

# Renovations...from Page 1A

"And it's the best roof we could put in."

The cheaper roof systems have a series of walkways because they can't be walked on directly, said Dr. Berrong.

"This is a built-up roof, which is the best option we could go with, and we just felt like that was the better thing for us to do," said Dr. Berrong. "If you're going to do something, do it right the first time."

The new HVAC systems are zoned systems. Before the modernization, the schools had single units handling multiple classrooms with different needs. Some classrooms were regular classrooms and others had 30 computers in them, for example, leaving some rooms hot and others cool.

With this new zoned system, said Dr. Berrong, classrooms will experience much less temperature differential, and the power bill should reflect the higher efficiency with lower cost.

"So far, we've had no surprises, no skeletons in the wall, nor do we expect to find any," said Perren.



An interior view of a Towns County Schools classroom waiting for the installation of a new drop ceiling. Photo by Mark Smith

Forward-thinking infrastructure will be installed during this first phase of the overall modernization project, so that the upgraded wiring for new technology will be easier and less costly to put in during the second phase of modernization in the summer of 2019.

Dr. Berrong and Perren both have indicated that they are very happy with the

progress of the modernization project so far.

Modernization is a much less costly project for both the school system and the state, said Dr. Berrong, which "is why the state is willing to help us with this. To build new would probably not have been affordable for us unless the state was willing to put up a lot more money."

that's all part of the budget, and we're not going to go over the budget."

As part of the consent agenda, the council unanimously approved the March financials, the May city council minutes and the May work session minutes.

The city's newest peace officer, John Carter, has officially joined his fellow officers at the Hiwassee Police Department, and he was met with a warm welcome by the city council and Ordiales.

"He comes from Florida with loads of experience, and we are very fortunate to have him here," said Ordiales.

Also in the meeting, the council approved second readings of the Hiwassee Tree Ordinance and the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan.

In order to keep the title "Tree City," the city must have a tree ordinance in place.

The June council work session will be held on Tuesday, June 26, instead of the usual Monday night meeting.

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and more in the city's June 5 regular meeting.

"(Cruiz-In organizers) have asked us, in addition to what we did last year with the lunch Thursday, they would like a block party drive-in movie Wednesday night, because they love the big screen movie thing we do," said Ordiales. "So, that would make it (July 11), which means we would have more people here in our hotels and eating in our restaurants an extra night."

Added Ordiales: "I'm letting them pick the movie and letting them pay for the rights to it, and we will show it Wednesday night."

The square that evening will feature music and games for all to enjoy prior to the movie starting, said Ordiales.

Also in the meeting, councilmembers approved the first reading of the tentative FY19 budget, and they will hold a public hearing on the budget in July.

"At the public hearing,

we will go over every single line of the budget," said Ordiales. "We are just waiting for the tax digest from the county so we will only need to have one meeting, and they said they would have something to us in July."

"The only changes were in the capital expenses, just to add a few things. And the water treatment plant needs a pressure washer, and that's like \$1,500."

City hall is in need of new interior paint and having the carpets replaced, according to Ordiales.

"I've got a few quotes to replace our floor, which looks really bad, and I'm waiting for one more," said Ordiales. "But it's going to cost about \$12,000 to rip up the carpet in there. When you walk in, that's really worn out there, so what we will be looking to install will be luxury vinyl tile planks."

Continued Ordiales: "Painting the downstairs is going to be about \$1,600, and

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fees for fiscal year 2017, which would have been a taxpayer expense otherwise.

And the numbers this year are exceeding last year's numbers dramatically, meaning that more volunteers are needed to speak for the children.

"I hate that we are having to get out and train more volunteers, because that means we have more children in care," said Ruf.

A rise in drug abuse has been one of the biggest reasons for neglect in the two counties, according to Ruf, which is resulting in families being split up.

"We typically have small families with one, two or three children," said Ruf. "We currently have a case in Towns County that there are five children, so we had a CASA step up to advocate for all five children."

"Unfortunately, many times those children are placed in multiple placements. So, that might mean that one child is in Fannin County with a foster family, two of them are in Conyers, two of them might be in Marietta, because we do not have enough foster families. Last count I heard, we only have one foster family in Towns County."

Continued Ruf: "Our responsibility is to check on that child once a month, but we also have a lot of authority granted by the juvenile judge. We can communicate with teachers and educators, psychologists, counselors, the family, naturally. Many times, their grandparents know what is happening with



Reace Hampton giving a speech on the Super Bowl during the June 8 Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting. Photo by Mark Novak

that child."

The ultimate goal for CASA volunteers is to find the best possible home for the children.

"One of the most disturbing things is to see a family go through all the processes of trying to get their life in order and get their kids back, and then something goes astray, and those children have to go back into foster care," said Ruf. "So, having a CASA, better decisions are made, and it's less likely that they will go back into foster care."

For the month of June, Enotah CASA is serving 76 children in Union County and 30 children in Towns County, with more cases pending.

On June 30 and July 1, the Georgia Mountain Pickleball group will be hosting a pickleball tournament fundraiser for CASA at the Towns County Pickleball

Complex across from the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

"We're going to have a tent set up at the tournament with CASA volunteers on hand to answer questions about being a CASA volunteer and to accept donations," said Ruf after the meeting.

Reace Hampton, a junior at Towns County High School, impressed those gathered that morning with a speech on the history of the Super Bowl.

Hampton also participates in numerous sports that include varsity football, basketball and soccer. He looks forward to going into the field of forensic science when he graduates high school.

"Tickets for the first Super Bowl only cost \$6, which was still too pricy for many, as there were 30,000 empty seats," said Hampton.

# National Park Service, Missing in America Project sign agreement for care of cremated human remains left at Vietnam Veterans Memorial



Washington – The National Park Service and Missing in America Project have entered into an agreement to provide for the inurnment of cremated human remains left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Under the five-year renewable agreement, Missing in America Project will take possession of the approximately 80 sets of remains that have been left at the memorial since 1989, as well as any cremated remains that are left in the future. The remains will be inurned with full military honors in an

in-ground vault at a private cemetery in Manassas, VA. No date for the transfer or inurnment has been set.

"We are grateful to Missing in America Project for their assistance in securing a final resting place for these veterans," said Patricia Trap, acting superintendent of National Mall and Memorial Parks. "This agreement provides a dignified solution that ensures the respectful, perpetual care for remains left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial."

"The Missing in America Project is honored to work with the National Park Service to assist in providing a final resting place for the cremated remains left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," said Brigitte Corb-

in, Missing in America Region 8 Coordinator.

The National Park Service maintains the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection, comprised of more than 400,000 objects left by visitors to the Wall in honor of the men and women who served in Vietnam and whose names appear on the memorial. However, the collection does not have the capacity to care for cremated human remains, and the leaving of remains or scattering of ashes at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is prohibited by regulation. The National Cemetery Administration can provide assistance on burial service and benefits available to veterans at their 135 national cemeteries around the country.

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an 'unmodified report,'" said Chance. "So, there's no variations, deviations ... everything was pretty much as it has been in the past."

Also in the meeting, the council accepted the donation of approximately 5.25 acres of real property known as the Kaiser Dean Property, donated by James Norman Hunter and Theresa Renee Hunter.

"Kaiser was a former mayor of Young Harris in the '50s, and I think also a state senator, and it was always his desire that it be donated unrestricted to the city," said City Attorney Marvin Harkins.

At some point prior to the meeting, City Councilmember Dr. John Kelley and Harkins met the Hunters – relatives of Dean – to walk the property, which features a house and is located near the old red fire station on Main Street.

"Once we roll up our sleeves and get it cleaned up, and sort of see what it looks like, then we can start thinking about a vision for it," said Dr. Kelley. "It can either become an investment or it can become something that we incorporate in the city for the city to utilize. Right now, it's wide open."

Also in the meeting, the council approved the purchase of a 2019 Ford F-550, to be used for hauling and towing by all city departments. The truck will cost roughly \$48,000 after being modified into a flatbed



Young Harris City Councilmembers Dr. John Kelley and Donald Keys. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

dump truck for maximum utility.

"We could get a less expensive truck, a used truck, and hope that nothing was wrong," said Dr. Kelley. "Or we could go ahead and purchase a new truck, take advantage of the municipality discount, which is major and huge."

"And rather than just getting a plain truck, let's get a dump truck and fit it properly so that we can haul our own gravel, remove tree refuse when it's cut, instead of having to haul it piece by piece on the back of a pickup truck or hire somebody else to do it."

Due to scheduling conflicts with the July 4 holiday, the council voted unanimously to move its next regular meeting from July 3 to July 17 at 6 p.m.

In closing, the Mayor Andrea Gibby said that, aside from a little rain, the recent North Georgia Highlands Seafood Festival in the "enchanted valley" of Young Harris went off without a hitch.

"I just want to say that the Seafood Festival was a huge success," said Gibby. "Anybody that was here or drove through our little city – I had comments Saturday from a friend from Cleveland who said, 'I think Young Harris quadrupled for the weekend.'"

"Everybody that I talked to loved it and had a good time. I said it was high quality, that the music was good, the food was good. Any suggestions on improvement or things to do next year, let me know."

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along with concrete parking for the handicapped.

"The dog park will be split up for small dogs and big dogs, and it will stretch down about halfway to the lake from the designated parking area. This area will give the dogs plenty of room to get out to run and have fun."

Ordiales hopes to clear some of the trees from around the lake to improve the view of Lake Chatuge.

"I will be working with the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition to remove as much of the underbrush and whatever can be removed to get a better view of the lake," said Ordiales. "We have beautiful views of the mountains already, you can't beat that."

Residents and tourists will have a barbecue grill to enjoy by the pavilion as well.

"We plan to put in a grill, so people will be able to come out and have cookouts while picnicking at the park," said Ordiales. "It's all about people being able to enjoy themselves and have fun in our city – the movies on the square, the concerts and other events that are coming up, it's all about



The new restrooms before walls and fixtures went up in Hiwassee Mayors Park. Photo by Mark Novak

having fun."

In other city news, Ordiales expected a large turnout for the Tuesday, June 12, Strategic Planning Town Hall Meeting, which occurred at the Towns County Civic Center after press time.

Leading up to the meeting, Ordiales said she looked forward to getting input from residents and business owners to assist her and the city in coming up with a unified vision.

Jessica Varsa and Harry Hayes from the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government, along with the members of the Hiwassee Strategic Planning Committee, will be conducting interviews with local property and business owners on June 13 and June 14 to further develop this vision.

"We want input from the community on how to make Hiwassee even better than it already is," said Ordiales.

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the companies that put in bids to supply the schools' cafeterias, and he explained the bids to the board.

"Some of these bids, like the milk bid through Mayfield, that's in conjunction with the state bids, so we just fall into the state with that," said Dr. Berrong. "Foster's Produce, we go into a bid with Union County

together, and that allows us to get a better price since we are such a small school."

Discussions also took place in the work session about the middle school's upcoming trip to New York City in 2019.

"After the Washington trip, I think that seemed to go very well, we had plenty of people there, very organized,"

said Dr. Berrong. "I feel a little bit better about allowing that trip to New York for the middle school."

The New York trip, if approved, will take place in November of 2019, and following approval, fundraising for the trip can begin this August.

# Georgia Mountain Writers Club May 2018 meeting



Georgia Mountain Writers Club members

The May 16, 2018 meeting of the Georgia Mountain Writers Club (GMWC) was held at G&G Bakery and Café. Suggested themes for writing were "The Most Boring Experience I Ever Had" or "The Games People Play."

Fifteen attendees gathered around the tables to share stories and writing experiences on a rainy May day. GMWC founder Ellie Dobson began by reminding us that our old forgotten stories can be treasures. She then read to us her recently rediscovered tale about a missing neighbor's wild night. Next, James Davis warned us his wife had urged him not to read his story about the games people play; but he did anyway!

Sylvia Dyer Turnage reported that her recently published book, "Flying Off Rattlesnake Mountain," resulted in Georgia News Network contacting her. They are putting together a piece about

her book that will go out to the whole state.

Mary Cone shared her "Deadly Boring" story about almost falling asleep on her long daily commute to work years ago. She discovered audiobooks were a life saver. Alan Cone's "Last Minutes at the Bushard Capitol Building" featured a bored main character who used his dull worktime to imagine wild adventures.

Pam Ippolito read to us about meeting her siblings as an adult. This will be a chapter in the book she is working on tentatively titled "They Called Her Peaches." Next was Jackie Volk's poem "Playing Games," which concluded that a tie is sometimes better than a win or a lose situation.

Elizabeth Kissew wrote about "The Richter Caravan," describing her experience of moving from Maryland to Miami with her parents and their four children in a converted

truck camper.

Last to read was Ralph Kwiatkowski and many of us could relate to his story about being bored at a college ceremony for his 45-year-old dual major son (of whom he is very proud) as he sat through too many speeches, honors, and awards for his son's fifteen seconds of recognition.

We have three suggested inspirations for our June meeting writing topic: "It Happened at the Farmer's Market;" a Mark Twain quote, "My mother had a great deal of trouble with me, but I think she enjoyed it;" or "What do the eyes of a picture see?"

New writers are always welcome. We ask participants to limit their readings to five minutes or less so that all attending have a chance to share. Next meeting is on Wednesday, June 20, from 10-12 at G&G Bakery & Café on Hwy. 515 in Blairsville.

Submitted by Jackie Volk