

City Council...from Page 1A

As expected, the council entertained various reappointments during its first regular meeting of the year, with Councilman Buddy Moore being selected to continue his longstanding role as mayor pro tempore.

Should Mayor Conley ever become incapacitated, Moore, as mayor pro tem, would take over from Conley in conducting the day to day business of the city.

City Attorney David Barrett and City Clerk Kaye McCann were reappointed to their respective positions that Tuesday as well.

City Council department liaison positions remained unchanged with the exception of Councilman Tony Dyer relinquishing his position on the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority Board to Councilwoman Easter.

Cook will remain on the Union County Historical Society Board, Mahan will remain the liaison to the Blairsville Police Department, and Easter will remain department liaison to the Blairsville Water and Sewer Department.

Moore will remain department liaison to the Blairsville Municipal Airport, and Dyer will continue to serve as liaison on behalf of city streets and sidewalks upkeep.



L-R, Front Row: Rhonda Mahan, Betty Easter, Tony Dyer and Jim Conley. Back Row: Mary Ruth Cook, Buddy Moore, Kaye McCann and David Barrett. Photo by Mark Smith

Also on Jan. 7, Mayor Conley recognized Water/Sewer Maintenance Superintendent Ottis Franklin for 36 years of employment with the city, saying that everyone in Blairsville was thankful for his service.

Moving along, the mayor held the first reading of an amendment to the city's alcohol ordinance for providing distilleries, citing future potential developments.

The amended ordinance will allow for the creation of a license for the business of manufacturing distilled spirits made from Georgia-grown perishable fruits and agricultural products other than perishable fruits grown in Georgia.

There were no objections or public comments in the first reading, and the second reading will occur on Feb. 4.

Council members adopted a resolution amending the city's Alcoholic Beverage License Fee Schedule to add license fees for the manufacturing of distilled spirits.

The council also adopted a resolution establishing a seized asset forfeiture checking account for the Blairsville Police Department. Cash seized in the course of police work will be deposited in this account before going through an awards process by the courts.

Once awarded in Superior Court, all seized assets are to be used by the Police Department strictly for law enforcement purposes.

Seized items like vehicles go through an awards process as well, and once awarded in Superior Court, they can be converted to cash for deposit into the seized asset checking

account.

In other council news, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris petitioned the city to allow Point to Point Environmental to dump water from a holding tank into the city sewer system rather than continuing to haul it offsite.

Paris explained that Point to Point, the company he hired last year to clean up a fuel leak at the road department, has determined that the spill has been cleaned up per Georgia Environmental Protection Division standards, pending the results of one last test made on Jan. 2.

However, per EPD rules, the company must continue to monitor the runoff for a period of up to two years. Paris said there would be no cost to the city and that Point to Point had agreed to pay the city the normal sewer rate. Point to Point will test the water twice per month.

The council unanimously approved the petition, conditioned upon the results of the Jan. 2 test.

In his department head report, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Jody Cook said the Georgia EPD would be in Blairsville on Jan. 14 testing for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. PFAS are manmade chemicals that have been manufactured and used since the 1940s.

Some of the more familiar products that contain PFAS are water-repellant clothing, non-stick coatings such as Teflon, polishes, waxes, paints, cleaning products and firefighting foam, according to epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas.

PFAS can accumulate

in the body over time and cause adverse health effects according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Danny Dillard reported that water usage in December 2019 was about 5 million gallons more than in December 2018.

Cody Harber was unanimously ratified as the new Blairsville Municipal Airport Assistant Manager. Harber is a 1997 graduate of Union County High.

June McEldowney, owner of Rustic Mountain Décor, was approved to join the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority Board.

The city's 2020 intergovernmental agreements with the DDA, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and the Union County Historical Society for hotel/motel tax distribution were all unanimously approved.

The annual city contribution to the Union County Public Library, which has been in the amount of \$7,000, was upped to \$7,500 at Cook's request and unanimously approved by the council.

Chamber President Steve Rowe announced that the base for a new electric automobile charging station had been installed in the upper parking lot of the Community Center. It will be a self-serve, self-pay system able to charge two vehicles at a time.

The charging station will be for public use and is meant to be a convenience for both residents and visitors to the area, as well as a draw for people who drive electric cars.

D.A.R.E...from Page 1A



A whopping 210 fifth-graders graduated from D.A.R.E. on Friday, Jan. 10.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

anticipating your high school graduation as the class of 2027," Elementary School Principal Jerry Bavero said.

Continued Bavero, "By the time you get to that point, much like we already have today, you will have won together, you will have lost together, you will have cheered for each other, and you will have comforted each other.

"Today, we celebrate your mastery and knowledge of the dangers of drugs and violence. As you move forward as a team and work toward your high school graduation, the goal is to master the application of this knowledge.

"Find your strength and support of your team, your school and your community. You are the 'all' that we want success for (in 'Success for All')."

Having the D.A.R.E. program helps students become more aware of pitfalls and dangers that they may encounter throughout their lives and assists them with understanding how to deal with those situations.

"D.A.R.E. was established in 1983 in Los Angeles County in California," Officer McConnell said. "What happened was, they didn't have a program to teach kids about drugs and alcohol, so you can imagine how bad it was.

"Now, D.A.R.E. is in over 300,000 classrooms in 50 states and in 53 countries. It is proven that having D.A.R.E. in your school cuts down on drugs and alcohol by 26% in usage.

"It's really a beneficial program where we talk about drugs, alcohol, vaping, bullying, situations they may get into, and stuff like that."



Jaxon Totherow of Union County Elementary won the big D.A.R.E. essay contest and got to read his essay aloud last Friday.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

The program is taught to fifth-grade students every year, with the school system and

local businesses supporting the program to ensure a better future for Union County students.