

Highlands Newspaper

Volume 20, Number 24

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Thurs., June 15 2023

County BOC votes 3-2 against budget

By Brittney Lofthouse

The first all Republican board of commissioners elected in Macon County have held more budget work sessions and longer budget work sessions than any board

in the last 10 years, however Tuesday night the board was unable to pass a budget for the fiscal year which begins on July 1.

Macon County Commission Chairman Paul Higdon set the

stage for a budget disagreement last week during a three-hour long work session — held after the first initial 6-hour long budget presentation earlier this month. While

• See BOC page 8

Dogwood Health Trust helps fund JCPS pre-school program

Jackson County Public Schools has been awarded a grant from Dogwood Health Trust in the amount of \$400,000 for a Preschool Coordinator position, funded for five years.

Jackson County Schools Superintendent Dr. Dana Ayers said one of her priority goals in Jackson County Public Schools is to increase preschool opportunities for families in our community.

"The role of the preschool coordinator will be invaluable as we grow, track academic progress and partner with teacher training programs," She said. "Our community is diverse in ethnicity, so-

• See DOGWOOD page 8



In the water from left: Justin Powell, Finneaus Garner, and Alex Lopez.

Photo by Radmila Petric

Hurricanes win big at triangular meet

By Steve Hott
Head Coach

On Thursday, June 8, 32 members of the Highlands Hurricanes team traveled to Waynesville for a triangular meet with the

Smoky Mountain Aquatics Club (SMAC) and the Cherokee County Aquatics Club (CCAC).

The Hurricanes won big. Highlands 527, SMAC 197, CCAC 151.

The Hurricanes were co-led by seven swimmers who all had five 1st place finishes and scored 80 pts. They were Junior Olympians: Finneaus Garner, Chase

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\$44 million waiting to be claimed in NC

Pisgah Legal Services offers FREE help

More than \$44 million is available to people in the Tar Heel State, but the question is: 'Will people actually claim it?'

That's what local nonprofit Pisgah Legal Services wants people to know about and act on before an important deadline on July 17.

Taxpayers have until July 17 to file a 2019 tax return in order to claim their refund. After that date, the IRS will no longer issue 2019 tax year refunds. The IRS estimates almost \$1.5 billion in refunds remain unclaimed because people haven't filed their 2019 tax returns yet. Of that amount, more than \$44 million is due to North

• See PISGAH page 13

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Final FY '23-'24 budget talk is tonight

Congratulations to the Highlands Motoring Festival for again putting on a wonderful car show this past weekend. Mark Chamar and all the volunteers of the Motoring Festival are to be commended for all their hard work in coordination, planning, and delivering this nationally acclaimed event. The community payout is over \$100,000 in support of REACH, the Literacy Council, and the Community Care Clinic.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Last week, I was at a recent meeting of the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission, where a representative from Duke Energy made an important presentation concerning the electric grid in Western North Carolina.

Lisa Leatherman, Duke Energy's Community Relations Representative, coordinated the presentation. This past winter, Highlands and other area communities lost power due to a failure of key components in the Duke Energy system. Duke Energy is addressing this problem by building a self-mending grid network. In the immediate future, they will have installed a system where if one service area loses power, an

automated system will reroute the grid to restore power to the affected area. This will contain areas where power is lost, and their crews will focus work there to reconnect the grid. This new system will benefit the Highlands and Cashiers areas.

Thursday is the June meeting of the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners. The meeting will begin at 7 pm at the Highlands Community Building. The first item on the agenda will be public comment, but we will also have a public hearing when the board reviews the proposed budget for fiscal year 2023-2024.

The budget includes a 5% cost of living adjustment for town employees. The town is now in a recruiting war with other municipalities to attract and retain qualified, highly trained employees. A critical area that underscores this situation is in law enforcement.

Just in the last few weeks, we have lost an officer to another jurisdiction that offered a higher salary. To be competitive with other agencies, our police chief will be asking for an additional \$4,200 increase for all current officers. While Highlands was at the top of the salary scale two years ago, other law enforcement agencies have eclipsed our pay scale to attract qualified law enforcement officers, who are in short supply across the nation.

In addition to the budget review, the board will hear a proposal from the town manager for hiring a new electric consultant. Our previous consultant, Kevin O'Donnell, tragically passed away several weeks ago. Our town manager and our public works director have been searching for a new consultant, and as a result of their efforts Louis Davis of UTEC will be introduced to the board. He has a broad background in all phases of electric utility services.

The board will also review an amendment to the parking ordinance pertaining to the forthcoming electric charging stations. Simply put, it will be illegal for any vehicle not using the charging system to park in those designated spaces.

See you at Thursday's meeting, whether it be in person or by way of the YouTube feed on the town website.

• HIC'S VIEW •



Dadday

• WEATHER •

Thu, 15-Jun	Fri, 16-Jun	Sat, 17-Jun	Sun, 18-Jun
72°F 55°F	77°F 56°F	77°F 51°F	77°F 62°F
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The 2023 Puzzle of the Year

Don't you just hate it when you get to the last few pieces to complete a puzzle only to realize there are a few pieces missing? The elated feeling of completion is thwarted by staring into a gaping hole.

The real estate market is sort of like a puzzle. Some years are easier than others. Here are some of the pieces that make up the puzzle:

• **Out-of-state buyers** - our area has had out-of-state buyers since our town's inception. The founders, Kelsey and Hutchison created advertising pamphlets to lure out-of-state buyers to their newly found resort town. I'd say their idea worked, but not without the help of generations of people who lived here, either transplanted after incorporation or if their families were here long before.

Some of the OOS (out-of-staters) came from places where the real estate values were higher than ours, and some simply had deep pockets. Either way, it was a good fit for them to buy property here. There are

a lot of OOS puzzle pieces.

• **COVID** - formerly referred to as Covid-19. We may, in the future, remember the years 2019 and before as BC- before Covid, when the real estate cycles ran their usual course of ups and downs. The years of 2020-2022 were some of the most abnormal years ever, real estate notwithstanding. Covid changed lives forever, physically and mentally.

I've heard of people who have looked at a US map of the night skies and chose this area because it was seemingly less spoiled and less populated. The National Forests that surround our area help keep us isolated. Covid jolted many people to make the move and have a fresh start.

• **Interest rates** - The Fed has increased the interest rate seven times in the last year or so. Have you ever played Limbo Stick? Yes, the intent was to help ward off increasing inflation, but it's like the Federal Reserve is in



Jeannie Chambers
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charge of raising the limbo stick just a little higher. How high can we jump? For some, it's not how high they can jump, it's how high will they jump.

The projections are for a slight decrease in interest rates by the end of this year, which will be a boost to sales. Some buyers who bought at the higher interest rate may want to refinance and that always keeps the banks happy.

• **Prices** - There was a slight slowdown in sales in the last few months, which meant there was an increase in home inventory on the market. Not much, but better than 2021 and 2022 - the anomaly years -with frenzied price wars and days on the market hardly reaching 30 days - including due diligence.

2023 may be the return to normalcy if we're allowed to use that term. Time will tell if sellers start adjusting their prices to try and catch the eye of more buyers. Lowered

prices usually has a lot to do with how long the property has been on the market. If the property was priced as other comparable homes that had recently sold, it wasn't overpriced, it just wasn't chosen. It's a personal decision between the seller and their broker. Buyers shouldn't assume there is something wrong with a property or a distressed sale if the price has been adjusted. It is usually a timing issue.

• **Tax Values** - and why wouldn't this puzzle piece be one of the most important pieces of the real estate game? I'm not saying every property should be listed at or near the upcoming tax appraisal, but why not? It's like the tax gods have deemed our property worthy, a lot more worthy than we ever thought. Some properties have doubled in value in four years without any improvements made to them during that time.

Personally, I think the tax appraisal is akin to hand-me-down clothes. It's like giving a newborn a size 4T with the comment, "Don't worry. They'll grow into it." Sure

• See INVESTING page 16

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3 BR 2 BA

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• DINING •

...HURRICANES continued from page 1

Kenter, Jack Sumner, Jazmine Abranyi, twins Dasha and Ben Halldin, and Lilliana Chambless.

Kenter broke a Mountain Swim League (MSL) Record in the 200 IM, Abranyi broke 2 Highlands Hurricanes team records in the 50 and 100 freestyle, and Chambless broke a 6-year-old team record in the 100 free.

Emilina Hernandez, and Junior Olympians Aniah McKim and Justin Powell scored 77 points including four 1sts and one 2nd. Charlie Hinton scored 74 pts, while Blake Kenter, Corena Dearth and Bella Batista brought home 73 each with 3 blue ribbons. Conner Hughes and Penelope McRae brought home 72 pts and also won three 1sts.

Annabelle Searles had 71 pts and three 1sts, Paolo McRae 69 pts and two 1sts while Ann Marie Hinton scored 68 pts and two 1sts. Wylie Hinton and Morgan Mason each scored 66 pts. Mason won 2 events. Aleks Petric and Jayce Powell both scored 63 pts; Petric won 2 events.

Annie Wilkes had 62 pts winning 2 events, and Ivan Shchelgachov and Alex Lopez scored 55 pts winning 2 events. Asa Garner scored 53 pts winning a blue ribbon, Max Jestin scored 46 pts and including two 3rd place finishes. Charlie Wilkes had 36 pts, Nicole Shchelgachov 33, Agatha Jestin 17 and Harrison McKim 11. Ian Batista was unable to swim due to illness.

Twenty-two of the 32 Hurricanes qualified for the MSL Allstar meet. They were Abranyi 3 events, Batista 3, Chambless 3, Dearth 3, Asa Garner 2, Finneaus Garner 3, Halldin twins 3 each, Hernandez 2, Wylie Hinton 1, Hughes 2, Kenter brothers 3 each, Lopez 1, Mason 1, Aniah McKim 3, Paolo McRae 3, Petric 1, Jayce Powell 1, Justin Powell 3, Searles 1, Sumner 3.

The Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team is a Highlands Recreation Park Team that practices in the evenings at the Highlands Recreation Park Pool. The only requirement to join is that a prospective swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards, one length of the Recreation Park Pool) unassisted. For further information please call 828.421.4121.

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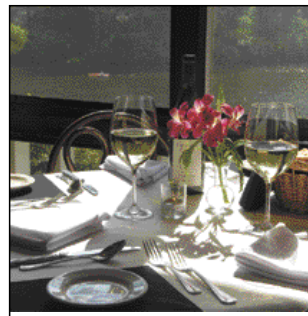


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...BOC continued from page 1

giving his fellow commissioners the directive that they can either "vote or not" for the proposed budget, Chairman Higdon did not hide the fact that his opposition to the budget was primarily political.

"Politically for me, that number needs to be decreased," said Higdon, referring to the proposed \$64.5 million budget — which sits \$5.5 million over the current fiscal year budget.

On Tuesday night Chairman Higdon reiterated that stance by opening the meeting admitting that the optics of the first all-Republican board approving a budget with a \$5 million increase didn't look good. Higdon further went on to say that he understands the \$5 million budget increase is tied to an increase in revenue generated within the county though things such as sales tax and interest on investments earning, and verified county growth, but regardless, the increase didn't bode well politically for the Conservative board.

Last week Commissioner John Shearl told his fellow commissioners he wanted

to see four things included in the county's budget for the Highlands community which included funding to get the Highlands Expansion Project "shovel ready," funding for Zachary Park repairs and landscaping for the adjacent property for youth fields, and improvements to the Highlands School soccer field.

Because the soil samples for the Highlands project won't be ready until April, with a report to the board not available before May which will be during the county's next budget cycle, commissioners agreed to delete funding for the soccer field for FY '23-'24, but gave consensus to fund the project when the time comes.

When Commissioner Josh Young made a motion to approve the proposed budget, his motion included updating the budget to include all of Shearl's requests, sans the soccer field, however Shearl still voted against approving the budget.

Young asked Shearl what they [the board] could do Tuesday night to reach an

• See BOC page 10

...DOGWOOD continued from page 1

cioeconomic status and education. I believe this coordinator role can assist in bridging those gaps for our families and the Jackson County Community."

According to Laura Dills, executive director of Federal Programs and Elementary Education said, the growth of the JCPS preschool program over the last two years has been a wonderful development that supports our youngest learners and their families in Jackson County.

"As we continue to expand and welcome new students and families, the role of a preschool coordinator has become vital to maintaining high-quality learning environments, building additional partnerships within the community, and increasing family engagement all of which are cornerstones of the JCPS preschool program," she said.

During the previous two years, Dogwood Health Trust has supported Dr. Ayers' initiative by providing grant funding for the addition of three preschool classrooms -- the newest notification having been received on November 15, 2022. To date, Dogwood Health Trust has awarded approximately \$910,000 to Jackson County Public Schools.

Education is one of Dogwood Health Trust's strategic priorities. It believes education begins at birth and lasts throughout life and is the key to unleashing the potential of opportunity for everyone, especially for those whose communities have been marginalized and should be equitable, excellent in its delivery and accessible to all regardless of place, gender, ability, income or ethnicity.



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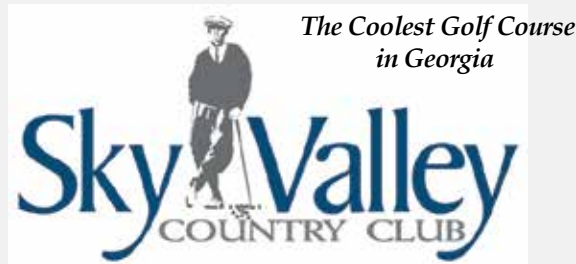
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...BOC continued from page 8

agreement to get a budget passed to which Shearl responded, “nothing.”

“Had I been prepared for this, it may be different, but there are things that I am working on internally in this budget process...some growth factors there that I am a little concerned about,” said Shearl.

Commissioner Shearl said that he “didn’t come prepared to vote on the budget” Tuesday night. He said he was willing to discuss the budget, however there were items in the budget he was still looking into, such as a truck for Animal Control and because of that, he was not prepared to take a vote.

Since February 9, county department heads have spent the last four months working with finance director Lori Carpenter and County Manager Derek Roland to establish the \$64.5 million proposed budget.

Commissioner Shearl was invited to sit in on those meetings over the last four months, however he did not. He did meet with certain departments to gain insight into their operations.

Roland presented his proposed budget for the first time in May and over the

last month commissioners have combed through it, asking questions on their own as well as spending just under 20 hours discussing the budget in open session.

Despite that process and with a tentative deadline of June 20, Commissioner Shearl said he was not ready to take up the budget.

All concerns and priorities Commissioner Shearl presented during open session relating to the budget were addressed in the motion Commissioner Young made for approval on Tuesday, however apparently Shearl has additional concerns that he has not yet expressed in open session or with county leadership.

Without asking those questions or voicing those concerns or requests prior to Tuesday night’s meeting, Roland and Carpenter couldn’t add them to the budget ordinance for consideration which delayed a vote.

Shearl echoed Higdon’s comments regarding the proposed budget’s over \$5 million increase — at one point saying that if the proposed budget reduced the county’s

• See BOC page 22

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ONGOING

• The "Kids Hike Highlands" trail passport program has been refreshed for the 2023 season. pick up a copy of the Kids Hike Highlands passport map at one of the four prize locations or you can download a copy at www.highlandsbiological.org.

Thurs-Sat.

• Highlands Historical Society Museum at 320 N. 4th Street is open 10a to 4p through October.

Mon-Wed, Fri-Sun

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471

Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. A ZOOM meeting is available Wednesday at 7PM (ID# 921 817 2966, password CVG2020). For more information, please visit www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357

Second Mondays

• The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women with financial need who want to return to school or further their education meets at 10 a.m. More meeting places call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

1st Tuesdays

• Indivisible Highlands from 5-6:30 pm at the Hudson Library.

2nd Tuesdays

• Highlands Writers Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 3pm. Writers still uncomfortable with in-person gatherings may participate via Zoom meetings

For more information contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budandlynn@me.com

Tuesdays

• Strength Training 8:15-9:15am. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone.

Mon-Fri

• Water Aerobics 18 years plus 10-11am. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Pickle Ball inside and outside. 10am-1pm, everyone is welcome so come out and enjoy a game of Pickle Ball.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

• The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a to 6p.

Mon. & Wed.

• New Mobility Class with Anna Norton It's all about movement. 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday 6:45-7:45. For more info, call 267-825-0716.

Mon, Wed, Fri

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30-9:30am. \$25 a month, The class

is led by Cathy Hodgson. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Aerobics w/Tina Rogers 8-9a. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

Tuesdays

• At Hudson Library, Nature Kids on selected Tuesday mornings, For more info call the Hudson Library at 828-526-3031

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers – Tuesdays from 5-6:30 PM. Facilitated by Sam Renken, this group has a simple mission: to foster and provide consistent community for local writers thereby giving writers of all ages and genres the opportunity to write, read, revise, and present their work to the group.

Tues. & Thurs.

• Zumba class with Gay Chaplin from 4:30-5:30p. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with different types of exercise.

Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information

First Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health, at 11a. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health issues of particular interest to them.

Wednesdays

• ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No registration required – just show up and participate. Questions? Visit www.maconncliteracy.org, call 828-526-0863 or email info@maconncliteracy.org

Thurs. June 15-Aug. 10

Highlands Biological Foundation's free Zahner lectures at the Highlands Nature Center (930 Horse Cove Road) at 6 p.m. To preview HBF's full Zahner lecture lineup, please visit www.highlandsbiological.org.

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15am. An

Lighting Up Your Nights

Along with the free
Outdoor Concert Series,
the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/
Visit Highlands, NC is pleased to light
up the sky with the annual fireworks
display and concert on July 4th.

Join us for our June and July
concerts and festivities!



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NORTH CAROLINA

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Friday Night Live

Town Square | 343 Main St.

Shows take place from 6 – 8:30 p.m.

JUNE 2	Ezra & Katie
JUNE 9	Johnny Webb Band
JUNE 16	Steady Hand String Band
JUNE 23	Southern Highlands Band
JUNE 30	Byrds & Crows

TUESDAY JULY 4 – Independence Day Festival Diamond River Band - Fireworks begin after the concert!

JULY 7	The Foxfire Boys
JULY 14	Curtis Blackwell Band
July 21	Carter Giegerich & Friends
JULY 28	We Three Swing

Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park
Pine Street

JUNE 3	NU - BLU
JUNE 10	Firecracker Jazz Band
JUNE 17	Dive Bar Divas
JULY 1	Blaze the City

JULY 8	Bill Mattocks
JULY 15	Lazrlovr
July 22	Back Porch Orchestra
JULY 29	Shane Meade & the Sound

For more information on the Outdoor Concert Series, July 4th fireworks display or other events, call 828-526-2112, write events@highlandschamber.org or stop by the Highlands Welcome Center, 108 Main Street.

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

- At Hudson Library, Kids Zone at 3:30 pm with a wide variety of STEAM, nature, and craft activities. For more information about any of these summer activities, contact Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

- At Wayfarers Chapel, Chair Yoga – Thursdays from 4-5 PM. If you are interested in greater strength and flexibility but have difficulty getting up and down from a sitting or reclining posture, Chair Yoga may be the perfect fit for you. Dana Thiele has been teaching Chair Yoga since 2017 and is ready to guide you on your new health adventure.

- At Wayfarers Chapel, Gentle Mat Yoga – Thursdays from 5-6 PM. Looking for greater strength? More flexibility? Time to focus on YOU? Join Dana Thiele at the chapel for Gentle Mat Yoga on the Deck. With more than 20 years experience,

3rd Fridays

- At the Rec Park, Senior Lunches noon in the meeting room. For any other information call Lester Norris or Maxine Ramey at 828-526-3556.

2nd Saturdays

- The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club meets in Highlands at The Bascom at 10 a.m. March thru November.

3rd Saturdays

- The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their Community Room/909 Chapel. We serve breakfast at 9am and hold our monthly meeting at 10am. We invite ALL Veterans to attend. Contact Ed McCloskey, Commander for any information 828-787-1660.

Sundays

- Church in the Wildwood Hymn Sing Sundays 7-8 p.m. through Sept. 3. Call 828-506-0125 if questions.

- At Wayfarers Chapel, Sunday Service: 10 AM Sunday Morning. Stick around for visitation and coffee hour immediately after service. (Coffee hour is replaced by potluck dinner the 1st Sunday of each month).

Thurs., June 15

- At The Bascom, free public reception celebrating our exhibi-

tion Into the Wood: Ed, Philip, and Matt Moulthrop. 5 p.m.

- At OEI's The Farm, from 6-8 p.m., Erick Baker, Emmy Award-winning writer, TV show host, and singer-songwriter. Tickets are \$40. Book Online: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/erick-baker-orchard-sessions-at-the-farm-tickets-124377>.

Fri., June 16

- At Highlands Mercantile, Jane Iredale Makeup Event from 11a to 3 p. Call for FREE 30-minutes consult appointment. 322 Main Street. 828-482-0818.

Sat. June 17

Highlands photographer Cynthia Strain will discuss and sign copies of her new, illustrated history book, "Highlands Through The Years" 2-4pm on Saturday at Shakespeare & Co. Booksellers. Refreshments from the Secret Garden.

Wed., June 21

- Hudson Library, in partnership with First Bank, is hosting a financial literacy program on Identity Theft on Wednesday at 1 PM. Participants will learn about the methods used by identity thieves to steal personal information and how to protect themselves. Bring your lunch and learn important information at this program! First Bank will provide dessert. For more information or to request an accommodation, please call Hudson Library at 828-526-3031 or visit www.fontanalib.org.

- REIKI at Wayfarers Chapel 4-6 PM. Reiki is a simple, natural, and safe method of spiritual healing that treats the whole person. Sessions are free and open to everyone. Donations may be placed in the baskets near the front door.

June 23-July 8

- "Jersey Boys" at Mountain Theatre Company now in residence at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street. For tickets go to www.mountaintheatre.com

Fri. - Sat., June 30 - July 1

- This special artistic weekend will feature the return of husband and wife duo, writer John T. Edge and artist Blair Hobbs. Social Hour Fri. and Sat. from 5-6 pm with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and special cocktails prepared by John T. available for purchase in J. Henry Farmhouse Tavern. To attend these complimentary events at Half-Mile Farm book your stay today. To book your stay, go to <https://www.oldedwardshospitality.com/half-mile-farm#/booking/step-1>

...PISGAH continued from page 1

Carolinians.

"Pisgah Legal Services wants to help people in our mountains that have lower incomes access tax refunds and credits they are due," says PLS Chief Operating Officer Jaclyn Kiger. "Not only are we assisting those who didn't file in 2019, you may also have funds waiting for you from more recent years if you haven't filed a tax return in 2020, 2021 or 2022, especially if you have children."

Pisgah Legal is a certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site and its staff and volunteers are already helping local people get hundreds and even thousands of dollars back, more than \$784,000 this year already. It's all for free thanks to funding by the Dogwood Health Trust.

"Ultimately, it's up to you to file or not, there is no pressure, and our services are completely confidential," said Kiger.

How to Access Free Tax Services

To qualify for free help from Pisgah Legal Services, you must:

- Make less than \$60,000/year.

- Live in the 18-county region of WNC including the Qualla Boundary

To make an appointment call (828) 210-3404 or visit www.pisgahlegal.org/taxes.

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mtntours.com

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Call 828-526-8800 or email
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Each class lasts approximately 90
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locally for each item made.

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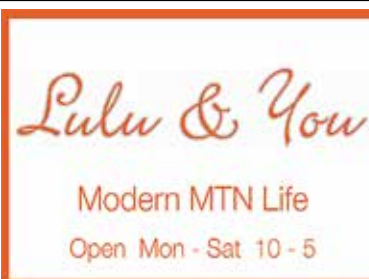
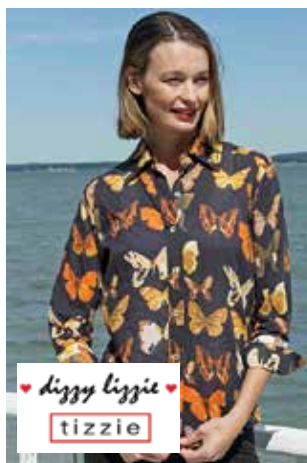
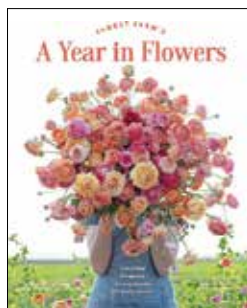


Jane Iredale Makeup Event

Fri., June 16th, 11 AM - 3 PM

Call for FREE 30 minute consult appointment!

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Summer Menu

View Menu



...INVESTING continued from page 4

enough, by the time the next tax appraiser comes around in 2026, we hope our homes will have grown into it.

• **Willing Buyers AND Sellers** - You can't complete the real estate puzzle without a willing buyer and a willing seller. It takes cooperation from both parties and with the help of an experienced Realtor, can be a seamless transaction.

By the end of 2023, we will know where

all the puzzle pieces fit. We may find that we aren't missing any pieces at all, they were right there in front of us the whole time.

Happy Father's Day weekend to all the fathers and the people who have assumed the role of father.

"The greatest mark of a father is how he treats his children when no one is looking." — Dan Pearce

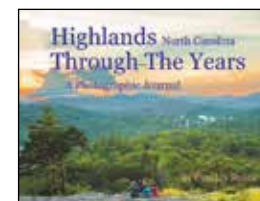
Book Signing at Shakespeare & Company Saturday, June 17 2-4 p.m.

Highlands photographer Cynthia Strain will discuss and sign copies of her new, illustrated history book,

Highlands Through The Years

Refreshments from the Secret Garden

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2023 Feasts

"Miller and Ransom - 2.0" Thursday, J

June 29 - 6 PM

\$150/person - 25 places

Timothy Miller, tenor &

William Ransom, piano - Perform!!

Hosts: Greg and Mary Thompson

"Meet and Greet with Julie!" Sunday, J

July 16 - 7 PM

\$125/person - 12 places

Non-performing guest, Julie Coucheron

Host: Marcia Weber

"Satulah welcomes Herskowitz"

Sunday, July 23 - 7 PM

\$150/person - 13 places

Non-performing guest, Matt Herskowitz

Hosts: Darren Whatley and David Moore

"Pianist Extraordinaire Charms"

Saturday, July 29 - 7 PM

\$125/person - 15 places

Non-performing guest, Michael Gurt

Hosts: Kay and Frank Cohen,

Cathy and Mike Crosby



2023 Salons

"Returning Gryphon will Delight - Again!"

Wednesday, July 12 - 5 PM

\$75/person - 20 places

Performing musicians: The Gryphon Duo

Hosts: Robert and Kathleen Rivers Carroll

"Festival Favorites: Hong and Krueger!"

Friday, July 14 - 5 PM

\$75/person - 25 places

Performing musicians:

Alice Hong & Charae Krueger

Hosts: J. F. and Peggy Bryan

"A Dynamic Duo!"

Thursday, July 27 - 5 PM

\$75/person - 20 places

Performing musicians:

Chee-Yun & William Ransom

Hosts: Steve and Sherri Ozcomert

"Grammy (s) Winner Mr. Bailey!"

Wednesday, August 2 - 5 PM

\$75/person - 30 places

Performing musician: Cellist Zuill Bailey

Hosts: Paula and Michael Fay

Mirror Lake Restoration and Dredging Update

“SAVE MIRROR LAKE” has been our battle cry for the past 3-years while it's been my pleasure to serve the M.L.I.A along with our Board of Directors. Our Mission Statement has always been “People Joining Together Sharing Time and Resources in Order to Save, Restore, and Preserve Mirror Lake and its Environs.”

A little background for those of you unfamiliar with our cause. For 20+ years, Dredging Mirror Lake has been the goal of many. Providing residents and visitors with pristine waters, navigable stream flows, native wildlife & fish, and recreation areas for all to access and enjoy will be the result. Mirror Lake is a “critical watershed” which flows directly into Lake Sequoyah; the Town of Highlands primary water source. A choked, silt-laden, unhealthy Mirror Lake negatively impacts the environment, the “Highlands way of life” and overall water quality. The time to act is right now.

It is a pleasure today to update all of you with our recent progress:

- We set a Goal to raise \$4.2-\$5.2 million in order to dredge Mirror Lake in 3 Phases.

- **Phase 1:** Dredge from Mirror Lake Bridge upstream (approximately to Billy Cabin Rd.), and downstream to the second bay.

- **Phase 2:** To deepen and clear the Mill Creek channel from Cullasaja Road to the Lake.

- **Phase 3:** To continue where we left off in Phase 1 upstream towards Big Pine Acres and downstream towards the Mirror Lake Dam where it feeds Lake Sequoyah.

- I am pleased to announce that through generous givers and significant private donations, our community has secured the funding to complete Phase 1 dredging.

- Our dredging consultant and partner in the project, RiverSand, Inc. have been given the green light by M.L.I.A. to secure dredging permits for Phase 1 and Phase 2. RiverSand is working in concert with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and with the U.S. Army



Corps of Engineers (USACE) to gain approvals, so that we can begin Phase 1 as soon as possible. If we interrupt your canoeing this Summer, we apologize in advance.

- Mayor Patrick Taylor has invited us to present our Dredging Plan and updates to the Town of Highlands Board on 3 separate occasions. We

have support from the Town of Highlands, and are collaborating with Leadership to gain approval, financing, and coordination within the scope of our plan in order to identify Town resources we can access for the necessary improvements to the watershed. Mayor Taylor has also brokered introductions and meetings with our State of North Carolina Senate Representative (Kevin Corbin) and our Congressman (Carl Gillespie) here in Highlands and in Raleigh. Both gentlemen took a full day to meet with the Mayor at Mirror Lake for an overview of our Dredging Plan, and immediately embraced it's importance to the Town of Highlands for all the reasons we've already mentioned.

- In the current Legislative Session in Raleigh, we are pleased to report that our Representatives have designated “The Restoration of Mirror Lake” as one of the funding priorities in Macon County for 2023.

- The M.L.I.A. has been invited to present our 3-Phase Dredging Plan to the Highlands Rotary, and the Highlands Country Club Garden Club for consideration and support.

It's extremely important that all of us now embrace this positive momentum to continue the fundraising efforts in order to “Save Mirror Lake”. While we commend the entire community for the progress made thus far, our job has only just begun. On behalf of the M.L.I.A. we thank you in advance for your continued giving, enthusiasm, and positive support of these efforts. Please continue to communicate to us your positive ideas and kind words as we move forward. In the end, we will all have the jewel that is Mirror Lake to enjoy!

Patrick J. Gleeson

Representing The Mirror Lake Improvement Association

Tax Deductible Donations may be made directly by calling Tom Roberson, Treasurer, M.L.I.A. (770.329.9919) or you can email Tom at tom.roberson2@gmail.com



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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



Fighting for Christianity

Pastor Sam Forrester
Whiteside Presbyterian Church,
Cashiers

Christianity is under attack from many different sectors of our society. There is a real war going on to diminish the message of the true gospel and to make it less threatening to those who are non-believers.

In Galatians 6:12b the apostle is speaking about the Judaizers and their compromising of the gospel. "The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ." The Judaizers preached circumcision. First, to have a reputation and second, to avoid persecution. The persecution would be from the Jews and the Romans.

During the time between the testaments there was a family in Israel that tried to bring the people together and deliver them from the Greeks. They were the Maccabees, you can read about them in the Apocrypha. They were not able to defeat the Greeks. The Romans were also fighting the Greeks, so an alliance was made, and a waver was given the Jewish nation so they could keep their own religion and still be a part of the Roman Empire. This was the only time such a waver was given by Rome.

If Christianity were to be seen as a sect of Judaism, it would be allowable under Roman law. You can see how this would have brought pressure on many to tie Christianity to Judaism. You could still preach Christ and the cross, but you would have to add the keeping of the law, thus modifying justification by faith alone to justification by works. Paul says this makes the resulting gospel, no gospel at all.

To make such a change is nothing short of cowardice. To take the truth and try to hide it, to ignore its claims, simply to avoid persecution is no more than a cheap tactic which paints a yellow stripe down the middle of your back. A generation has not gone by in the history of the church, where these types of people have not plagued her.

My friends, I can assure you of one thing. The gospel will always offend the world. In every age you will find manifestations of this offense. All true believers will be pressured to drop the truth and take up some watered-down version of the gospel.

Apart from the one true religion, all others have accepted a watered-down version. These other groups are all syncretistic to some degree. That means they are all trying to bring two or more religious systems together. Christianity is the only religion that is absolute. It claims, without apology, to be the only truth. If you compromise Christian doctrine in even the slightest way, you lose its message. The world of our day does not mind if you believe in Jesus, as long as you believe other religions are just as valid as Christianity. They cannot handle the idea that

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315

Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Arlyn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship; Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

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www.christanglicancashiers.com

9:30am Sunday School; 10:30am Worship Service. Mon. Night

Bible Study & Dinner, 6pm, call for details.

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45am. S.S. 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.

Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sundays: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am

Wednesdays: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mondays

4:30pm, Tuesdays 10am; Men's Bible Study: Wednesdays &

Thursdays 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706. 746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

Worship: Sun. 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

Sunday: Rite I, spoken, 8 am in Chapel, Rite II with Choir 10:30

am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel,

Morning Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in Chapel

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Women's 10:30 am

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Emily Wilmarth, pastor

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.

Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m. Choir: 6p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson

Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street

Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily

sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

Sunday Worship is at 9a. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from June 5. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

June 5

• At 10 a.m., officers responded to a report of someone obtaining property by false pretenses at Reeves Hardware where more than \$700 worth of merchandise was taken.

June 8

• At 3:53 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at Maple Street and US 64 east.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from June 6.

June 6

• At 1:06 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on VZ Top.

June 7

• At 12:10 p.m., the dept. was called to investigate the cause of smoke on US 64 east.

• At 9:33 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

June 8

• At 6:54 p.m., the dept. was called to investigate a brush fire on Flat Mountain Road.

• At 9:10 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Aunt Dora Drive.

June 9

• At 1:56 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Hospital Drive.

• At 6:20 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Flat Mountain Road.

June 10

• At 3:19 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid at a structure fire in Cashiers.

• At 4:53 p.m., the dept. extinguished an unattended fire on Rockhouse Road.

June 11

• At 11:31 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers FD.

• At 11:43 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance removing a tree off NC 28 south.

June 12

• At 2:25 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Horse Cove Road.

...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 18

one religion is the true religion. They cannot stand the idea of absolutism.

This is why many have taken the cowardly way out. They compromise the gospel. Many who preach this watered-down message, tell you, Jesus is only “one way,” they may even admit he is the best way, but they never say he is the only way.

The great reformer Martin Luther said to deny the gospel at the point of the world’s attack, to save face, was to deny Christ himself. Herein is the reason for all compromise. It is to avoid rejection. To avoid ridicule. To avoid suffering. To avoid persecution. It’s to escape because you are afraid. The one who compromises what he believes is a coward.

You must not allow your fear to cause you to turn away from the truth. In our day, we have seen so many make this tragic mistake. Many churches are abdicating their place of leadership in the sexual lives of their people. Perversions are running rampant throughout our society. Such perversions of sexual behavior are sins and the wages of all sin is death. But we have many today who want to overlook these

sins or explain them away. Proponents of these sins compromise God’s truth, so they can escape the wrath of the politically correct tyrants. They want to avoid persecution.

Compromise is the devil’s tool for destroying the gospel message. The Bible teaches, it is the infallible and inerrant Word of God. It shows itself to be sufficient to deliver God’s truth. If you truly believe it, then, you must not be cowardly in the face of opposition but you need to do as Paul says in Ephesians 6. You need to put on the armor of God and once you have done so, stand firm.

Compromise will gain nothing but heartache. It will only destroy your life and the lives of your children. Many of you are parents. You know how hard it is to stand firm with your children and tell them “no.”

Today, far too many parents, like too many churches, are giving in and allowing children to do what they want. Then, they wonder what happened, when a daughter comes home pregnant or a son is arrested with drugs. What happened was they compromised the truth and the children had no

• See SPIRITUALLY page 22

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 22

• CLASSIFIEDS •

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...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 19

standard to judge by, and thus, compromised everything that came their way. Unless you act with courage in the face of the world's attacks, your children will become even bigger cowards than you are. They need your example to build a solid uncompromising godly character.

The same thing is required in churches. People are needed who will stand up and say: "We believe the Bible. We believe that God is sovereign and the initiator of salvation. We believe in the totally sinful nature of man, in the wonderful love of God that calls his people out of sin. We believe in the power of Christ to save his people, in

his grace and its absolute guarantee of success. We believe in the covenant of God to save and his promise to save such that he never loses any he saves."

We need people who are courageous enough to hold to the truth regardless of the consequences. Men and women clothed in the armor of God, standing firm, prepared for battle, unyielding and unafraid of the fiery darts of the devil. Herein is the only defense the church has, people who are committed to stand and stand firm in the truths of Scripture and in the glory of the works of Jesus Christ.

...BOC continued from page 10

tax rate from .27 cents per \$100 valuation to .24 cents, "we would have a deal."

Shearl's suggestion to lower the tax rate to .24 cents per \$100 valuation would generate \$30,782,694.59 based on the county's tax base of \$12,825,780,728 — right around \$5 million less than the proposed .27 percent.

In theory, and in terms of political optics, a .24 cent tax rate paired with the county's other revenue sources such as sales tax, would produce a "flat" budget compared to the current fiscal year and not have the appearance of a \$5 million budget increase.

However, as Roland explained to Shearl — it isn't good government or sound financial policy to produce a budget that funds recurring expenditures using unpredictable, fluctuating revenue sources. If the county were to lower the property tax this year and offset that revenue decrease with sales tax, if the following budget cycle sees a decrease in sales tax collections, the budget would default or a substantial property tax increase would be needed.

In addition, Commissioner Shearl sided with Higdon in opposing the proposed \$1.1 million in the budget to address compensation for county employees.

The FY '24 Recommended Budget proposes a 1-step advancement in the pay scale for all employees and a 3% cost of living adjustment. The 1-step advancement amounts to an approximate 1.5% increase per employee resulting in a \$424,200 increase to the FY '24 Budget. A 3% COLA will result in an FY '24 Budget increase of \$772,438.

Roland said for a sheriff deputy making \$17 an hour — the proposed increase would mean about an 85 cent an hour increase. For the employee working at the tax office making \$14.80 an hour, Roland's increase would mean an additional 40 cents per hour. The proposed COLA and merit increases in the budget mirrored what Jackson County's budget includes and remains below the regional average and nearly half of what the state is proposing for employees. Regardless, Shearl agreed with Commissioner Higdon that the proposal was "too much."

Shearl also shared heartburn over the proposed \$2-\$5 per ton increase on commercial waste at the Highlands Transfer station. The increase is just to cover the cost of disposing commercial waste.

Shearl said taxpayers can't afford the increase — however the increase is to commercial waste — meaning businesses. Previously, the tipping fee for brush and stumps covered the cost of having those ground down. However, those costs have gone from \$9 a ton to over \$20 per ton, resulting in a request to increase the tipping fee from \$30 to \$35 a ton in the budget.

The last increase was specifically for the Highlands' station's transfer fee to be applied to brush and stumps, which is a result of the transfer costs to the landfill. Shearl, who owns a landscaping company, said as a business owner the increase is hard on him and his employees and the increase would directly impact him personally which is why he didn't support it.

Tuesday night, for the first time in the four-month-long budget process, Shearl said he wanted to see the county do more to help the private sector like build a convention center or something to help private businesses.

Even after Tuesday night, it remains unclear what Commissioner Shearl would like to see changed in the budget. The directive to commissioners now is for them to get with Roland and Carpenter prior to next week's continued budget meeting.

Commissioner Gary Shields seconded John Young's motion to approve the budget — supporting the salary adjustments for employees, moving forward with the new FHS Project and everything else included in the \$64.5 million proposal, which no longer includes the Highlands School soccer field.

Chairman Higdon hasn't supported the proposed combined 4.5% increase for county employees but would support a 2% increase. Roland explained that the increase the county approved last year, which Higdon voted against, didn't even cover the cost of inflation, making it difficult for employees. Higdon said it wouldn't be fair to increase the salaries for county employees in the public sector because private sector employees don't receive the same consideration.

"Public government employees didn't lose anything during COVID. I have friends in the private sector who lost things, one lost his house. County employees didn't lose anything — expect maybe a family member," said Higdon.

Retiring Human Resource Director Mike Decker was quick to correct Higdon to say the difference is that county employees fared better during COVID because as essential employees they continued to work.

"They worked every day during COVID. They showed up every day and did their jobs and kept this county going," said Decker. "Let's not lose sight of that."

Shearl agreed with Higdon and said that increasing county employee salaries is a means of "growing the government" and he would rather see tax dollars used to grow the private sector, which would help to grow the county.

Without a vote on the budget, the Macon County Board of Commissioners voted to recess the meeting until Monday, June 19 at 6 p.m. at which time additional discussion will occur.

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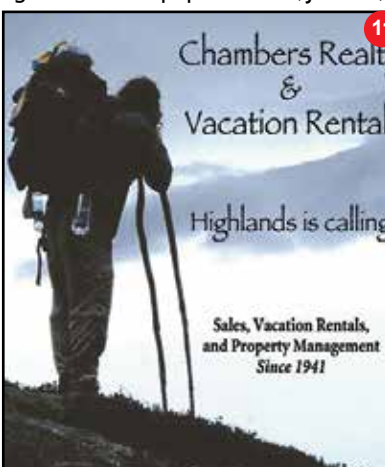
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