

Meeting Date; 1/13/2026
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 13th of January 2026 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 Assistant Attorney Brooke Bowman, Madison County Sheriff Mike Coyle, Madison County Clerk Kenny Barger, and Jailer Larry Brock were also present.

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

Judge Taylor asked Reverend Timo Karvonen, Berea United Methodist 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 12-16-2025:

Motion by Billy Ray Hughes seconded by James Brian Combs to approve the minutes from the regularly called meeting on December 16, 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: Approval of Special Meeting Minutes 12-31-2025:

Motion by Billy Ray Hughes seconded by Stephen Lochmueller to approve the minutes from the special called meeting on December 31, 2025.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

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

IN RE: Proclamation — Madison County School Board Recognition:

Judge Taylor proclaimed the month of January 2026 as School Board Recognition Month and urged all citizens to honor Becky Coyle, Beth Brock, Brandon Rutherford, Lori Cobb, and Samantha Burford for their service. Madison County School Board Members Beth Brock, Samantha Burford, Lori Cobb, Becky Coyle, and Brandon Rutherford were in attendance to accept this proclamation, along with Superintendent Randy Neeley.

Board Chairman Lori Cobb thanked Judge Taylor and Fiscal Court for their continued support. She stated that they do the best they can to do and always want to do what is best for the children of Madison County.

IN RE: Resolution 2026-001 — Proposed Discontinuance of County Road Maintenance for the Gravel Portion of Haden Heights:

Scott Shepherd, Road Supervisor, presented Resolution 2026-001—Proposed Discontinuance of County Road Maintenance for the Gravel Portion of Haden Heights for the Court's approval. This Resolution approves the proposed discontinuance of the gravel portion of Haden Heights from the County Road Maintenance System.

Meeting Date; 1/13/2026

Meeting of; Madison County Fiscal Court

Meeting Type; Regularly Scheduled

Motion by James Brian Combs seconded by Stephen Lochmueller to approve Resolution 2026-001— Proposed Discontinuance of County Road Maintenance for the Gravel Portion of Haden Heights.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that he has spoken with both parties that are present today and wanted to apologize about being ill-informed on the data behind this discontinuance the last time this was presented. He informed both parties that he understands the situation better this time.

Debbie Vescio, 204 Crimson Dr, stated that she thinks that the gravel portion maintenance should be continued based on Resolution 2024-03, a Resolution approving the future maintenance plan of gravel roads in the County Road System, and KRS 178.070 and KRS 178.116, which outlines certain requirements for the discontinuance of county roadways and maintenance. She stated that Haden Heights provides necessary access for farmers, including themselves, to access farms, the road has been maintained by the County within the past three (3) years and there is a demonstrated public need due to the route being used by residents, visitors, farmers, and workers making it a road for public use. She is requesting the maintenance be continued on the gravel portion of Haden Heights to avoid any inconveniences to landowners, residents, and others who use this as a route, including utility companies to perform services and repairs.

Billy Dargavell, 175 Maple Grove Road, stated that he and his brother own all four (4) farms that this road goes to, and there is one farm that is owned by the Vescio's, who have a locked gate entry. He stated that the deed for the portion of the original farm that the Vescio's now own states that the deeded roadway for that property is Jackson Branch, and there was an easement for the use of the Vescio property to get to his property through Jackson Branch, not for the Vescio's to get to his property. He stated that he wants to get rid of the road maintenance because of trash, beer bottles, needles, etc., the vehicles that use their property to turn around and destroying their hay fields because they aren't able to put a gate up. He stated that discontinuing the maintenance and potentially putting a gate up wouldn't stop those that need access to the property to have that access.

Steve Vescio, stated that they do have a right-of-way off of Haden Heights, based on a Civil Case that was conceded by the father of Mr. Dargavell. Debbie stated that she never has seen any trash on the road or vehicles coming and going. She went to the Sheriff's Office and the State Police for any calls on that property and were told they had no reports. Mr. Vescio stated that no matter the decision that would be made today, it would still be a county road, and a gate can't be put up on a county road.

Judge Taylor stated that there is a case law at the Supreme Court that if it is still a public pathway, a gate can't be put up. The Resolution for the discontinuance doesn't take anyone's easement away or right to access the property. This case is coming back up because the Vescio's identified that the KRS stated three (3) signs have to be put up in three (3) prominent locations within one (1) mile of the road, and originally, they only put one (1) sign up.

Assistant Attorney Brooke Bowman stated that KRS 178.070 and KRS 178.116 provide two separate mechanisms for discontinuing a county road, making it an "either/or" situation not an "and" situation to qualify a road to be discontinued. If a road doesn't qualify under KRS 178.166, that is when it goes through the formal procedure that is before the Court today. Judge Taylor stated that they are following KRS 178.070 for this roadway.

Magistrate Combs asked if there were any other public comments through emails or phone calls. Judge Taylor stated that he had received a text message from a resident in the area that stated he didn't have a problem with the discontinuation, but there was nothing that came through the Judge's Office either by email or phone call.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that, as this road is in his district, he hasn't had one call for, nor against it.

Magistrate Botkin stated that if the County discontinues the maintenance, that it wouldn't render either property owner from working on the road at their own expense.

Magistrate Hughes stated that gravel roads are one of the most contentious issues they might deal with.

Meeting Date; 1/13/2026

Meeting of; Madison County Fiscal Court

Meeting Type; Regularly Scheduled

Steve Vescio stated that Jackson Branch was discontinued maintenance on in the past, so the front entrance and now the back entrance to his property has been discontinued, which makes it inconvenient for him to maintain. Magistrate Lochmueller stated that they didn't pick this road to be discontinued, they were asked to discontinue it by a property owner. Steve Vescio stated that it was originally asked by the father of Mr. Dargavell, and there are 4-5 other landowners that didn't ask for it. Magistrate Lochmueller stated that none of the other landowners has said anything for, nor against the discontinuation.

Magistrate Botkin asked when the last maintenance was done on it. Assistant Attorney Brooke Bowman stated by her recollection, it was in August 2023. Scott stated that this section of Haden Heights has been a problem for the Road Department for some time because it is a very steep hill and every time it rains, the gravel runs down. Judge Taylor stated that it also has a cattle guard across the road, which has caused issues.

Magistrate Botkin also stated that he wanted to make sure that they don't restrict access for landowners. Judge Taylor explained that they are not closing the road, it will still be public access.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs-Yes Stephen Lochmueller-Yes

Billy Ray Hughes- No Tom Botkin- Yes

Reagan Taylor – Yes

IN RE: Resolution 2026-002 — Madison County Clerk's 2026 Budget:

Kenny Barger, Madison County Clerk, presented Resolution 2026-002—Madison County Clerk's 2026 Budget for the Court's approval. This Resolution is for the Madison County Fiscal Court to approve the Madison County Clerk's 2026 Budget.

Motion by James Brian Combs seconded by Stephen Lochmueller to approve Resolution 2026-002—Madison County Clerk's 2026 Budget.

Clerk Barger stated that they continue to be blessed with the economy they have in Madison County. The car dealerships in the county provide an enormous amount of revenue through car sales and they are continuing to see increases in land records. Several years ago, they started processing passports, which has not only provided a revenue stream, but also helps the public by not having to make an appointment to process a passport. They did increase salaries for deputies by 2.5% to keep up with where things are going. Clerk Barger explained that they continue to keep the salary schedule competitive; they don't have a high turnover rate but if they do have to hire new employees, they can keep it fair. He expressed his appreciation to the Fiscal Court for their support and for providing the building that they are housed in, as well as thanking his staff.

Judge Taylor asked how the building was working for them. Clerk Barger stated that it is good, especially since they opened the side lot for extra parking and the "man gate" in the fence for the customers to come through.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked if the public is aware of the fact that they can do passports at the Clerk's Office. Clerk Barger stated that they get applications every day. The Post Office is the only other location in the County that processes passports, but they have to have an appointment. Magistrate Lochmueller stated that he has never had a bad moment in the office and expressed his appreciation to the staff of the Clerk's Office.

Magistrate Hughes bragged on Judge Taylor and Clerk Barger for the "sweat equity" they put in on the building. Judge Taylor stated that they had a lot of help from Madison County Fire Department and the inmates, especially during the demolition.

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

Meeting Date; 1/13/2026

Meeting of; Madison County Fiscal Court

Meeting Type; Regularly Scheduled

IN RE: Resolution 2026-003—Madison County Sheriff's 2026 Budget:

Major Tony Terry provided a summary of the Sheriff's Department for 2025. He started with the operations, stating that they had 34,403 calls for service which was up 793 calls from 2024, a total of 5,453 citations, 178 DUI's, 114 drug/narcotics arrests which was down 19 from 2024, 991 warrants served, 3,498 papers served, 771 evictions/vacates, 4,851 vehicle inspections, and 869 CCDW application.

Judge Taylor clarified that vehicle inspections are only on vehicles that come in from out-of-state and get registered in Kentucky.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked if Major Terry could provide some data where the citations and DUIs were done at, whether they were in the city limits or the county limits.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked if Major Terry could provide a differentiation between the calls in the Berea city limits and the Richmond city limits when they get time. Major Terry stated that he will get that together, along with the collisions and the number of cases they work in the cities compared to the county.

Judge Taylor asked if the calls of service include calls for back-up from the cities. Major Terry stated that it does. Anytime they get dispatched to any type of call, no matter where it is, they will go and it counts as a call of service for them. With the Sheriff's Department being in downtown Richmond, they do get a lot of calls within the Richmond city limits.

Major Terry continued on, explaining they worked 753 non-injury collisions, 236 injury collisions, no fatal collisions, worked 1 collision reconstruction, 373 animal complaints, 259 domestic violence which was down 25 from 2024, 569 motorist assists, 546 special details, and 74 canine activations. The increase in the number of citations and DUIs has a direct reflection on the 0 fatal collisions they worked on. As they are charged with the public safety in Madison County, they work with other police departments to deter fatal accidents by aggressive speeding, seatbelt, and DUI enforcement. He also stated that the increase in special details was due to their assistance with traffic control during the interstate reconstruction.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked of the injury collisions if they could determine how many of those involved a semitruck. Major Terry stated he wasn't sure they could determine that through KYOPS, but they will try. In the investigations branch of the Sheriff's Office, Major Terry explained that they had 63 death investigations, 7 overdose deaths, 35 sexual assault cases including internet crimes against children, 60 violent offenses, 32 other major crime offenses, 44 HIDTA Madison County investigations, 21 arrests, 61 guns seized, seized 2,038g (4.5 lbs.) of fentanyl/heroin, 589g (1.3 lbs.) of cocaine, and 8,273.7g (18.24 lbs.) of meth. The street value of the drugs seized was \$246,879, and the total value of all seizures was \$382,734.

Major Terry continued by informing the Court that they have a deputy that is involved with the DEA as a Task Force Officer (TFO), and combined with 4 other DEA agents and 8 other TFOs, they had 42 Federal Investigations, 7 of which was by the MSO detective, and had 11 Federal arrests in Madison County. The group seized a total of 17 lbs. of fentanyl, 49 lbs. of meth, 75 lbs. of cocaine, and 260 dosage units of pills (fentanyl). Judge Taylor asked if they see any more abuse of prescription pills. Major Terry explained they are still out there, but it is not as prominent as it has been in the past because they are harder to get.

The Court Security branch of the Sheriff's Office had 4,763 prisoner transport, 84,585 miles driven, 4,509.62 gallons of fuel at a cost of \$12,615.42 in fuel.

Magistrate Combs thanked Major Terry for the presentation and congratulated him on being the next Sheriff. Magistrate Botkin asked how many of the deputies are road deputies. Major Terry stated they had 41 sworn deputies, and 19 in Court Security.

Tony Terry, Major, presented Resolution 2026-003—Madison County Sheriff's 2026 Budget for the Court's approval. This Resolution is for the Madison County Fiscal Court to approve the Madison County Sheriff's 2026 Budget.

Meeting Date; 1/13/2026

Meeting of; Madison County Fiscal Court

Meeting Type; Regularly Scheduled

Motion by Tom Botkin seconded by James Brian Combs to approve Resolution 2026-003—Madison County Sheriff's 2026 Budget.

Judge Taylor stated that the budget is \$6,587,773.00.

Magistrate Hughes expressed his appreciation to the Sheriff's Department and all that they do. He stated that the budget for this year is up 15% from last year, with the employee salary up 25%.

Sheriff Coyle stated that the increase in salary includes an extra payroll and they increased the salary scale because they are losing more and more deputies because they are not able to compete with the salary. When a deputy leaves, it costs them a lot to replace them because of the cost of sending them to the police academy, the uniforms, service weapons, etc.

Magistrate Botkin stated that the Sheriff's budget has always been a contentious issue, but when it comes to the safety of the citizens and getting the drugs off the street, it is very important.

Judge Taylor stated that this is due to unfunded mandates, because the Sheriff's Departments are becoming the more prominent law enforcement agency in the unincorporated limits of the county. He stated that the budget is just an estimate, and he feels that the Sheriff's Department is going in a good direction. You can't just compare this budget to last year's budget; you have to compare the actuals and take into account the entire picture. Last year they approved a budget of \$2.3 million, and they only spent \$1.7 million. He thanked the Sheriff for the job he has done for the past 14 years as Sheriff.

Magistrate Botkin stated that they do have to stay competitive with Richmond and Berea city's pay. He also thanked Sheriff Coyle for all his hard work over the years, stating that it has been a pleasure to work with him.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that there is so much they are mandated to do, and it is the job of all the Magistrates to talk to the Legislators to get them to fund unmandated services that the Sheriff's Department has to take over. He also expressed his appreciation to Sheriff Coyle for his service.

Major stated that they spoke with the Legislators last year about supplementing the Court Security costs, and they are going forward to the Legislative body to ask for more pay to be able to completely fund Court Security costs.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

James Brian Combs-Yes Stephen Lochmueller-Yes

Billy Ray Hughes- No Tom Botkin- Yes

Reagan Taylor – Yes

IN RE: Resolution 2026-004—Blue Grass Army Depot Liaison MOA:

Sarah Stewart, Treasurer, presented Resolution 2026-004—Blue Grass Army Depot Liaison MOA for the Court's approval. This Resolution approves a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Energy and Environment Cabinet, Division of Waste Management and the Madison County Host Community Liaison for Blue Grass Army Depot. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 2023-140.

Motion by Stephen Lochmueller seconded by Billy Ray Hughes to approve Resolution 2026-004—Blue Grass Army Depot Liaison MOA.

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: Resolution 2026-005 — Updated Madison County Emergency Operations Plan:

Meeting Date; 1/13/2026

Meeting of; Madison County Fiscal Court

Meeting Type; Regularly Scheduled

Tim Gray, EMA Director/Fire Chief, presented Resolution 2026-005—Updated Madison County Emergency Operations Plan for the Court’s approval. This Resolution approves an updated Madison County Emergency Operations Plan, and supersedes Resolution 2021-13

Motion by James Brian Combs seconded by Tom Botkin to approve Resolution 2026-005—Updated Madison County Emergency Operations Plan.

Magistrate Botkin asked if they wrote this plan because it was very well written. Chief Gray stated that they just updated it.

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:

Kenny Barger, Madison County Clerk, spotlighted Cody McGlothlin, Deputy Clerk, since 2020. A colleague stated that Cody’s willingness to go above and beyond to help citizens demonstrates his dedication to offering professional and efficient customer service. He always shows kindness and patience toward citizens, and they are thankful that Cody is on their team.

Clerk Barger stated that Cody works in the land records side of the office, and is a history buff, which is very beneficial to the office. Cody is very good at finding what the citizens need, is patient, and he is very blessed to have him as part of his team.

RE: Judge’s Report:

- Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc. is accepting applications for crisis energy assistance through Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Applications will be accepted through March 27, 2026, or until available funds are expended. Visit www.foothillscap.org for more information.
- Visit our website at www.madisoncountyny.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.
- The Madison County Courthouse and its related offices will be closed on Monday, January 19th for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Offices will re-open on Tuesday, January 20th at 8:00 AM.

Comments from Magistrates:

Judge Taylor thanked the Berea City Council and Mayor Fraley for allowing them to use their chambers for today’s meeting.

Magistrate Botkin stated that he wanted to thank his colleagues for all they do for their constituents. He did have a request to get some brush cut back on Caleast Road; he has talked with Brandon McIntosh, and the State has added that to their list. He also thanked Scott and the Road Department for their work on 595 and Peggy Flats Road.

Meeting Date; 1/13/2026

Meeting of; Madison County Fiscal Court

Meeting Type; Regularly Scheduled

Magistrate Combs stated that it is a pleasure to serve and be able to serve.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that he, Judge Taylor, and Chief Gray will be going out to the Boone's Trace HOA tonight, and he is excited for the opportunity to talk with them and listen to what they have to say.

Magistrate Hughes asked Chief Gray if he had a chance to prepare a diagram on where their calls come in from throughout the county. Chief Gray said they are in the process of getting it together.

Sheriff Coyle thanked the Court for their support, and the recognition they received Friday for National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day.

Comments from Department Heads:

No Comments from Department Heads.

Public Comments:

No Comments from the Public.

IN RE: Pay Claims and Approve Transfers:

Motion made by Stephen Lochmueller seconded by James Brian Combs to approve to pay claims and transfers.

ANNOUNCE NEXT COURT DATE:

Judge Taylor announced the next court date for January 27, 2026, in the Fiscal Courtroom of the Courthouse Annex Building in Richmond, Ky at 9:30 AM.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Motion from Billy Ray Hughes to adjourn, seconded by James Brian Combs. Hearing no objection, the meeting adjourned at 11:11 AM.


REAGAN TAYLOR MADISON CO. JUDGE/EXECUTIVE