



SPORTS

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by Tigers **1B**



BUSINESS

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new ownership **5C**

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Southern



Standard



The Head and the Heart was the first sold-out show of the Cumberland Caverns Live concert series which debuted this year. Concert promoters asked the city for \$40,000.

Subterranean spending

City approves \$40K for Cumberland Caverns Live

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

RCS Production has requested \$40,000 from the city of McMinnville to help in “generating a buzz” and keeping music at Cumberland Caverns.

The city Finance Committee met to consider the allocation at the written request of RCS Production producers Joel Grubb and Stephen Moore.

“Cumberland Caverns Live is requesting funding from the city of McMinnville to create a large-scale brand awareness campaign,” said Grubb and Moore. “We believe the campaign will be very effective, as the campaign will remain active throughout the year generating a buzz about Cumberland Caverns/ Cumberland Caverns Live and McMinnville. The campaign would help bring national and international attention, as well as pull in the tourists who are flocking to Nashville and Middle Tennessee, as well as new residents calling Tennessee home.”

Specifically, the \$40,000 would be used in an awareness campaign.

“With underwriting from the city of McMinnville, we will be able to execute the brand awareness campaign for the next 12

months. The campaign would target different mediums including radio, online, print, television and live streaming. We believe utilizing all these platforms will be more beneficial and will reach a larger and more diverse audience than if we utilized only one or two platforms.”

That campaign will hopefully increase ticket sales in order to keep the music flowing.

McMinnville officials provided funds annually to Bluegrass Underground’s efforts related to the PBS filming. Bluegrass Underground was broadcast on PBS stations across America and was filmed at Cumberland Caverns until 2017.

Cumberland Caverns Live took over this year and has no such connection with PBS. It is a for-profit business.

Alderman Everett Brock asked, “Can we do this?”

“I’m not aware of any legal constraints on the board in giving money to anybody,” said city attorney Tim Pirtle. “It might be prudent to address the specific question to the Comptroller’s Office. If anybody had a problem with it, it would be the comptroller.”

Committee members approved a \$40,000 allocation in the city’s fiscal year budget for 2018-19, if the Tennessee Comptroller’s Office provides its stamp of approval.

Neal ribs city over ‘pork’-filled budget

Alderman says
handing out
too much money

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

McMinnville government has gone hog wild when it comes to frivolous spending, according to one elected official.

“The budget had so much pork in it that it nearly squealed,” said Alderman Mike Neal. “From my observations, all you had to do is ask for an appropriation and it was granted. There are people on the board just looking for places to spend money and who have never, as I can recollect, voted against an expenditure. They have never even considered giving it back in the form of a property tax cut.”

Neal was the only dissenting vote when the proposed budget for fiscal year 2018-19 was presented to the McMinnville Board of Mayor and Aldermen on Tuesday night for its consideration on first read.

Mayor Jimmy Haley, Vice Mayor Ben Newman and Aldermen Everett Brock, Steve Harvey, Kate Alsbrook and Ryle Chastain voted in favor of the budget which had an estimated ending balance of \$2.4 million.

The budget included several

increases to nonprofit and civic organizations.

Under consideration is a last-minute \$40,000 allocation to the producers of Cumberland Caverns Live, a concert series at Cumberland Caverns. “Also I am not in favor of propping up a private business,” said Neal of Cumberland Caverns. “There were no restrictions placed on what that money can be spent on.”

Officials recently approved a 20-year property tax rebate, also called Tax Increment Financing, in order to encourage David Hunt of Hunt Properties to construct a Hilton Gen 8 Hampton Inn Hotel in McMinnville.



NEAL

Neal says the tax rebate did allow Mr. Hunt to hold onto some of his profits, but that’s different than providing a business with \$40,000 in taxpayer dollars.

“I know we recently gave a tax deferment to a hotel that is looking to open here, but I don’t equate that as an equal

action,” Neal said. “I believe we as a board should make sure equal opportunities are in place for all businesses, but when we financially help some businesses by giving them money, and not all businesses, I think that is just wrong. I wish every business in the county would come to the final vote on the budget and ask for their share.”

Second and final read on the 2018-19 fiscal year budget is slated for Aug. 28.

New wheels



Lisa Hobbs photo

McMinnville Police Department has three new SUVs ready to patrol the streets. The Police Department is switching from sedans to SUVs, a slow change that could take years. Pictured is master patrol officer Mike Starkey with his new vehicle.

Church offers an Oasis



When you hear “church membership” what comes to mind?

According to Oasis Church assistant pastor Kevin Clark, “membership” connotes things like being a member of a gym or a club-like mentality. At Oasis Church, they don’t believe in having a church membership or roll because they don’t consider it scriptural. In fact, Clark says anyone who has been born again or saved by accepting Christ as their savior into their hearts is part of the body of Christ.

“Don’t join a church if you feel



Lacy Garrison photo

A few teens from Oasis youth group gather at Hotpoint to hang out. Pictured, from left, are Shelby Clark, 17, Alanis Cripps, 16, Kerrigan Cripps, 16 and Hayden McClure, 16.

like you don’t need to,” explained Clark. “We’ve seen churches try to keep people and it hurts them to think that they’ve lost a member or family, but if they are moving on to something more that God is

leading them into and taking what they’ve learned and going somewhere else, that’s in our opinion, the way things ought to be.”

Continued on **3A**

Five schools excel on test

BY **LACY GARRISON**
Reporter for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

The state of Tennessee released the 2018 TNReady results Thursday. For Warren County, the results are bright for a test with so many technical difficulties.

Director of Schools Bobby Cox says the overall district scores improved from Level 2 to Level 4 since last year, which educators are excited about.

The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) uses a Level 1 through 5 score. Cox said five schools in Warren County were identified on the TVAAS Level 5 school list: Centertown School, Dibrell School, Hickory Creek Elementary, Irving College

School, and Warren County Middle School.

Eastside, Bobby Ray and WCHS scored Level 1, which Cox explained was due to index form scoring meaning one low score in certain areas brings the entire score down.

“We have really moved into standards that are more challenging and telling the truth about what students in Tennessee should know and be able to do,” said Cox. “We’ve not hit our goals, but we are moving toward mastery and on-level skills. We are focusing a lot on growth, not just achievement at that one time on that one day of testing.”

A more comprehensive overview will be given at the School Board meeting this Thursday at 5 p.m.

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