

Magistrates-elect divvy committee posts

By Laura Hagan

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With six new members and a new judge-executive, the Oldham County Fiscal Court is in the midst of planning, training and organizing themselves before taking office in January.

After attending a recent training with current Judge-Executive Duane Murner, the magistrates chose spots on the court's nine committees.

The committees – in charge of everything from parks to public safety – are made up of three magistrates, the majority of which are new to the court.

Magistrates Bob Leslie and Steve Greenwell are the only two magistrates on the current fiscal court who retained their posts.

Among the other changes as the new court takes office is a reorganization of a couple of the committees. The newly-named public safety committee takes the place of the former emergency services committee and now includes animal control – formerly it's own committee. An environment committee merged into one responsible for utilities.

Leslie and Greenwell each remained on committees they'd served on previously.

For Leslie that meant continuing on both the parks and public safety committees. Greenwell remained chair of the road committee and will serve out the remainder of the fiscal year on the finance committee, as he is the only magistrate part of the current committee.

Judge-Executive Elect David Voegele said he and the magistrates are moving forward toward their first day. In addition to a state training for newly-elected public officials later this week in Louisville, the new court will have a special called meeting at 10 a.m. Jan. 3 to swear in the magistrates and several other public officials. To determine which magistrates participated in the respective committees, Voegele said he requested their areas of interest and attempted to match their interests with where they'd fit best.

Each committee has three members, except for finance, which will include Greenwell until the next fiscal year.

Greenwell said he's glad to be named chairman of the road committee again and said the committee plans to continue with the current pavement management system.

He'll also serve on the building and maintenance committee and utilities and environment, both he said he hasn't been a part of but looks forward to serving. He'll also serve on the jail committee.

J.D. Sparks, a newly-elected magistrate representing District 5, said he's looking forward to beginning his term in January. He will serve on the technology, jail and public safety committees.

He wanted to be involved with technology, he said, because of his background in working with technology. He's worked at Microsoft and said he believes he'll do well on that committee. His other interests included public safety.

A graduate of local citizens' academies and a member of the security forces while he served in the U.S. Marines, Sparks said he has "a keen interest in supporting those guys because they take care of the community."

The recent training has been helpful, he said, especially when magistrates met last week and heard from the county's various departments. "It was really beneficial because they discussed our roles and limitation and the things we'll run into," he said. Sparks said he decided to run because he wanted to be a part of the court and find as many ways as possible he can make Oldham County the best place to live.

He said he is ready to help limit government if need be or clean up any waste or fraud he sees. He looks forward to working with his fellow magistrates and says so far they all agree they want to keep "moving the ball forward," but he reminds residents that change won't happen immediately. "I hope that the citizens are patient with us but open and help us along," he said. "I hope they understand we're up there with the best of intentions."

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