

Mayor...from Page 1A

beat anybody," Barrett told the Towns County Herald previously. "I was running to serve this wonderful community that's given me so much. I really want to be a true representative, so I just want to listen to everyone."

Patsy Owens defeated Incumbent Jay Chastain Jr. in the Council Post 2 race, receiving 180 votes to Chastain's 111 votes.

Nancy Noblet defeated Ann Wedgwood to win the Hiwassee Special Election for Council Post 5, and she will serve the remaining two years of the term started by Ordiales before she resigned the seat.

Noblet won 162 votes to 131 votes for Wedgwood. "I'm feeling excited," said Noblet the evening of Nov. 7. "I would like to move forward from this election and make this City of Hiwassee



Patsy Owens reacting to the news that she was elected to the Hiwassee City Council, outside the Towns County Board of Elections office on Tuesday, Nov. 7. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

great, and keep it going." Continued Noblet: "I would just like to see some more tourists, and I'd like to see more activities on the

square, and just go forward with this city council. It looks like there are three new seats, and we just want to do our best, what's good for the city."

Veterans...from Page 1A

to everyone for coming out today for this ceremony," said American Legion Post 23 Chaplain and U.S. Coast Guard Veteran Scott Drummond. "It means a great deal to all of us veterans to know that we have the support of our community."

Serving as the guest speaker for this year's ceremony was Ret. U.S. Army Major Bob Bischoff, a Vietnam Veteran and business owner in Young Harris.

Unlike speakers in years past, Bischoff did not pull from previous experience or tell of his time in the service or the history of his time in the military. Instead, Bischoff took the time to recognize all those who have served and who are currently serving, thanking each and every one for their service, for the sacrifices they make each and every day and for the freedoms American citizens enjoy because of these sacrifices.

"We are reminded on this 11th minute of this 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month that we are here to honor those who have served," said Bischoff. "For those of you who have served or are serving here today, I want to say thank you. All of you should receive the gratitude that you so deserve."

Bischoff asked all those veterans that were present to please stand, as the crowd offered up an overwhelming round of applause for those who have put their lives on the line time and time again so that each and every citizen can enjoy the freedoms and liberties of this great nation.

"Today is a day set aside to honor our veterans," said Bischoff. "They are our unsung heroes and the veterans in our community do a lot."

Bischoff extended a warm welcome to any veteran or anyone in the community with a heart for veterans to visit American Legion Post 23 and to get involved with the various local veterans' service organizations and all that they



Retired U.S. Army Maj. Bob Bischoff delivered the keynote address in the Nov. 11 Veterans Day Ceremony. Photo/Lily Avery



The North Georgia Honor Guard firing a volley. Photo/Lily Avery

continue to do for the people of Towns County.

Toward the end of the service, just before the memorial laying of the wreath ceremony, those who have served and since passed on were commemorated with their names inscribed on the park's Wall of Honor.

On behalf of local veterans groups, their family members were recognized and given fresh red roses in appreciation of that service. This wall, which honors those in Towns County who have passed away, now bears 12 news names added to the list of the many Towns County heroes.

"I'm deeply humbled and honored to be here," said

Drummond. "These men whose names are now inscribed on the wall have served our nation bravely, like many of us here today have, and now they have gone on to be with our Supreme Commander.

"We want to honor them and their families and, again, thank you for your service."

With a solemn gun salute, and the laying of the wreaths ceremony, this year's Veterans Day celebration came to a close, as all in attendance were reminded to say "thank you" to veterans, not just on Veterans Day, but every day for without them, this country would not be the great nation so many have the great privilege to call home.



Happy Veterans Day! Thank you for your service. Photo/Lily Avery

Baas...from Page 1A

Baas knows a thing or two about game pressure, and fortunately for the Indians, he was in town last week visiting his dad, Mike, who moved to Young Harris from Florida about a year ago.

As for how Baas got hooked up with the Indians, that's because Jimmy Smith was doing some roof work for Baas' father when the former professional football player himself showed up.

Smith, who just retired from his position as Towns County Youth Football Director after 21 years, asked Baas if he wouldn't mind speaking with the kids, and Baas immediately jumped at the chance.

Baas has spoken with kids at many schools since he retired from the NFL several years ago, and he was more than happy to visit the Indians two days before their history-

making game. He met with them after team practice on Wednesday, Nov. 8, and once he had passed around his heavy Super Bowl ring to the delight of the players, he told them what they needed to hear ahead of their Nov. 10 playoff match against Pelham High School.

"I told them to believe in themselves, but be humble in the process," said Baas. "To go out there and play for each other, pick each other up." He encouraged the student athletes to bring all their enthusiasm to bear, "so that it doesn't matter who you're playing."

Of course, the Indians were happy to meet a storied professional football player, and they eagerly asked him questions about his life and career, and about the stress of performing at a high level. "One of the first things I said to them was, act like you've been there before,"

said Baas. "It may be your first time in the playoffs, but go into it with the mentality that this is what we've worked for.

"Don't let the whole environment shellshock you to the point where you don't know how to function. Just do what you've been doing all year long and continue, and just do it better."

Baas also advised them to think of the game in terms of one series at a time, one play at a time.

"Having somebody that's been in their shoes sitting at a locker just like them is important, because you can continue to climb the ladder, whether it's just right now in this game on Friday, or it's after that or in life, because football teaches you a lot of good life lessons," said Baas.

Indians Head Coach John Cornett was thankful to Baas and his father for taking the time to hang out with the Indians, and to Smith for

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this," Perren said. "I'm glad that it's coming. We have nothing to hide. I don't have anything to hide. I'm not going to say anything in that meeting that I wouldn't say to you here."

Open meetings were a platform that some, who are now directors, had promised as they petitioned to become candidates and solicited votes.

Larry Williams, Fannin County's sole representative on the board, told fellow board members last month that he ran on a platform for open meetings and transparency. He added that he was prepared to make a motion during the business portion of the meeting to vote on open meetings.

He did just that, including in his motion that the next meeting in November be open to the public.

Roy Perren, the board's secretary, was asked if he got Williams' request. "I did, and I second that motion," Perren said. "I too ran on a platform of open meetings."

In September, at the Annual Meeting held in Blairsville, an amendment to the bylaws was proposed by former Towns County

Republican Party Chair Chuck Luca to require the board to conduct business in open meetings. Likewise, it was given the seal of approval by the membership to place on the 2018 election ballot.

Williams argued at the Oct. 10 meeting that the board wasn't required to put that as an amendment, rather, they could put it to a vote on Oct. 10. And they did just that.

With a motion from Williams and a second by Perren, President Cummings asked for discussion. Ray Cook, who represents Cherokee County, North Carolina, said as chairman of the policy committee, he had asked the board for a straw vote on the matter during the summer. The board voted no in the straw poll to hold open meetings.

"I'm not saying that the folks in Cherokee County, North Carolina, don't want open meetings, I'm just saying that no one has ever asked me to ask the board to do that," Cook said. "I don't think anyone in Clay County, North Carolina, has asked for open meetings."

Board member Gene Mason said that the board

had met with three separate attorneys, lawyers that have represented EMCs, and those lawyers each told the board that they would not recommend opening the meetings to the public.

Board member Cory Payne told the board that he voted against open meetings in the straw poll.

"It's not an issue that came up in Clay County," he said. "In the last few weeks I've talked with several members of the board. I would welcome open meetings."

President Cummings called for a vote. Danny Henson, Mason, Jeff Ledford and Bert Rogers voted to not open meetings to the public.

Williams, Cook, Payne and Perren voted to open the meetings to the public. Cummings, as president, voted to break the tie and allow for open meetings beginning in November.

Open meetings will require the board to follow the state Sunshine Laws regarding executive sessions.

Following state law would allow the board to go into to executive session for only three reasons - personnel, real estate decisions and matters of litigation.

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would not have literally had to do anything. We didn't have to build an infrastructure and we didn't have to write a grant. So, it's a source of revenue that almost everybody in the state takes advantage of."

The future of the Franchise Fee Ordinance is unclear presently, as a second reading of the repeal ordinance had not yet been set as of press time.

In August, the council voted unanimously to adopt the Franchise Fee Ordinance, though much public discussion has occurred since then, and both Chastain and Ross have had changes of heart after interactions with Hiwassee residents and business owners.

"I cannot in good conscience vote for a fee that would cause citizens to struggle in paying their power bills, particularly in the winter months," said Ross following the meeting.

If the ordinance remains in place instead of being repealed, the city would hope to compel the EMC to pay franchise fees for its use of city land, which the EMC would then collect from all customers located within Hiwassee City Limits.

Collection of these fees

would result in an extra line item fee on consumer bills consisting of 4 percent on gross sales of electricity within city limits, as well as 5 percent franchise fees on gross sales of cable and fiber services within the city.

As previously reported, the average residential consumer's electric bill will increase by \$55 a year should the original ordinance be enforced, though much larger consumers, such as churches and businesses, will face significantly higher franchise fees because they have higher power bills.

And customers with fiber and cable services through the EMC will have to pay separate franchise fees for each of those services delivered by the EMC.

In other business, the city council approved the contract between the City of Hiwassee and the Towns County Water and Sewer Authority in the meeting.

"The County Water and Sewer Authority did not want to extend (the contract) beyond one year because they want to wait and see what's going to happen this year," said Mitchell.

That contract will be extended for one year, and the



Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith

wholesale water rate will be increasing from \$1.50 to \$1.65 per thousand gallons.

Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith gave his regular report in the meeting, and he said that the city made nine drugs arrests, issued 80 citations and 40 written warnings for the month of October.

Chief Smith also announced that he had promoted Officer Brandon Barrett to detective, and said that the police department is continuing its commitment to regular training.

Also in the meeting, gunsmith Jackson Noblet of Mountain Gun Worx won a contract to maintain the guns of the Hiwassee Police Department.

Miller...from Page 1A

reasons, as he will be leaving Young Harris by the end of the year.

And while the council, Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby and the community will miss Miller, the council is now set to fill yet another vacant seat to arise in the last six months. With two years remaining in his term, it is currently unknown what the next course of action will be for replacement.

"The council has some hard decisions to make," said Mayor Gibby.

Young Harris City Attorney Marvin Harkins shared that GMA suggests that if a post's term ends within 24 months of the point of resignation, that the council should appoint a successor to the post due to the prohibitive cost of an election.

As of right now, the council has yet to decide on proceeding steps to fill the Post 3 seat.

Miller thanked everyone at the Council, and thanked the community, for allowing him to serve for the last six and a half years and, in return, all those in

attendance wished Miller and his family the best of luck in their future endeavors.

In other Young Harris City Council news, the Council discussed changes to the city's current charter. Since coming to work with the city nearly a year ago, Harkins has been fervently working on the city's ordinances and codes, revising, rewriting and updating to create consistency for the city and for local residents. Now, in accordance with those undertakings, Harkins is working on a revision to the city's current charter.

During the meeting, Harkins brought up a topic of concern with the Council regarding who should have the authority to hire and fire city employees since Young Harris does not have a city manager or an equivalent to that position.

Young Harris City Councilman John Kelley suggested that, since the city does not have a city manager and does not wish to get one at this time, the mayor should be given the authority. With this idea, the mayor could hire



Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby. Photo/Lily Avery

or fire a city employee as she or he sees fit, however, as long as the council is aware of such occurrences.

While the mayor would not have to seek Council approval to continue with such actions, she or he may deliberate with the Council as needed.

This clarification in the charter has not been set in stone, but Harkins is continuing to work on the revised charter in hopes of having it completed by the end of the year.



Baas with Indians Head Coach John Cornett, left, and coaches Jonny Eyrich and Chris Vardo. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

making the connection for the team.

"Just to have the presence of an NFL player means a lot to them, just the awe of that - they see his ring, they see his size, and to hear his stories

is great for these kids," said Coach Cornett. "He said some valuable things about game prep.

"I know they hear it from me 80 times a day, but to hear it from somebody like

that means even more."

For more playoff coverage of the Towns County Indians, check out the Sports Section of this week's newspaper.