to budget for that. Keep that in mind.

Judge Williams – Where ever you have an ambulance service you have to have a medical director. We cannot operate without one.

Q. Sharon Fields – how much do other counties pay their med director?

A. Judge Williams – Not sure what the salary may be? We will do research on that.

VII. Joint E-911 Board – Brad Oberlander

- **Funding Request for City and County \$1,085,070.00, that's \$542,535.00 from each.**
- Revenue dynamics
 - CMRS (cell) revenue modest growth (~\$225,000–\$240,000); landline revenue declining (~\$75,000 and falling).
 - Historically, revenue shortfalls vs. expenditures contributed to a payroll liability to the City (~\$300,000).
- Contributions and repayment plan
 - Combined City + County contribution proposed at \$542,000 for FY27.
- Includes ~\$50,000 dedicated to begin repaying the outstanding City payroll liability.
- Operating and service contracts
 - Salaries/benefits are the largest expense; trunk line charges approx. \$3,400/month.
 - CAD system: ~\$100,000 installed (prior); annual maintenance ~\$61,000 due early in fiscal year (cash-flow pinch).
 - TotalResponse call guidance system: ~\$18,000 annually (front-loaded).
- Capital upgrades and grants
 - Radio console refresh (primarily software/hardware module replacement) ≈ \$110,000; pursuing 80/20 grant (20% local match).
- Performance metrics and risks
 - Cost per emergency call projected at ~\$175–\$176.
 - Early-year lump-sum service payments constrain cash; structural decline in landlines continues to pressure revenues.

FY2027 E-911 services total budget expenses = \$234,760.00, expenditures have increased.

E-911 is facing a decrease in revenue services. Decrease in landline revenue. Contributions held flat up through 2024. Largest expenditures. Call volume, \$176.00 per call. Page 37 budget outline. Total phone system helps dispatchers with calls. We are looking at getting liabilities paid down. We need to update radio consoles. Judge Williams – EMS and E-911 are big expenditures for our budget. These programs are not money makers. \$400 in revenue for each run. Most are Medicare or Medicaid patients. Cost per run is \$3,000-\$4,000.

VIII. **Bluegrass Narcotics Task Force – Mark Burden (Paris City Police Chief) and Bobby Gray (Interim Director Bluegrass Narcotics Task Force)**

- Structure and funding
 - Funding Request for City and County \$40,000.00, that's \$20,000.00 from each.
 - Multi-agency partnership serving Bourbon and Harrison Counties and local municipalities; both governments contribute (not via interlocal agreement).
 - Grant fiscal agency transitioning from Harrison County Fiscal Court to the City of Paris to enable funding of a new Director position without supplanting; may facilitate adding another investigator.
- Operational focus and outcomes
 - Primary focus on drug trafficking; coordinated enforcement with ATF, FBI, DEA, and local partners.
 - Marked reductions since task force inception:
- Harrison County: ~95% reduction in overdose deaths; >50% reduction in drug-related calls for service.
- Bourbon County: >50% reductions reported in comparable indicators (overdoses and calls for service).
 - Current threats: fentanyl and stronger analogs (some naloxone-resistant), poly-drug mixtures, and firearm “switches” converting weapons to fully automatic.
- Notable cases and prosecutions
 - Multiple high-level traffickers federally charged (cocaine/fentanyl/meth distribution).
 - Physician case: criminal conduct tied to controlled substance prescriptions; significant sentence imposed.
- Community engagement and training
 - Regular school K9 sweeps and civic outreach.
 - Regional KLEC-certified (40-hour) trainings hosted locally (active shooter, driving), saving agencies travel and tuition costs.
- Funding note
 - Participation cost cited as relatively low (e.g., ~\$20,000 per participating government) relative to leveraged regional capability; continued support strongly encouraged.

The Bluegrass Narcotics task force began in 2017. We have 3 detectives and would like to add a fourth. With the new person we will become fully funded. We have developed partnerships with various local and state agencies. Some drugs we see: Fentanyl, Heroin, Crack, Cocaine. Fentanyl in very small amounts is deadly. Most fentanyl is man made. Crimes associated with drugs: theft, assaults, burglaries, robbery's etc. We've had a measurable impact in Harrison County. Community engagement: Civic groups, schools, K9 Searches, presentations and churches. We partner with KSP. Training: KOEC training is 40 hours. Expenses: \$20,000 contribution by participating organization. Judge Williams, these individuals save lives. We all need to be aware of the impact they have on the community. We need the funding and we owe them a big thank you.

IX. **Adjourn 7:55pm**