

Meeting Date: 1/12/2026
Meeting of: Madison County Fiscal Court
Meeting Type: Special Called Work Session

HONORABLE REAGAN TAYLOR COUNTY JUDGE EXECUTIVE PRESIDING

The Madison County Fiscal Court convened in a special called work session on the 12th of January 2026, at 1:30 PM in the Madison Room of the Courthouse Annex Building in Richmond, 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, Jill Williams, Stephanie Moore, Lora King, David Estep, and Nikita Vundi were also present.

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

IN RE: Madison County Opioid Task Force Update:

Jennie Haymond, Chair of the Opioid Task Force; Stephanie Moore, CEO of White House Clinic; David Estep, Executive Director of the Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc.; Nikita Vundi, Director of the Madison County Health Department; and Lora King, Director of Specialty Services at Baptist Health Richmond, make up the Opioid Task Force. Jennie stated that they wanted to provide an update on where they started, what they have been doing, and where they are headed.

The Task Force started by establishing their bylaws. One of their leading points was the Generational Impact, and how they could leverage the abatement dollars to create a generational impact in the county. They also wanted to make sure they were getting proven results by looking to see who were the players that could demonstrate a program impact and return, and how they could all work together to achieve the greatest return for the community.

Stephanie stated they looked at what is currently in the community and is working. They wanted to make sure those services that are already in place in the community are accessible to all people that need them. Even with the services in place, there are still gaps, so they identified the gaps in services missing for a Model Community of Recovery. Then they interviewed potential partners or experts who are effectively getting results, such as the school system, and people that work in different sectors to see who might be getting results, and then they looked at how organizations can work together to fill gaps in the community and increase access to care. These activities helped them develop what a Model Community of Recovery would look like. There are opportunities for Prevention, then Decision Support when an individual acknowledges the substance abuse and is wanting treatment, to the actual Treatment Delivery through different treatment options, and then Recovery and Stabilization to rebuild their life. There are a couple areas that they are already doing in regard to the model that they feel are accessible to all areas of the community, but there are several areas that have gaps in them or are not in the community at all.

David provided the Task Force's recommendations, which included three (3) categories: coordination and sustainability, to break the cycle through prevention, and success and stabilization. The coordination and sustainability category involves the salary and benefits for a 1.0 FTE County Opioid Program Coordinator who will serve as an investment to leverage additional funds to build sustainability. In order to break the cycle through prevention, they need to collaborate with a community partner to implement evidence-based prevention curriculum for all K-12 students in Madison County. David explained that adolescents who use drugs before age

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15, are 6.5 times more likely to develop a substance abuse disorder later in life. The Task Force also noted that they will need to partner with an established organization to support transformational permanent change for those in recovery through a multi-disciplinary approach in order to have success and stabilization after treatment and eventual contribution to society. Nikita stated that the desire of the Task Force was to use the funds in a manner that produces generational impact, because what enriches lives is a well-built and supportive community. They found that about 75% of people with serious addiction problems eventually recover, often after several treatment attempts. Long-term recovery tends to strengthen over time; maintaining sobriety beyond one year significantly reduces relapse risk, and by five years the likelihood of relapse drops to very low percentages.

Magistrate Hughes asked if the treatment facility the City of Richmond is working on has anything to do with this. Jennie stated that the Task Force has looked at that and after they get approval from the Court, they will then go to both cities to inform them of what they are planning and communicate with those groups.

Magistrate Hughes asked if their major ask is to hire someone to oversee the recommendations. Jennie explained that they will need a full-time coordinator to oversee the operations, as well as to find supporting funds and partners with someone to write grants, maintain accountability of the programs, and be able to bring groups together. They then want to focus on programs within the schools, whether it be in the school system or through programs like Ignite, that are age appropriate and built on the foundations of previous education.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked what other entities are doing, like the cities of Berea and Richmond. Jennie stated that they didn't think it was appropriate to join forces with them yet. They have given some of their funds out, but they aren't sure about what they are working on. She acknowledged that the City of Richmond has asked for a joint government meeting.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that he is partial to preventing substance abuse at an early age as there is more opportunity for success. Jennie explained that there are some programs in the school system, but they are very open to more programs and people to provide support and consistency. They will be able to see that these programs are working because they will be results driven.

Magistrate Botkin asked Jennie what kind of funds she thought would be needed long-term to sustain the programs. Jennie stated that she would think it would depend on the programs and who they partner with, whether or not those partners have additional funding. They want a partner that is already established and has a place they can go to for the stabilization process. They have gone into this process with the thought that the opioid funding is seed money or investment money, and the full-time coordinator can look for grant opportunities to maintain the programs.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked if they like this direction, would the next step be to talk with the cities. Jennie stated that they do want to talk with the cities, but they also would like to talk to entities to determine what kind of partnership they can form, and what that would look like. He also asked if there was a desire to go to the cities to have an initial conversation about working together before hiring someone. Jennie stated that yes, the Task Force will talk to the cities before they look at hiring anyone as a coordinator, as that person will be working for the cities as well.

Magistrate Combs ask if they felt like this is measurable and wouldn't be something that is already being done at the school system. Jennie stated that it would be new curriculum to the

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schools and would not be a voluntary program for the students to attend. In the past, the school system had the curriculum but didn't have teachers to actually teach it. Now, they have social workers who could help impact the curriculum.

Judge Taylor stated that pre-Covid, they had a Too Good for Drugs program in the school system with 6th graders, that the law enforcement and fire departments helped with. With the external agency partnerships, some could bring money in to help and others could provide people, so the burden wouldn't be all on the school system to provide the instruction and follow-up.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that he believed that the program would be much more meaningful if the schools not only support the effort but would be a part of the effort of hiring or facilitating the space to educate this program in the school system.

Magistrate Botkin stated that the Task Force is heading in the right direction, and the coordinator is the key to the entire program.

Judge Taylor stated that no matter what they do, there has to be data collection to make sure that it is beneficial to the community and it is working. The data can determine whether the coordinator or Task Force has to redirect or "tweak" the program.

Whitney, with The Edge in Berea, stated that the Task Force also needs to talk with the doctors and medical staff that prescribe opioids. She stated that 8 out of 10 heroin users started with prescription pills. Half of the nearly 9 million people in the USA in 2023 who misused opioids started with a prescription drug, and 40% got a pill from a friend or relative, and 7.5 million people who misused opioids were 26 and older.

Judge Taylor stated that not only do they have a drug epidemic, but also a mental health crisis, in which there is not a mental health facility in the state of Kentucky. Jennie stated that they now have a mental health court, which is separate from drug court, as well as an established Tims Law in Madison County.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked if there is any interest from either city in participating or if they have already started a program. Judge Taylor stated that with speaking to both Mayors, there is some interest, but isn't sure of a program that has been started by either city. Jill stated that she believes the City of Richmond's focus has been on the men's recovery center and services that are associated with that. The City of Berea has had different conversations on how to best serve. The Task Force stated that no matter what is decided they want to make sure it is evidence based, it is established, and they can speak to it.

Judge Taylor stated that they are ready for the Task Force to take the next steps and expressed his appreciation to them for the hard work they have put in over the past year for the community.

Magistrate Lochmueller thanked the Task Force for their service.

Magistrate Combs expressed his appreciation to the Task Force for all the hard work they have done and stated that the goal is to make a generational difference.

ANNOUNCE NEXT COURT DATE:

Judge Taylor announced the next court date for January 13, 2026, in the Council Chambers' Courtroom in Berea, Ky at 9:30 AM.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Motion from Stephen Lochmueller to adjourn, seconded by Billy Ray Hughes. Hearing no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48 PM.

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