

Meeting Date; 4/8/2025
Meeting of; Madison County Fiscal Court
Meeting Type; Regularly Scheduled

HONORABLE REAGAN TAYLOR COUNTY JUDGE EXECUTIVE PRESIDING

The Madison County Fiscal Court convened in regular session on the 8th of April 2025 at 9:30AM in the Council Chambers' Courtroom in Berea, Ky. Present was the Honorable Reagan Taylor in the chair presiding and the following members of the Fiscal Court: James Brian Combs, Stephen Lochmueller, Billy Ray Hughes, and Tom Botkin were present. Madison County Attorney Jennie Haymond, Madison County Sheriff Mike Coyle, Jailer Larry Brock, and Madison County Clerk Kenny Barger were also present.

It being determined a quorum was present, the meeting was called to order.

Judge Taylor asked Pastor Tim Taylor of River of Life Foursquare Church, to lead the Court in prayer.

Judge Taylor asked Sheriff Mike Coyle to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN RE: Approval of Meeting Minutes 3-25-2025:

Motion by Billy Ray Hughes seconded by Stephen Lochmueller to approve the minutes from the regularly called meeting on March 25, 2025.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs-Yes	Stephen Lochmueller-Yes
Billy Ray Hughes- Yes	Tom Botkin- Yes
Reagan Taylor – Yes	

IN RE: Amending the Agenda:

Motion by Stephen Lochmueller seconded by James Brian Combs to approve amending the agenda to add an Executive Session.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs-Yes	Stephen Lochmueller-Yes
Billy Ray Hughes- Yes	Tom Botkin- Yes
Reagan Taylor – Yes	

IN RE: Proclamation—Fair Housing Month:

Judge Taylor proclaimed the month of April 2025 as Fair Housing Month.

Jerri Dyer, Director of Projects, Fahe, was in attendance to accept the proclamation. She stated that Fahe is always happy to partner with the local communities, and they work together to make sure everyone has safe, decent, and affordable housing that meets their needs. This helps the county to continue forward with economic development, the overall health for the citizens, and being more of a community that people want to be a part of.

Judge Taylor expressed his appreciation to Jerri for all that she does.

IN RE: Joint Proclamation— Prevent Child Abuse Month:

Judge Taylor, along with Richmond Mayor, Robert Blythe, and Berea Mayor, Bruce Fraley, proclaimed the month of April 2025 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Madison County, KY and called upon all citizens to increase their participation in our efforts to support families, thereby preventing child abuse and strengthening the communities in which we live.

Victoria Bengé, Executive Director, CASA of the Wilderness Trail, was in attendance to accept the proclamation. Victoria explained that CASA of the Wilderness Trail serves abused and neglected children in Madison, Clark, Estill, Lee, and Owsley County's. She shared that in 2024 there were 313 abused or neglected

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children in Madison County, and that Kentucky is 14th in the nation for child abuse. She encouraged everyone to step up and be a voice and advocate for the children; they are our future. Judge Taylor expressed his appreciation to Victoria for all she does.

IN RE: Joint Proclamation— National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week:

Judge Taylor along with Richmond Mayor, Robert Blythe, and Berea Mayor, Bruce Fraley, proclaimed the week of April 13-19, 2025, as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in Berea, Richmond, and Madison County, Kentucky, and encouraged all citizens to honor the men and women whose diligence and professionalism keep our community safe.

Wendy Lynch, Madison County Emergency Communications Center (MCECC) Director, and Jodi Webb, MCECC Assistant Director were in attendance to accept this proclamation. Wendy thanked the Court for honoring them and stated that they will do some fun things within the center during that week. They stated that in addition to the first responders that they work with, they also work together with other departments, like the Road Department, and the Animal Shelter. There is a lot that they do in the community as a whole in addition to 911, and they are a great group of dispatchers. Wendy also stated that the public can adopt a dispatcher during April 13th through 19th and the information on that can be found on their Facebook page.

Jodi expressed her thanks to the Court as well.

IN RE: Hope's Wings Jail and Bail Fundraiser Update—Jennifer Lainhart, Executive Director:

Jennifer Lainhart, Executive Director, spoke on the Jail and Bail Fundraiser. Jennifer stated that the Jail and Bail Fundraiser is happening next Friday, April 18th. She explained that they are a 3-phase program, and phase 3 of the program is putting victims of domestic violence, who live in their shelter because their own homes are not safe to live in, into affordable housing within the community. The phase of the program is in danger due to grant freezes at the federal level. They have already had one transitional housing grant frozen, which will expire in September, and next year, if HUD continues to freeze grants, they will have their second transitional housing grant frozen and then will not have phase 3. Therefore, she has challenged the Fiscal Court to be arrested and raise \$1,500 bail money for Hope's Wings. She explained that when they put someone into an apartment it costs them \$2,000 to \$3,000 each time, so they need this fundraiser even more this year.

Judge Taylor asked Jennifer what the potential amount of loss would be in those two grants. She said that the transitional housing grant alone is a \$400,000 grant over a 3-year period.

IN RE: Resolution 2025-027—Madison County Sheriff's 2025 Budget Amendment:

Mary Margaret Young, MCSO Administrative Director, presented Resolution 2025-027—Madison County Sheriff's 2025 Budget Amendment for the Court's approval. This Resolution approves an amendment to the Madison County Sheriff's 2025 budget by increasing the revenue and expenditures to \$331,367.31 and supersedes Resolution 2025-02.

Motion by James Brian Combs seconded by Tom Botkin to approve Resolution 2025-027—Madison County Sheriff's 2025 Budget Amendment.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs-Yes Stephen Lochmueller-Yes

Billy Ray Hughes- Yes Tom Botkin- Yes

Reagan Taylor – Yes

IN RE: Employee Spotlight:

Gary Vanderoef, Director of Golf and Recreation, spotlighted Travis Coffey, Assistant Golf Shop Attendant, since 2023. A colleague stated that Travis goes out of his way to make customers feel welcome at the golf course. He is always courteous, professional, and seems to really enjoy his job, and is a great teammate. Judge Taylor expressed his appreciation to Travis as well as all the crew at the golf course for their work.

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IN RE: Enter Executive Session:

Motion by Billy Ray Hughes seconded by James Brian Combs to enter into Executive Session at 9:53 AM. This Executive Session is allowable under KRS 61.810 subsection 1, subsection C to discuss proposed or pending litigation against or on behalf of the Madison County Fiscal Court.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs- Yes Stephen Lochmueller- Yes
Billy Ray Hughes- Yes Tom Botkin- Yes
Reagan Taylor – Yes

IN RE: Exit Executive Session:

Motion by Billy Ray Hughes seconded by James Brian Combs to exit Executive Session at 10:11 AM.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs- Yes Stephen Lochmueller- Yes
Billy Ray Hughes- Yes Tom Botkin- Yes
Reagan Taylor – Yes

IN RE: Eminent Domain

Motion by Stephen Lochmueller seconded by Tom Botkin to request the Madison County Attorney to file a lawsuit to exercise eminent domain at the request of a property owner and is outlined in KRS for public purpose of the proposed fire station on 1000 Carr Lane.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs- Yes Stephen Lochmueller- Yes
Billy Ray Hughes- Yes Tom Botkin- Yes
Reagan Taylor – Yes

RE: Judge's Report:

- Citizen Shoutout – Thank you to the citizen that made a donation and thanked the County for the amazing job at snow removal.
- Join us for a Town Hall Meeting at 5:30 PM on Thursday, April 10th, at the Central KY Regional Airport. This event is open to the public for community discussions.
- Greg Gerard's State of Healthcare Address will be on Wednesday, April 23rd, at noon in the Baptist Health Arena Premium Club, inside Alumni Coliseum. Contact Richmond Chamber of Commerce for required tickets.
- Berea Chamber of Commerce's Annual Golf Tournament will be on Friday, May 9, 2025, at Battlefield Golf Course. Registration ends April 30th. Contact Berea Chamber of Commerce for more information.
- Visit our website at www.madisoncountyky.gov/community-events to see a list of some of the events happening throughout our community. If you have an event you would like to feature on this page, simply click on the "Submit an Event" button and complete the form.
- Madison County Government and its related offices will close at noon of Friday, April 18th for Good Friday/Spring holiday. Offices will re-open on Monday, April 21st at 8 AM.

Comments from Magistrates:

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Judge Taylor thanked Berea Mayor and the Berea City Council for allowing them to use their chambers.

Magistrate Hughes reminded the public about the Slick Conner Memorial Horse Show Saturday night, April 12th at the Madison County Fairgrounds.

Magistrate Botkin stated that he saw where the State has worked on some of the repairs that he had requested to be done on the roads in his district. He thanked Scott and the Road Department for all their hard work over the weekend due to the weather.

Magistrate Combs thanked Scott and the Road Department, as well as the State and first responders for all the work they did during the flooding over the weekend. He asked when they had flooding and damage to the roads, if that was something they could recoup through federal money. Judge Taylor stated it was if they meet the thresholds, and he stated that they did declare a State of Emergency over this event.

Magistrate Lochmueller thanked the Road Department and Emergency Services for their work during the recent weather event.

Comments from Department Heads:

Bert Thomas provided an update on the numbers of zoning/acreage. Madison County's total acreage is 279,000 acres, with Berea City being about 10,000 acres, Richmond City about 12,000 acres, which leaves 257,000 acres in the unincorporated limits of Madison County. Of the county acreage, 214,000 acres of that is zoned agriculture (roughly 83%), 22,000 acres (roughly 9%) is zoned single-family residential, 2,000 acres (less than 1%) is zoned commercial, 300 acres (less than .2%) is zoned multi-family residential, and 285 (less than .2%) is zoned industrial. The rest of the acreage is made up of 14,000 acres with the Bluegrass Army Depot, 1,800 acres is Central KY Wildlife Area, and then other miscellaneous zoning. He also stated that in 2022 they approved 63 acres for single-family residential developments. In 2024, that number dropped to 54 acres, and in 2024 it was 132 acres approved for single-family residential developments. Over the last three years, that averages out to 83 acres a year for single-family residential development approvals from agriculture.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that what seems to confuse people is the distinguishment between what are City and what are County developments.

Magistrate Combs asked what portion of single-family residential zoning is being used as agriculture. Bert stated that there are several properties that are zoned for single-family, multi-family, or even commercial that have never been developed and are still being used for agricultural purposes.

Judge Taylor stated that the myth that is going around the community is that all of the farmland in the county is getting used up. Bert stated that the percentages don't back that up; 214,000 acres compared to an average of 83 acres being developed a year.

Magistrate Hughes stated that an Agricultural Economist for UK that spoke at one of the Extension meetings said that the land that is being consumed for development doesn't concern him since it is such a small number, but the impact that development has on the farmland is what concerns him. It drives up the cost of farmland, making it prohibitive for people to continue to farm.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that it was his understanding that small farming for the last 50 years is virtually nonexistent, and it is not going to revert itself.

Magistrate Combs stated that farmers that raise our food are not being paid enough; it is not very profitable. Most people that are actively farming have inherited the land, and the equipment so they don't have the upfront cost that others would have when starting up a farm. It's a big problem to make a priority, i.e. food, profitable without raising the cost of food. Most farmers now have to have a second job to have an income and have insurance in order to farm, they aren't farming to have money. The property owner should have a right to do what they want to do on their property, and if a farmer decides to sell it, then it is their decision to do that, outside of it taking away someone else's rights. He encouraged the public to support their local farmers to help that farmer do what they need to do to keep their farmland.

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Judge Taylor thanked Bert, Chris, and Austin for their work on getting these numbers together.

Public Comments:

No Comments from the Public.

IN RE: Pay Claims and Approve Transfers:

Motion made by Billy Ray Hughes seconded by James Brian Combs to approve to pay claims and transfers.

ANNOUNCE NEXT COURT DATE:

Judge Taylor announced the next court date for April 22, 2025, in the Emergency Operations Center in Richmond, Ky at 9:30 AM.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Motion from Billy Ray Hughes to adjourn, seconded by Tom Botkin. Hearing no objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:34 PM.



REAGAN TAYLOR MADISON CO. JUDGE/EXECUTIVE