

# CHILDCARE: Court ultimately authorizes request

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building owned by the county to the left of the fiscal court building at 321 W. Main St. to offer childcare at a reduced rate to county employees. The Capital Academy, a licensed provider, was the only provider responding to an advertisement for bids.

First District Magistrate Sherry Sebastian and 6th District Magistrate Eric Whisman wanted more openness with the process.

When Whisman asked why the court didn't have more input, Kennedy said hours and hours went into preparing the proposal and magistrates were welcome to come to the courthouse during regular business hours and share in these discussions.

"We're here every workday from 7:30 until sometimes 6," Kennedy said, indicating a lot happens outside the twice-a-month meetings of the court. "We will be glad to discuss any issue or provide more information. Reporting all of that here would extend the length of these meetings."

The court ultimately authorized a \$5,000 request for The Capital Academy to proceed with the project, money which is in the current budget. "This is another amazing benefit for our employees," Judge-Executive Michael Mueller said. "And it's a great recruitment tool, too."

"A lot of these folks spend most of what they make on childcare and health insurance," said 5th District Magistrate Richard Tanner. "Anything we can do to help would be a real benefit."

Extending the offer to employees in the departments of county government was discussed and will be studied.

In other business:

▶ Tax rates for 2026 will reflect only minor changes. Because of growth of \$231 million in real property, taxes on real property will drop a fraction from 18.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 18.3. Property Valuation Administrator Wil Rhodes said the change came primarily as a result of growth in the commercial sector.

▶ Franklin County Health Department Director Judy Mattingly reported that the department's recommended rate is 6.5 cents per \$100

of assessed value of real and personal property, like boats and motor vehicles.

Mattingly said her agency has experienced some of the well-publicized cuts in federal funding and is bracing for more. She said there are a lot of questions about what will come, and "tough times" could be ahead.

▶ The court approved an interlocal cooperation agreement with the City of Frankfort regarding local tourism.

▶ Approved \$343,295 for the Farmers Lane Bridge Project. The bridge is the only access to the 150 homes in the subdivision and the weight of fire trucks and construction vehicles crossing the bridge is a concern.

▶ The court approved authorization to execute an easement with the Farmdale Sanitation District on property owned by the county. First District Magistrate Sherry Sebastian explained these districts operate independently and it's good for the county to be able to step in and help.

▶ The court authorized the fire department to purchase a boat, highlighting how important boats were in the recent flood. The cost is \$43,425.

▶ A lengthy discussion was held regarding the replacement of the roof on the sheriff's office. Bids by Dynamic Restoration and Ideal Roofing were essentially the same and the court will decide to which company the bid will be awarded. Total cost is \$55,000, encompassing insurance and the deductible.

▶ Denise May was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Sabrina Gordon on the recently-created Franklin County Sports Tourism Commission.

▶ Approval was granted to proceed with an agreement with Arbitrage Rebate Computation regarding any interest that may be required to be returned from a \$10 million bond that was issued in July 2023 that's been accruing interest with U.S. Bank. There is a limit to how much interest can be earned on a tax-exempt bond, and the calculation, if any, will have to be repaid.

All items requiring approval passed without further discussion.

# Capital City Activity Center hosts watermelon seed spitting contest



PHOTOS HANNAH BROWN | STATE JOURNAL

**THE COMPETITION IS ON:** Above, Dora Wright spits a watermelon seed during the watermelon seed spitting contest at the Capital City Activity Center/Meals on Wheels Greater Frankfort on Wednesday. Below, Kay Sanderson holds up a gift card she won, along with a watermelon being held by Marche Jenkins — executive director at the Capital City Activity Center/Meals on Wheels Greater Frankfort — after the watermelon seed spitting contest at the center on Wednesday.



State Journal staff report

The Capital City Activity Center/Meals on Wheels Greater Frankfort hosted its annual Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest on Wednesday.

Kay Sanderson won the contest. She spit the seed 19 1/3 feet. For her accomplishment, she won a \$10 Kroger gift card and a watermelon.



**SPECTATORS:** Anne Robbins, Vaughn Garvin, Andra Paul, Ce Ce Long and Myrna Herron laugh as they watch the watermelon seed spitting contest on Wednesday.

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