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# Southern



# Standard

## Contractor's gamble may not pay off

School Board votes to delay paying for unauthorized work

BY **LISA HOBBS**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Unauthorized repairs may create a bridge of discontent between Warren County School Board members and the contractor renovating the concrete walkways at Warren County Middle School.

According to Upland Design Group architect Allen Hill, Midwest Maintenance performed additional work totaling \$7,900 prior to School Board approval and would like to be paid.

"They approached us about performing some additional work," said Hill. "They were told we could not get approval to do that until the board meeting Feb. 22. They said they were going to have a hard time rescheduling their crew to come back and do this additional work. They went ahead and did the work and hope it's approved."

Midwest took a risk, said Hill, who recommended approval for the work, which would allow payment to be made.

"This happens sometimes that contractors take a chance," said Hill. "They knew it was at their risk. I would have recommended the work be done because it would provide a better finished product. Our recommendation would be to approve that work. Having done it ahead of time, they knew they were taking a chance."

The project has a \$10,000 contingency fund to be used if unforeseen items were discovered during the project. Payment would lower contingency to \$2,100.

Director of Schools Bobby Cox had a different take on the situation.

"I'm going to recommend we don't approve it," he said. "There was no approval given. I understand the process of them wanting to get the work done, but I think that would cause us an audit issue. My job is to make sure we are on sound financial footing and we follow what we should follow. They needed to get prior approval."

The majority of work is complete, excluding demolition of the walkway closest to the football field. Cox discouraged depleting the contingency fund at this time.

"The other part of the work isn't going to be done until spring break," he said. "That contingency is there if an unforeseen event happens. If they get into that project and it's more than we thought, we don't have the money to do it. You're the board and you can do what you want to do, but my recommendation is no."

School Board members decided to hold off on authorizing the work and issuing payment. Cox was asked to seek the advice of auditors and bring that information back to the board.

**“**  
*This happens sometimes that contractors take a chance. They knew it was at their risk.*

**ARCHITECT  
ALLEN HILL**



WCMS school resource officers Kevin Murphy, left, and Jorge Rivera have the responsibility of protecting a campus which had more than 2,000 students at the beginning of the school year.

## Safeguarding our schools

### Local officials vigilant in protecting students

BY **JAMES CLARK**  
Editor for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Columbine. Sandy Hook. And now Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Today's students have never known a world without school shootings.

Officials in Warren County are well aware of this fact and say school security is a constant emphasis for the county's 11 campuses.

"There have been hundreds and hundreds of hours spent training," said Sheriff Jackie Matheny. "What we try to do more than anything else is to emphasize to students if

they hear something, no matter what it is, to let us know. When we receive tips, we look into it until we can go no further. We'll work until we fall down checking out a tip. Sometimes it's just a rumor, or sometimes it's just an expression of anger, but we'll look into it as far as we can."

Law enforcement officials checked out a tip just last month when it was reported a WCMS student threatened to shoot one of his classmates. The boy denied making the threat and Sheriff Matheny said no weapons were found at his home.

Continued on 3A



In today's world, a law enforcement presence is required every day at WCMS.



City employees are pictured installing seats in the award-winning Park Theater balcony during renovation.

## Park balcony work wins major award

BY **LISA HOBBS**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

McMinnville officials took a leap of faith with Park Theater's balcony renovation and it paid off with a state award.

"Our budget for the renovation, I think, was about \$90,000," said Park Theater manager Kevin Roberts. "When we went out for bids, the cost came back at \$198,000 – double what we thought it would be. Bill Brock (city administrator) decided we would take care of it ourselves in-house as a cost-saving measure. It ended up costing about \$45,000."

Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association has given Park Theater a Four Star Award for the renovation. TRPA, a nonprofit organization, exists to strengthen and unite those committed to the benefits of parks and recreation.

Four Star Awards are given to recognize excellence in renovation, as well as programming, marketing, and new facility design.

Roberts says the cost-saving measure adds something special to Park Theater, the satisfaction of successfully completing a project together.

"This is a beautiful balcony and a shining example of what people can accomplish when they work together," Roberts said. "City officials, administrative, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Park Theater, everyone worked together. Each department did its part and the community gets the benefit, in both the financial savings and a beautiful balcony of which they can be proud."

TRPA will hold its annual conference later in the year and Parks and Recreation Department will be presented a plaque for Park Theater renovation.

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