

The Hartsville Vidette

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Started by Civil War General John Hunt Morgan, bringing Trousdale County's news for more than 150 years and counting

Commission files ethics charge vs. mayor

Legal threats cited in Water Department vote

BY CHRIS GREGORY
MANAGING EDITOR

The County Commission has formally asked for an ethics investigation into County Mayor Stephen Chambers.

At Monday's Commission meeting, Chairman Dwight Jewell read into the minutes a letter signed by 11 of the 20 members asking County Attorney Branden Bellar to "investigate these actions for any ethical or legal infractions and pursue any legal recourse necessary" against the mayor.

"I had hoped this would somewhat die down and it didn't," Jewell said in speaking with The

Vidette. "I talked with Mr. Bellar about what we needed to do if we wanted to pursue it... I also talked with CTAS (County Technical Assistance Service)... Based on their recommendation is why it went the direction it did."

The letter was signed by Gary Claridy, Rick Davis, Coy Dickey, Bill Fergusson, Jerry Ford, Richard Harsh, Jewell, Rachel Jones, David Nollner, Lonnie Taylor and Steve Whitaker.

Jewell said he received the letter by email but declined to say who had sent it to him.

"It came from everyone who signed onto it," he said. "It came from 11 commissioners and I

feel that's the way it needs to be looked at."

The letter alleges that at a special called Commission meeting on July 18, the mayor threatened legal action against the Commission for an alleged violation of the Open Meetings Act with regards to the Water Department's request to build a new facility on county property. The letter also states that some commissioners voted for the project "because they were intimidated and coerced to do so, to avoid the county being involved in litigation."

At that July meeting, Mayor Chambers pointed out that five commissioners had discussed the building project prior to a meet-



Chambers

MORE ONLINE

Read the County Commission's letter asking for an ethics investigation into the county mayor at lebanon-democrat.com/hartsville.

ing of the Education Committee and that the discussion was on video. The mayor also stated that any potential Open Meetings Act violation could be cured by discussing the same topics at a public meeting and those discussions were held prior to the Commission's vote to approve the \$1.2 million building. The approval came by a 10-9 margin.

Chambers denied any wrongdoing on his part, saying, "I was not aware of the letter. My initial reaction is I'm going to consult an attorney, because there

are allegations made in there. They are baseless allegations. I'm going to speak to an attorney and if there's a statement to be made, I'll make it later."

Bellar declined comment when asked how a formal investigation would proceed, saying he wanted to examine the statute first.

In addition, Dickey read a statement calling on the mayor to apologize for publicly calling commissioners "idiots" after the group's August meeting. Those remarks came after a failed vote on funding a Trey Park grant.

"We're not idiots; we're not dumb... The mayor should apologize to the Commission," Dickey said in part.

Reach Chris Gregory at 615-450-5756 or cgregory@hartsvillevidette.com.



Chris Gregory / Hartsville Vidette

Trousdale County's Xavier Harper (12) celebrates after sacking Smith County quarterback Peyton Hix (10) during the first quarter of Friday's game. The Yellow Jackets won, 34-16, to improve to 5-0 on the season.

Yellow Jackets overpower Smith Co.

BY JERRY RICHMOND
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

The Trousdale County Yellow Jackets ran out to a 34-3 lead in the third quarter before finishing with a 34-16 victory over the Smith County Owls on the Creekbank Friday night.

The Jackets remained perfect on the season at 5-0 while the Owls fell to 2-4.

"I've noticed a trend with our football team: these rivalry games we get up for and play," TCHS coach Blake Satterfield said. "I thought we played three-and-a-half quarters of very good football tonight. We blocked really well, we tackled really well and we were very physical tonight."

The physical nature of the game was on display throughout as both teams combined for 11 penalties and Trousdale County's Xavier Harper was ejected after being flagged for a personal foul.

"That's the one thing I told our team: the thing we've got to get better at, the emotional part of it," Satterfield said.

"Knowing that people are going to try and get in your head, football's about controlling that emotion. It's OK to get fired up."

The Jackets got on the scoreboard on their second possession when Bryson Claiborne raced 62 yards down the right

SEE **OVERPOWER/PAGE A3**

Trey Park could get rubber mulch surface

BY CHRIS GREGORY
MANAGING EDITOR

Members of Trousdale County's Parks & Recreation Committee were inclined toward putting rubber mulch inside the Trey Park playground as a new surface.

During the group's Sept. 23 meeting, commissioners weighed various options for

improvements to the play surface, which is currently grass.

County Mayor Stephen Chambers noted that as part of a grant for adding ADA-compliant play equipment, the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation requested that Trousdale County look

SEE **MULCH/PAGE A6**

Summer camps aided student test scores

BY CHRIS GREGORY
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Students who participated in summer learning camps across Tennessee, including the local Summer Scholars program, showed marked improvement in test scores according to the Tennessee Department of Education.

On Sept. 22, Gov. Bill Lee and Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn held a press conference to share what they called encouraging data from the summer programs.

A special session of the General Assembly in

SEE **CAMPS/PAGE A6**

PTA holding second Craft/Yard Sale

BY CHRIS GREGORY
MANAGING EDITOR

Trousdale County's Parent-Teacher Association is planning its second Community Craft/Yard Sale this weekend as a fundraiser.

The event will be held Saturday, Oct. 2 at First Baptist Church, located at 773 E. McMurry Blvd., and will run from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

"We were very pleased with the outcome and the constant flow of traffic back in May. We're really hoping for the same," said Leah Kelley Brown, president of the PTA. "I think the location along Highway 25 helps get those onlookers."

Booths are \$20 each and cover two parking spots in the church's lot. Those participating are responsible for setting up their own table or canopy.

There are 18 spots already reserved, Brown said, and room for 10 more spots. Craft vendors are welcome as well as yard sales, she noted.

"That's more than we had last May, so that's good," Brown said.

Anyone wishing to reserve a booth can call or text Brown at 931-319-0063, or email her at kellyk_05@yahoo.com. Payment can be made with cash, check or online through Venmo.

In addition to craft and yard sale items, there will be at least two food trucks participating. Hot Dog Momma will be there again and Foodland employee James Reeves will have smoked meats available.

Vendors scheduled to be on hand include Hartsvegas with Trousdale County-themed T-shirts and hoodies, as well as sellers of glass art, cake pops, handcrafted jewelry, Christmas ornaments, furniture and more.

Reach Chris Gregory at 615-450-5756 or cgregory@hartsvillevidette.com.

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THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA

The Steering Committee will meet in on Tuesday, Oct. 5 at 6 p.m. the upstairs courtroom of the courthouse.

The School Board will meet on Thursday, Oct. 7 at 6 p.m. in the office of the Board of Education, 103 Lock Six Road.

MORE INSIDE

RESULTS	2021	2020	2019
Math	88%	85%	82%
Reading	85%	82%	79%
Science	82%	79%	76%
Writing	80%	77%	74%
History	78%	75%	72%
Art	75%	72%	69%
Music	72%	69%	66%
Physical Education	70%	67%	64%
Foreign Language	68%	65%	62%
Health	65%	62%	59%
Career	62%	59%	56%
Community Service	60%	57%	54%
Other	58%	55%	52%

Wage study recommends \$236,000 to up county employee salaries.
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