

*in this issue >>>*

- *WCHS opens January 8<sup>th</sup>!*
- *Good Things: New Code Enforcement Officer; New Police Chief;*
- *Nonprofit Spotlight*
- *“TAP” Grant Q&A*
- *From the (new) Mayor*



January-February 2025

# City Matters

*Informing and engaging residents of Versailles and Woodford County, Kentucky*

## **New WC High School opens its doors to students on January 8<sup>th</sup>!**



Photo from the Woodford County Schools website

Assuming the weather cooperates, students will return from winter break on January 8<sup>th</sup>. The big change is that the new high school will open for classes for the first time!

The high school is next to the middle school so please be mindful of new traffic patterns around the schools – High Street / McCowans Ferry; Falling Springs Blvd.; Troy Pike; and Tyrone Pike, in particular – and heavier traffic volumes in the morning and at dismissal time.

Watch for school buses and vehicles whose drivers might be unfamiliar with the drop-off routine as well as for students who may be walking or biking to school.

Based on the schools' start and dismissal times, please give yourself a little extra time if you're traveling in this area from about 7:30 to 8:45 am and 2:45-4:00 pm!



## City Hires New Code Enforcement Officer!

Meet JJ Martin, whose first day as Versailles' Code Enforcement Officer is January 6<sup>th</sup>! He fills a very important role for the city by addressing nuisance and other violations that impact health and safety of residents and may affect property values.

Many of you know JJ. He grew up in Versailles and worked for United Bank for years. Currently, he does real estate appraisals for The Hockensmith Agency in Georgetown, so is experienced in recognizing issues with residential and commercial properties.

Give JJ a minute to get up to speed, but if you have a question or issue, he can be reached via City Hall at 859-873-5436. His email address is [jmartin@versaillesky.com](mailto:jmartin@versaillesky.com). Welcome, JJ!

## Did You Know?

### That the City has a Suggestion Box?

You are always welcome to call or email the mayor, city council members or city staff and let them know what's on your mind, but if you'd prefer, there are comment cards in the lobby at city hall and a box to put them in.



The mayor empties the box and reads each card. If you would like a response, leave your name and contact number and she will be in touch.

While you're in the lobby, pick up some city swag – water bottles, pens, stress balls and fidget spinners!



## Nonprofit Spotlight: The (Warming) Station at Living Grace Church



Woodford County is lucky to have a place for people who are without shelter to sleep during cold weather.

Called The Station, the beds are housed within Living Grace Church, which is located at 128 E Green St in downtown Versailles.

The Station is the brainchild of Living Grace Pastor Jo Lauderdale and Judge-Executive James Kay, who were dismayed by the death last February of a city

resident who died of exposure, at least in part. There were a few meetings of people who were motivated to find a better solution for those struggling with homelessness or housing insecurity. The Station was opened as a "gap measure" until a long-term solution is found.

As is the case for most nonprofits, **VOLUNTEERS** are The Station's biggest need. Currently, there are just five. Two volunteers are needed to stay the night, with one remaining awake at all times. Interested? Call Jo Lauderdale at 859-421-4103!

### The particulars:

\*The Station is open from November 1 – March 31 WHEN NIGHTTIME TEMPS FALL BELOW 32 DEGREES.

\*Hours are 7 pm until 8 am. (The Station's Conditional Use Permit is designated as "Emergency and Temporary" so it can only be open limited hours, number of months, and in dangerously cold temperature.)

\*Guests are greeted with a hot meal and can help themselves to snacks and drinks throughout the night. They can charge their devices and watch TV. They wake up to hot coffee and breakfast.

\*The Station can accommodate up to 10 guests.

# Versailles has a New Police Chief!



Chief Rob Young being pinned by former Chief Mike Murray

While he's in a new position, Versailles Police Chief Rob Young is a familiar face to many, having served as Assistant Police Chief since 2018! With former Chief Mike Murray's retirement at the end of the year, it made sense to promote Chief Young to provide the Versailles Police Department (VPD) the continuity and stability an experienced leader like him provides.

Chief Young graduated from Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ, in 1990 with a degree in Accounting. He worked as an accountant right out of college for the CPA firm Grant Thornton, but decided accounting was not for him so began a law enforcement career in 1992 as a Federal Special Agent for the Office of Inspector General in New York City. Chief Young served in that role until 1998 when he became a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and moved to Lexington, KY. As an ATF

Special Agent, Chief Young was an explosives canine handler, member of the National Response Team, and Certified Explosives Specialist. He retired in 2017 as the Resident Agent in Charge of the Lexington Field Office. However, after only a month of retirement, he decided he wanted to continue serving and was hired by the VPD as a Detective, and, in 2018, was asked by Chief Murray to be Assistant Chief.

Chief Young is married to Tamie and together they have two young adult sons. Congratulations, Chief Young!

## What fun we had this past holiday season!

From the downtown Tree Lighting to the Christmas Parade, Christmas at the District, caroling, and lots of businesses joining in the fun, it was a great end-of-year in Versailles! We can't wait till next December!



# The City receives Grant Funding – learn more about its recent TAP Grant award!



**Wilson Avenue (located between Laval Heights and Woodford Plaza at Lexington Road and Wilson)**

**What is a TAP grant?** TAP stands for **Transportation Alternatives Program** and is under the US Dept of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. The program "provides funding for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management; environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity; recreational trails; safe routes to school projects; and vulnerable road user safety assessments."

**What will Versailles' TAP funding be used for?** Thanks to this area being assessed during late 2023's Walkability Audit, Wilson Avenue was identified as a site for sidewalk and other improvements. City / county engineer Mary Beth Robson prepared the grant application. The improvements include:

- \*5' wide concrete sidewalks (@1,000 ft), including connecting sidewalks where there are none
- \*Erosion control
- \*Entrance pavement
- \*New storm inlets
- \*Curb and gutters
- \*New storm pipe
- \*Retaining wall (less than 4' high)
- \*Earthwork
- \*Sodding
- \*Detectable warnings (ADA)

**How much will this project cost?** The total cost of the project is \$401,960. Federal grants typically pay 80% of the cost, so the federal share is \$321,568 and the local share \$80,392.

**When will this project begin?** The design work should begin in February 2025. We hope it will be built this year, but state approvals take a while to get, so it's safer to say that the project will be finished in 2026.

**Why are these grants important?** Infrastructure improvements are hugely expensive and beyond the budgets of most, if not all, municipalities. While local governments have "skin in the game" with their local matches, they often depend on federal and state grant opportunities for big projects to improve public safety, building resilient infrastructure, and strengthen equity for all residents.

**Will the city pursue more of these TAP grants?** This is not its first TAP award and won't be its last!

## Upcoming City of Versailles Meetings and Events >>>

### Regular City Council Meetings (Everyone welcome)

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 5:30 pm in council chambers at the Versailles Municipal Building (City Hall), 196 S Main Street

- January 7<sup>th</sup>
- January 21<sup>st</sup>
- February 4<sup>th</sup>
- February 18<sup>th</sup>



### Regular City Council Work Sessions (Everyone welcome)

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 5:30 pm at the Versailles Municipal Building

- January 14<sup>th</sup> (if scheduled)
- February 11<sup>th</sup> (if scheduled)

### Holidays (City Offices Closed)

- New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1<sup>st</sup>
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>

### Community Events (that are supported at least in part by the city)

- 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King Day Breakfast, Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 am at First Christian Church, 160 Lexington Street, Versailles
- *A Raisin in the Sun*, Woodford Theatre, February 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> ([www.woodfordtheatre.com](http://www.woodfordtheatre.com))

City meetings, work sessions and committee meetings are open to the public. We welcome and encourage you to attend! You do not have to have a specific reason to be there, and you do not have to sign in, say your name, or speak, though if you wish to speak, you may only do so during public comment. (Public comment is an agenda item at council meetings only.) You may also submit comments in writing to the city clerk.

If you prefer to watch the meetings from the comfort of home, Council meetings and Work Sessions are shown live on the City's Facebook page (@City of Versailles, Kentucky).



## Look Who's New in Town!

The following businesses recently registered with the City of Versailles...

## YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

(No new businesses – brick-and-mortars or food trucks – were registered in November or December.)



**2025-2026 Versailles  
City Council >>>**

**Mary Bradley  
(859) 873-5843  
chinadollmert@live.com**

**Lisa Johnson  
(859) 552-6873  
ljohnson@versaillesky.com**

**Gary Jones  
(859) 321-0582  
garyjones1028@gmail.com**

**Ann Miller  
(859) 619-6402  
amiller@versaillesky.com**

**Fred Siegelman  
(859) 338-0141  
fsiegelman@versaillesky.com**

**A sixth council member will be  
voted in on January 7<sup>th</sup> to fill  
Laura Dake's full term.**

# From the Mayor...



I would be remiss to not start this with thanks and gratitude to all of you who have made me feel so welcome in my new role. The cards, the calls and visits, and other well wishes have really put wind beneath my wings!

The city staff, too, deserves a huge shout-out for their support and help in making this transition a smooth one. I am so appreciative as I learn the job that I can lean on such competent people for advice and guidance.

2025 promises to be a exciting year for the city. There are several big projects that have been on the drawing board for some time that will begin or finish construction. I'll be talking more about these in my upcoming State of the City address and here in this newsletter.

There are some smaller projects, too, including sidewalk improvements and electric vehicle charging stations downtown and at the Woodford County Park, among many others.

I hope you will come meet me. If my office door is open and I'm in there, don't hesitate to drop in! I enjoy meeting new people or catching up with people I already know. If you would like to call/text or email me, I'm at 859-351-0460 and ldake@versaillesky.com.

***Stay safe during the upcoming weather  
and check in on your neighbors!***

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### **Want to get the city e-newsletter directly in your inbox?**

Simply click the "Subscribe" button below or email City Clerk Elizabeth Reynolds at ereynolds@versaillesky.com with "Newsletter" in the subject line. The newsletter is completed around the first of every other month, so the next one will arrive on or about March 1, 2025. If you'd rather not get an email, the newsletter will be available on the city's Facebook page and on the city's website. Past issues are archived on the website also.



**City of Versailles  
196 South Main Street Versailles, Kentucky 40383  
(859) 873-5436**