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Mobility, safety discussed at Hardin Valley forum

By Nick Skoda

An open house-style public forum was held on Tuesday, January 15 at Hardin Valley Academy regarding proposed changes to Hardin Valley mobility, for both motorists and non-motorists.

The meeting was held to gauge public opinion on matters that are important to the occupants of Hardin Valley and the abutting areas.

The roads and areas that are being studied and will be revisited with a plan of action are: Hardin Valley Road all the way to Hickory Creek Road; Everett Road at Yarnell; Yarnell Road at Campbell Station; Lovell Road at Hardin Valley and Pellissippi Parkway; Solway Road.

After a recent survey was conducted, receiving feedback from 795 respondents, it was determined that the top five comments regarding the issues surrounding these roads and areas are congestion during school drop-off/pick-up and rush hour, that the roads are too narrow, that there is poor lighting and visibility, general congestion and the lack of shoulders.

Two examples of comments were, "Yarnell is too narrow and needs to be widened for growth to happen," and at the hard bend in the road just as Hardin Valley Rd becomes Hickory Creek Rd it was said that "Removing the bend in the road will lead to excessive speeding unless a



PHOTO BY LUTHER GRADINGS

The Powell Panthers' Ayden Greene breaks away for a shot against Vine in Thursday night's Knox County Middle School basketball tournament championship game at South-Doyle Middle School. Greene scored 18 points as Powell defeated the regular season champion Golden Bears 56-48. Please see story and other tourney coverage in Sports & Recreation, Section C.

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Commissioners may decide who pays Pension Suit lawyers

By Mike Steely
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The Knox County Commission meets in work session Tuesday to possibly decide which county department pays the \$165,000 lawyer fees in the settlement of the suit against the Knox County Retirement and Pension Board. The commission meets on Tuesday because all City-County offices were closed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday.

Two items are on the agenda, both presented by the finance department, and both with a blank space for the account that would be charged. Some of the commissioners have said in past meetings that the law department should foot the bill since it initiated the original suit.

But the commission voted to settle the dispute, prompted by County Mayor Glen Jacobs, and then voted to hire an outside firm to represent the county in the settlement.

One resolution calls for attorney fees for individual and class defendants, \$97,500, a mediator fee of \$3,150, and the outside counsel of Amett, Draper and Hagood, LLP in the amount of \$48,896.

The second resolution calls for reimbursement of attorney fees previously paid by current or former sheriff's department employees for attorneys in the amount of \$37,562.60.

If the debate on the fees echoes previous discussions the commission may split on a vote to designate which department will be paying the fees.

The commission is also

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Board decides to continue Career Magnet Academy

By Anne Primm

Chairwoman Terry Hill called the Wednesday January 16, 2019 meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Councilwoman Stephanie Welch and Dr. Anthony Wise of Pellissippi State Community College were present.

Eighth District board member Mike McMillan made a motion to change to the last item on the agenda to the first item on the Regular Agenda.

Representative McMillan then called on Deputy Law Director Gary Dupler, whom he had enlisted along with Superintendent Bob Thomas to work with him in formulating a motion to present to the board regarding CMA. The motion read as follows:

Approve programmatic changes as implemented in the 2018-2019 school year for Career Magnet Academy and re-allocate the current magnet budget of the CMA to provide marketing material, increased recruitment, and a modest

sign for the campus in an amount not to exceed \$5000. Additionally, upper administration is to report to the Board on CMA's recruitment and marketing progress at the March and May Board Work Session meetings.

Three speakers spoke in public forum in favor of keeping the school open before the board took a roll call vote which ended in an eight to one decision to continue operation of the school. Hill cast the dissenting vote.

Fourth District

Representative Virginia Babb questioned McMillan about Principal Hewitt's request for a name change for the school. McMillan and Dupler agreed that this was a separate issue that would need to be brought before the board for approval.

The next item up for discussion was 2019 Legislative Priorities. Public forum speaker Caitlin Nowell, seventh grade Language Arts teacher at South-Doyle Middle School, addressed the board about keeping ThrReady as the state

evaluation tool. Nowell said that even though this product has its issues, it is based on the Tennessee Standards. The Tennessee Standards are the guidelines teachers have been using for nearly two decades and to change now would really upset teaching and learning.

Teacher Evaluation was the next legislative priority. The board wanted to urge the legislature and the State Board of Education to develop sound guidelines for teacher evaluations that incorporate

local educator input and more accurately represent teacher performance.

The final topic of discussion was the role of ACT (ACT Suite of Assessments) and/or SAT in lieu of End-of-Course Exams. After discussion with Knox County School Superintendent Thomas and other school personnel, the board decided not to address this issue at this time and to wait until more information is available about the ACT Suite of Assessments which is still under development.



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