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County awards ambulance contract

The fiscal court awarded a contract to provide ambulance service locally to Blue Grass Medical Services of Lexington after a joint meeting with the county council Monday night.

BOGMS will take over the service as of midnight, Dec. 31, when the local funeral homes go out of the ambulance business.

The court's action came after the county council, despite the urging of Mayor William Power, refused to provide any financial assistance for the service. The court decided to shoulder the entire \$20,000 necessary to get the program off the ground, and passed a motion to award BOGMS a one-year contract by a four to one vote. Magistrate B. O. Livingston voted against the motion. Magistrate Andrew Bretz was absent.

After hearing an altered proposal from Dick Cooksey of BOGMS calling for an \$8,000 subsidy, and the county buying and retaining possession of two ambulances from local funeral homes

for \$12,000, County Judge/Executive Hesse Smoot asked the city council if it could not contribute \$4,000 to get the program started.

The issue was hotly debated before the council went out into the hall at the courthouse to decide the matter. When the councilmen returned, Mayor Power told Judge Smoot, "You're on your own, Judge."

The judge then said that it would mean cutting back on other services in the county, but that a local bank had agreed to "take care of us" until a revenue sharing hearing is held on Dec. 28. At that hearing the court will appropriate \$60,865 of unbudgeted funds for the fiscal year. \$2,000 of that comes in an unexpected Revenue Sharing payment to the county, and \$7,815 is carried over from last year.

The contract awarded Cooksey calls for the county to provide his service with an \$8,000 subsidy and to lease him the two ambulances currently used by the local funeral homes. The county

will purchase those units for a total of \$12,000.

Cooksey will then maintain and insure those vehicles, and provide personnel for running the local ambulance service.

The county will also allow use of the armory for storage and office space at no charge to BOGMS.

Cooksey will provide one full-time ambulance attendant on duty at all times and supplement that with part-time personnel. Also, in the event an ambulance in the county is out of service, he will augment the local ambulance with backup units from his service in Lexington.

Cooksey's charges for runs are not to exceed \$9 for a run to Lexington, and \$6 for a local run. There is no additional charge for materials used or waiting time.

The service will be conforming to state regulations.

When Judge Smoot asked the city for help, Mayor Power said that the city

did have the extra funds. He said it could be taken from Revenue Sharing funds, or from a "several thousand dollar" refund the city had just received from its gas supplier.

That unbudgeted refund was placed back in the general fund, Power said. Raising a question of double taxation, Councilman Clarence Cord asked Judge Smoot "Why should the city kick in anything? Aren't they part of the county?"

Cord said, "Speaking as a taxpayer as well as a councilman, I pay county taxes just like anyone else in the county."

Cord said, "I'd rather be honest and say here are the books, we lost money, we tried, but we can't do it," he said. Cooksey said that his Lexington service has a 98 percent collection rate. "Collections have been the least of any problems

which allows cities to contribute to a county ambulance service," Cooksey also pointed out that the city had participated in an earlier subsidy paid to them by the county.

After their meeting in the hallway, the councilmen offered no money to the court.

Several citizens in attendance at the meeting questioned Cooksey's ability to make a profit from the service and worried about the possibility of even greater subsidies in the future. After explaining how he felt he could cut overhead costs by handling the runs to and from Lexington with his service already established in Fayette County, Cooksey said straight out that he would not come back and ask for "\$20,000 the next year."

"I'd rather be honest and say here are the books, we lost money, we tried, but we can't do it," he said. Cooksey said that his Lexington service has a 98 percent collection rate. "Collections have been the least of any problems

we've had since we've been in the business."

Under the agreement with the court, Cooksey will also get to use the county's small claims apparatus to press for collection if necessary.

He has said from the outset that his company wants to use Nicholas County as a springboard to expand into other counties in the area.

The question was raised by both Charles Gates and David Kramer as to who would be responsible for replacement of vehicles when the ambulance units wear out. No commitment was mapped out on that, but Cooksey said that "\$8,000 down" leave much room for replacement.

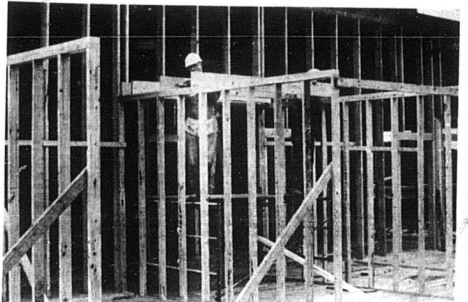
Both Cooksey and Magistrate Harold Mitchell pointed out that the contract was only for one year, the maximum allowed by law.

Russ Bell, who had proposed a volunteer service to the court two weeks ago, also questioned Cooksey's

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Progress

The gray clouds of winter turned a bit warmer Monday afternoon, and workmen for the East End Construction Company of Maysville were busily at work on the new Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe building on the corner of Main Street and Eastern Avenue. — Mercury photo.

Change of pace Petition supports the fiscal court

In a radical change from the events of the last several weeks, the Nicholas County Fiscal Court was presented with a petition Monday night that did not call for a house cleaning of the court, an abatement of local governmental taxing districts, or even an audit of the county's finances.

In fact, a petition presented the court by Dr. and Mrs. W. R. Kingsolver expressed the "support and appreciation" of "underappreciated registered voters of Nicholas County" for the court's effort to provide an ambulance service to the county.

Calling the petition "not really a petition" as much as "papers of support," Dr. Kingsolver said that there has been "no campaign to produce large numbers of signatures."

He said that the papers have just been made available to those who want to express support for the court.

"Realizing that each of us may not agree with all the decisions or actions taken," Kingsolver told the court, "we still desire to express our firm intention to work together in a reasonable fashion to accomplish our aims."

"I am certain the actions which we feel this way are large," he said. Kingsolver told the court that he felt the recent barrage of media attention on the county had only "given the viewpoint of some Nicholas County

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Bluejackets are off to a rocky start Nicholas drops two in season openers

"We'll be back," vowed Nicholas County basketball coach Mike Kenney after his squad dropped the second game in a row last Friday night to Bourbon County 94-69 in the opening week of the local high school basketball season.

The Jackets opened the season with a promising performance against Tates Creek, playing within 12 points of the Lexington school until the final minutes of the third quarter, before going on to lose the game 78-64 and follow with a drubbing at the hands of Bourbon County.

"We were just not ready to play," Kenney said of his squad who had had but some 13 practices prior to the Bourbon County game.

Besides the short preparation caused by the extension of football season into the playoffs this year, the Jackets have been forced to go into battle without their top gun. Senior guard David McGuffey has been sidelined with a hamstring injury since a week prior to the season.

Kenney said prior to the season that McGuffey, who was an all-region and all-CKC pick last year, "should be one of the best, if not the best player in the region this year."

McGuffey shot a blazing 54 percent from the floor to average 17 points a game last year. McGuffey made a brief appearance in Friday night's contest, but was still limping noticeably on his injured leg.

Steve Anderson has come on in McGuffey's absence to provide the offensive punch for the Jackets. The sophomore forward, son of former NCHS basketball coach Bill Anderson, pumped in 29 points against Tates Creek and 21 against Bourbon County.

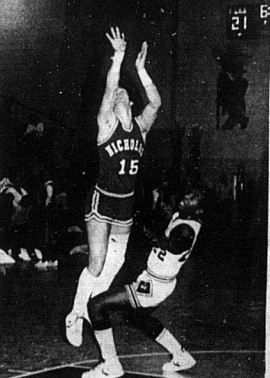
Kenney said following the game Monday that his team needs more time working together to get the feel of its defenses.

Kenney said that Friday's game was "one of those nights when everything went out the window." After getting behind early, "rushing to and churning up" worsened the situation, the coach said.

Bourbon County jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead in the contest. But the Jackets fought back, and a pair of Kirk Mattox free throws and some strong inside work by Jeff Howard cut the lead to one inside the final three minutes of the first quarter, at 12-11.

Bourbon County handed home two quick buckets following Jacket mistakes to go back up by five before the quarter ended 16-11.

Bourbon County came out smoking in the second quarter and increased their lead to 16-25-15.



Nicholas County's Mike Woosley sends Bourbon County's Jim Royce flying along with his jumper from the foul line in Friday's game with the Colonels. — Mercury photo.

Santa and Snow Queen coming by train Friday

There won't be any floats or Model A's in Carlisle's Christmas parade this year, but Santa, Snow Queen candidates and the NCHS band will be there.

And this year's Christmas parade won't follow the traditional annual route down Main Street. Because Santa is coming by train this year.

The train with Santa and the Snow Queen candidates is scheduled to arrive at the corner of Broadway and Market Street at 9 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 11.

According to Mayor William Power, who is coordinating the program, Santa and the candidates will depart from the train onto the platform at the TTI station, where a brief ceremony will crown this year's Santa. The band will

be on hand at the ceremony.

The gathering will then move down to the Historical Society's newly renovated building, where Santa will talk to children and pass out candy.

Also at the depot, the City Fire Department auxiliary will serve chili, soup and soft drinks.

Five young ladies who are students at the Nicholas County High School will be vying for the Snow Queen title. They are Mindy Smith, Kristin Hamilton, Sherry Fryer, Peggy Stewart and Angie Wilson.

In conjunction with Friday night's activities, many local stores will be maintaining extended hours for evening shoppers.

— See Snow Queen, page 12

— See Lawsuit dismissed, page 12

— See Rocky start, page 12