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7	8	5	6	4	9	8	1	2
8	2	9	3	5	1	4	7	6
1	4	6	7	8	2	3	9	5
2	6	8	9	7	4	5	3	1
9	1	3	2	6	5	7	8	4
4	5	7	8	1	3	6	2	9
5	7	1	4	9	8	2	6	3
6	9	2	5	3	7	1	4	8
3	8	4	1	2	6	9	5	7

Word Search Answers

H	V	R	A	E	S	L	N	A	B	R	J	S	L	S	N	S
J	S	O	O	S	L	H	T	J	M	V	J	S	d	I	C	E
K	X	O	A	X	I	V	C	H	O	X	d	O	S	E	V	E
E	H	V	d	I	S	O	N	J	d	J	V	L	O	S	E	O
T	N	I	C	K	I	S	B	H	V	N	R	I	C	E	V	E
d	V	I	C	T	L	Z	J	C	A	N	V	g	d	O	H	L
I	V	I	g	T	S	S	R	H	S	I	d	O	S	E	V	E
W	M	O	I	H	S	O	N	C	S	V	T	N	Z	I	C	E
U	N	d	I	N	N	L	H	S	I	d	O	S	E	V	E	I
f	O	N	I	S	O	L	E	O	N	V	d	S	d	O	S	E
I	T	A	S	I	O	d	I	A	A	V	d	S	d	O	S	E
N	V	T	R	I	L	A	A	T	B	S	I	d	O	S	E	I
L	T	A	O	Z	R	B	N	V	L	M	O	N	N	I	C	E
N	E	T	Z	R	B	N	V	L	M	O	N	N	I	C	E	I
d	H	V	Z	S	A	R	N	d	J	V	V	E	O	S	E	I
R	T	B	O	T	I	V	G	S	O	D	R	N	O	O	G	M
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Marshall County School Board Has Lengthy Discussion in Regards to Tax Rates

By Kelsey Edwards
KPI Writer

At the end of August, the Marshall County Board of Education held a special called meeting to approve new tax rates, after an error was discovered in the reports that were used to establish the rates approved at the meeting that took place August 18. The board had originally approved a rate of 49.7 cents per \$100 of assessed value on real property and 49.8 cents per \$100 of assessed value on personal property. These rates were both in excess of a 9% increase from the year prior. By law, the school district can set a rate that will increase their revenue by no more than 4%. A rate that would generate more than 4% more revenue than the prior year would require a public hearing. Brooke Gibbs, the District Finance Officer explained that an exoneration is not included in that figure, and the original increase was due to a five cent exoneration. An exoneration occurs when there has been an error in the valuation or tax bill of a property, which then led to that property receiving a refund. The exoneration allows the taxing district to recoup the funding they had anticipated receiving prior. Following the approval of the rates, it was determined that the exoneration was included by mistake, which was due to an error on the part of the Property Valuation Administration(PVA). It was stated that after a few phone calls and some research, it became apparent that an error had been made on a form that the office submitted to the Department of Revenue in June. A total on one of the pages of that report erroneously included a number from a different category. Due to this, it resulted

in a very large number, allowing the school board to calculate a tax rate significantly higher than expected. The mistake was corrected and resubmitted and then approved. This correction allowed the Kentucky Department of Education (KED) to adjust their reports, providing the local board with the correct information in order for them to set the rates. The original rate had sparked a large amount of pushback from the community, which led to many attending the August. 28 meeting. Usually the district does not include public comments during special called meetings, however, Darla Doss, the board chair, said that after the new rates were presented, she would entertain questions from the community as a part of the discussion.

Bill Thorpe, the Superintendent began the meeting by explaining that the district tax rates are among the lowest in the state. The 2024-2025 Fiscal Year real estate rate of 44.7 cents per \$100 of assessed value was the 16th lowest out of 171 school districts in the state and the motor vehicle tax rate of 44.6 cents per \$100 of value was the 6th lowest in the state. Thorpe went on to explain that the district spends over \$2.6 million dollars each month for basic expenditures like utilities, debt service payments, and payroll. He also claimed that the district is the primary employer in the county with approximately 660 employees. Thorpe explained that the district receives funding through a state level program called SEEK, which is intended to help equalize funding in districts across the state, but when property values increase it leads to the district getting more money locally, and the SEEK fund then

decreases. Further, Thorpe stated that the teachers have received minimal raises in recent years. In 2021 teachers received a 1% raise, in 2022 a 2% raise and a one time payment of \$1,100, in 2023 a 3% raise and a one time payment of \$1,000, nothing was received in 2024, and in 2025 a 3% raise, and in 2026 they are set to receive no raise, except for a one time payment of \$1,200. Thorpe then noted that in 2025 the average cost of building a new school was approximately \$450 per square foot and that the MCHS renovation project cost the district approximately \$13.093 million, whereas building a brand new school would have cost \$100 million or more.

Once Thorpe was finished, Gibbs presented the new tax rates, and explained the process that goes into the determination of the rates. In her explanation of the rates, Gibbs shared a graph that showed the rates for the 2024-2025 fiscal year was the lowest the rate had been since 2014. Gibbs then explained that, as previously reported, the error had been on the reports submitted by the PVA, but have since been corrected. The corrected rates real estate and personal property were 44.9 cents per \$100, and 45 cents per \$100, respectively. The corrected rates allow the district to collect the allowed 4% increase in revenue, and only increase the payments of the community by approximately one tenth of a cent on real estate and on personal property two tenths of a %. Both rates include a 0.2 cent exoneration. These increases will total a \$1 increase on a home valued at \$100,000.

Following the report, both Doss and board member Will Coursey praised Gibbs for noticing

the drastic increase and contacting KDE. Doss then opened the floor for questions where several community members asked clarifying questions regarding the rates, other ways for the district to cut costs, and concerns over the district's electric bill. Thorpe and the board members explained various ways that the district has attempted to cut costs by eliminating positions and cutting back where possible. The board went on to approve the rates.

The board also approved the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Federal District assurances for the release of federal funds. This was a standard procedure that is required for the disbursements of any federal funds in the district. The next scheduled meeting is a planning meeting which will be held at 5 p.m. on September 15, 2025 with the next regular meeting to follow on September 18 at 6 p.m.

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