



Called City Commission Meeting Highlights with McCracken County Fiscal Court

Tuesday, March 19, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall

2020 Census Presentation and Proclamation

Partnership Specialist Mark Wattier with the U.S. Census Bureau provided a brief presentation about the upcoming census and the importance of creating a Complete Count Committee (CCC). A CCC is comprised of government and community leaders from various organizations including education, business, and healthcare with the goal to create an awareness campaign for the upcoming census to encourage citizens to respond to the census questionnaire to ensure a complete count for our area. Wattier said, "The goal of the 2020 Census is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place."

Wattier also discussed the importance of a complete and accurate count in determining congressional representation, the determination of legislative, school, and voting districts, and the appropriation of federal funding.

So far more than 1400 CCC's have been created across the United States. After the presentation, the Paducah Board of Commissioners and the McCracken Fiscal Court issued a joint proclamation in support of creating the Paducah McCracken County Complete Count Committee. McCracken County Judge Executive Craig Clymer has asked Zana Renfro to chair the CCC.

Wattier also emphasized that there are part-time jobs available with the Census Bureau. Online applications are accepted at <https://2020census.gov/jobs>.

E-911 Presentation and Discussion

McCracken County Judge Executive Craig Clymer led off the discussion of the current organizational structure and financial challenges of the E-911 Center which provides emergency and non-emergency services for the residents of the City of Paducah and McCracken County. Judge Clymer said, "911 provides for the protection of citizens. The protection of citizens is the first and highest priority of government."

Paducah Police Chief Brian Laird and McCracken County Sheriff Matt Carter together made a presentation about the current organizational structure and equipment needs. Chief Laird said, "Some of the key components in the 911 Center have become obsolete. The system was originally installed in 1994 and upgraded in 2008." Chief Laird and Sheriff Carter both discussed the need to upgrade the portables (handheld radios) and the mobiles (radios in vehicles) and the need to increase the antenna coverage around the County.

911 Communications Services Manager Ed McManus explained that so far \$1.7 million has been invested in the 911 Center with upgrades in the telephone system, logging recorder, and CAD system (computer-aided dispatch). However, the radio infrastructure, radios, and antennas have not been upgraded with an estimated cost of \$13 million to complete those upgrades.

Emphasizing the importance of a 911 center, Paducah Mayor Brandi Harless said, "It's [911] there. We always want it to be there in case we need it. This is our core function as public leaders to make sure our community is safe."

Mayor Harless added, "We know how strapped our budgets are with the pension issue. We need to get creative in how we fund this."

Both elected bodies discussed the funding challenge due to declining revenue streams. Funding sources have changed significantly over the past couple of decades with land line fees funding 100 percent of the operating costs 25 years ago. But with the recent decline in land line use, those fees fund less than 30 percent of the operational costs with cell phone fees funding only about 21 percent of the operational costs. This decline in revenue has led to local governments across the



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country struggling to subsidize their 911 centers. The City of Paducah uses more than \$600,000 of its General Fund to subsidize the 911 Center annually.

Regarding funding, Mayor Harless and Judge Executive Clymer proposed abolishing the landline fee by both the City and County. However, there would be a new fee created that would appear on utility billing. The other revenue sources including grants, wireless fees, and user fees from non-city/county entities would continue.

They also proposed a new organizational structure for E-911 by making it a City-County consolidated 911 agency. The proposed new structure would create an independent agency that would have a seven-member board comprised of two Paducah Police appointees, two McCracken County Sheriff appointees, one Paducah Fire appointee, one McCracken fire appointee, and one citizen at large appointed jointly by the Mayor and Judge Executive.

Members of the Paducah Board of Commissioners and the McCracken County Fiscal Court acknowledged the importance of determining a funding source for the 911 operations and plan to continue their discussions and information gathering.

Since 2016, 911 Communications Services has been structured under the City of Paducah with various user groups contracting for dispatching services. E-911 currently is a division of the Paducah Police Department with 23 authorized positions. The 911 Center receives more than 150,000 calls per year.

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