

Tax...from Page 1A

file its written acceptance of the same with the clerk of (Hiawassee), so as to form a contract between the parties," according to the ordinance.

The ordinance was adopted on Aug. 11.

Windstream is the only utility company that has been paying a franchise tax to the city, and now, Windstream will be joined by the EMC, according to the city.

City Hall became aware of its franchise taxing abilities after being contacted by another utility service inquiring about the City's franchise tax rate.

Revenues generated by the franchise tax will be doubly beneficial to the City, since the City no longer receives SPLOST revenues, and the franchise tax will live on in perpetuity.

Moving forward, the franchise tax monies will go into the City's general fund to be available for improvements around the City.

"It's just exciting times right now, real exciting. We're doing some good things for the City," said Hiawassee City Councilmember Kris Berrong, who at the time was mayor pro

tem of the City.

When contacted by the *Towns County Herald*, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms said the EMC was still in the process of reviewing the ordinance, and that he planned to address it in the Sept. 9 EMC annual meeting.

Also in the Aug. 8 called meeting, the Council held the second reading and adoption of the City's Planning Expansion Ordinance, which will guide growth and development within the Hiawassee City Limits from here on out.

Houston...from Page 1A

do something."

The Woman's Enrichment Center in Blairsville is coordinating with Gooch Trucking to see that a huge demand for diapers in the Houston area is curbed, Kris Gooch said.

The Center turned to social media last week to request aid for the victims of Hurricane Harvey in south Texas.

And the philanthropic spirit of Union County responded. Overwhelmingly.

On Wednesday, the Center posted on Facebook that they were accepting boxes of diapers to ship to Texas, and word immediately spread like wildfire.

"I just posted it yesterday (Wednesday, Aug. 30), and I believe it's the highest performing post that we've ever made on Facebook," Addie Jarrett said that next Thursday afternoon. "People have shared it like crazy and the response has been amazing."

The Houston metropolitan area has been ravaged by Hurricane Harvey's storm surge since the storm came ashore last month. Meanwhile, the Center has experienced a flood of donations since its post went viral late last week, and according to Jarrett, they're having a difficult time keeping up with the incoming supply of diapers.

"We can't keep enough boxes to put them in," she said. "I went to Walmart to get more boxes and as soon as I got back, more diapers were coming in so I had to go back and get more boxes."

The Center will continue accepting donations into this week. Gooch Trucking will transport the diapers put together to go to Texas. They expect to have the boxes on the truck headed west this week.

"It won't just be diapers on the truck," Jarrett said. "A lot of different organizations are doing different drives. We've also packed some other things like baby blankets, hygiene kits, formula, food, bottles, and that kind of stuff."

"My sister was in Houston and was evacuated," Jarrett added. "She told me that a lot of the shelters need



Volunteers at Fellowship of the Hills Church helped to organize a relief drive for victims of Hurricane Harvey.

diapers."

Resulting from the Facebook post, several local churches have been encouraging members to bring in diapers. Jarrett also told the story of a Center supporter who was in the process of buying diapers at a local business when something completely unexpected happened.

"Someone asked her what she was doing with all those cases of diapers and she told them, 'I'm buying them for the Woman's Enrichment Center. They're being shipped to Texas.' Immediately, people just started handing her cash to go back and buy more diapers. By the time she left, she had a minivan packed full of diapers."

The Center's Facebook page will be kept up-to-date for anyone interested in bringing in diapers before the deadline. As soon as an end-date is set, the page will be updated. They are closed on Mondays, Fridays and weekends, however, so anyone wishing to donate diapers should plan on doing so no later than Thursday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The Center is always available to help the people of this community with diapers, baby food, clothes, baby furniture, and more. They are located on Jones Street behind the old Standard Telephone Company building on Hunt-Martin Street.

You can also take U.S. 129 South to Jackson Street (on the right between Circle K and the veterinarian's office). Turn left onto Jones Street at the stop sign; the Center will be on the right.

One of those local churches making a concerted effort to make a difference in Texas is Fellowship of The Hills. At the close of Sunday Service, several people stayed to offload a truck of donations from the many folks that filled it last night at the A-Z Auction; then they loaded pallets of donations from all the folks at Fellowship of The Hills.

The Fellowship Hall currently is filled to capacity with several full pallets of items such as cases of water, diapers, food, toiletries, shoes, batteries, etc. All items are new and ready to be loaded on a truck from Gooch Trucking that will deliver these donations to the victims in Texas.

The folks at Fellowship of The Hills say, "Praise the Lord!"

A list of most needed and critical items is below.

Food: bottled water, peanut butter, canned meats/protein, canned fruits/vegetables, canned stews, soups, and chilies, dry cereal, easy open snacks, and baby formula.

Personal Care Items needed are below.

New socks, undergarments (adult and children - include extra-large sizes), diapers, feminine products that include sanitary napkins, tampons, and panty liners.

A list of cleaning supplies needed is listed below.

Buckets, mops, bleach, paper towels, toilet paper, laundry detergent, rubber gloves, and face dust/particle masks.

Please - no outdated canned goods.

treatment, sheriff's reports show.

The incident was turned over to Towns County Sheriff's investigators for further investigation. Sheriff's investigators, assisted by an agent with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, followed up on the altercation.

Sheriff's Office investigators identified and interviewed 26 witnesses. Investigators gathered other evidence as well. After an extensive investigation,

Towns County Sheriff's investigators secured an arrest warrant, charging Freyre with aggravated battery.

The victim is currently still hospitalized with serious injuries.

The case is in the hands of the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution, sheriff's reports show.

No further updates were available at press time.

County Senior Center, sheriff's reports show.

Once the audit was completed, the findings were forwarded to the Towns County Sheriff's Office to be investigated further, sheriff's reports show.

Sheriff's investigators, upon completing their investigation and consulting with the District Attorney's Office, obtained seven warrants, charging Parker with financial transaction card fraud.

The case has turned over to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution, and additional charges are likely, according to sheriff's reports.

Parker, a native of Towns County and a graduate of Towns County High School and the

University of North Georgia, became Senior Center director following the retirement of Pat Nicholson in 2015. Parker had moved back to Towns County at that time after having lived in West Virginia since 2007.

She replaced Nicholson, who retired as Towns County Senior Center director after devoting 30 years of service. Nicholson retired on June 10, 2015.

The case against Parker now rests in the hands of the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office, sheriff's reports show.

Barrett talks Hiawassee City Council at MMS meeting

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers heard from Hiawassee City Councilmember candidate Amy Barrett during the group's weekly meeting at Sundance Grill on Friday, Sept. 1.

Barrett, who is the only qualifying candidate for Hiawassee City Council Post 1, shared her background, her involvement in the community and the future she hopes to help build for the city of Hiawassee.

"I would like to thank Sam Fullerton, the Movers and Shakers and Sundance Grill for giving me this opportunity to speak," said Barrett.

Barrett may not have spent her entire life in Towns County, but her heart has been in Hiawassee from the moment she moved here with her high school sweetheart, Timothy Barrett.

The two of them have been together for going on 20 years and together the couple is raising three children, all of which attend school in the Towns County School System.

"We started out with humble beginnings," said Barrett. "I was fresh out of Georgia State (University). We moved up here and I started waiting tables at the Georgia Mountain Restaurant.

"Tim was commuting back and forth to John Marshall Law School in Atlanta three days a week. On his two days off, he helped me solicit insurance.

"With blood, sweat and tears, a lot of cold calling and soliciting, we built our insurance agency up. Barrett & Associates took off and we ended up being one of the largest



Amy Barrett independent insurance agencies in the North Georgia area."

After Timothy graduated law school, he chose to put his law degree to the side and focus on his passion, insurance, and the couple dove head first into the insurance business and never looked back.

As the couple grew their insurance business, Barrett began her journey into the world of volunteerism. And when Barrett retired six years ago, her work as a volunteer in the community grew even more.

"I've been volunteering for about 20 years," said Barrett. "The volunteer work that I've done over the last two decades has not only enriched me but it has enriched our community. It has molded me into the person that I am.

"I've volunteered for S.A.F.E. I worked with the Children's Choir program at McConnell Baptist Church. I did that for about five years then I got involved in their Sunday children's program.

"I was blessed to have the

opportunity to coach children for Mountain United Soccer for about 12 years and I also coached tee-ball and basketball. I learned a lot from these children."

Barrett also volunteers her time with Cub Scouts, Towns County Parent Teacher Student Organization, Towns County Elementary School Council, Friends of the Library of Towns County and countless other organizations.

According to Barrett, it is because of the countless people she encounters daily through these volunteer efforts that made her want to run for Hiawassee City Council.

To Barrett, becoming a councilmember is not about what she wants, but what the citizens of Hiawassee want for not just the future of the city, but the present as well.

"Deciding to run for city council was an easy decision for me," said Barrett. "I want to give back to my Hiawassee family. I volunteered here because my family has been blessed with so much from the city."

"I don't want to come in and tell you my agenda. My agenda is your agenda. I want to be a true public servant. I want to hear your wants, your needs, your wishes, your hopes and your desires for our community."

Though Barrett is the only qualifying candidate for the position, she still wishes to run a campaign for her election to build a better understanding of what the citizens want out of a city councilmember.

Barrett will be replacing Rayette Ross, who chose not to run for re-election, for the Post 1 Hiawassee City Council seat.

BRMEMC...from Page 1A

substitute teacher for Union County Schools. She and her family attend First Baptist Church of Blairsville, where she is a member of the choir and volunteers as the choir teacher for 3-year-olds.

White is a lifelong resident of Union County. He attended Woody Gap School, went to North Georgia College, and graduated from the University of Georgia.

He is past president of the Union County Saddle Club. He has managed consumer finance offices and is now self-employed at Budget Propane in Suches. He and his wife Susan have two daughters.

In Towns County, Waldroup and his wife Sonya have two children, Alexis and Tristan. They attend Macedonia Baptist Church and have called Towns County home for the past 15 years.

Rogers is a lifelong resident of Towns County. He and his wife Diane have two daughters and three grandchildren. They attend Macedonia Baptist Church.

Meanwhile, in Clay County, Ledford, a life-long resident of Clay County, North Carolina, is currently the Used Car Manager at Ware Chevrolet in Blairsville.

Cabe is a lifelong resident of Clay County, North Carolina. He graduated from Hayesville High School in 1994. He has been married to Amanda Smith from Blairsville for 15 years, and they have two daughters, Kaitlyn and Maci Cabe. They are members of Mountain Grace Baptist Church in Clay County, North Carolina.

Logan, who also won election by way of petition ballot in 2014, presently serves as treasurer of the BRMEMC, chairman of the Finance Committee, and serves on the North Georgia Network Board of Directors.

BRMEMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms said any misunderstanding associated with the 2017 Directors election is a result of questions about the proper qualifications required for a member to be eligible to serve as a director.

While the bylaws are quite clear in most requirements, they are void of any clear definition of "member in good standing," and the board is taking steps to clarify that requirement for the membership's consideration in 2018 at the Annual Meeting.

The Board of Directors doesn't vote on who is on the ballot, that's a decision by the Credentials Committee, said the EMC Board Secretary Roy Perren.

The Credentials Committee received direction by internal and external legal counsel to judge the nomination process by payment history, thus the "member in good standing" confusion regarding candidates.

According to Perren, the



Preston Cabe



Jeff Ledford



Jason Waldroup



Danny Henson



Chris Logan



Bert Rogers



Charles Jenkins



Karen Pirie

EMC board intends to offer amendments to the bylaws that more clearly define candidate qualifications in order to eliminate any confusion in future elections.

However, the earliest opportunity to do that would be the 2018 Annual Meeting, due to specific notification requirements for amending corporate bylaws.

"We wouldn't be able to get it ready for this year's Annual Meeting," Perren said.



Tommy White

Freyre...from Page 1A

Towns County Sheriff's deputies responded to the Sand Bar on Sunday, Aug. 20, during the early morning hours in reference to a fight occurring there.

Upon arrival, deputies located a male subject, identified as Jeremy Austin Hall, severely injured, lying on the ground being treated by Emergency Medical Services personnel.

Hall was transported from the scene and admitted to a local hospital for medical

Parker...from Page 1A

of financial transaction card fraud, sheriff's reports show.

Legacy Link terminated Parker prior to the completion of an independent audit of the spending practices at the Towns

County Senior Center, sheriff's reports show.

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