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Lewisburg talks development some more

By **Scott Pearson**
Associate Editor

The bulk of this month's Lewisburg City Council meeting revolved around the city's most frequent topic recently, development.

Blake Arnold, who is developing the Holly Grove Meadows subdivision, briefed the council on the process of development in general and on his project in particular.

The city has annexed the Holly Grove Road property already but the council de-

ferred, last month, a vote on approving a planned urban development, or PUD, zoning for the property.

Arnold proposes 272 single family homes on the 70 acre parcel if a PUD is approved.

He pointed out the differences and trade offs inherent between straight zoning and PUD zoning.

Under the current R-1 zoning, he could develop 204 lots with much less input from the city or 304 lots if rezoned to R-2.

A PUD zoning would allow

the city more say in the look of the development and require 25 percent of the property be left undeveloped for common use.

Arnold proposed adding a turn lane for the development at his expense as well.

Previously, several residents close to the proposed subdivision have expressed concerns about the project. Only one neighboring property owner spoke last week.

A vote revisiting the PUD proposal was not on the meeting agenda.

The meeting marks the final meeting for two members of council.

Two-term Ward 4 Councilman Jerry Gordon and Ward 2 Councilman Jack Cathey depart the council after defeat in the August general election.

Tommy Burns and Vickie Michael will join the council for the first time along with Ward 3 Councilwoman Peggy Harwell, whom voters returned to her seat.

Council members will be sworn into office prior to next

month's work session at 5 p.m., Tuesday, September 6.

The council approved a three year PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) agreement with Southern Carton to offset some of the cost on \$7.5 million in additional equipment.

The council also agreed to raise the fines for demolitions undertaken without a permit to \$500 and approved application for a grant to fund communications equipment for the fire department.

Upcoming blood drive to honor 12-year-old cancer patient

Middle Tennessee residents are invited to roll up a sleeve and donate lifesaving blood to help a 12-year-old girl from Marshall County.

Blood Assurance will be hosting a blood drive from 12 p.m.-7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 26 at First Assembly of God in Lewisburg. The church, located at 1191 W. Ellington Pkwy., is where Sarah Jones, 12, and her family attend services. Earlier this year, doctors at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville delivered the unfortunate news that Jones had blood cancer. Since her diagnosis, she has required multiple blood transfusions and has achieved remission, but will require treatment until June 2024.

To support the Jones family, for each donor who gives at the upcoming blood drive, Blood Assurance will be donating \$10 to go toward Jones' medical bills.

"It will be really heartwarming to see people donating blood," said Sarah's mother, Pamela Jones. "Sarah is very happy that there's going to be an opportunity to give back. This won't just help Sarah, but so many others battling illnesses in our community."

Donors can visit www.bloodassurance.org/sarah



Sarah Jones

bloodassurance.org/sarah, call 800-962-0628, or text BAGIVE to 999777, to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins will be accepted.

To be eligible to donate, you must be at least 17 years old (16 years old with parental consent), weigh 110 pounds or more and

be in good health. Donors are asked to drink plenty of fluids and eat a hearty meal prior to donating.

Commission closes term

By **Scott Pearson**
Associate Editor

Monday's meeting of the county commission marked the last meeting of the current commission's four year terms.

"I think we've been able to do a lot of good things over the last four years," said County Mayor Mike Keny.

Five members of the current commission will not be returning in September.

Swearing in ceremonies for the new iteration of the commission will be held on August 31 at the Dixie Theater.

Keny also announced that a special election for an 8th District seat will be included on the November 8 ballot.

Commissioner Lynn Stocstill currently serves the 5th District, appointed after Commissioner Wesley Neece moved into the 9th District.

Stocstill had filed to run for election in the 8th District, anticipating a move into that district by election day.

She finished second in the race, winning one of the two seats, but delays in her move past election day have left her disqualified from taking the seat.

James Hopkins, appointed to the commission a couple of months ago, and Joey King finished in third and fourth positions in the August race.

Qualifying paperwork is available now from the Marshall County Election Commission.

All of the commission agenda items were approved unanimously, consisting mainly of resolutions adjusting various budget account balances for accounting reasons.

One item that was continued to next month was appointing a new doctor to the positions of County Coroner and Medical Director for the county Emergency Medical Service.

Dr. Kenneth Phelps, who died July 29, served the county in both roles.

Former Tennessee Speaker Casada arrested in corruption probe

By **Kimberlee Kruesi and Jonathan Mattise**
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tennessee's disgraced former House Speaker Glen Casada and his top aide were arrested Tuesday on federal charges including bribery, kickbacks and conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Their indictments follow the abrupt resignation in March of Republican Rep. Robin Smith, who pleaded guilty to federal wire fraud charges involving Casada and his chief of staff, Cade Cothren. Afterward, speculation swirled about what additional charges might come in the corruption probe.

FBI agents arrested Casada and Cothren at their homes Tuesday morning. If convicted, they each face up to 20 years in prison. Both

pleaded not guilty Tuesday and received pretrial release with travel restricted to the middle district of Tennessee unless otherwise approved.

The 20-count charging document alleges Casada and Cothren exploited their positions of power by working with another unnamed lawmaker to funnel money to themselves using a political consulting firm — known as Phoenix Solutions, LLC — to conceal their involvement.

Cothren registered the firm in New Mexico because the state allows anonymous registration of LLCs, and rebuffed requests for in-person meetings with Casada's fellow lawmakers, saying the company representatives were out of state.

The trio deceived other Tennessee lawmakers in a conspiracy "to enrich themselves by obtaining bribes

and kickbacks from Cothren, in exchange for securing the approval of Phoenix Solutions as a mailer program vendor," a Justice Department news release said.

Outside the courthouse afterward, Cothren's attorney, Cynthia Sherwood, told reporters Cothren plans on "strongly defending the charges" and that he "looks very forward to being vindicated." Cothren himself told a reporter, "the truth will come out."

Casada and his attorneys declined to answer reporters' questions as they left.

House Speaker Cameron Sexton, who succeeded his fellow Republican in the leadership post, testified as a witness in the investigation in front of a grand jury in March. Other lawmakers and former and current staffers testified as well. Sexton has

said he has assisted federal authorities in the investigation since becoming speaker in 2019.

Revelations about the case also prompted lawmakers to pass tougher state campaign finance and ethics requirements this year.

"Today is a good day for Tennesseans because we did not turn a blind eye on these criminal activities," Sexton said.

Under her plea deal, Smith also promised to cooperate as a potential witness.

Casada resigned as speaker in 2019 but held onto his seat after revelations that he and Cothren had exchanged sexually explicit text messages about women years earlier. He is not running for reelection this year. Cothren lost his legislative job in the texting scandal, but remained involved in Repub-

lican politics.

FBI agents searched the homes and offices of several state lawmakers in January 2021, including those of Casada and Smith, and the home of Cothren.

The charging documents revealed Tuesday say Cothren launched Phoenix Solutions with Smith's and Casada's "knowledge and support" to offer mail and consulting services to lawmakers. All three claimed the firm was run by a "Matthew Phoenix" when in fact it was a made-up alias for Cothren, and Casada knew the name was fictitious, the documents allege.

The documents allege Smith emailed Cothren at one point saying he "may have to assume the role of Matthew again." He replied saying, "Matthew, reporting

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