

Meetings...from Page 1A

retired.”
The board consists of three members with staggered terms, the other two members being Frank Riley and Sonya Young.

The regular monthly Commission Meetings that were previously held on the third Thursday of each month have been permanently rescheduled for the third Tuesday of each month, effective in February.

The meeting time of 5:30 p.m. will remain unchanged, along with its location at the Towns County Courthouse in Hiawassee.

Commissioner Bradshaw also expanded the Child/Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Board to include an additional member. Effective Jan. 1, 2017, Alisa Richards was appointed to serve on the CACFP Board.

Also on the agenda, Towns County established a Tax Appeal Administration Supplement in the amount of \$1,500 annually.

“The Superior Clerk Court, Cecil Dye, serves as the Tax Appeal Administrator,” Bradshaw said. “House Bill 202 passed by the General Assembly gave authority to the county’s governing body to provide a supplement to the clerk for serving as the Tax Appeal Administrator.”

In other business, Bradshaw notified the public of where it can find information regarding special called meetings.

According to Bradshaw, called county meetings will be posted on the door of the Towns County Courthouse, on the bulletin board inside the Towns County Courthouse, and on the door to the Towns County Commissioner’s Office, more than 24 hours prior to such a called meeting.

If at any time a meeting must be held with less than 24 hours’ notice, the Commissioner’s Office will contact the county legal organ, the *Towns County Herald*, to advise its staff of the date, time and purpose of the meeting.

Sid Turner of the Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and Towns County EMS/EMA Director Rickey Mathis were on hand to present two Awards of Excellence to Jackie “Greg” Taylor of the Towns County EMS.

“The award is authorized by the National Society of the SAR,” Turner said. “The award is handed out once a year due to the national rules, but I would like to make it where we could give four a year because we have four counties (Towns, Union, Fannin and Gilmer) in our chapter.

“So, to be fair, we divide it up between the four counties, which means we can only give it to Towns County once every four years. What we do is, we go to the different department heads, so in this case it was Rickey Mathis, and we told him about the award and that we were going to honor one of the people in his organization.

“The only requirements for the award are, anyone can be selected and they have to meet the standards of the



Greg Taylor of Towns County EMS, left, with Sid Turner, president of the Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter Sons of the American Revolution, and Kendra King. Photo/Todd Forrest



Towns County EMS/EMA Director Rickey Mathis with Sid Turner. Photo/Todd Forrest



Commissioner Bradshaw with new Towns County Tax Assessor Steve Wiles, pictured here with Mrs. Wiles. Photo/Todd Forrest

award, which is dedication in their field and that they’ve never received that award before.”

Taylor was honored for his “outstanding service and dedication to the citizens of Towns County,” the award read. “He supervises and works the truck, orders all medical supplies, ensures that the most modern equipment is available, keeps orders ensuring that they are updated, and spends his days working as a flight medic.”

Murray King was a member of Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter Sons of the American Revolution who passed away from a heart attack, and presenting a second award to Taylor, the Murray King Award, was Murray’s wife Kendra King.

Mrs. King was so impressed with the EMS personnel that responded to her husband, with their professionalism, dedication and the work that they performed, that she decided to honor them by creating the Murray King Award that is presented

to those who go above and beyond.

Finally, during the Commissioner’s Report, Bradshaw noted a smooth transition between his staff and Commissioner Kendall’s staff. He also announced that renovations will be made to the Commissioner’s Office during the summer months that will include new carpet, paint and furniture.

The commissioner also discussed the recent snowstorm and reported that no major problems resulted from the storm.

“Nothing like getting a major snowstorm during my first week in office, but everything went well,” Bradshaw said. “I personally went out with the road crew Friday night, and those guys did a great job and worked very, very hard.

“I went out with them again on Saturday and we did everything that we could to keep the roads clear. There were a few roads that were missed, unfortunately, but they will not be missed next time.”

Hiawassee Business Group hangs banners along Main Street

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

After months of much anticipation, the Hiawassee Business Group got things going with the downtown Hiawassee seasonal banners, setting out the first round all along Main Street the week of Jan. 9.

The theme for the banners, “Georgia’s Lake and Mountain Paradise,” was determined via a survey conducted by members of the group earlier last summer. From there, two graphics were designed, one for summer and one for winter, to be rotated depending on the season.

“The plan was to do one for the summer and one for the winter,” said Liz Ordiales, Hiawassee City Councilwoman. “However, since we missed being able to put them up in the summer, we’re going to use the one we already have made for the year, which is the summer month.

“Then, when the Christmas lights go up next year, we’ll do a different design. That’s the plan for now.”

The business group originally planned to have the banners installed throughout central downtown by late summer, though the group encountered a few obstacles along the way that prolonged the project.

First, the group encountered difficulties regarding which poles in the downtown area would be appropriate for the banners. Then, there was a long waiting period that the group had to endure from the Georgia Department of Transportation for verification that the banners could be installed, since a vast majority of the banners were scheduled to be placed on a state highway.

For a while, because of all the complications with hanging the banners on Main Street, only four banners were hung in the Hiawassee Square because of the difficulties. Now, 38 banners hang proudly across city limits.

“We started this project in March of last year,” said Ordiales. “It’s been a joint effort with the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, who have been wonderful. We had to deal with DOT about getting them approved. We had to deal with the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) on several lots.

“It’s been a great effort. The guys from the sewer department helped put them up, and the firefighters helped with stopping traffic so they could be put up. It’s been really a great group effort, and the community seems to be really rallying around it and wanting to do things to make the community look even better, which is great.”

When the project was initially in the works, group members wanted to have the names of their businesses displayed with the banners.

Due to a restriction from the DOT prohibiting advertisement on the banners because of their location along a state highway, the businesses that donated money to purchase the banners will not have a name plaque attached to their respec-



Heath Moss, with the Hiawassee Wastewater Treatment Plant, hangs one of the Hiawassee Business Group’s long-promised seasonal banners. Moss had help from Carl Grizzle, who drove the forklift that raised him during the installation.



Here’s one of the newly installed banners, situated right next to the recently completed crosswalk at the Hiawassee Post Office.

tive banner.

Regardless, according to Ordiales, this endeavor could not have happened without their continued support.

“These businesses who bought the banners have been so patient,” said Ordiales. “They paid for the banners in May and it’s taken all the way until January for us to be able to put them up.”

The following businesses and civic entities purchased a banner: Always Christmas; B & G Vapors; Bacchus Beer and Growlers; Berrong’s Barbershop; Bill and Cyndi Daves, REMAX Town & Country; Brown Haven Builders; Harry Norman Realtors; Chancy Hill Inn; Chatuge Medical Supplies; Chophouse; Deb Collins Art; Fortitude Estate Jewelry; Georgia Vision Center; Grahl Galleries; Hiawassee Antique Market; Hiawassee Realty; Janet Allen, on behalf of the Hiawassee Square; Nancy Noblet, on behalf of the Hiawassee Square; Ingles; Lakeside Vintage Market; Linda’s; McClure’s Barbershop; Moose Creek Furniture; Mountain Graphics; Mountain Realty; Mountain Roots; Mountain Scene Design; Park Sterling Bank; State Farm; TaTa on Main; The Soundman 4 U; United Community Bank; Valerie Polding, CPA; Windstream Communications; Georgia Mountain Laurel; Foster’s & Peters Furniture; Hiawassee Hardware; NAPA Auto Parts; Eller’s Tires; Eller Electronics/Collage; Noblet’s 5 & 10; and

Legacy Link.

Also new to Downtown Hiawassee is the recently added crosswalk across Main Street, from the post office to Hiawassee Hardware. The city has been attempting to get this project completed for months, though it took longer than expected due to extended periods of waiting to hear from the DOT.

According to Ordiales, the crosswalk is ready to go and has already been a huge asset to the downtown area.

“The crosswalk project is something we have been talking about doing for well over three years,” said Ordiales. “If you ever have attempted to cross over from the hardware store to the post office, you’ve been literally taking your life in your own hands.

“Well, this year we finally approved the expense to go through with getting it into place. It was not cheap but it was needed.

“It was finally completed last week, so now you can go over the crosswalk, push a button and you’ll get a flashing light to signal cars to stop so you cross over.

“I have seen quite a few people use it and the flash really stands out. It’s definitely something that’s going to be put to good use.”

Now, with the additions of the banners and the crosswalk, walking around Downtown Hiawassee just got a bit better.

Ordiales brings Movers and Shakers up to speed on Hiawassee

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS — Hiawassee City Councilwoman Liz Ordiales spent an hour last Friday morning speaking with and taking questions from members of the Mountain Movers and Shakers at Mary’s Southern Grill.

One of the many topics she broached was the upcoming public hearing at Hiawassee City Hall.

The purpose of the hearing will be to explore several new ordinances with residents. The hearing will take place on Thursday, Jan. 26, at 6 p.m.

To be discussed in the hearing, upcoming changes to the city’s alcohol ordinance to include three referendums that each passed in November by a margin of 2 to 1.

As a result of the November election, the following will be coming soon to the city: Sunday retail sales of beer and wine, liquor by the drink in restaurants Monday through Saturday, as well as liquor by the drink in restaurants on Sunday.

Ordiales said the council should be able to adopt the ordinance reflecting the three referendums in the February meeting.

“Another ordinance we’re going to discuss and pass in February is a sign ordinance, so we have some kind of restrictions as to what our

signs would look like,” said Ordiales, adding that the sign ordinance will also be discussed in the Jan. 26 public hearing.

Yet another ordinance to be discussed this Thursday will be Hiawassee’s proposed Derelict and Blighted Building Ordinance.

“And that is basically to address, (for example), if you’ve driven down Bell Street, that trailer that’s been burnt down for eight months — come on, let’s get rid of that,” said Ordiales.

As for how the city would go about enforcing the ordinance, the councilwoman said it was “pretty spelled out in the ordinance.”

“It’s one of those where we’re going to give you a certain amount of time to clean it up,” said Ordiales. “And if you as a property owner or whoever the responsible party is doesn’t clean it up, then we’ll add a tax to your taxes.

“This is long-term, but eventually, if you don’t pay your taxes, then the city will take that property. Not within 30 days, but that’s the plan, and that way hopefully we could clean up some of these buildings that are falling apart.”

She also talked about Thomas Mitchell out of Hoschton, who was recently hired as the City of Hiawassee’s new attorney.

“He’s very good at what he does, he’s been doing city



Hiawassee City Councilwoman Liz Ordiales at the podium, Photo/Shawn Jarrard

law for over 30 years,” said Ordiales. “He is a city attorney for three cities down there, and he’s very knowledgeable with zoning, which is something that I think the council wants to tackle going into this year.

“I know that’s very controversial, about what we’re going to do with zoning, but I think even people in town feel like we need some sort of zoning. Not where you have to paint your fences pink and your roof has to be beige — none of that. But some kind of

zoning.”

Moving forward, Ordiales said that she and the other council members look to utilize the recently completed Five-Year Comprehensive Plan, which was put together using survey data of residents and community stakeholders.

“It’s a plan for the city for the county and for Young Harris,” said Ordiales. “Oddly enough, none of the three mesh. Like, we have our things to do, Young Harris has their things to do, and the county has their

things to do — three completely different plans.

“But I think in working together, we can do a lot of these things faster, and Cliff (Bradshaw, Towns County Sole Commissioner) I think is going to be fantastic to work with. That document was 159 pages. I took out our City of Hiawassee and it was 32 pages. So, I think we use that going forward, because that’s input from everybody in the city.”

Ordiales said that it’s likely the city will soon be sending out requests for proposals on a few items, including for the city website and landscaping of city property, and she talked about the changing landscape of water treatment in Hiawassee and, by extension, much of the county.

She pointed out that for most of the summer, when the county’s population influx is at its peak, the water treatment facility is working at maximum capacity.

“We run into trouble with being able to supply water,” said Ordiales. “One of the big improvements we’re doing is we’re adding a third filter. And that sounds like, oh, it’s just a filter this big — the filter is about the size of this room, it’s amazing.

“To go along with the filter, you need an extra room and all the gadgets that go

along with the filter. That’s been approved already, and it’s not a cheap proposition, it’s over \$1 million. But it’ll double the capacity we have now, so we should be able to handle all kinds of water issues for years to come.”

As far as the wastewater treatment plant is concerned, Ordiales said the city will be evaluating its options to see what exactly the plant needs to become a maximally efficient facility.

The Mountain Movers and Shakers meet for an hour every Friday at Mary’s Southern Grill in Young Harris, beginning bright and early at 8 a.m.

This Friday’s guest speakers will be a pair of sole commissioners — Towns County’s own Cliff Bradshaw, as well as neighboring Hiawassee County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris.

Glenda Gooch House available

The Glenda Gooch House is now available for use by families, from the tri-state area, of patients in Union General Hospital as well as local nursing and assisted living homes. For more information please contact Leslie Daniel at 706-745-2050, or log on to glendagoochhouse.org.