

# THE FORT SCOTT TRIBUNE

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FSCC board reviews new certificates, facility plans and strategic goals.

**INSIDE:**  
Fort Scott trolley tours are retuning for the 2026 season. See page 2.

**SPORTS:**  
Several Fort Scott High School Tiger and Lady Tiger basketball players earned spots on All-SEK League teams. See page 6.



Bourbon County Commissioner Gregg Motley, left, speaks during a discussion on a forensic audit as Commissioners Mika Milburn-Kee and Samuel Tran listen during Monday's commission meeting.

Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

## Commissioners split 3-2 toward independent forensic audit

Jason E. Silvers  
The Fort Scott Tribune

Bourbon County Commissioners hope to address allegations concerning the county's finances with approval Monday to pursue a forensic audit by an independent firm.

Commissioners voted 3-2 to pass an amended motion by Commissioner Gregg Motley to "engage an independent firm to do a forensic audit on any transaction any commissioner deems necessary." Motley and Commissioners Joe Allen and Samuel Tran voted in favor, while Commissioners David Beerbower and Mika Milburn-Kee voted against.

Prior to commission discussion, citizen Nick Graham requested commissioners send out requests for proposals for an "independent forensic audit of payroll," among other steps he feels the commission should take in response to accusations Graham said he recently saw on social media related to "waste, fraud and abuse."

The specifics of the allegations were not immediately available to the Tribune.

"How would your auditor know what to audit?" Tran said at one point during the discussion.

Motley said commissioners can choose "any transactions" they wish to be added to the RFP, and his motion would include "any scope" the commission decides. Allen said he wishes to move past the issue, and Milburn-Kee said she would not vote in favor of the motion as stated.

"If this is the next step, we've got to move past it at some point," Allen said.

Reading from written information, Tran said he would like whoever the commission votes to conduct the audit to look into the following areas: "identify irregularities in cash receipts and disbursements; concerns raised through internal review, whistleblower allegations; procurement and vendor payment abnormalities; grant compliances and allowability concerns; payroll and timekeeping irregularities."

"Those are the things I want to look into," Tran said.

Motley's original motion was to create an RFP to search for an independent auditor, and included a request to ask "the longest-tenured commissioner," who is Beerbower, and Allen, the "shortest tenured," to work on the RFP. Beerbower seconded that motion, but Motley later amended his motion to exclude Beerbower and Allen as point of contact and include an idea by Sheriff Bill Martin for Martin to contact a sheriff outside the county about serving as the county's point of contact for auditors.

Beerbower also seconded the amended motion, and Milburn-Kee said she would like for Martin to find "somebody appeasable" as the point of contact prior to a commission vote. It was discussed there was a motion on the table, and Motley said he did not wish to pull his motion. Beerbower said he would prefer to wait to see who is chosen as the point of contact.

Early in the discussion, Tran said he had an RFP already completed, and Motley requested that document be given to Beerbower and Allen as part of Motley's original motion. Tran said

he did not agree with that motion, as he would like the RFP to be modified.

"We need to decide who to be point of contact for this," Tran said.

In reading from written information, Tran said "all communication regarding the RFP must be directed to the point of contact. Proposers shall not contact commissioners, department staff or any other county officials regarding the procurement, except through the point of contact."

Tran said a point of contact will provide "transparency" during the auditing process.

"It encapsulates this in a manner where the public can't say that one or more of us is gerrymandering or rigging the RFP," Tran said. "The point of contact should not be political."

Beerbower asked if an independent firm had been identified, but Tran said no, as the request would "go out for a sealed bid."

Motley asked who the point of contact is in the resolution Tran had obtained, and who created the resolution. Tran said it is BakerTilly, but Motley said that firm is "not independent." BakerTilly is a Kansas City-based firm that works with the city of Fort Scott, Bourbon County and the sheriff's office on their budgets.

"They're (BakerTilly) not going to bid," Tran said. "This goes out to everybody else."

Motley said the RFP would need to be independent as well, and could be given to an independent firm.

SEE AUDIT ON PAGE 6

## FSCC Spring Rodeo is out of the gate



Fort Scott Community College rodeo athletes prepare for the breakaway competition during the 47th annual Spring College Rodeo Friday morning at Arnold Arena. The rodeo, which features athletes from 25 colleges in Kansas and Oklahoma, included events Friday night and continues today at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The short go is scheduled for 1 p.m. Sunday

FSCC photo/Taylor Bailey.

## Senior-versity participants get tour of Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes



A Senior-versity tour took place Thursday at the Lowell Milken Center in Fort Scott. The group is sponsored by the Fort Scott Community College Foundation and is open to all interested retired community members. Lowell Milken Center Program Director Megan Felt presented to the group, with refreshments provided following the tour. All Senior-versity events are free unless stated and more information on reservations for upcoming events is available by calling 620-223-2700, extension 5830.

Marti Wells-Smith/Special to the Tribune

## FSCC board reviews new certificates, facility plans and strategic goals

Tribune Staff Report

Editor's note: An FSCC news release contributed to this report.

The Fort Scott Community College Board of Trustees heard reports and updates from several college leaders during a special meeting Thursday afternoon in Burris Hall.

Dr. Larry Guerrero, vice president of academic affairs, presented information on academics, including Farm and Ranch Management certificates, the addition of an Equine Management and Production program, and adding a Pharmacy Technician Certificate.

Dean of Advancement

Lindsay Hill provided updates on the facilities master plan; the fleet management plan, which includes the disposal of some vehicles; and Foundation updates, including fundraising for soccer field enhancements, the Hall of Fame Alumni Weekend taking place May 1-2, the annual scholarship dinner, and a scholarship drive aimed at establishing new endowed funds.

Athletic Director Dave Wiemers celebrated the men's basketball team, which has advanced to the NJCAA National Tournament, with its first game at 9 a.m. Monday He also provided an update to the board on the 2026 Athletics Hall of Fame inductees, who will be honored at a ceremony during Hall of Fame Weekend on May 2.

CFO/Vice President of Finance and Operations Gina Shelton updated the board on ongoing accounting work, audit progress, student refunds issued, and the upcoming rodeo weekend, noting the positive economic impact these activities have in the community.

Vice President of Student Affairs Vanessa Poyner presented an update on the Strategic Plan work being done through committee efforts. Poyner reviewed the six goals established by the committee, as well as the work to be done on tactics and measurable outcomes. She also reviewed changes to the employee scholarship.

Dr. Jack Welch, FSCC president, shared an update on visits to school districts over the last few weeks and the feedback being received

about FSCC through that outreach.

The board reviewed agenda items for the March 13, 2026, regular meeting. The remainder of the time was spent on board training on goal setting, guided by Dr. Michelle Hubbard with the Kansas Association of School Boards.

The agenda for the board's regular meeting Friday included the following items:

- The consent agenda, which included meeting minutes; financials and cash flow report; check register; Feb. 13 payroll; a contract ratification; a contract for Frame Grant duplexes; and the KASB Legal Assistance Fund for 2026-27.

- Community, employee and student recognition – review of the TRIO program and recognition of the Trust-

ee Emeritus and students.

- Leadership reports and updates
- Old business – the State of the College address will take place at noon May 21 in the Danny and Willa Ellis Family Fine Arts center; employee scholarships for 2026-27; and an agreement for the STARS (Southeastern Technical Academy for Rural Students.)
- New business – Farm and Ranch Management

certificates and a Pharmacy Technician certificate.

The agenda also included a public forum, as well as an executive session to discuss security measures and a separate executive session to discuss personnel matters. Trustees were slated to take action after the second session.

More on recent college business will appear in a future edition.

### WEATHER

Mainly sunny. High 76F. Winds SSE at 10 to 20 mph. Mainly clear skies. Low 59F. Winds S at 15 to 25 mph.

