

City Council discusses verbiage for Hiawassee Sign Ordinance

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In a special called meeting of the Hiawassee City Council on Thursday, Jan. 10, Mayor Liz Ordiales led a discussion on verbiage for the new Hiawassee Sign Ordinance, which is still a work-in-progress.

With Economic Development Officer Denise McKay coming on board as of Jan. 2, 2019, informed new ideas are coming to light.

For example, McKay suggested that the lighting on signs be pointed down rather than up, because upward shining lights obscure one of the area's greatest attractions – the night sky. In the North Georgia Mountains, stars, planets and the Milky Way are visible to the naked eye at night.

McKay said that about 18 states have enacted "night sky ordinances" because light pollution has obscured their

once pristine stellar observatory views.

Accordingly, the council has incorporated downward facing lights into the Hiawassee Sign Ordinance verbiage.

Ordiales, using a PowerPoint type visual presentation, graphically showed all of the various kinds of signs for definition purposes.

With this presentation, the council was able to discuss the pros and cons of different kinds of signs with no possibility of councilmembers misunderstanding what kinds of signs were under review.

Sign size, material, anchoring, placement, number per business, height, maintenance, abandonment, sign ordinance violation, lighting and Georgia Department of Transportation subjugation were among some of the issues brought up in the work session discussion.

Given Ordiales' graphic



Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales with City Clerk Bonnie Kendrick in the city's Jan. 10 work session. Photo by Mark Smith

presentation, the council was able to determine tentative verbiage and parameters they will use to finalize the various sections of the Hiawassee Sign Ordinance.

The Sign Ordinance, as tentatively amended in

this meeting, will be sent to Hiawassee City Attorney Thomas Mitchell for review and, assuming Mitchell's approval, will be presented for a First Reading in the upcoming Jan. 28 work session.

A Second Reading and

Adoption will tentatively take place at the Feb. 5 City Council meeting, just prior to the expiration of the sign moratorium on Feb. 11.

In other City Council news, qualifications for the 2019 Hiawassee City Council elections were set per Georgia state law.

"Pursuant to all of the state laws, the 2019 General Election of the offices of councilmembers three, four and five (Anne Mitchell, Kris Berrong and Nancy Noblet) is called for Tuesday, Nov. 5," said Ordiales, reading from the Resolution. "Qualifying fee for each office is \$45.

"Qualifying period is designated as Wednesday, Aug. 21, through Friday, Aug. 23, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., minus one hour for lunch here at City Hall. In the event that we have to have a run-off, it'll happen Dec. 3."

Ordiales added that Georgia state law requires these qualifications to be published in

the legal organ of the county, that being the Towns County Herald, by Feb. 1, 2019.

The Qualifications for the 2019 Elections Resolution was unanimously accepted by the council.

Moving forward, Ordiales said there are three municipal vehicles that are not worth repairing any longer.

"One of them is a Police Department Ford Expedition," said Ordiales. "The other one is the Sewer Department's Ford Rangers, which is a 2001, and the Water Department (vehicle), the one that has 320,000 miles on it.

"So, we're going to do a sealed bid and just get rid of those and replace however many we can replace with our budget."

The council unanimously accepted the resolution to sell the three vehicles via sealed bid.

Davis highlights Pregnancy Center with Movers and Shakers

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers hosted their first meeting of the year on Friday, Jan. 11, at the Sundance Grill in Hiawassee.

This group aims to host guest speakers every week to come and share information about their organizations or programs with those in the community who attend the meetings.

Kathy Davis, executive director of the Georgia Mountain Pregnancy Center in Blairsville, served as the guest speaker during the Jan. 11 morning meeting, and she came to give background information on her organization and what they aim to do for the community.



Executive Director Kathy Davis of the Georgia Mountain Pregnancy Center in Blairsville spoke with the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, Jan. 11. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

The Pregnancy Center opened its doors in March of 2017, with a mission to encourage, educate, and

empower abortion determined women to choose life for their babies, according to Davis.

GMPC is a ministry-

based organization that wants to help women who are considering abortion and are worried about going through a pregnancy with the fear of being judged by others around them.

And women of all religious backgrounds are welcome at the center, which wants everyone to have access to the help they need to continue healthy pregnancies.

"Our website has been designed to appeal to a girl who is thinking about an abortion," said Davis. "It's not for a nice pastor or nice church lady, because I've had a lot of people say it doesn't say anything about God, because that's just going to scare them off.

"They're going to be afraid somebody is going to judge them, but we are not there

to judge them, we are there to help them, and we will talk about Jesus while they're there if they are open to it."

Davis said the goal is to counsel girls considering abortion into thinking of other ways they can handle their pregnancy.

"We do a pre-abortion counseling, and that to me is a draw, because here in Georgia, girls have to have pre-abortion counseling at least 24 hours before the abortions," said Davis. "We offer them pre-abortion counseling where they are going to get the truth, because women that have had an abortion in the past were not always getting the truth.

"Seventy-nine percent said that they were not informed of alternatives," said Davis. "Sixty-seven percent said they

received no counseling at all, and 64 percent said they received pressure from someone, and that's pretty common when there's a boyfriend, parent, or someone telling them what they have to do."

Other services the group offers include free medical grade pregnancy tests and OB ultrasounds, and free of charge post abortion support for women and men who are grieving an abortion in their past.

For more information on GMPC, visit the center's website at GeorgiaMountainPregnancy.org.

The Mountain Movers and Shakers host speakers like Davis every Friday morning at 8 a.m. at the Sundance Grill.

Erlanger announces name change for hospital in Murphy, NC



L-R: Cherokee County Commissioner Cal Stiles; Dr. Thomas Clayton, Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital Chief of Staff; Mark Kimball, CEO Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital; Pastor Wil Posey, Murphy First United Methodist Church; and Cherokee County Councilwoman Barbara Hughes.

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

MURPHY, N.C. – The Erlanger Murphy Medical Center now has a new name: Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital.

Erlanger made the announcement in special event at the Tri-County Community College in Murphy on Friday, Jan. 11.

"For almost four decades, Erlanger Murphy Medical Center has been providing healthcare to those living in Cherokee, Graham and Clay Counties (in North Carolina)," said Hospital

Chief Executive Officer Mark Kimball. "Our affiliation with Erlanger Health System last April has not only made us financially stronger, but it's also greatly enhanced our scope of clinical services.

"By joining the Erlanger family of hospitals, we have gained the expertise, the knowledge and the resources that come with partnering with a nationally acclaimed health system.

"Today, we are anchored by a leading academic medical center with seven hospitals, six Life Force air ambulances, and the 10th largest healthcare system in the United States.

"All of this, of course, benefits all of us to live, work and receive medical care in this thriving community."

Kimball said his team had recently completed a strategic plan and that one of the key recommendations that emerged from that process was to initiate a name change.

"Our employees, our physicians and members of this community felt that the current name was too narrowly focused," said Kimball. "Everyone wanted a name that more accurately reflected this region and the various communities we serve and will serve in the future.

"Today, I want to proudly and officially announce the new name is Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital. With this new name, we feel the region will better understand who we are and what we stand for.

"Although our hospital is based in Murphy, over the years, it has not only grown in size, but in scope. Today, we play a vital role in the care of families and businesses throughout the region. And we now have healthcare providers in surrounding areas like Andrews and Hayesville, so this new name clearly reflects

our broadening reach.

"I'm excited to be making this announcement as we begin the new year and look forward to many other significant announcements which will positively impact the population health of this region to come.

"Our team at Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital is committed to providing the very best services in the region."

On Thursday, employees of the newly-named hospital were given T-shirts with the new Erlanger Western Carolina

Hospital logo during a special celebration event, according to a news release, and on Friday, the employees gathered in front of the first sign bearing the hospital's new name to commemorate the moment with pictures.

Joining Kimball during Friday's announcement were hospital Chief of Staff Dr. Thomas Clayton, Cherokee County Commissioner C.B. McKinnon and Barbara Hughes with the Murphy City Council.



Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital staff pictured with new signage.

Homecoming...from Page 1A

The college is around four and a half hours away from Towns County, which will be a huge change for Cornett as she continues her soccer career through college.

"I'm not only going because of the scholarship," said Cornett. "I toured it and I really do like the college."

Looking ahead, Towns County's seniors continue to move closer toward the conclusion of their high school careers in May, with only a few more milestones in the way before the finish.

One upcoming event seniors are definitely excited about this semester is prom, with graduation following shortly after, marking the end of their time at Towns County High School, and acting as the beginning of their paths to the future.



2019 Basketball Homecoming Queen Taylor Cornett with her father, Coach John Cornett, and little sister. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Kelley...from Page 1A

the Top 10 Most Wanted in Broome County on July 3, 2017, with her warrant being featured on July 12, 2017. The Broome County Sheriff's Office Warrants Division recently obtained information that indicated Kelley was living in the state of Georgia.

"With the assistance of the Towns County Sheriff's Office, Kelley was arrested in Hiawassee, Georgia, and remanded to their jail. Kelley is currently awaiting extradition back to New York state on her Grand Larceny charge."

An extradition date had not been set as of press time.

Kelley was staying on Wood Street in the city of Hiawassee for an unknown length of time prior to her Jan. 4 arrest, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

She is facing no local charges, though Kelley had been pulled over previously by at least one Towns County deputy over a year ago, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

When contacted about her out-of-state warrants that came up in the system at the time, New York authorities chose not to extradite her, according to the Towns County

Sheriff's Office.

The renewed interest in Kelley by New York authorities appears to stem from an initiative to make good on past issued warrants featured by the Broome County Sheriff's Office.

"Broome County Sheriff David E. Harder would like to thank the public and local police agencies in the southern tier for their assistance with the Broome County Sheriff's Office Featured Warrant Initiative," according to the Broome County Sheriff's Office Facebook page.

21st Century...from Page 1A

of students based on their education level in school, with the younger kids having more focus on reading enhancement, while the middle school group focuses on math and other subjects.

High school students can attend the program to complete credit recovery and practice for the SAT and ACT to help them get into college and move on with their life goals.

"We've already had two kids complete a course this past fall, and I've got two students right now working on another one," said Stowers. "That's a good thing for the high school kids to keep them on track with graduating.

education and college and career readiness, so we are looking to expose the kids to different kinds of careers."

This program has obtained a lot of support by providing students with a wide variety of tailored activities, and the program also gained recognition from the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network, or GSAN.

Back in the fall of 2018, the GSAN selected the program as a model program for State Sen. John Wilkinson to visit, where he spoke with students, parents, teachers, and school administrators about the program, then toured the site and participated in one of the cooking classes with the kids.

"He visited to see lots of things we do, and we had lots of support from the administrators, with all the principals coming by, along with the superintendent," said Stowers. "We had several teachers and parents come, with some of the parents talking to the senator about the program."

Information regarding the status of the grant will be available to the program sometime in April.

For more information on the afterschool program and upcoming events, visit Towns21Century.Weebly.com, or visit the program Facebook page by searching Towns County 21st Century Afterschool Program.