

## AED...from Page 1A

devices going to waste, the department has been able to get a smaller trade-in credit for each old AED device to lessen the total cost of the new AED units. Altogether, the new AEDs, and the accessories that go with them, rounded out to a total cost of roughly \$7,000, which is significantly less than the estimated market value of \$10,500 for all seven

devices.

But, for Towns County Fire Corp President Colleen Gibson, it was worth every penny.

"Just to be able to increase the ease and use for them, so that it's a faster transition and there's a possibility of saving more lives, that's worth it right there," said Gibson.

The department received

the new devices last Friday afternoon and all devices have been distributed to the various stations.

"I want to thank the Fire Corps for everything they've done for us and continue to do for us," said Walls. "This really means a lot for both the department and the people of the county for us to have this equipment. We can't thank them enough."

## Sheriff...from Page 1A

Chris Clinton provided the music for the evening, treating guests to classic rock hits with his band, The Chris Clinton Band, as guests perused the silent auction tables, raffles and enjoyed the tunes.

A delicious dinner of rolls, herb roasted chicken, blanched citrus green beans, mashed potatoes with brown gravy, tender beef cooked in gravy and homemade peach cobbler was served up and catered by Brother's at Willow Ranch.

All funds garnered from the dinner tickets, raffles, silent auction and live auction that evening went toward the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes organization, with the majority of the funds helping provide food for the kids living in the homes.

"This is all for the kids," said Ron Denton, CLEA volunteer. "It takes a lot of money every month to feed these kids and we want to be able to help. These kids aren't delinquents or trouble makers, they're good kids that are just in bad situations."

Last year, the event

raised just over \$15,000 and all those involved hope that this year's fundraiser brought in even more, though a total was not available by press time.

Although this is only the second year of the fundraiser, Sheriff Clinton hopes this will continue to be an annual affair as the youth homes are something he holds near and dear to his heart.

"This all goes back to when I first became sheriff," said Sheriff Clinton. "Every year, the sheriffs get together with these kids at Christmas and there was this little boy. He was asked what he wanted for Christmas. He was a shy little guy and so he didn't really say anything at first. Well, by the end of the night he came up and he said, 'I know what I want for Christmas. I want somebody to love me.' And that just really stuck with me."

"What kind of person would I be if I didn't try to help. These kids just want somebody to care about them."

"We've been raising money for this organization for the last nine years and it just seems to get better every year,

especially with the CLEA volunteers involved. I think this year is going to be our best yet."

The need for youth homes became a concern for Georgia sheriffs during the late 1950s, leading up to the opening of the first youth home in Hahira in 1960. From there, the organization continued to grow, giving children from all across the state a place to feel safe, receive attention, affection and live in a nurturing environment that would be more beneficial to their future success.

Now, there are five Georgia Sheriff's Youth Homes across the state: Boys Ranch in Hahira, Pineland in LaGrange, Cherokee Estate in Dalton, Mountain View in Chatsworth and Herrington Homestead in Nunez.

"This is a really good program and I truly believe in it," said Sheriff Clinton. "At these homes, these kids are loved and they thrive. I want to do everything I can to support that. Every child deserves to know what it feels like to be loved."



The benefit dinner was held at the Towns County Recreation and Conference center on Saturday, June 17. Photo/Lily Avery

## Indians...from Page 1A

preferable to give the team a good idea of how much food will be needed, residents are invited to purchase tickets the day of the fundraiser.

"We are also raffling off two YETI coolers, two free lunches from Asiano Restaurant, a free four-hour pontoon rental from the Ridges, a \$25 gift certificate to Hawg Wild BBQ, a set of cornhole boards, and a new type of tool from Hiwassee Hardware," said Indians Head Coach John Cornett. "The raffle tickets are \$5 per ticket, and every fifth ticket is free. The raffle will be drawn at the BBQ lunch."

The Indians are also running a fundraiser through the "Shopping Boss" app, which is a rewards program that benefits the Indians when people shop with Shopping Boss corporate partners like Nike, Under Armour, Chili's and Home Depot.

Monies raised through the various fundraisers will help the team to upgrade and purchase newer equipment, including minor renovations to the kids' locker room.

"Come out this year," said Coach Cornett in words to the community. "I think you're going to see a team that you can be proud of."

"I think the players have set their expectations to make the playoffs, and their goal is to win at least six games. I'd love to get people to our games to watch them play football."

The Indians got together last Thursday, June 15, for a friendly 7-on-7 passing game against White County, and Coach Cornett was pleased with what he saw.

"For our first practice, we played decent," said Coach Cornett. "I saw some good things on offense and some good things on defense. We had several interceptions."

Of course, the Indians won't get fully revved up until they're back under the lights on Friday nights, but they're already preparing for the upcoming season.

"One of my buddies that I played with at Carson-



Football Head Coach John Cornett, left, going over a play with his team. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Newman, Clay Livingston, we hired him here to do the weight room," said Coach Cornett. "He's got to be one of the best things Towns County's ever had, I feel."

"We have 40 football players showing up regularly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. That's our high school team."

"From 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., any female athlete comes into the weight room, and they go through his workout. And that's any sport, any athlete."

"In the evenings, we've been doing a session for all middle schoolers, and that's from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and we've had a good 15 to 20 kids show up regularly as well."

With kids from a variety of Towns County athletics already committing themselves to getting stronger, the system should experience improvements across the board in the coming seasons.

"That's why I love having Clay up there," said Coach Cornett. "He's not just about football, he's about all athletics."

"So, I think that we're going to see some great changes in our programs through the upcoming years, just getting better."

The 2017-2018 school year will be Coach Cornett's second as head coach of the high school football team, and he said he's

excited to take his program to the next level.

"We had some great seniors last year, there's no question about it," said Coach Cornett, adding that he wishes he'd been able to coach them longer. "Going into last season, I think a lot of them didn't really know what I expected and what I wanted."

"This year, I think we're just naturally better, just because they've been with me for a year now. I have some great leadership right now. I've got Andy Chambers and Logan Cowart that are killing it in the weight room."

"They're the two seniors that have stepped up right now. I have several other seniors that are working hard as well, but those are probably the two that stand out right now."

The team would like to thank the following sponsors for helping with their fishing tournament earlier this year:

Young Harris Sports, Century 21, Barrett Insurance, United Community Bank, State Farm with Susan De Vries, Brown Haven Builders, Asiano Restaurant, The Ridges, Hiwassee Hardware and Hawg Wild BBQ.

For more information on how to get involved with the team, and to RSVP for the July 1 BBQ, contact Coach Cornett at jcornett@townscountyschools.org.

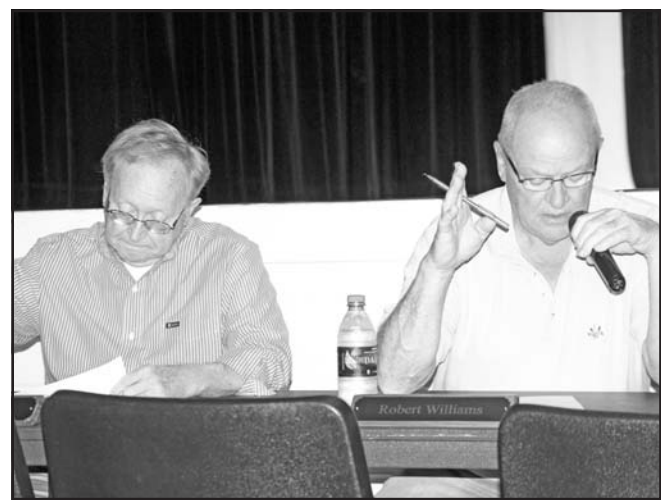
## BOE...from Page 1A

The budget is comprised of two primary parts, the General Fund and the All Other Funds. For FY18, the board approved a budget of \$14.3 million for the General Fund and a budget of \$3.8 million for All Other Funds.

The General Fund supports the daily operations of the school system. For this fund, the board office expects an intake of roughly \$12.9 million in FY18 revenues, which will be primarily split between local and state capital, with some additional federal funds.

The school system's Fund Equity, or monetary reserves, will account for the remaining \$1.4 million needed for General Fund expenditures. As of right now, the board expects revenues from the current fiscal year to round out at roughly \$3.5 million, which will be added to the FY18 budget.

As far as the All Other Funds category of the budget is concerned, these monies will stem from SPLOST funds, food service revenues and some federal monies. However, the FY18 budget shows \$2 million of E-SPLOST funds that was previously not there, which is attributed to the referendum that was approved by voters last May.



Towns County Board of Education Members Jerry Taylor and Robert Williams. Photo/Lily Avery

Altogether, the school system is in better shape than it has been in years and the board office is looking forward to making good use of the FY18 budget for building renovations and education enhancements for the students of Towns County.

In other BOE news, Dr. Berrong shared that the high school is on the hunt for a new Spanish teacher. The current Spanish teacher resigned at the end of the 2016-2017 school year and, as of right now, the board has yet to have many applicants to fill the position.

"On the issue about our Spanish teacher situation, we have very few applications for that position," said Dr. Berrong. "We are contacting other schools and seeing if

they have applicants that didn't get the job to see if we could call and see if they would be interested in coming to Towns County."

"Right now, that is an issue this late in the year. We are working diligently to find an applicant for that position."

For any serious inquiries about the high school Spanish teacher position, visit the Towns County Schools website at [www.towns.k12.ga.us](http://www.towns.k12.ga.us) under the "employment opportunities" tab to fill out an application.

The Towns County Board of Education will hold its next monthly meeting on Monday, July 3, at 7 p.m. at the Anne Oliver Mitchell Auditorium.

## Macedonia...from Page 1A

14, and the views shared in that meeting contributed to Murray's decision to change his vote.

Afterward, Murray said he felt he had no choice after listening to the people of Towns County speak over the last several months.

The board has actually held a number of votes concerning consolidation measures since December, though the June 14 vote was final.

Initially, the board wanted to consolidate Towns County's four precincts down to one.

After public input rolled in against such a consolidation, including pushback from Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, that initiative changed to keeping Tate City, Young Harris and Hiwassee precincts open, and closing the Macedonia Precinct.

Pressure from the public continued, most recently in the form of more than 100 letters asking the board to reconsider closing Macedonia, and the board decided to compromise once more with the relocation measure voted on in the June 14 meeting.

Had the relocation ultimately passed, Macedonia voters would have been able to keep their identities as Macedonia voters, though instead of voting at the comprehensive school in future elections, they would be voting in a separate line alongside Hiwassee voters at the Towns County Civic Center.

There will be no more consideration of consolidation as it stands now, be it through the closing of precincts or relocation, following Murray's decision to take back his vote, as the June 14 determination is considered final by the board.

Over the past several months, consolidation efforts have had steady support from Elections Board Chair Janet Oliva, Vice Chair Scott Ledford and Rob Murray.

Board Members Barbara Shook and Loretta Youngblood have been consistently opposed to any sort of consolidation, advocating the keeping open of all four precincts.

The majority of the board, however, has felt all along that it would be in the county's best interest to reel in as much of its voting infrastructure as possible to promote efficiency



Towns County Board of Elections Members Rob Murray and Scott Ledford. Photo/Shawn Jarrard



Sally Varao. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

and accuracy in a day and age where poll workers and managers, they feel, are scarce.

As for relocating the Macedonia Precinct, the board argued that it was also a matter of safety, that board members had become aware of fall risks associated with having to vote inside the elementary school gym.

Furthermore, the board made its case that a majority of voters didn't even vote at their polling precincts in the last two election cycles, preferring instead to vote early at the board office.

Though everyone who attended the June 14 meeting – including residents who have voted as Macedonia voters for 50 years – seemed to be against the relocation measure, two of its most vocal critics were Commissioner Bradshaw and Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton.

Addressing the board, Sheriff Clinton said that public safety was under his purview,

and that he had never felt any safety issues existed at the elementary gym.

The commissioner said he understood that the board had a tough job to do, and that he appreciated the work it was doing, but he shared his opinion that relocating Macedonia would prove an undue burden to those voters, a position he has held throughout the consolidation evolution.

Longtime poll manager Sally Varao spoke against relocation in the meeting, and she was joined by a steady chorus of criticism for any decision that would lead to a change in the precincts.

Murray's change of heart in the meeting was lauded by many in attendance, and served as a reminder that public interest and support can make a difference.

The board looks forward to continued public interest and support the next time it puts out a call for volunteers to staff the four precincts of Towns County.