

# Webster County Board Of Education Meeting Grows Contentious As Tax Rates, Facility Use Are Discussed

What looked to be a relatively short work session for the Webster County Board of Education Monday night turned into an hour and 29-minute session that had board members raising questions over the school district tax rate proposed two weeks ago by Superintendent Aaron Harrell and finance officer Brandi Burnett.

At their last meeting in August, Harrell and Burnett spent quite some time reviewing tax rates, presenting their recommendations and sharing why they were proposing the 4 percent plus exoneration (57.0 per \$100 assessment) rather than the compensating rate. Harrell explained that aging infrastructure in the district continues to fail and it is necessary for the school system to set aside funds to take care of replacement/repair of HVAC units, roofs, plumbing and other facility issues that arise, but Monday night, board members who had been part of those discussions questioned whether there is really a need to go beyond the compensating

rate of 54.8.

At one point, board member David Asher asked if the board could delay approval of the rate and look at initiating the nickel tax discussions again. He also raised questions regarding whether the district could lift the four percent rate if in the future a nickel tax passed. Both Burnett and Harrell answered those questions. The discussion then turned to use of facilities specifically the track and football field that underwent a complete renovation this summer. Board members Amanda Coomes and Melony Hobgood questioned how they were going to explain to constituents why Junior Pro games were not being played on Trojan Field this year and why fans and parents were not being allowed to go onto the track and field at the conclusion of varsity football games. Hobgood questioned the whether or not it is fair to Junior Pro to not be allowed to play on the high school field.

Again, Harrell explained that with the removal of the old field

irrigation system and the installation of the new system, the field has undergone trauma and needs time to rejuvenate. He also noted that the district’s first priority is serving the students of the district and that while Junior Pro participants may be WC school children, the district is not obligated to provide for that program. Harrell added that the district has done a lot to facilitate the use of the football field at Clay for the program. The district does, however, not charge Junior Pro for use of the field, but the district does take care of the mowing, striping, providing a concession area, porta potties and when games were played on the high school field provided power for lights and announcing. Harrell added that as superintendent he feels an obligation to protect the district’s two million dollar plus investment made on installing a new rubberized track and other improvements to the track/football complex.

After 55 minutes of discussion, board chair

Tim McCormick called for a motion on the tax rate. Vice-chair Venita Murphy made a motion to accept the four percent plus exoneration rate for both real and personal property. After a brief pause and no movement from other board members, Coomes gave a second and the rate passed on a 4-1 vote. Hobgood cast the dissenting vote. Exonerations will raise about \$282,000, money that will be earmarked for facility improvements and repairs and replacement to the district’s aging facilities.

Other business to come before the board Monday night included a brief review of the 25-26 working budget. That budget totals \$28,373,693.75 with a contingency of 5.41 percent. Key components of the 2025-26 budget include a bus purchase at a cost of \$173,466 and debt service of \$1,339,394.98. The SEEK forecast from April 2025 and the proposed tax rate were also among the budget considerations.

In her review of the budget, Burnett shared information related to

how the funds are allocated and how much money is set aside for each area of the budget. Federal funds make up just over 18 percent of the local district’s budget with state funds providing about 58 percent and local funds providing 21 percent. Expenses continue to rise with both maintenance and salaries seeking increases this year. Instruction makes up about 45.75 percent of the district’s expenditures, records show. The board is expected to approve the working budget at their last meeting this month.

Following the review of the working budget, Greg Bowles provided updates on a number of projects. He reported that the district has received an \$8000 plus grant for repairs at the tennis courts. That grant comes from the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and will help offset the cost of repairing cracks in the courts and resurfacing the courts.

Bowles also provided updates on roof repairs, front entrance projects and the track/field project. Those three projects are near close-out with only minor items needing to be taken care of on the punch list. The roof projects, Bowles said will see the district receiving a \$20,000 credit for unused materials. There is still seeding and work to be done on the sidelines of the football field before that project is closed out.

Bowles also noted that the district’s maintenance department is fully staffed and is doing an excellent job.

Michael Gooch, who oversees secondary instruction, reported that the district needs

two volunteers to serve as chair and alternate chair for the district certified/classified appeals panel. Those appointments are expected to be made later this month.

In his report, Harrell noted that Safe Schools Week is underway with the highlight on insuring a safe secure learning environment for children. The focus, Harrell said, is on positivity, kindness, responsibility and staying alert. The superintendent also offered input on facility improvements and told the board that his evaluation plan focuses this year is on strategic leadership and managerial leadership. The board should they choose, may add to that list of focus items, reject the items Harrell has chosen or present a new list of focus items for them superintendent.

The last item on Harrell’s list of reports is was the announcement of the formation of a Webster County Leadership Alliance. The district is searching for about 15 individuals—community leaders, business people, parents—who would be interested in learning more about the school system and provide feedback on how the district operates. “We will tackle everything from food services to transportation to environment and facilities,” Harrell said. He added that the group will meet four times a year to provide input. Persons interested in service on the Alliance may fill out an application and submit it for consideration.

## Providence Hears First Reading Of Ordinance Amendment

Providence City Council met in regular session Tuesday with councilmember hearing first reading of an ordinance amendment, making an appointment to the Housing Authority Board and hearing several public appeals and announcements regarding city business.

Following the approval of minutes from the previous meeting, the council heard first reading of an ordinance amendment regarding connection and continuation of utility services. The change to the ordinance relates to cutoff of services for outstanding account charges. When the ordinance is passed the city will be allowed to refuse to reconnect utilities that have been cut off until payment and fees are paid in full.

The ordinance change also notes that the city may refuse to provide services to any new property or any other property the debtor may owe. For individuals with rental properties, that means the property owner could become responsible for past due utility bills on that property should a renter fail to meet payment obligations to the city.

According to Mayor Tom Glover, after

he and clerk Tiffany Conrad reviewed city records, they found that the city has over \$200,000 in outstanding delinquent payments for utilities. After the meeting Glover told The Sebree Banner that while some of the payments are older, the majority have occurred over the past four to five years. The non-payments are not sustainable for the city to support.

The council did not say when they will give second reading to the ordinance amendment; however, once the ordinance is approved, the changes will be effective upon publication.

In other business, Glover called for the appointment of Tonia Morrow to the Providence Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. Morrow will serve a four year teams that expires in July 2029.

The mayor also announced that two city employees are retiring/resigning. Terry Rice, the city’s public works director and head of the water department, will leave the city’s employment September 10. Assistant public works director Jamie Harkins’ last day with the city is Friday, September 5. Glover told the

council that the state is aware there will be a transition in the water department; he added that the city has very few applications for the positions.

On Tuesday, council members also heard a report from Fire Chief Cameron Brown who noted local firefighters have been called to 16 fires since July 27. Four of those fires were structure fires and several were brush fires.

Brown also clarified that while rumors have spread throughout the city that response time to a Coleman Street fire took over an hour, the response time was actually about four minutes. The fire chief also cautioned residents that burning brush, leaves and other debris at this time is not a good idea due to the extremely dry conditions.

A number of residents addressed the council with concerns including Bobby Simms who reported that 15 street lights along Westerfield Drive are not working. Glover responded that the city needs to address the issue; however, that work may not be done until retiring employees are replaced.

Phillip Halsrud also addressed the council concerning discipline

of a city employee about whom he filed a complaint and water issues on his property. Halsrud told the council he has been without water for over a month due to having no water meter. He also described other water issues including water running off a building onto his property and damaging his foundation, old water lines that should be replaced and other water issues. Attorney Bobby Murray told Halsrud that any disciplinary action of a city employee will not be discussed in an open meeting, adding that the mayor and clerk are looking into the matter.

Regarding Halsrud’s lack of a water meter, the Mayor will have a city employee investigate that matter and see if the city has a responsibility to correct the issue. “We will address these things and try to get some answers,” Glover told Halsrud.

Two other city residents complimented the city on the work being done on trees, pot holes and other city clean up initiatives.

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m. The council is scheduled to meet again on September 15 at 6:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Jared Newcom, 2964 Valley Creek Road, Culleoka, Tennessee, appointed Administrator of the Estate of Janet Newcom, who died testate, a resident of 4095 State Route 109, North, Clay, Kentucky on July 14, 2025. Date of qualification August 12, 2025. Stephen M. Arnett, attorney, 109 South Morgan Street, P.O. Box 419, Morganfield, Kentucky. Inventory due October 14, 2025. Settlement due August 17, 2027. All claims must be filed within six months of appointment.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
WEBSTER DISTRICT COURT  
CASE NO. 23-P-00063**

**IN RE:** Walter Eugene Miller who died intestate on the 28th day of March 2023, a resident of Webster County, Kentucky

**ORDER REGARDING' FILING OF FINAL SETTLEMENT**

It is now ordered that the Final Settlement tendered herein be filed in the Clerk's office; advertised in accordance with statutory regulations, and continued until September 30, 2025 at 8:15 A.M. for exceptions.

**BE IT SO ORDERED**, this 2nd day of September 2025.

HON. BEN LEONARD  
Webster District Judge

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
WEBSTER CIRCUIT COURT  
CIVIL ACTION 25-CI-00065**

DOT CAPITAL INVESTMENTS, LLC,

vs.

JENNIFER T. BANEY; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF JENNIFER T. BANEY; WEBSTER COUNTY, KENTUCKY

**NOTICE OF SALE**

By virtue of a Judgment and Order of Sale rendered by the Webster Circuit Court on AUGUST 7, 2025, I will on **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025**, at the hour of **11:00 A.M.** or as soon thereafter as possible at the Courthouse door in the City of Dixon, Webster County, Kentucky, proceed to offer for sale to the highest and best bidder the following described real property located in Webster County, Kentucky, to-wit:

**Property Address: 86.66 Acres off of Poole Mill Road  
PVA No. / Map No.: 056-003-000**

**The current year's property taxes will be paid by the purchaser of the property.**

Purchaser may pay cash or said property will be sold upon payment of 10% deposit, with the balance upon credit of 30 days, the purchaser shall execute a good and sufficient bond with approved surety thereon for the purchase price, the bond to bear interest at the rate of 6% per annum from the date thereof, until paid, and to have the force and effect of a judgment, but a lien shall be retained on said property to further secure the payment of the purchase price. At his option, the purchaser may pay cash or pay the bond with accrued interest at any time before its maturity. Said sale to be made free and clear of any and all liens, claims, rights, title, and interest of any and all parties to this action. The purchaser will be prepared to promptly comply with these terms or the said property will immediately be offered again for sale.

GIVEN under my hand this the 20th day of August, 2025.

STEPHEN M. ARNETT, Master Commissioner  
9/17c

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
WEBSTER CIRCUIT COURT  
CIVIL ACTION 25-CI-00039**

SONATA BANK F/K/A SEBREE DEPOSIT BANK

vs.

DARRELL E. HOAGLAND; MARY ANN HOAGLAND; WEBSTER COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SALE**

By virtue of a Judgment and Order of Sale rendered by the Webster Circuit Court on AUGUST 12, 2025, I will on **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025** at the hour of **11:00 A.M.** or as soon thereafter as possible at the Courthouse door in the City of Dixon, Webster County, Kentucky, proceed to offer for sale to the highest and best bidder the following described real property located in Webster County, Kentucky, to-wit:

**Property Address: 10690 State Route 138, Slaughters, KY 42456  
PVA No. / Map No.: OSL-020-002**

**The current year's property taxes will be paid by the purchaser of the property.**

Purchaser may pay cash or said property will be sold upon payment of 10% deposit, with the balance upon credit of 30 days, the purchaser shall execute a good and sufficient bond with approved surety thereon for the purchase price, the bond to bear interest at the rate of 6% per annum from the date thereof, until paid, and to have the force and effect of a judgment, but a lien shall be retained on said property to further secure the payment of the purchase price. At his option, the purchaser may pay cash or pay the bond with accrued interest at any time before its maturity. Said sale to be made free and clear of any and all liens, claims, rights, title, and interest of any and all parties to this action. The purchaser will be prepared to promptly comply with these terms or the said property will immediately be offered again for sale.

GIVEN under my hand this the 19th day of August, 2025.

STEPHEN M. ARNETT, Master Commissioner  
9/17c