

# Highlands Newspaper

Happy Father's Day!

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Thurs., June 18, 2026

## County '26-'27 budget is \$68 million

*\$20 million undesignated fund balance remains untouched*

By Kristin Fox

At their June meeting, the Macon County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the 2026-2027 county

budget as presented by County Manager Warren Cabe, balanced in accordance with state law with revenues and expenditures totaling \$68,045,008 and maintaining

a tax rate of \$0.27 per \$100 of value.

The tax rate has not changed since 2023 with Macon County

• See COUNTY page 14

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## Macon County pulls out of FRL system; year-long testing period begins July 1

*Catlin, Gaston and Bonner not reappointed to board*

By Kim Lewicki

With the backing of the Macon County Commission's 4-1 vote, the far-right faction of Macon County has won the hard-fought battle against the Fontana Regional Library System which was set in motion back in June 2021 over a Pride display.

Though withdrawal wasn't on the recent June Board of Commissioner's agenda, it was added after the public comment period and the decision to follow in Jackson County's footsteps to withdraw from FRL was made.

Commissioner Gary Shields voted against the hasty departure saying he needed more information.

Though the initial battle was won, whether the war has been won is yet to be seen.

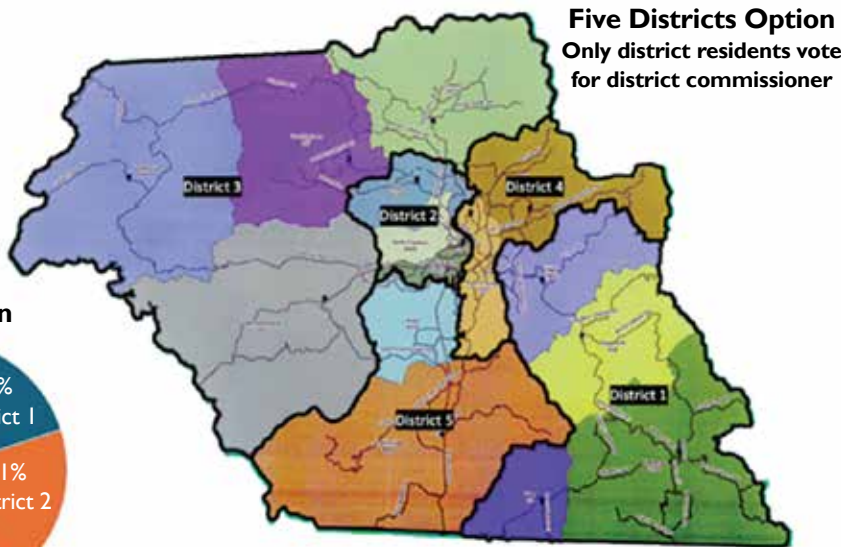
The Tuesday, June 9, deci-

sion to withdraw now means the ball is in the county's court.

Beginning July 1, the county has one year to prove to the state it is capable of running the county's three libraries – shoulder operating expenses, negotiate contracts for services and supplies, pay salaries, maintain the programming and services the libraries now offer and continue to maintain and repair the facilities at the Macon County Library on Siler Road, the Nantahala Community Library and the Hudson Library in Highlands

That building is owned by the Hudson Library Foundation who leases it to the county for \$1. In return, the county is in charge of routine maintenance, repair and more.

• See FRL page 4



## Creating 5 districts and eliminating at-large voting discussed at meeting

By Kim Lewicki

If districts by population is how congressional districts are drawn, why can't voting districts in Macon County be aligned the

same way?

At a community meeting last Tuesday evening, about 35 people turned out to hear ideas put forth by Amy Patterson,

Highlands Town Board Commissioner and Highlands liaison to the Macon County Planning Board, about redistricting the

• See DISTRICTS page 10



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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Noise ordinance on the agenda for tonight

I must begin with a special shout-out to the volunteers of the Highlands Motoring Festival for putting on another great weekend of motoring events, including the capstone car show on Saturday. These volunteers and the challenging work they do is a labor of love. A passionate love for automotive technology and history, and a love of this community. All proceeds, which routinely run into six figures, go to local non-profits.



Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor

We all nervously joke about the weather and rain as we approach the event. But it is a critical concern, and I hate to see so much effort dampened by rainstorms. This year, the weather was perfect, and I was so relieved and happy for the show organizers. We all can look forward to another delightful event next year.

This Thursday, June 18, is the date for a town workshop and board meeting. The workshop is slated for 6 pm, and the board meeting follows at 7 pm. Both sessions are at the Highlands Community Center.

The workshop will feature a sound demonstration by the police department.

### Highlands Newspaper

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#### Letter Policy:

There is a 500-word limit. We reserve the right to reject or edit letters-to-the-editor. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.

#### Obituary Policy

Obituaries are \$8 per column inch.

\$10 per photo.

Payable prior to publication.

Commissioners will go outside to measure decibel levels in accordance with the current noise ordinance. At the board meeting, the issue of adjusting the noise ordinance will be on the agenda. The board may decide to change some provisions of the ordinance, but a total makeover is not on the table.

At the board session, there will be a public hearing on the proposed FYI 2026/27 town budget. That budget does have a 3-mil property tax increase to address current and future shortfalls. As we pass this budget, I will continue to track all property tax reform legislation taking place in Raleigh. The mantra of many legislators is that property tax increases in towns and counties across the state are out of control, and that the legislature must rein in these out-of-control local governments.

Not so for the Town of Highlands. The last property tax increase was way back in 2014. It was a 1.5 increase to improve recreation facilities. In later years, that increase was earmarked for road paving and sidewalks. The current increase is to stop the bleeding in our reserve funds. Without an increase, our general fund reserves would soon reach a critical level.

Another observation concerns property revaluations. Over the past several revaluations, during which property values increased dramatically, the town board opted for a revenue-neutral approach. That tax formula reduced the millage rate, so the town took in only the same amount of revenue as before the revaluation. In other words, there was no tax increase after the county reevaluated the property.

Nevertheless, there is also a 1.03 cents per hundred dollars of assessed property for the fire tax. While that increase will help continue to fund full-time firefighters it will not enable the department to expand the number per shift to 3, up from the current 2 full-time firefighters.

Also on the agenda is another presentation by Mike Hanson of McGill engineering concerning plans and scheduling for the Mirror Lake dredging project. There is a caveat for this item. Mike is reviewing a potential cost-saving procedure that could increase the likelihood of more dredging. If this issue is still unresolved by the day of the meeting, we may postpone his presentation

• See MAYOR page 6





## • MILESTONE •



U-Neek Flav'ur had the crowd jumping Saturday night during music in the park.

- Photo by Kim Lewicki

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 18-Jun	Fri, 19-Jun	Sat, 20-Jun	Sun, 21-Jun
			
73°F 61°F	78°F 54°F	75°F 56°F	77°F 61°F
A couple of p.m. t-storms	Cloudy, a couple of t-storms	Mostly sunny and less humid	Mostly cloudy
RealFeel® High 77 Low 65	RealFeel® High 82 Low 60	RealFeel® High 85 Low 61	RealFeel® High 82 Low 66
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## ...FRL continued from page 1

After a year, if the state sees that the county is capable, then Macon County will continue to get aid from the state.

State Aid to Public Libraries in North Carolina is an annual appropriation administered by the State Library of North Carolina. The fund aims to promote and equalize public library services across the state through a combination of block grants and equalization grants.

To qualify for state funding, a local library system must be open to the public at least 40 hours per week; must employ a full-time library director who holds a North Carolina public librarian certification and must secure operational funds from local government sources that are at least equal to the rolling 3-year average budgeted amount.

Now that Jackson County's year-long testing period is over, the mantra for Macon County is "let's see how Jackson County is handling this."

MC Librarian Abbie Hardison, who had just submitted the '26-'27 budget for the libraries, said there are many unknowns right now.

"We will be watching Jackson County and hopefully gain some insight into navigating this process as smoothly and cost-effectively as possible for our patrons and staff," she said.

Hardison said one of the main reasons regional libraries exist – like FRL – is the ability to split the cost of shared staff, services, and resources.

"It is too early to tell yet how much it will cost when we go to negotiate those things as an individual county library with three branches," she said. "I would be very surprised if many things do not cost more; however, until we go line by line and compare, we won't have any idea."

Jackson County pulled out of the FRL system last year and has just completed its one-year review. It will continue to receive \$120,000 from the state per year. It will also continue to participate in resource sharing – access to statewide programs, NC LIVE resources, and the NC Cardinal Resource Sharing Consortium but not FRL sharing.

The NC Cardinal Resource Sharing Consortium is a network of public libraries across the state that share a centralized online catalog, and a massive collection of over 8.1 million items.

If after a year, Macon County prove it can foot the bill to operate the three libraries, FRL will cease to exist because the only library in the "system" will be Swain County's Marianna Black Library in

Bryson City and all the counties will be operating their own libraries.

What all this means financially for Macon County is the question.

Jackson County has two libraries. Macon County has three.

Jackson County Finance Director Darlene Fox said ramifications of pulling out of FRL have been mixed.

"We have to pay some upfront costs negotiating contracts and services and had to buy new computers for \$145,000 which were owned by Fontana, so we bought them during FY '25-'26 budget year in anticipation of leaving the system during the year-long testing period," she said. "We will also have an additional county IT employee who just works for the library."

According to the new Jackson County head librarian, Grace Powell, who started June 1, the county is also hiring a courier to deliver books obtained through NC Cardinal via FedEx to the Sylva and Cashiers locations and will be increasing book drop-off location for patrons.

When part of FRL and its resource sharing system, a courier drove books to all six libraries in the system – Macon's three, Jackson's two and Swain's one.

However, Cardinal resource sharing for Jackson County has been paused during the transition and it will now be paused for the Macon County libraries.

According to Fox, all 27 employees in the Sylva and Cashiers libraries are now on the county pay roll – \$1,355,006 for Sylva and \$500,413 for Cashiers. In addition, there is an allocation of 6% COLA for Jackson County employees in the FY '26-'27 budget.

Fox said some of the "group rate" monies previously paid to the FRL for services and programs and salaries have been reverted back to Jackson County.

"All money we previously paid FRL is now part of our budget," she said.

Jackson County will continue to pay for maintenance and repairs as well as utilities at the Sylva and Cashiers libraries.

Fox said anticipated revenue for FY '26-'27 will come from donations from Friends of the Library – \$48,000 for Sylva and \$45,000 for Cashiers; a total of \$120,000 in state aid – \$90,750 for Sylva and \$30,650 for Cashiers, as well as funds from taxpayers.

Fox said the libraries get to keep the materials currently in the libraries – books, periodicals, etc., – because though they were purchased by FRL (at "group"

• See FRL page 5



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## ...FRL continued from page 4

rates) they were purchased with funds sent from Jackson County.

New librarian Powell said since she is new on the job there is a lot she doesn't know and admitted there is a downside to not being part of the FRL resource and courier system.

"But we will adapt to what our community needs and figure out how we can make it better," she said.

Prior to Macon County's withdrawal from FRL Tuesday, Hardison presented the '26-'27 budget request for the county libraries – including operating requests for the Macon County Public Library in Franklin, the Hudson Library in Highlands, and the Nantahala Community Library in Topton.

The figure was \$1,628,276 which included a line item of "FRL Services" which included the funding increase required to provide for a share of the salary and benefits for a dedicated FRL Director and additional administrative expenses projected as a result of Jackson County's withdrawal from the Fontana Regional system, including IT and courier staff which will be shared between the Macon and Swain libraries.

Now out of the FRL system, that figure will change. but whether up or down isn't known at this time.

There are 27 employees across Macon County's three libraries – 18 in Franklin, five in Hudson and four in Nantahala.

Hardison said the required employer contributions for NC Retirement have increased, and she was advised to plan for a 20% projected increase in health care costs, NC Retirement obligations as well as a 2.8% COLA for salaries.

"Aside from that, requested funds are applied to our operational costs, which includes expenses such as NC Cardinal participation, liability insurance, equipment service contracts, dumpster rental, postage, telephone, internet and office supplies, as just a few examples," she said.

Harbison said 91% of funding for library materials and programs is provided by the Friends of the Macon County Public Library, the Macon County Public Library Endowment and the Hudson Library Foundation.

The derision that began in June 2021 over the Pride Display at the Franklin branch has blossomed into the current

• See FRL page 17



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# ...MAYOR continued from page 2

until July.

On June 9, a productive meeting took place at the Highlands Community Building regarding how to organize county districts and elect county commissioners. Of course, no outcome occurred, but a good and spirited discussion among 35 people in attendance took place. Amy Patterson did a comprehensive presentation about district alignment and election options. I hope this meeting and Amy's presentation will serve as catalysts for further review and discussion across Macon County regarding this critical decision.

Also, this Friday, I will be holding the

monthly Community Coffee with the Mayor at the Hudson Library starting at 11 am. In addition to reviewing the proceedings of Thursday's town board meeting, Chief Andrea Holland will join us. She will update us on the Highlands Police Department and answer questions.

Finally, there will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the new playground at the Highlands Recreation Center on Friday at 2 pm. I will be there to express our appreciation to Brian Stiehler and Jeff Weller for all the work they have done to make this project possible. Construction will begin after July 4th.

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## For what it's worth

*In today's real estate market, sometimes it feels like it's more about market and less about real estate.*



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When a new home has its initial debut in the MLS, the spotlight is on, and the first few days feeds the buzz and, hopefully, starts turning heads with potential buyers contacting their broker for more details.

But, before we get to that point, there's work to be done to get the property ready for its premier showing, and the first step is the listing price. One of the first things a seller wants to know is, "What's it worth and what's in it for me?"

There are two main ways to determine the best listing price, and both of those involve working with a licensed professional. The first way is to hire an appraiser who may perform a full appraisal by doing a walk-through of the interior and exterior, document their findings with photographs and do research of homes that have recently sold, preferably in the same general area as the subject property. While appraisals are mostly requested by the lender of a buyer, some sellers choose to have appraisals. Appraisals can be costly but are usually revered as gospel.

The second way is to ask a real estate broker, preferably a Realtor to put together a CMA. A CMA is a comparative market analysis and can be done totally online, but the best way is for the broker to visit the home, take initial snapshots inside and outside, and then research other properties that have sold within the last year, preferably within the last six months. Then the research begins.

A broker searches the MLS, and many times will call on their memory to "see" the homes they've seen before to make sure it's a good match. Knowing the different areas and neighborhoods is crucial when doing this research. We've seen CMAs or even some appraisals that show homes not even in the same town as the subject property, and while it can be hard to find a comparable for some properties in the same town, the property values can vary too much to be considered if they're not close. The cost of a CMA is usually offered as a free service.

Those are the two main ways, but with

the help of modern technology and artificial intelligence, there's more than one way to skin a bot. With websites like Zillow and Reator.com, a seller can get answers to some of their initial questions by letting their fingers do the walking.

The caveat: As advanced as artificial intelligence is, it's still artificial. You can look up properties even if they aren't for sale. That's a little spooky, but just another way for us all to realize that just about anything can be

found on the internet. These sites should not be relied upon exclusively.

Zillow uses an algorithm that analyzes public tax records, deeds, county map references, and the recent sales data from MLS sites. Zillow gives what they call a Zestimate, which can be, but probably shouldn't be a lot different than the listing price. If the property is "off marke" the Zestimate is what the algorithm thinks the listing price "could be."

Realtor.com also uses some pretty sophisticated tech. One of the things is called Cotality, formerly CoreLogic, and comes from combining three words: Collaboration, Totality and Vitality. Their best-computer-aided-guess is called RealEstimate, and they take their deep-dive data one step further -- they use a crystal ball! Well, they call it Quantarium which uses predictive analytics, an AI powered AVM (automated valuation model) to suggest what the property will sell for based on actual sales data of similar homes.

In the end, the worth of a property is what a buyer is willing to pay. On paper, it's just a statistic, but the physical address can hold a different sense of worth to a seller vs. the buyer, and that's where the importance of having a Realtor comes in.

A seller needs to realize they can't sell their property for what it "could be" or what it once was. A buyer needs to realize that just because they want to renovate doesn't mean the seller is willing to offset the price to cover their upcoming expenses. A good CMA should give the seller an idea of a listing price that is comparable to other homes in the same real estate market, taking into consideration its condition and any amenities provided, including the first three rules of real estate: Location. Location. Location.

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All veterans' graves (more than 200) are honored with an American flag. The public is invited to assist the aging post members in the flag placement.

Flags will be placed, Thursday, July 2 in the Highlands Cemetery. Please join them at the cemetery flagpole at 5:30 p.m.

If you can't participate, please take the time to drive through the cemetery and see the display of flags.



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# • OBITUARY •

## Charles 'Charley' Atwood Czarniecki

Charley Czarniecki born January, 19, 1950 in Saint Charles, IL and died May 7, 2026 in Franklin, NC. Charley, one of nine children in the Czarniecki family is survived by four siblings, Leila, Lani, Wheezy and Lisa. In addition to his wife Soni, son, Charley Lavelle, stepson, Cody and granddaughters, Joslyn and Gemma, nephew, Max and his wife Rebecca and niece and nephew, Tani and Charley. Plus, two lively cats, Jax and Bella. Charley's immediate family or Ohana called him by his Hawaiian name 'Keiki' which means child or descendant.

Charley led an adventurous and colorful life! As a teenager, he made his way to the west coast of California in the late 1960s. He found himself in the Los An-

geles music scene and was a manager for Rick Danko from the famous music group The Band. He lived in Malibu and hung out with rock stars and actors like Dennis Hopper from the classic movie Easy Rider. Charley loved motorcycles, fast cars and the lively southern California lifestyle of the early '70s.

In the 1980s Charley ended up down south in the sunny state of Florida where he embraced his band manager skillset and started a business running pool decks for fancy hotels in tourist towns like Marco Island. He was a friendly and outgoing 6'7" greeter and had a warm and inviting spirit - he could talk to just about anyone and always shared a special sense of hospitality with his colleagues and clients.

In the early 2000s Charley made his way to Highlands, NC. Shortly after his arrival he brought his hospitality skillset to the newly build Old Edwards Inn &



Spa. Starting out in the fitness center and managing the pool decks, Charley created a hiking program for guests and members to explore the rare and diverse sub-tropical mountain region.

His famous Historic Highlands walk was a favorite attraction at the hotel for more than 15 years. Known as the 'Hiking Guide' or 'Nature Concierge' as he used to refer to himself, he shared with tourists and locals the history and diverse flora and fauna of Highlands Plateau region.

Charley made a lasting impression on everyone he met, a true gentleman and friend in every way, he will be missed dearly! A Hui ho Keiki - until our eyes meet again.

Online condolences may be made at [www.bryant-grantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryant-grantfuneralhome.com). Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is honored to serve the Czarniecki family.

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## • LETTERS •

### Ensuring inclusive, evidence based-decision making

Dear Editor,

I write as someone with more than 30 years of experience facilitating transparent, evidence-based decision-making across diverse stakeholders, and as a pro-democracy advocate who believes local governance is essential to community health.

Recent Macon County meetings — the County Commissioners meeting on June 9 and Planning Board meetings on May 7 and on June 11 — raise serious concerns about whether decisions are being made in ways that are transparent, inclusive, and grounded in evidence.

At the June 9 Commissioners meeting, within the budget discussions, commissioners signaled their intention to leave the Fontana Regional Library (FRL) system based on costs. This significant decision — while time-bound — was not publicly debated as a standalone issue, was not placed on the agenda for public comment, and appeared to have been made without clear data, a transparent assessment of costs and benefits, or meaningful public input.

At that same meeting, commissioners considered applications for the Macon County Public Library Board of

Trustees without clear evidence of interviews or transparent selection criteria. While no appointments were ultimately made, the process by which applicants would have been chosen lacked rigor.

Similarly, Planning Board discussions during May 7 and on June 11 regarding redistricting did not reflect a thorough review of available data. Multiple well-developed representation options were presented, yet deliberations neglected the evidence and engaged in a disrespectful discussion rather than engaging the full analysis. With this issue returning on July 2, public awareness and participation are critical.

Decisions affecting library access and electoral representation carry long-term consequences, and I want to express my sincere appreciation for those decision makers who step up and commit to this community. It is not always an easy job, and that service matters. These decisions must be made through processes that are open, evidence-based, and inclusive of community input — and Macon County residents should expect nothing less.

**Constance L Neely**  
Scully Mountain

### Regarding the MC Commission's FRL vote

Dear Editor,

Let me begin by thanking and acknowledging Mr. Shields. He demonstrated both honesty and integrity when he stated that he did not yet have enough information to make this decision.

At the end of the day, after the fiasco that unfolded in Jackson County, we are now being forced to confront similar issues in Macon County. Calling the question is

appropriate. What is not appropriate is the manner in which this matter was handled at this week's meeting of the Board of Commissioners. In government, how decisions are made is just as important as the decisions themselves.

The action taken without advance public notice is unacceptable. Adding this item to the agenda during the

• See LETTERS page 14



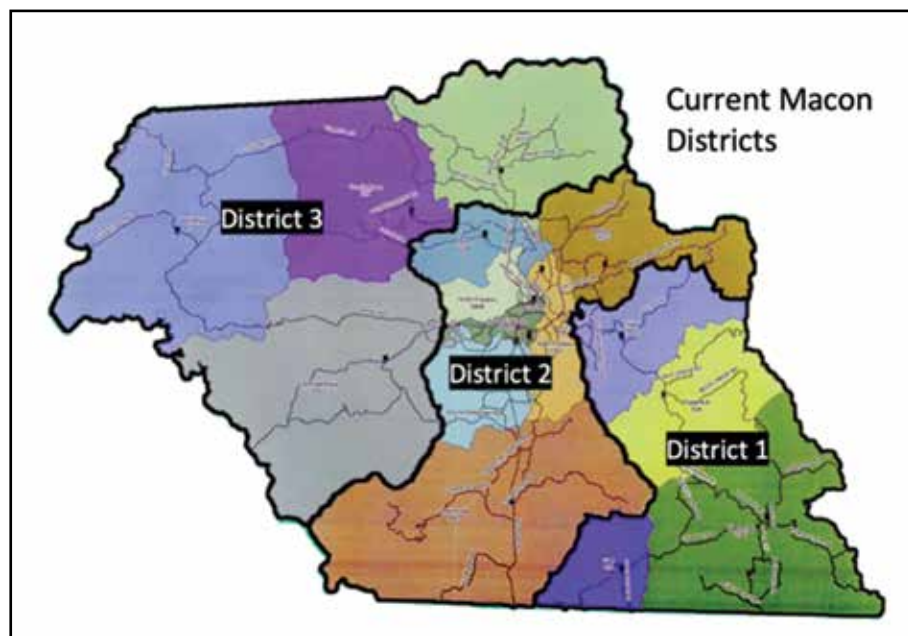
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## ...DISTRICTS continued from page 1



District 2 is the county's population hotspot so with at-large voting the less populated districts have less voice at the polls.

voting map of Macon County.

The county's plan to change the terms for candidates and redistricting was halted late last year and sent to the MC Planning Board for more research and consideration.

Recently, the county decided to disallow the Highlands and Franklin liaisons on the planning board from voting on any planning board issue, but they are allowed to attend and participate in meetings.

Consequently, Patterson, and the Town of Franklin liaison, are now non-voting members of the Macon County

Planning Board which has been discussing how voting is handled in the county for a few months now.

Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor opened Tuesday night's meeting stressing the importance of the community being involved in a potential redistricting decision as well as the way county commissioners are elected.

"It's important that the citizens are involved in this decision," he said.

The idea of changing the current system was first put forth by MC Commissioner John Shearl who resides in District 1. His idea is to keep at-large voting and the current districts as they are except possibly change terms but he said "distinct districts would still be four-year terms unless all seats were two-year terms."

Regarding redistricting he said how the Board of Commissioners are elected is really simple and the purpose of redistricting is even more simple.

"The purpose of redistricting is to level up the playing field and make it fair to every man, woman and child in Macon County. That's it," he said.

Which was Patterson's point precisely.

Her idea is to redistrict the county into five districts each with the required population of 20,000 and to do away with the "at-large" vote, so the MC Commission Board would ultimately be com-

• See DISTRICTS page 11

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## ...DISTRICTS continued from page 10

prised of a commissioner elected by and representing the people in each district.

Currently, with at-large voting everybody in the county votes for all five seats on the county commission regardless of where they live.

There is one representative from District 1 (Highlands), one representative from District 3, (Nantahala) and three-representatives from District 2, which represents 60% of the population of the county. That divided by three is 20% which the state says constitutes the constituency of one representative – which is why District 2 gets three representatives.

With at-large voting, when all the county votes, regardless of who runs in District 1 or District 3, those districts don't get to actually control who their representative is because 80% of the population can vote in someone else.

"I think that's part of the crux of the problem," said Patterson, regardless of who the districts want to represent them, they're being told by the rest of the county who will represent them."

The current system is called "residential vote." Candidates have to live in District 1 or 2 or 3 to be a candidate, but they can get voted in by the entire county.

"That's one of the problems that we have with the way we're doing it now," said Patterson. "Regardless of who the citizens in the districts want to represent them, they're being told by the rest of the county who that will be."

Patterson says that matters particularly when discussing countywide allocation of money and resources.

"It's important that everybody in the county gets their perspective accurately represented on the commission board," she said. "It's more fair for the commissioner from each district to actually be elected by the voters of that district. It makes them accountable, so if citizens don't like the way they vote on an issue, they can vote them out."

Patterson and the Highlands Town Board believe breaking the county into five districts with the required "as close as possible" 20% population per district is the most logical and fairest way to go. There is population percentage leeway because precincts have to be contiguous.

"We're looking at how to make the voters themselves have more say, have a smaller constituency for each county commissioner, have accountability for each county commissioner, and have the

voters actually know and get who they want to represent them," she said.

The biggest change in the five-district redistricting plan would be in dividing District 2 into three districts.

District 1 wouldn't change from what it is now with the required 20% of the population.

Nor would District 3 change because it has 18% of the population which is as close to 20% as possible with the precincts still contiguous.

District 2 would change from one district with three county commission seats into three districts with one county commission seat apiece.

District 2 would be the Franklin area – South Franklin, North Franklin, and Iola, with 21% of the population.

District 4 would be the Mill Shoals and East Franklin precincts, which has 19% of the population.

District 5, would be the Smith Bridge and Union precincts, with 22% of the population.

"This means, the huge hotspot of population density, will be divided into three districts so each district gets to control who is going to represent them on the county commissioner board," said Patterson.

There would be no at-large seats which could be dominated by the large population areas, which could subsequently determine the vote-getter of the county commission.

"With five districts and no at-large voting, citizens can elect their own representation and the entire county – every precinct – would be well-represented and we can get the best government that we can in Macon County," she said.

Interestingly, the Macon County Planning Board recently held an ad hoc vote to keep electing all county commissioners through at-large voting – so the entire county would still elect all county commissioners.

Again, the Highlands and Franklin liaisons were not permitted to vote.

At the July 2 meeting, the board will discuss and possibly decide if it wants to divide the districts differently.

No final decision will be made by the county commission until after the November election because there could be at least two new members elected.

To see Commissioner Patterson's Powerpoint presentation email Mayor Pat Taylor at [mayor@highlandsc.org](mailto:mayor@highlandsc.org).



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## UPCOMING PROGRAMS



### Freedom, Federalism, and the Right to Vote

Presenter: Jefferson Cowie, Thursday, June 25, 10 AM - 12 PM, \$35 Members / \$50 Nonmembers



### The Art of Craft Chocolate Making

Presenter: Melody Germain, Thursday, June 25, 2-4 PM, \$75 Members / \$90 Nonmembers



### Johnny Cash: The Many Redemptions of the Man in Black

Presenter: Jefferson Cowie, Friday, June 26, 10 AM - 12 PM, \$35 Members / \$50 Nonmembers



### Freedom of Information at the Crossroads: The State of Play

Presenter: Charles Davis, Monday, June 29, 2-4 PM, \$35 Members / \$50 Nonmembers



### How Flowers Made Our World

Presenter: David Haskell, Tuesday, June 30, 10 AM - 12 PM, \$35 Members / \$50 Nonmembers



### The Biology of Belief: Exploring Spirituality's Role in Human Health

Presenter: William Robertson, Wednesday, July 1, 10 AM - 12 PM, \$35 Members / \$50 Nonmembers

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## • UPCOMING EVENTS •



Cellist Amanda Forsyth, pianist Shai Wosner and Pinchas Zukerman

### HCCMF 45th Anniversary Opening Gala Concert is June 28 at 5p.

The Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival has, over 45 years, become the reason to be on the Plateau in summer. On June 28, that means one place in particular: the Martin Lipscomb Theater at the Highlands Performing Arts Center, where the 45th Anniversary Opening Gala Concert begins at 5 p.m. with the Zukerman Trio.

The chance to hear Pinchas Zukerman in a room this size does not come along often. He arrived in the United States from Tel Aviv in 1962 to study with Ivan Galamian at Juilliard and has since built a career that spans more than five decades, more than 100 recordings, two Grammy Awards, and 21 nominations. He now chairs the Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music and serves as Artistic and Principal Education Partner of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. What distinguishes his playing is its directness – phrases built to carry, not decorate, with an emphasis on line and structure over display.

Cellist Amanda Forsyth meets him on equal footing. A Juno Award winner and the daughter of composer Malcolm Forsyth, she trained with William Pleeth in London and Harvey Shapiro at Juilliard, then went on to serve as principal cellist of both the Calgary Philharmonic and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra. She performs on a 1699 Carlo

Giuseppe Testore cello, an instrument that brings warmth and depth to the trio's sound. Her role is not accompaniment; she anchors and shapes the texture from within.

At the piano is Shai Wosner, an Israeli-American musician known for clarity and control. A student of Emanuel Ax at Juilliard and now on the faculty at the Longy School of Music, Wosner has earned an Avery Fisher Career Grant, a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award, and Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award. Within the trio, he provides the structural backbone—defining pace, supporting transitions, and keeping the ensemble tightly aligned without overpowering it.

The trio grew out of the Zukerman Chamber Players and has spent the past decade performing on major international stages, including Carnegie Hall.

A champagne reception with the artists follows the performance, sponsored by Ruth Gershon and Sandy Cohn.

Tickets are \$80 for the concert and \$125 for the concert and reception. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 828-526-9060 or purchasing online.

At 45, the Festival opens its regular season with musicians who don't need introduction so much as the right room. This is that room.

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# ...LETTERS from 9

meeting, without providing notice so citizens could attend and address it directly, was unconscionable. In fact, several friends and I believed the board would be appointing new library board members as advertised. Rather than attend, we submitted comments regarding the applicants and chose instead to attend Mayor Pat Taylor and Amy Patterson's meeting in Highlands regarding district reconfigurations.

By proceeding as you did, you disregarded the spirit and intent of North Carolina's Open Meetings Law. Jackson

County's withdrawal from Fontana has been a matter of public record for some time. There was no compelling reason this decision could not have been properly noticed and placed on a future agenda, allowing adequate opportunity for public comment. The appearance is that this was done to avoid public input rather than encourage it.

Further, failing to appoint the three open library board members as noticed, while leaving 11 applicants in limbo, represents a dereliction of duty. A six-member board invites ties and gridlock at a time when effective governance is needed most.

What this looks like to me is a short-term political compromise—a way to split the difference in ongoing cultural disputes and kick a difficult decision down the road.

We all know where this is heading, and given what has already happened in Jackson County, we are obligated to ask some hard questions. But those questions should be addressed fairly, transparently, above board, and with the best interests of all Macon County citizens — and our libraries — in mind.

This process was none of those things.

**Bonnie Bell  
Highlands**

# ...COUNTY continued from page 1

continuing to have one of the lowest tax rates in the state just ahead of Carteret and Dare Counties.

Expenditures increased across many of the county's normal operating categories with requests from departments and agencies totaling \$75,728,093. In addition, the county also had to absorb other increases such as a mandated increase from the North Carolina Retirement System, health insurance increases and other various expenses consistent with normal business operations.

To maintain the tax rate of \$0.27 per \$100, a one-time allocation from fund balance was needed to apply toward the Macon County Schools capital expenditure request.

Although the tax rate has remained the same, Macon County is seeing an increase in the taxable value of property which slightly increased tax collection revenues. Miscellaneous revenue increased slightly compared to the FY 2026 budget. In addition, revenue from service fees has also slightly increased. Sales tax revenue and intergovernmental revenues are projected to see small increases.

Projected revenues include property tax collections at \$37,054,763 (54% of the budget), sales tax at \$14,416,536 (21%), intergovernmental revenues at \$8,561,757 (13%) and service fees at \$5,065,752 (7%). Miscellaneous revenues are projected at \$1,796,200 (3%) and \$1,150,000 (2%) appropriated from fund balance to cover capital improvement costs for Macon County Schools.

Total property values are estimated at \$13,696,273,048 between land and vehicles, up \$290,268,915 from 2025. This would produce a total tax levy of \$36,442,764. Due to increases in the property tax base and the amount of service fees collected, revenues will increase slightly from 2025-2026.

### Personnel

Addressing the needs of what County Manager called "the county's greatest asset," its personnel, the budget includes a one-step advancement within the pay plan for full time employees and a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all employees as well. This increase is actually down from the 3% adjustment county employees received in 2025.

The step maintains the county's initiative to retain existing employees and advance them through their career paths



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# • UPCOMING EVENTS •

## CLE Hosts Federal Judge Jed Rakoff and Pulitzer Prize-Winning Historian Jefferson Cowie: From Cryptocurrency, Federal Power and Voting Rights, to Johnny Cash

Next week CLE welcomes two nationally prominent speakers who will bring timely discussions of democracy, law, culture, and American identity to the Plateau.

On Wednesday, June 24th, distinguished federal judge and legal commentator Jed Rakoff will present a two-part lecture, the first on cryptocurrencies and the second on the limits of Presidential power.

Judge Rakoff will give a primer on cryptocurrencies, stable coins, meme coins, and other crypto “products.” And then, based on his experience presiding over criminal and civil cases in the Southern District of New York arising out of fraudulent cryptocurrency transactions, he will explore their use in criminal and corrupt activities, their impact on the stability of U.S. and foreign national economies, and the need for robust regulation to address the risks these currencies pose.

In the second hour, the Judge will pivot to a discussion of some of the important cases the Supreme Court has decided this term. He will focus on the effective repeal of the Voting Rights Act in the Court’s Callais decision, as well as those cases involving the Trump administration’s assertions of executive power and their impact on the relationship between the Court and the lower federal courts.

On Thursday, June 25th, historian Jefferson Cowie will discuss themes from his 2023 Pulitzer Prize winning book, “Freedom’s Dominion: A Saga of White Resistance to Federal Power,” but with a twist. In “Freedom’s Dominion,” Cowie



Judge Jed Rakoff



Jefferson Cowie

described the role “states’ rights” played in preventing an equitable right to vote. Now, however, in this mid-term election year, the States find themselves as points of resistance to demands of federal power seeking to restrict equal access to the ballot box. Cowie’s scholarship explores the historical tensions embedded in the nation’s political culture and the ongoing debate over the meaning of freedom in America.

Cowie switches gears on Friday, June 26th and will present a second lecture based on his current research focused on legendary musician Johnny Cash, drawing on his celebrated work connecting American music, labor, class, and culture. Known for combining rigorous scholarship with accessible storytelling, Cowie brings history vividly to life for public audiences. Cowie holds the John Seigenthaler Chair in American History at Vanderbilt University,

and in addition to “Freedom’s Dominion,” is the author of several other prize-winning books on the American labor movement: “Capital Moves: RCA’s Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor;” “Stayin Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class;” and “The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics.”

These presentations will take place at CLE’s Lecture Hall, located in the Peggy Crosby Center at 348 South 5th Street. The cost for each program is \$35 for CLE members and \$50 for nonmembers. Walk-ins are welcome. For more information, please visit clehighlands.com or call (828) 526-8811.



## A prelude to the Highlands Cashiers Film Festival September 17-20: A viewing of “Trail Mix”



Come see this 2025 “Audience Choice Award winner” A 50-minute documentary which follows a 2,000-mile journey from Georgia to Maine along the Appalachian Trail and the transformative power of nature. Director and filmmaker Glenn Sweitzer will be at both of these FREE events to discuss the film and answer questions.

**SAT., JUNE 20**

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## Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival 45TH ANNIVERSARY OPENING GALA The Pinchas Zukerman Trio

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## ...COUNTY continued from page 14

without losing competent and trained employees to other organizations adversely impacting the county's quality of service.

Macon County has both full and part-time employees as well as utilizing contract employees or agencies in some areas to provide services. The county employs 408 full-time positions and 291 part-time positions. The county currently has 16 vacant full-time positions.

Part-time employees are typically used on an as-needed basis, and some positions are classified as seasonal including recreation park employees and poll worker positions.

Funds budgeted include a 0.75% increase in contributions for general employees and 1.02% increase in contributions for sworn law enforcement officers for the North Carolina Retirement System that are mandated, or a total of \$367,642. Health insurance rates did increase by 6% or a total of \$322,461, but employee rates for health insurance will remain the same.

### General Government

General government expenses have increased by \$1,065,192 from FY 2025-2026. General Government accounts for 15% of the budget at \$10,403,541. General government includes departments such as Mapping, Tax Assessment, Garage, Infor-

mation Technology and Maintenance. The increase takes into consideration different classification of funds after consolidation of the Health Department and increased Information Technology expenses.

### Public Safety

Public Safety expenses have increased by \$419,640 from FY 2025-2026. This includes what are normally considered public safety agencies such as law enforcement and EMS but also includes Code Enforcement and Animal Control. Expenses that contributed to the increase for public safety include an ambulance for \$256,681, EMS equipment at \$143,900 and four patrol cars at \$248,243. Public safety makes up 30 percent of the county budget at \$20,429,331.

### Education

Education Expenses, categorized as educational, increased by \$1,673,808. Education accounts for 21 percent of the budget at \$13,951,621 and includes funding for Macon County Schools and Southwestern Community College.

Funds for school resource officers and the school nurse program are also now categorized as educational expenses in an effort to clarify the county's total educational expenditures as a percentage of the overall budget.

Macon County Schools Funding for Macon County Schools totals \$13,441,182. Operational funding is proposed at \$9,882,398 and local supplemental funding is proposed at \$702,943. Capital funds were budgeted at \$1,150,000, timber sales at \$60,000 and solid waste fees at \$86,228.

The PULSE internship program for the Continuing Technical Education (CTE) program has also been funded at the same amount as last year at \$50,000. \$418,040 is also included for the school nurse program and \$1,141,573 for the school resource officer program. This funding is less than the \$3,593,622 increase requested.

Southwestern Community College is allocated \$510,439 for current operations in the budget.

### Transportation

Transportation expenses increased by \$231,000; however, this will be offset by an additional \$200,000 in transportation grant funding. Transportation expenditures account for 2% of the budget at \$1,523,134.

### Economic and Physical Development

Economic and Physical Development expenses, which include the Cooperative Extension Service, Soil and Water Conservation and Economic Development, increased by \$57,686. Additional funding was budgeted primarily due to planning

for a future Economic Development Director contract or position. At 1% of the budget, economic and physical development \$728,873.

### Human Services

Human Services expenses decreased by \$453,623, which takes into consideration different classification of funds after consolidation of the Health Department and includes classifying school nurse positions under educational expenditures. Human Services accounts for 20% of the budget at \$13,709,701.

### Culture/Recreation

Culture and Recreation expenses account for 5% or \$3,422,364 of the budget and includes the Macon County Library. In the approved budget \$1,249,601 is proposed for library expenses attributed to Macon County which is an increase of \$23,967 from the previous year attributed to increased employee expenses.

### Future Capital Projects

During the budget development process, departments or outside agencies submitted a total of \$44,310,143 in capital project requests for FY 2026-2027. This amount is a little over 2/3 of the annual Macon County operating budget. According to Cabe many of the requests had value or merit; however, the county obviously cannot fund all of the requests.

Cabe said Macon County has a healthy fund balance achieved through conservative budgeting practices. Previously the board committed to \$20,000,000 from the general fund balance for current and future capital projects.

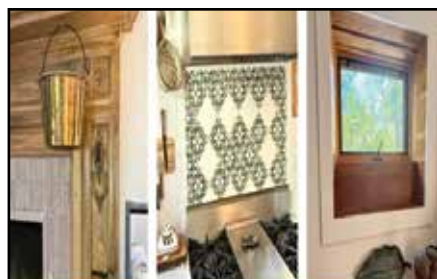
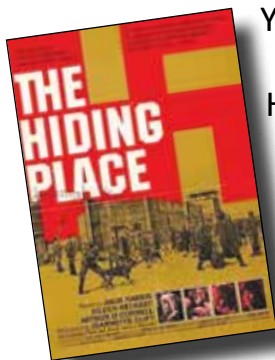
In August 2024, the Board adopted financial policy guidelines which contained a fund balance reserve policy. Macon County has capacity to fund some larger capital needs on a pay-go basis but also has the ability to acquire debt service funding to fund such needs. Commissioners have discussed many potential projects such as senior services, board of elections, housing, and a potential justice center facility.

"We are able to provide a wide range of services to the citizens and visitors of Macon County with this budget while maintaining a low tax rate," said Cabe. "We are fortunate to have an undesignated fund balance that allows us to address various capital and one-time expenditure needs. We will have to watch our revenues closely next year and make an educated decision about future needs and what revenues are required to fund such needs. We do not want to rely on any type of general fund expenditure to balance our actual operating budget expenditures."

## Sunday, June 28 at 6pm

You are invited to view this inspirational film being shown at the Highlands Central Baptist Church in the downstairs Fellowship Hall of the Shortoff Baptist Church – 11339 Buck Creek Road. ***It is the true story of the Ten Boom Family who in WW2 hid and rescued persecuted Jews from the Nazis.***

Produced by World-Wide Pictures (Billy Graham Organization) in 1975



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## ...FRL continued from page 5

situation originally fanned by Macon County Commissioners Paul Higdon and Danny Antoine and later by Macon County's Library Board appointees Diann Catlin, Leah Gaston and Justin Bonner whose terms are up and who were not reappointed Tuesday night.

In November 2024, an amended interlocal FRL agreement allowed Macon County commissioners to appoint FRL board members directly which is how Catlin and Gaston got on board and gave the county more influence as to what goes on in the county libraries regarding programs and materials.

How the board will be restructured is unknown. Currently, instead of nine board members there are now six, which is another problem. As Bonnie Bell noted in her letter-to-the-editor, "a six-member board invites ties and gridlock."

Whether the collection policy of the entire FRL system – collection referring to "the materials in the libraries" – will change now that Macon County is solely in charge is another issue.

During the ongoing controversy, in January 2023, then head FRL Librarian Tracy Fitzmaurice explained that the col-

lection policy was reviewed by an attorney and resembled policies used nationwide.

Its operative language was strong, anti-restriction language: no materials, book-club or story-time selections, or displays would be labeled, restricted, sequestered or altered because of controversy about the author, subject matter or intended audience.

How all this will affect Macon County's bottom line is unclear. Estimates to run an independent library system aren't known, though initially the county will receive some sort of a refund from FRL as Jackson County did.

According to recent reporting in Smoky Mountain News, when Jackson voted to leave, its county manager projected the withdrawal would cost roughly \$300,000 initially and about a half-million dollars per year thereafter.

They reported that Jackson's departure alone is projected to hit the remaining two counties for about \$371,000 – roughly \$186,000 in added expenses plus a \$155,000 revenue drop – with Macon bearing the larger share because it has three branches.



## Outdoor Concert Series

Each Friday and Saturday night from May through September, the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/ Visit Highlands, NC hosts live music downtown.

Join us for our June concerts!  
All shows take place from 6 - 8:30 p.m.

### Friday Night Live

Town Square | 343 Main Street

Showcasing traditional mountain music and local talent

JUNE 5

John Webb

JUNE 12

Young Mountain Magic

JUNE 19

Shortoff Mountain Boys

JUNE 26

Doug Ramsey

### Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park  
411-499 Pine Street

Featuring a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians

JUNE 6

The American Flyers

JUNE 13 - 6:30 p.m.  
U-Neek Flav'ur

JUNE 20

Groove Machine

JUNE 27 - NO CONCERT

Time change for  
Highlands Motoring Festival



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# SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

## The Joyous Believer



Rev. Dr. Marcus B. Robertson is Interim Priest in Charge of Christ Anglican Church, Cashiers.

The hundredth psalm begins with these famous words, "O be joyful in the Lord, all you lands ..." This psalm is sometime known as the "Jubilate," from the Latin word for "joy." In our Anglican tradition, it is often sung or chanted in worship and is one of the first portions of Scripture I learned when growing up. Joy is an important aspect of belief. It is the fruit of the realization of God's love for us and our relationship to Him as His child.

Joy is different from happiness. Happiness is contingent upon what is "happening." If circumstances are favorable, we are happy. If they are unfavorable, we are unhappy. That makes sense. But joy is different. It is more constant, having deeper roots. It is foundational and richly rewarding. Joy is a true gift when it comes to our daily living, because joy lasts.

In the Christian Tradition (which I represent as a priest), joy is a hallmark of the Christian. In Galatians, it is one of the virtues known as "the fruit of the Spirit." In John chapter 15, Jesus explains one of the purposes of His teachings: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." Joy is central to the Christian faith.

But sometimes joy is depicted in superficial ways. It is often presented more like happiness, which can come and go. But the power of genuine joy is that it remains. That means joy stays with us, even when our lives are filled with trouble or pain. This seems to contradict human experience and many think such a claim to joy is flippant and unrealistic.

However, if joy transcends our circumstances, then joy has the potential to ground us in something far deeper than what's currently happening. This is why St. Paul can teach in Romans chapter five that the Christian can "rejoice in our sufferings," and describes the process by which joy builds character in us through trial and difficulty, resulting in us becoming more like Christ.

James echoes Paul's teaching. In chapter one of the epistle that bears his name, we are taught to "consider it all joy ... when you meet trials of various kinds ..." and James goes on to describe a process of character development, very similar to Paul's.

This is not a superficial or Pollyanna approach to human suffering. It is not a simplistic and magical understanding of "positive thinking." Instead, it is a deep and disciplined rehearsal of all that God has done for us in Christ, grounded in an honest understanding of our

# PLACES TO WORSHIP

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Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor 706-782-3965

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

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

5th Sunday Singing featuring Georgia Mountain Trio;

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

Senior Pastor: Rev. Amy Spivey

Assoc. Pastor: Rev. Wonyeong Lee 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30; Worship & Kids Worship 10:30

## GRACE CHAPEL ON HIGH HOLLY

9615 Dillard Rd Scaly Mountain, N.C.

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas. <http://www.Graceonhighholly.com>

Sunday School 9:45; Worship 11; Prayer Service Wed 5:30p

Men's and Women's Bible Study throughout the week

## CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Rev'd Dr. Marc Robertson & Rev. Nick McGee

464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC

CAC@christanglicancashiers.org • 828-743-1701

Sunday: Adult Christian Ed, 9:15a; Holy Eucharist, 10:30a;

Fellowship 11:45a; Wed: Bible Study/Contemplative Prayer, 5p

## CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

743-5470 • [www.cashiers.church](http://www.cashiers.church)

Sun. 10:45a; Wed Study 5:15p supper and childcare.

## 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](http://www.cbchighlands.com) • 526-4685

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

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

Wed.: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mon. 4:30pm, Tues.

10am; Men's Bible Study: Wed. & Thurs. 7am @ Zookeeper

## EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

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

5th and Main streets • [www.incarnationwnc.org](http://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](http://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

Rev. Emily Wilmarth, pastor; Rev. Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor

828-526-3175 • [fpchighlands.org](http://fpchighlands.org)

Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10a; Worship 11a.; Tues: Men's Group 10a;

Wed: Bell Choir 4p. Chancel Choir: 5:30p

## GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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## 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. & 6p. Wednesday Worship is 6p

## HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services

909a Bluegrass and 11a Traditional

[www.highlandsmethodist.org](http://www.highlandsmethodist.org)

## HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Rev. Ken Langsdorf

Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

Visit our website: Holy Family Lutheran Highlands NC

## MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Zane Talley

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11. Choir: 6 p.m.

Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

## MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

Franklin • 828-634-1312 • [mountainsynagoguewnc.com](http://mountainsynagoguewnc.com).

Services: 1st Fri.; 3rd Sat. & Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

## MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church. 4224 Big Ridge

(4.5 miles from NC 107)

Weds: Youth Group 6 p.m.; Bible Study 6:30 p.m.;

## OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

## CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone – 526-2418

Sat. 4pm thru Oct 24.; Sun. - 11am

## SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

## SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

## SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Richard Salmonson

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

## ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Sun. 9a (English); Mon. 9:30a (Vatican II in Latin); Tues.

7p (Spanish); Wed., 9:30a (English)

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## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • [uufranklin.org](http://uufranklin.org)

Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

## WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers • 828-743-2122

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from June 11. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.**

• During the week, officers issued 10 Citations and 11 Warning Tickets.

## June 11

• At 2:40 p.m., officers received a report of a simple assault at an inn at 270 Main Street where a man was pushed by another man.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from June 2.**

## Sewer line break causes sewage leak

Yesterday, the town gave notice of a sewer line break that caused untreated sewage to leak into an area tributary.

“The Town of Highlands had a discharge of approximately 11,025 gallons of untreated wastewater on June 15, from a main line of our wastewater collection system near the intersection of Laurel Terrace and Riverwalk Drive.

“The untreated wastewater discharged into an unnamed tributary within the Cullasaja River Basin. The line was repaired in eight hours and the discharge which lasted for 5 hours and 15 minutes was terminated.”

Town Manager Josh Ward said a 6-inch PVC main sewer line was split underneath a manhole cover, which contained an air valve. There was no contractor involvement.

“We believe the manhole cover was sitting that way on the pipe a long time which caused the pipe to ultimately give way,” he said.

The Division of Water Resources was notified of the event on June 16, 2026, and is reviewing the matter.

This notice was required by North Carolina General Statute 143-215.1C. For more information contact, Josh Ward, Town Manager at (828) 526-2118.

“I would like to thank the sewer maintenance crew and their diligence in working to repair the failure,” said Ward.

## June 9

• At 11:59 a.m., the dept. responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence on Chestnut Run.

• At 3:13 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 south (Walhalla Road).

## June 10

• At 7:29 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Picklesimer Cemetery Road.

## June 11

• At 6:04 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Foreman Road.

• At 7:39 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Pierson Drive.

• At 8:04 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Spring Street.

## June 12

• A little past midnight, the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• At 3:46 p.m., the dept. conducted a search and rescue in the vicinity of Buck Creek Road.

• At 4:11 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD on a fire.

• At 5:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at Skyline Lodge.

• At 8:45 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Dolly Lane.

• At 9:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

## June 13

• At 11:04 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Persimmon Lodge Road.

• At 3:05 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Sherwood Forest Road.

• At 6:36 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 7:07 p.m. the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Bowery Road.

• At 8:35 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on South Old Walhalla Road.

## June 14

• At 2:12 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers FD on a fire.

• At 8:53 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Pipers Court.

## June 15

• At 8:57 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Morewood Circle.

## June 16

• At 1:35 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Morewood Circle.

• At 6:15 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Bowery Road.

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# • CLASSIFIEDS •

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**2BD/2BATH SINGLE WIDE** \$1,100 per month internet included. First and last security. Mark 828-200-0765. (st. 5/29)

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## SERVICES

**CREATURE COMFORTS** – In-House Pet or People sitting. Call Peg Ellis. Retired RN. References available. 828-200-1028. (st. 11/20)

**CAREGIVER/PET SITTER** – Veteran, 20 years experience. References in Palm Beach area and Highlands. Call 561-685-0700. (6/4)

**PLATEAU PAINTERS** – Interior and exterior painting, pressure washing, decks, and sanding and staining wood floors. Division of Chatlos Construction. Fully insured. Free estimates. Call Mike at 828-200-4071. (6/25)

**HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HANDYMAN** – Chatlos Construction – Remodels, Additions, Framing, Siding, Roofing, Decks, Painting. References. Insured. 828-200-4071. (6/25)

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**NEED FURNITURE MOVED OR ANYTHING HAULED AWAY?** Call or text James of Going Gone at 828-421-2655. (7/30)

...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 18

own moral failures and an embrace of God's offer of mercy through faith and repentance.

I wish for all of you a joyous summer. Not just a "happy" summer, but a joyous one, where a faithful consideration of God's grace extended to us in Christ is embraced, celebrated and enjoyed!

Read Highlands Newspaper, Highlands' only locally owned newspaper free from everywhere – on the street or on the web. Digital version at [www.HighlandsNewspaper.com](http://www.HighlandsNewspaper.com) Click on Local News.

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# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

## NOTE:

• Highlands Pharmacy is closed on Saturdays until May. Hours are Mon.-Fri. 9a to 5:30p.

## POOL SCHEDULE

• Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri. 6am-9:45am, and Saturday 10am-11pm - 6 lanes. Water Aerobics: 18 y+ Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers. Adult Swim: 18y+ Mon.-Thurs. 11am-3:30pm, Friday 11am-1:30pm. Public Swim: Mon. thru Thurs.. 11a-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

## PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. there are three indoor Pickle Ball courts and six outdoor courts. Pickle Ball can be played every Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs. and Friday 10am-pm outdoors for the summer

## MOUNTAIN FINDINGS

• Open: 10 am - 1 pm. Thurs-Sat.. Spruce Street. www.mountainfindings.org

## FIBBER MAGEES

• Fibber Magee's Thrift Store on Laurel Street Hours. Wed. & Fri. - 10a to 4p. Sat. - 10a to 2p.

## FARMERS MARKET

• The "market" is open every Saturday 8a to 12:30p in KH Founders Park on Pine Street.

## ALL WEEK

• Scaly Mountain/Highlands/Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Open meetings are held in Scaly Mountain at Grace Chapel, 9915 Dillard Rd., Scaly Mountain each Tues at 5:30 pm and Highlands at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Mon. at 5:30 p.m. and on Wed. & Fri. at 12 noon. Open in-person meetings are also held in Cashiers @ the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library, 249 Frank Allen Rd. on Sunday at 5pm, on Tuesday @ 7 pm, on

Friday at 5 pm and on Saturday at 9 am. For more information please visit our website www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of A.A. 24/7 call our HELP Line 828 349-4357

## SUN. THRU LABOR DAY

• At the Church in the Wildwood, traditional Hymn-Sing 7-8 p.m. Non-denominal. All are welcome. 10 minutes from downtown Highlands in Horse Cove. A family-friendly summer tradition for more than 30 years. Call or text 919-523-7067 for directions or questions.

## Mon.&Thurs.

• At First Presbyterian Church, ArtSpace is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The next exhibit will start in mid-August. For information contact fphkelley@gmail.com

## Mon-Wed-Fri

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9am at the Rec Park.  
• Balance, Stretch & Strengthen Class at the Rec Park 8:30-9:30am. The cost for the class is \$30 a month and is led by Vivian Brewer. Call the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

## Mon., Tues., Thurs.

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

## 2nd 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. For more info call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

## 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 info contact Bud

Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budandlynn@me.com

## Tuesdays

• Strength Training at the Rec Park 8:15-9:15 am.

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers – from 5-6:30 PM

• ESL classes at The Literacy & Learning Center, 6-7 p.m. 675 S 4th St.

## Tuesdays & Thurs.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at the Rec Park at 5:30. A combo class with different types of exercise. 828-526-3556

## Wednesdays

• The Literacy & Learning Center offers a FREE weekly Citizenship Class led by Faviola Olvera from 5:30 to 7 pm at 675 S 4th St in Highlands, this program is designed to help students navigate the complexities of the U.S. naturalization exam.

• Digital Navigators will be at the Hudson Library from 1-3 PM, digital navigators will host a Tech Time drop-in time at Hudson Library with the goal to assist attendees with basic smartphone, laptop, iPad and tablet skills. For more information, call the Library at 828-526-3031. This program is free and open to the public.

## Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15a. at the Rec Park. No martial arts background necessary Contact the Rec Dept. at 828-526-3556 for more info.

• At First Presbyterian Church a free concert "Music for Prayer" at noon. These casual concerts are almost entirely improvised and last 30-45 minutes.

## 3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main St. in their community room/909 chapel. Breakfast ia at 9a; meeting is at 10a. Email ncpst370@gmail.com or just join us at 9am.

## Through July 25

• At The Bascom, "Connecting to Place: Blue Ridge Craft Trails Invitational 2026" in the Thompson Gallery. The exhibition brings together 20 craft artists from communities across WNC, including Franklin, Waynesville, Dillsboro, Bryson City, Cullowhee, Canton, Cherokee, Maggie Valley, and Brass-town. Admission is free.

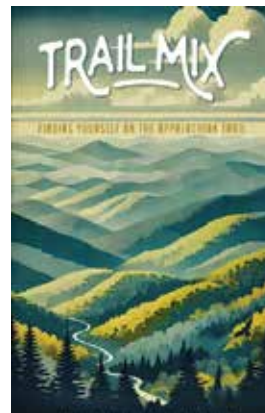
## Fri., June 19

• At CLE, Nicaea Revisited: Turkey Between Rome, Moscow, and Washington Presenter: Eren Tasar, 10AM-12PM, \$35. Members/\$50 Nonmembers

• Breaking ground for the new playground at the Rec Park is a 2p. Kona Ice social included.

## Sat., June 20

• Highlands-Cashiers Film Festival Summer FREE Screening. Trail Mix, noon at the Village Green in Cashiers and at 4p at PAC in Highlands. It follows a 2,000 mile journey from Georgia to Maine along the Appalachian Trail.



## Sat & Sun, June 27-28

• Mountaintop Rotary Club's Art and Craft show in KH-Founders Park.

## Sun., June 28

• At Highlands Central Baptist Church in the Fellowship Hall of Shortoff Baptist Church, at 6 p.m., you re invited to a viewing of "The Hiding Place" -- The true story of the Ten Boom Famimlly who in WW2 hid and rescued persecuted Jews from the Nazis.



## Thurs., July 2

• Fourth of July Flag Ceremony at Highlands Cemetery. Highlands American Legion Post 370 needs help placing flags on the graves of more than 200 veterans. Please join them at the cemetery flag pole at 5:30 p.m.

## Sat., July 4

Independence Day Celebration: 9-11a, water rockets at the Town Ball Field; 11a, free hotdog lunch at the ballfield; 11a to noon, Field Games at the ballfield; noon, Mtn. Area Medical Airlift helicopter to land at the ballfield; 1p, HF&R Ladder Truck Spraydown at the ballfield; 2p, Duck Derby at the bridge at Mill Creek; 6-8:30 p.m. Concert in KH Founders Park Southside Station; 9:20 p.m., fireworks, downtown.

## Sat., July 11

• Pop Up Pipers.

## July 13-16

• Little Highlander Basketball camp from 1-4p for Rising 1st-5th grade. The cost of the camp is \$75. For any other information call Lester Norris or Janice Mathis at 828-526-3556

## Tues., July 14

• Chef Dinners at OEI's The Farm. Annual Champagne Dinner featuring Pol Roger. Tickets start at \$234. Includes dinner drinks, shuttle and gratuity. Book online.

## Fri., July 17

• At PAC, Three American Troubadours at 7:30 pm. box-office@highlandspersformin-garts.com. 828-526-9047.

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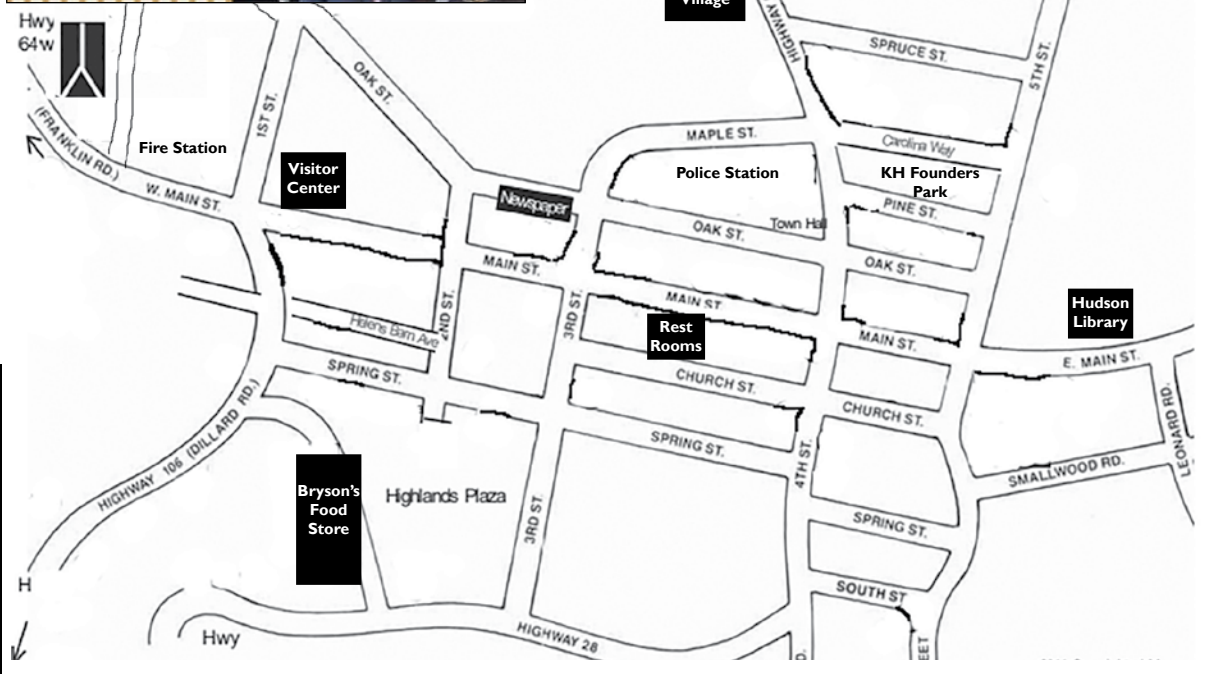
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