

Hiawassee gives improving COVID report, conducts business

By Jarrett Whitener
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Hiawassee City Council members met March 2 for their regular monthly meeting, in which they heard a COVID-19 update from Mayor Liz Ordiales.

The mayor had some good news for everyone, including the people watching from home via Facebook Live, as the meeting was closed to the public as usual due to limitations on gatherings amid COVID.

“In Towns County, as of (March 1), we have administered 4,383 vaccines – 2,923 for the first doses and 1,460 for second doses,” Ordiales said. “We have had 49 new cases in the last week, which is not bad. The positivity rate is way down, only 6% positive. Things are looking much better.”

“At the end of this week or maybe next, the other one-shot vaccine from Johnson & Johnson should be available. We don’t have any here yet, but I am hoping we will be able to get some. We are looking forward to that.”

Council members approved the new Water Department Building, a budgeted expense with an estimated cost of \$50,000. The new building will allow the Water Department to have more room for office space and to clean/store equipment.

The council approved

a new police car purchase estimated at \$26,900, of which \$17,000 was previously budgeted. To make up most of the difference, the city sold three other city-owned cars, coming up just \$1,400 short of the new car price.

Next, the council approved a generator at the lift station between State Farm and Mountain Realty on Main Street. This lift station moves sewage from Towns County Schools for treatment and is the only one on the system without a generator.

The estimated cost of the generator is \$44,000, with only \$20,000 budgeted, but the mayor and council believe it to be a necessary expense to guarantee the station remains operational in the instance of a power outage.

Ordiales presented the council a list of repairs needed at City Hall and around the Town Square for a budgeted amount of \$60,000, which will include some leak fixes to the roof at City Hall.

“The roof ... the square posts and lights, and the painting, and more important than the painting is the fixing of all the cracks all around the outside of the building,” Mayor Ordiales said. “The side that faces Worthy has rust stains going down it, and we really don’t know why, so we will have to check all that out.”

The new lights will be installed around the square and the city is adding two new



Liz Ordiales
Hiawassee Mayor

lights near the stairs.

Council members approved a proposal from Barrett & Associates Insurance for \$12,750 per city employee annually. Barrett has carried the city’s insurance for several years now and offered the best quote, including health, vision, dental, etc.

Councilwoman Amy Barrett abstained from voting, as her husband Tim provided the proposal.

Additionally, the council renewed Engineering Management Inc.’s contract regarding Environmental Protection Division monitoring for \$21,173.

Those interested can watch the March meeting and previous city meetings on the City of Hiawassee Facebook page.

Towns County Head Start Application/Pre-K Registration



The Towns County Head Start and Georgia Pre-K Program will begin taking applications on March 1, 2021 for the 2021-2022 program year. The Towns County Head Start / Georgia Pre-K program is a high quality early childhood program that is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and is Day Care Licensed. The program was awarded 3 out of 3 stars from Georgia’s Quality Rated and Improvement System.

To pre-apply for either program, applicants can go to www.ndo.org. PLEASE NOTE: this is a pre-registration. Completion of this DOES NOT guarantee that your child has been accepted, selected, or given a slot or that they will be given a slot.

For the Head Start program a child must be age three or four by September 1, 2021. The following information is needed to complete a Head Start application: Proof of child’s age. Proof of income.

Helpful information includes the following: Copy of Medicaid, Peach, or insurance Card and Immunization record (Form 3231.)

Head Start service is provided for all children who qualify, regardless of race, sex, creed or religion. Head Start also serves children with disabilities.

Georgia Pre-K: Slots will be filled by lottery drawing April 1, 2021. (Parent/guardian will be contacted on day of drawing to verify acceptance.) No appointments necessary.

Georgia Pre-K waiting list is on a first come basis after April 1, 2021.

Registration will begin

Granny’s Attic reopens March 10

Granny’s Attic Thrift Store in Hayesville, is reopening on Wednesday, March 10, at 9 AM. Shopping and donations of new and gently used items start again this day.

Visitors are asked to continue mask, social distance and frequently wash/sanitize their hands.

Granny’s Attic is run by the Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital auxiliary and sale proceeds are reinvested in the community.

Granny’s Attic is located at 200 Hwy 64 next to Subway, in Hayesville. Watch Granny’s Attic Facebook page for shop news and specials.

American Red Cross Volunteers

Make a difference in your community! As a volunteer with the American Red Cross, you can help families recover after a home fire, train individuals in first aid and CPR, support America’s military families, or take on any number of other roles that make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient. Get started at <https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/volunteer.html> or call your NWGA chapter office to ask about volunteer opportunities 844-536-6226.

Community Support...from Page 1A



L-R: Indians Head Coach Rob Benson accepted the Carrion Tree Service donation from Foremen Marshall Turner and Derrick Gavin, to be used for state tournament travel expenses such as food and lodging.

amazing for the student-athletes of Towns County High School.

Support for both the boys and girls’ teams has been overwhelming in recent weeks as each progressed in their respective state tournaments, and that community backing has continued with the boys’ advancement to the championship.

Carrion Tree Service traveled to the high school on Monday, March 8, to present a \$3,000 check to the Indians following their March 6 Final Four victory in Chattahoochee County. Carrion employees also fed the team biscuits from Mary’s Southern Grill Monday morning.

The donation is a recognition of the team’s success and will go a long way toward defraying the costs of food and lodging as the Indians head to Macon this weekend for their chance to earn a program-first state title. “I am super excited for the community, the basketball team, and just very blessed that the community supports my tree service enough where we can make such a generous donation.”

Owner Manny Carrion said. “If you live in Towns County and have hired Carrion

Tree Service to do work in the past, then you are a part of this journey also. “We would not be in a position to make such a contribution if it was not for the support of our

tree service in Towns County.”

Many people and businesses have donated to the team this season and in recent weeks, including Brown Haven Homes, which paid to charter a bus to the Final Four game, and many members of the community raised several thousand dollars with a GoFundMe account for the team.

Sheriff Ken Henderson and his deputies have provided bus escorts to both Towns County basketball teams during their post-season games, and the escorts have been well-attended by members of the community lining the road to wish players well.

Other businesses that have given to the Indians include but are not limited to: Mountain Realty, Jacky Jones Chevrolet, Barrett & Associates, Parker Oil Company, Moss Forestry Consulting and Susan De Vries with State Farm.

“We’ve had a great amount of support, without a doubt,” Indians Head Coach Rob Benson said. “Between

the Sheriff’s Office, (Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw), parents, people just seeing us out in the county – it’s been amazing. “And the kids love it. It makes them feel proud to be from Towns County. A lot of people love to see them be successful, and they love it, so that’s what it means for them. They just love playing for Towns County.”

The big game will take place Saturday at 12:30 p.m. in Macon. Coach Benson and his staff would like to invite the community out to wish the boys well, both on their departure and upon their return.

Players and coaches plan on watching some other state tournament games from the stands Friday to get a feel for the venue before the championship matchup Saturday, and people are encouraged to cheer them on at the high school as they leave campus around 9:30 a.m. March 12.

Coach Benson said the team expects to return from Saturday’s game around 6:30 p.m., with the potential for a slight delay, and the entire community is invited to line Main Street in Hiawassee to welcome the boys home after their historic moment.

Speaker Ralston proposes Free State-Issued Photo Identification for Georgians to support Election Security

Speaker of the House David Ralston proposed that State ID cards through the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS) be free to all eligible Georgians. Currently, DDS assesses a \$32 fee for State ID cards. Similar in form to driver’s licenses, State ID cards are compliant with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s REAL ID standard and may be used for voter identification among other purposes. Georgia already offers a free voter photo identification, but that document may only be used for voting.

“I am committed to eliminating barriers to voting for all legally eligible Georgians,” said Speaker David Ralston. “We have heard from Georgians who are concerned about fees associated with obtaining a voter identification.



David Ralston

While Georgia already offers a free voter ID, this State ID card is more useful and will make it easier for Georgians to not only vote, but use the ID to open a checking ac-

count or show identification to a TSA agent at an airport. Ultimately, we want to make getting a government-issued photo ID as easy as possible and removing this fee is one more way to demonstrate our commitment that everyone has the tools necessary to vote in Georgia. I look forward to working with Governor Kemp, Lt. Governor Duncan, and my colleagues in the General Assembly to keep Georgia’s elections accessible and secure.”

State ID cards are one of many types of identification cards and licenses obtained through the Georgia Department of Driver Services.

You can learn more about obtaining a State ID card through the DDS website at <https://dds.georgia.gov/how-do-i-id-card>.