

Bradshaw adopts amended ordinances in called county meeting

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Cliff Bradshaw

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw held a second reading and adoption of the resolution to amend the county sign ordinance in a called meeting at the Towns County Courthouse on Monday, Oct. 29.

The amended ordinance, which underwent a first reading in the Oct. 16 regular county meeting, effectively does away with billboard signs in the county moving forward.

After an uncharacteristic influx of off-premises billboard sign requests flooded Bradshaw's office in July, he contacted County Attorney Robb Kiker, and together, they formulated a sign moratorium that went into effect on July 17.

Immediately following the enactment of the moratorium, Bradshaw instructed Kiker to conduct an in-depth study of the existing sign ordinance, and it was quickly determined that the ordinance was inadequate when it came to controlling the installation of billboard signs.

One owner of a billboard sign company that applied for a permit in the summer even told Bradshaw that if the sign ordinance wasn't strengthened, Towns County would be "hammered" with billboards.

As a gauge to find out the thoughts of Towns County residents regarding off-premises billboard signs, Bradshaw conducted an informal survey, to which 45 businesses and 105 individuals responded.

Overwhelmingly,

the response was "no more billboard signs."

The amended sign ordinance limits off-premises signs in unincorporated parts of the county to 32 square feet in area and 10 feet in height. They must be set back 10 feet from a property line, and there may be no more than one sign per platted or recorded parcel of land.

On-premises signs are now limited to 75 square feet in area, with only one sign per platted or recorded parcel being allowed.

The "objective and purpose" of the ordinance was amended to include the following language:

"Provide a reasonable balance between the right of an individual to advertise his or her business or express their thoughts, and the right of the public to be protected against the visual discord resulting from the unrestricted proliferation of signs and

advertising devices."

Also in the called meeting, Bradshaw held a second reading and adoption of a resolution to amend the county ordinance regulating cell towers.

The potential installation of cell towers also came under scrutiny recently, with questions being raised about off-premises billboard signs resulting in some changes to the telecommunications ordinance.

The main points of the updated telecommunications ordinance are that cell towers cannot exceed 200 feet in height, must be at least five miles apart and be monopole in design, and they aren't allowed to have lights.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires lights on towers that exceed 200 feet in height, so the light restriction will not be problematic given the height restriction imposed by the ordinance.

Cell towers on private property must also be at least 1,000 feet from a residential structure, school, public park, playground or daycare center where there is any risk posed to children.

Additionally, cell towers will not be approved for operators that can piggyback on existing cell towers.

Full copies of the amended ordinances may be obtained at the commissioner's office in the courthouse.

Also on Oct. 29, Bradshaw approved a bid from Frazer, Ltd. of Houston, Texas, in the amount of \$138,342.52 for a new ambulance module for Towns County.

PlanFirst...from Page 1A

"The county signed their second reading of the sign ordinance today," said Ordiales. "They had a moratorium for 90 days, and I think another 30 after. They surveyed over 45 businesses, and 40 of them decided they didn't want any more (billboard) signs. Same with local residents, the majority, 98 percent, of the surveyed said no more signs."

"I want to take that ordinance and mirror it with ours, and make sure we are not contradicting each other in any kind of way. Our little two miles should be in sync with the county."

Councilmembers were

slated to vote on a 45-day sign permit moratorium in the Nov. 6 regular city meeting, which occurred after press time.

The mayor talked about the ongoing Tater Ridge Drive project in her Mayor's Report, letting the council and guests know that the city is working to correct numerous dips in the road, with an eye toward safety and aesthetics.

Ordiales was also proud to announce that, most recently, only one misread occurred out of the city's 2,257 water meters, and the city plans to remedy the problem as soon as possible.

Light Up Hiawassee returns on Dec. 1, and the city

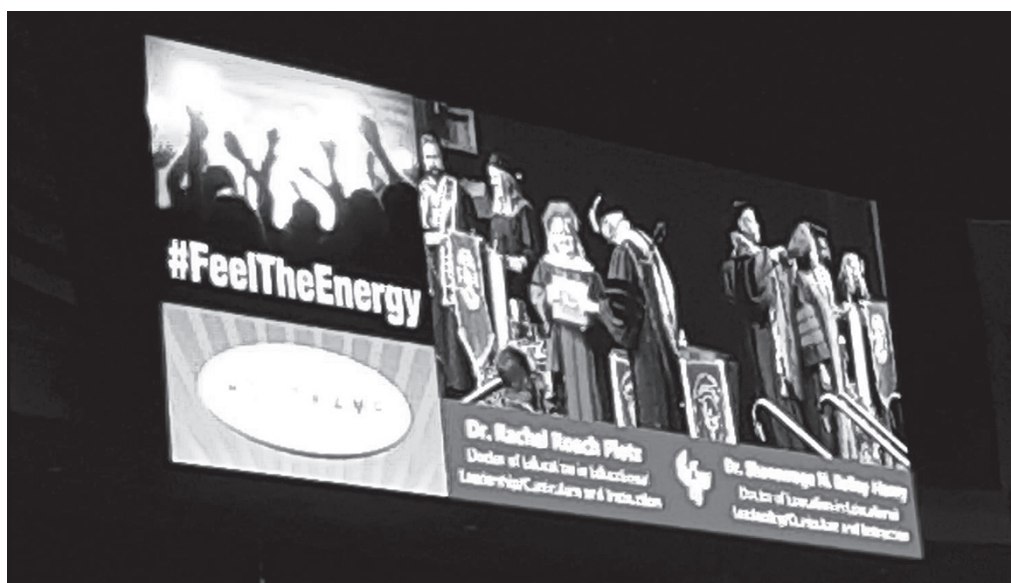
council is asking for community volunteers to help put the event together.

Volunteers are needed to help hang the lights and decorate the Hiawassee Town Square for the event. Those who are interested in volunteering will need to be available on Nov. 17 at 9 a.m.

"Anybody that is willing to help decorate the square would be appreciated," said Councilwoman Nancy Noblet. "Anybody and everybody, please come out and help make this happen."

For more information on volunteering, contact Noblet at 706-897-1779.

Pietz...from Page 1A



Dr. Pietz on the jumbotron at the Infinite Energy Center in Duluth, where she received her Doctor of Education on Oct. 21.

Dr. Pietz, and though she has faced many challenges along the way, she has taken them all in stride, determined to earn her Ed.D.

"Anybody who looks at getting their doctorate, there are a lot of hoops," said Dr. Pietz. "I have heard of very few people who don't have some kind of roadblock along the way."

A particularly challenging roadblock for Dr. Pietz occurred when her dissertation chair sadly and unexpectedly passed away.

Not only had she lost her educational mentor,

under whom she'd already completed half of her program requirements, but she also had to start the whole process over with someone new.

Due to that unfortunate turn of events, coupled with her duties as a full-time teacher, dedicated cheerleading coach and hospital/homebound instructor at Towns County High, Dr. Pietz decided to continue her own education at a slower pace, completing her degree program in nine years.

But it was all worth it, said Dr. Pietz, who has enjoyed every minute of her career in education.

"I absolutely love the kids," said Dr. Pietz. "That's my main thing – if I can make any kind of imprint on a child's life to make them better, I feel like that's my purpose in life. That's what I'm supposed to do; I am supposed to try to make a child's life better."

Dr. Pietz is a graduate of Towns County High. She also has an Associate of Science degree from Young Harris College, a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of North Georgia, and a master's degree in education from the University of Phoenix.

Lunch...from Page 1A



Workers with the Towns County Road Department and EMA Director Rickey Mathis enjoying the student-led appreciation lunch at the Towns County Civic Center. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

community," said Spano. "I don't think they get as much appreciation as they should, because people don't realize how much they do for the community."

"That's what I've come to realize, so I want to say thank you to them. They definitely deserve it. It's often a thankless job, and they do a lot of good work for our community."

Towns County EMA Director Rickey Mathis was one of dozens of first responders to attend the luncheon, and he said he was thankful to his student and faculty hosts.

"It's good when somebody takes notice and

recognizes you, and does an act of kindness and appreciation," said Mathis.

In many ways, public servants are finding themselves increasingly in the public eye, which is a good thing here, according to Mathis, and makes Towns County that much more of a special place to live and work.

Local business owner Royce Dillard of Superior Paints cooked all the meat and beans for the luncheon, and Mary's Southern Grill supplied several sides.

Dillard attends Enotah Baptist Church, which is headed up by Pastor Donnie

Jarrard, who also serves as a resource officer at Towns County Schools.

"I cook a lot for our church, and I've cooked for the football team for three years now when the church feeds them, usually within the first part of football season," said Dillard. "Our first responders are our support in town, our police, our sheriff's office, EMS."

"All of them are great, and they work really hard to do what they do. So, I thought I'd give back and help the school (with the luncheon), too."

Moore...from Page 1A



Raleigh Keagan, Callie Moore and Tony Ward of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition at the 2018 State of the Water Address on Oct. 30 in Hayesville, North Carolina. Photo by Mark Smith

that actually do migrate. These geese are a kind of domesticated nuisance. In some areas of the watershed, they alone are problems for recreation."

Moore commended the City of Hiawassee for voluntarily implementing a nutrient reduction protocol at its Wastewater Treatment Plant, thereby reducing the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus going

into Lake Chatuge.

Also that evening, Moore touched on how, concerning water quality, the state only records data every two to five years in its watersheds.

HRWC volunteers, on the other hand, record water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH and E. coli at 21 different sites on a monthly basis.

With that in mind,

Moore's biggest takeaway over the last year is the knowledge that, without its volunteer monitoring team, the coalition would not have had any new findings to present at the State of the Water Address.

For more information and to find out how to become involved, check out the coalition's website at HRWC.net.

History of Hiawassee Academy at Historical Society

Jerry Taylor, Towns County Historian, will be presenting the program on Monday, November 12, 2018 at the Towns County Historical Society meeting starting at 5:30 p.m. His topic will be "A Light in the Darkness: the History of the Hiawassee Academy 1887-1929."

He will discuss the plight of education in the area during the post Civil War period and the emergence of church-sup-

ported classical academies at the time. The Hiawassee Academy was one of those schools. It was started in 1887 under the leadership of Rev. F. C. McConnell and Rev. George W. Truett. Taylor will share information regarding the formation, curriculum, discipline, faculty, and other activities of the school that eventually became Hiawassee Junior College. The school played a vibrant part of the educational and social

scene of the area until its restructuring in the late 1920s when it was sold to the county and began a new life as Towns County High School.

We have videos made of past programs for only \$5 each t-shirts and Towns County Pictorial History books also for sale. The Historical Society building is located at 900 N. Main Street in Hiawassee and we hope to see you there.