

EMC...from Page 1

"I think people are ready to put the past behind them," Perren said. "I think the membership is ready to move forward. I think the vote today was about transparency, I think it was about opening the meeting process. I support both measures."

Cummings echoed Perren's sentiments.

"We need to get down to business," Cummings said. "Winning an election is one thing, but doing what needs to be done is something else. That will be the most difficult part."



EMC Board of Directors Past President Lenny Parks bestows a plaque of appreciation to the Ensley Family. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The task at hand is to put into practice what the membership has voiced to those they supported in the director races, Cummings said.

"We as a board have to go into this remembering why we were elected," Cummings said. "We were elected for a number of reasons. Being as transparent as possible, answering people's questions, and addressing financial concerns."

"There is a lot of work that needs to be done and I'm on a real steep learning curve," Cummings said. "I've been told it takes a while to get the hang of things. So, I'll be working hard to get up to speed and make a contribution."

Interim EMC General Manager Dan Brewer said it's unclear how long the healing process will take. He said it was imperative to restore stability prior to beginning the search for a new general manager.

"Where do we go from here, and how in the world do we get there?" Brewer asked. "I believe that the turmoil that surrounds the EMC has created an environment where our employees can't focus on doing their jobs."

"They are wondering if they will have jobs tomorrow," he said. "Or, if the latest rumor has any truth in it. I am convinced that it is imperative that we move quickly to provide stability to the EMC."

"You've got a great group of employees," Brewer told the membership. "They have a high level of skill and dedication. It is impossible for them to perform their jobs with the amount of turmoil surrounding the EMC."

Brewer said that if the EMC Board of Directors does a national search for a new general manager, the search will take six months from beginning to end.

"It is also imperative to restore the stability before

we begin the search," Brewer said. "It is very unlikely that a highly qualified candidate would step into the CEO position with the kind of instability that exists here at Blue Ridge Mountain EMC."

"It is time to put an unpleasant part of our history behind us and move the organization forward as quickly as possible," Brewer said. "I'm hopeful that the conclusion of this annual meeting will be the turning point to head in the right direction."

Prior to the business portion of the annual meeting at Anderson Music Hall, retiring President Bill Prather introduced past President Lenny Parks, who presented a plaque of appreciation to the family of the late EMC Board Member Bob Ensley.

The Georgia Fiddler Randall Collins and the Cartecay River Band provided entertainment for the membership prior to the business portion of the annual meeting.

Hiawassee...from Page 1

the city would consider using Airmecare.

"It's something we will consider, but we'll need a proposal. This was kind of a first presentation," said Stancil. "Give us a proposal, give us a contract and policy, so we can actually look at what it says. I think the issue is the council has an enthusiasm to provide more services to the people of the city."

"You want to make sure that you're providing services for citizens," Stancil went on. "If you have a home here but don't live here full time, are you including that? Who do you qualify? But I think it's something they're very interested in pursuing and looking at, there's just a lot of questions that need to be answered. And I think it's important that they get all the answers to questions."

Also at the Hiawassee Committee meeting, an interlocutory injunction regarding Noel and Jan Waite's case against the city was available. The case is important because it determines whether the city has

control over its water system.

"The judge found that the city owns and operates its water system and we never delegated control of our water or sewer system to anybody. By resolution the city granted connections for water and sewer to Kenneth Stine," Stancil said.

Because the judge found that the city did nothing improper, the ruling found that the city of Hiawassee has full authority to grant water and sewer connections to Kenneth Stine pursuant to the resolution that was passed. Therefore, the Waites lacked standing to seek any injunctive relief against the city of Hiawassee, Stancil said.

That is just the first part of the case.

The city of Hiawassee and its council maintain that the city has full authority to do full planning within the city limits. The next hearing will determine who has the legal authority to do planning within the city between the city and the county.

As all necessary business was covered during the

committee meeting, the city council was free to quickly pass regulations at the regularly scheduled council meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 1.

The first was a resolution to approve the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission to staff and to prepare the 2010 comprehensive plan update for the city of Hiawassee.

"We're just putting into effect what has been in effect since 2010," explained Mayor Barbara Mathis. "It has been our policy for all of these years, and along the way we have not followed those exactly, so now we're going to be following it more closely."

Next, the city passed a resolution approving the Water, Sewer, and Grease Trap Approval and Conditions for Paci's Pizza Restaurant that will be opening soon.

Finally, the city appointed Teresa Kelley as Deputy Clerk.

"She's a very good employee and we look forward to putting her in this position," said Mayor Mathis.

Young Harris...from Page 1

gineer to help us look at things. She raised a concern, and in Georgia, you can't raise rates arbitrarily, that's true, but ours are not," Mayor Gibby said.

The rates are public re-

cord at Young Harris City Hall.

In addition to these rate increases, the fee for late payments will be increased from 10 percent to 20 percent. The

reconnection fee will be increased from \$25 to \$75. Seasonal cutoffs will be required to pay the minimum bill monthly, plus pay the reconnection fee.

Taste...from Page 1

these recipes are recipes that anybody would cook in their home. Not gourmet - it's just food we all eat every day."

Those interested in attending should arrive when the doors open at 4 p.m., as the sponsors of the show will be displaying their wares.

"We have about a dozen vendors that are going to be set up, showcasing their products that are going to be of interest to the people that come to this show," said Cunningham. "People will be able to come early, browse around, see what's for sale, and everybody that comes is going to get a goody bag. The goody bag will have a lot of

neat products in the bag.

"Everybody that comes will get two Taste of Home Magazines in their bag, and Chef Roberts will say (for example) turn to page 15, and they'll get to follow along with the recipe that she's preparing."

Sponsoring vendors for the show are Chatuge Medical Supply, Taste of Home Cooking School, Milton Food Service, Ray Shuey with Stainless Steel Cookware, Ingles, Lake Chatuge Lodge, United Community Bank, The Cherie Show/ETC TV3, High End Cookware, Rhineland Cutlery Knives, Jamie Stewart Lifetime Stainless Steel Cookware, Pink Ladies, Rodan and Fields,

Brasstown Manor and Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary.

"I definitely want to send a big thank you to all of the sponsors, because they support us," said Thomason. "Some of them gave cash and some of them gave other things as well."

As for Cunningham, she'd like to see every seat in The Hall filled.

"Bring your mother, bring your sister, bring your husband if he likes to cook," said Cunningham. "Where can you go and pay \$15 and be entertained for two hours on a Saturday night? For \$15, you're entertained for two hours, and it's something new."

9/11...from Page 1

watch the documentaries now that have come together over the years, you can watch how calmly those men walked into that building with their gear on and their tools," said Chief Copeland.

The date is personal for the chief, who was wearing his New York Fire Department shirt instead of his usual Towns County uniform.

"I had the pleasure, on the 10th anniversary, of being in Indianapolis, Indiana, with Chief Ray Downey's sons, who are both battalion chiefs on Fire Department of New York. Chief Ray Downey was 64 years old and only two or three months away from retiring from the fire department, and he went in with his men and perished in the fire," he said.

On the 10th anniversary of the attacks, Chief Copeland was able to attend school at the National Fire Academy.

"It means a lot to our firemen," he said.

And the legacy of the Sept. 11 attacks is not lost on Chief Copeland.

"Every morning, every Sept. 11, when you watch the news they name every name of every person starting in alphabetical order that perished in that fire, all 3,000 folks. When you hear their family members give it, some of them are so touching, because some of them are children that didn't know their granddaddies. I find that just to be one of the most amazing things ever," he said.

"It's just a great memorial. Every Sept. 11, it's like the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This day will live in infamy, always will. So it's a day of great sadness, but at the same time, it's a day of great pride, just overwhelming pride," he added.

Chief Copeland also want-



ed to be clear that, for him, the memorial served to underscore his sense of duty to Towns County and to his own fire department.

"I'm just proud to be a fireman. Every day is great day to be a fireman," he said.

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton felt the effects of the attacks in similar ways.

"I do recall, just like anybody, pretty much exactly where I was and what I was doing on Sept. 11, 2001," he said.

He had just gotten off duty as a patrol officer and was going to bed for the day when his wife called him in to see what was happening on the news.

"I was watching the coverage and speculating about what had happened when the second plane hit, and I remember just looking at her and saying that I had to do something. So I just went back and got my uniform on and went into work. And that's just what we do, in public safety, you feel like you have to do something," he said.

"I don't think there was

a law enforcement officer or a fireman or an EMS worker anywhere in the United States sleeping at that point. It really hit home because terrorism is something we were aware of and we battled it overseas, and this was a significant event because this was really a full scale attack and they brought it to our shores," he said.

He added that Sept. 11 is a significant day for Towns County law enforcement in another way, as on that day in 1981, Towns County Sheriff's Deputy James Taylor died in the line of duty.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall stopped by to pay his respects to the 9/11 memorial as well.

"I remember when it happened. That was a terrible time, and it brought the nation together in a way it hadn't been together in a long time. It just makes you proud you're an American. And I think of all the sacrifices that the soldiers over the centuries have made for that flag, and we need to keep honoring it and keep it flying," he said.

Costa Rica...from Page 1

"I've always wanted to go to Costa Rica as a biology teacher, but I just never got the opportunity. So I just want the kids to feel what it's like to give back, because Costa Rica is No. 1 in ecotourism. I want the kids to understand that we are part of a global network, it's not just the United States, there's everybody else involved," she said.

As a biology teacher, Moss' main interest will be the wide array of biological diversity in Costa Rica, but the trip will offer insights into more than just science. Moss and Jennifer Hogsed, the Spanish teacher, hope to offer the students a look at cultural diversity.

"I'd like for the kids to understand different cultures

through the Spanish class going with us," said Moss. "I'm not Spanish-speaking, but they are, they speak Spanish, and they can interact in Spanish through that component of cultural diversity, too. We're even going to plant a tree in the rainforest one day, so I want the kids to experience that."

Hogsed agreed. For her Spanish class, the trip will be an opportunity to show off their linguistic skills and to pick up a few more.

"We're looking at getting to have cultural interaction and language usage. We're hoping to take the kids in afternoons after we've done our excursions or whatever for the day, take them out to some of the local markets or grocery stores and

get them to interact with some of the locals and use some of their Spanish and just learn a little more about the culture in the areas," said Hogsed.

"We're trying to merge the two, so the kids are getting an educational experience related to biology and be able to include some of that, but also the language and culture," Hogsed added.

The students will be leaving in 2016 on March 31 and returning on April 8.

"This is the chance of a lifetime, and kids in Hiawassee don't get out of this area much, so I want to open that door," said Moss. "And these are really good kids, so I want to give them that opportunity. So, I'm willing to work hard for them."

City hopes to raise funds for Ambassador Program

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hiawassee needs the help of its residents.

Mayor Barbara Mathis recently released an open letter to the public to inform residents that the city is forming a committee to raise a special projects fund that will go toward beautifying the city, especially during holidays.

"Committee members will raise private funds for projects not normally the responsibility of local governments," the letter reads. "We have set a goal of \$10,000 and are already past the midpoint in contributions received."

This committee will be known as the Hiawassee Ambassador's program, an idea that has been in the works for some time. The program is in its infancy right now, but Mayor Mathis hopes that it will grow.

"Our goal is set for \$10,000 for decorations on the square, and we're going to have a group of people that we have already organized trying to work on this to where we can get donations through businesses and individuals, anyone who's willing to give us donations to help us to where we can have the Christmas tree," she said. "And we're looking forward to that this year, but we need more decorations for the square and for the tree and all."

The Ambassadors Program will work toward improving the appearance of the city at all times, not just during



holidays, but right now the holidays are a priority. For example, Mathis is hoping to have a festive tree lighting event on the square this year.

"We've never had a tree lighting just designated for the square," she explained. "Last year, we had one, we put it together very quickly, and the tree had just been moved from a different location and moved on the square and we didn't have enough decorations to make it look really good, so this year we're hoping to have more decorations and have a tree that looks really good, and make something big."

Afterwards, she hopes that the city will be able to host a small gathering, open to the public.

"We really want to have some kind of little get together in the gazebo after the parade with hot chocolate and such as that for our people that are there for the tree lighting," she said.

In addition, the Ambassadors Program will work with the Hiawassee Adopt-a-Street program for litter cleanup and

prevention.

"We envision clean city streets and sidewalks as a way to become a more appealing place to stop and shop," the letter reads.

The Adopt-a-Street program allows private citizens to take responsibility for the cleanliness of their own community. "There's a lot of people that have been interested in adopting a street, and if people could adopt the street maybe that they live on, and make sure that they keep it clean and all," said Mayor Mathis.

"So we're going to try to get something going to where we can make the city more beautiful and try to help it look real good at all different times, like during the holidays," she added. "You really look at the holidays because people want to pass through town and see beautiful decorations and all. We have the tree out there this year that we can decorate that was moved last year, and we want to have enough ornaments on it to where it will look real good."

Kelley named Hiawassee deputy clerk

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer



Teresa Kelley has been with Hiawassee City Hall for four years as a billing clerk, and at the September meeting of the Hiawassee City Council, she was named deputy clerk.

"I still do a lot of the prior duties, and now I help Cenlya Galloway, the city clerk, with her chores, and try to make it a little bit easier for her," said Kelley. "We do open records requests and whatever comes in that she needs some help with."

Kelley is no stranger to the city or the county, as she was born in a Mashburn in Young Harris and grew up in Hiawassee, and graduated from the old Towns County High School.

Prior to working at city hall, she and her husband, Phil, owned a construction business, and Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis was glad to have taken her on board four years ago and equally glad to expand Kelley's duties now.

"We came across a problem, because with elections coming up, Cenlya's going to need some help," said Mayor Mathis. "Teresa had helped us out before at the council meetings, and she's helped us in a lot of situations. Also, we've been receiving a lot of requests for open records, and Teresa has really played a big hand in getting the open records together for these people, in assisting (City Manager) Rick Stancil and Cenlya both."

"She has been great for

likely be required to take classes fairly regularly to receive up-to-date training as the years go by.

This year marks a departure from past city elections, as the county and city elections will no longer be held jointly, so the City of Hiawassee will be responsible for its own city council elections to be held at city hall.

"We do not have machines, we have paper ballots," said Mayor Mathis. "They'll have to be voting with paper ballots. We're situated to where we can set it up to have locked doors, and where we can have areas for people to vote in."

"We're having to get all of this together. It's ordered, and it should be here in the next few days. We'll have little portable booths and have everything that we have to have. This is a learning session. We've gotten into it this year and we're having to find out all of this."

Kelley has been deeply entrenched in the community all her life, and she enjoys spending time with her three children, four granddaughters and great-grandson. As a lifelong member of the community, she looks forward to her added responsibilities in her local government.

"It's a real learning experience for me, and I've learned a lot with just being able to talk to Rick, and for him to give me direction and tell me what I need to do and where to look for things, and how to look for things," said Kelley. "I'm very thankful to be here. I enjoy it. Everybody has a good working relationship, and it's a good environment."