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Matthew Deven Taylor's motorcycle was recovered on the side of Old Highway 76 after the fatal crash last week. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Specialized Collision Reconstruction Team to investigate the crash.

A finalized report by the Specialized Collision Reconstruction Team could take months to complete, the GSP said Monday, and more information will be available at a later date.

Funeral services for Deven Taylor were held on

Saturday, Sept. 21, in the chapel of Mountain View Funeral Home.

Taylor, a Blairsville native, was of the Baptist faith, and he attended the Union County School System.

He is survived by father Matthew Taylor of Blairsville; mother Sonia Taylor of Hiawassee; brothers and sisters Leanna Taylor, Chelsea and

Cody Meeker, Logan Taylor, Chris Cothren, and Bryan Nelson, all of Blairsville; Grandparents Virginia Taylor of Blairsville, Debra Willis of Hiawassee, and Harvey Willis of Dalton; nieces and nephews Charlie and Cayden Meeker, Layla and Joseph Cothren; and several cousins, aunts, uncles, and many other relatives and friends.

## Board of Education...from Page 1A

remodeling existing buildings with possible state funds. The exact amount of those funds is unknown at this time."

Essentially, the district is weighing all options in evaluating how best to move forward with either updating the current elementary school building or constructing a new one using state reimbursement monies as a funding mechanism.

Fields and Crow explained that the COPS program for Georgia's 181 school districts is funded with \$300 million in "entitlement earnings" distributed each year by the state.

Each district gets a percentage based on several factors, with the option of using state entitlement money for new buildings or new equipment, modernizing buildings 40 years old or older, or doing short-term renovations of buildings or equipment 10 years old or older.

Furthermore, each of these options comes with various constraints by the state, as well as time and space scheduling considerations that school boards must consider when deciding which option to choose, if any.

All of the options are of the cost reimbursement variety, meaning that the school districts would pay the costs up front and submit invoices to the state for reimbursement after jobs are completed.

"The schools have received over \$300,000 in entitlement money for the 10-classroom addition at the primary school in 2015-2016," Crow said. "We are waiting on state funding for Union County High School totaling over \$900,000 for HVAC renovations in 2018."

Fields explained in the work session training that the



Superintendent John Hill in the Sept. 17 regular Board of Education meeting. Photo by Mark Smith

COPS money available from the state each year is cumulative and progressive. That is, it accumulates year over year if the school district elects not to use the available funds, and the amount increases each year.

Crow said that, due to the Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax in Union County, and because the school board and school leadership have conservatively managed school finances, all options are feasible for the district without having to resort to debt financing.

The school board approved the system's Gifted Education Manual in the Sept. 17 meeting.

Union County Schools has had an ongoing program for gifted students for years that follows Georgia Department of Education guidelines, though the state now requires that gifted education programs be formalized, board-approved and submitted to the state each year.

"This is mainly pulled from the Georgia DOE manual," said Lisa Vaughn, Curriculum Director and

Testing Coordinator for Union County Schools, of the system's current gifted manual. "And for this year, they have started asking this to be sent in. I had to send it to the state on Aug. 1."

Added Murphy, "All of the principals, (Assistant Superintendent Dr. Paula Davenport, myself and Mrs. Vaughn went through the DOE guidelines from the state and put in what we do here and what we can provide."

Davenport stressed that the manual outlined gifted program procedures that the school system had been doing all along, "it's just that, at this point, Lisa has compiled them and put them into a formal document."

School department directors updated the board on their areas of influence, and all directors reported that their departments were running smoothly.

Nutrition Director Cindy Jones brought in pastries and biscuits made by high school students for the board members and leadership team, much to their delight.

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portion of the meeting, Paris said that BM&K Construction & Engineering, the company that won the bid to build the double gymnasium on Glenn Gooch Bypass, had been given an ultimatum by the county to start construction by this week or else the project would be taken back out to bid.

"That's something we certainly don't want to do, but that's what we're looking at on that," Paris said.

Paris originally announced the approval of the \$3.32 million contract for the construction of the new double gym in his regular meeting on May 16, stating that "the contractor should start, we're hoping, right away."

In his July regular meeting, the commissioner said that "construction on the double gym has not started yet," and that the company had said "they're going to start within 30 days."

Last month, in his August commission meeting, Paris updated folks on the progress — or lack thereof — on the double gym construction.

"We had hoped it would be done by February or March (of 2020), but since they've prepped the site, it's been two and a half months. They did move a construction trailer out there," Paris said at the time, adding that there would be penalties if they didn't complete the project on time.

The new recreation center/double gym will feature multi-purpose flooring rather than wood so that the facilities can be used for a variety of different activities.

In other county news, Paris accepted a \$33,000 agreement between the county and iWorQ Systems Inc. for software enabling the county to better track the progress of public works and community development projects.

"This will include software programs for the building and inspection office, the road department, the county commissioner's office and accounting, which will allow the county to become more organized with the repair work, inspection and road prioritization, including pavement assessments," Paris said. "Also, there's an area in there where the public can actually go online and report a road problem."

Commissioner Paris approved an agreement with Rushton & Co. LLC in an amount not to exceed \$14,000 to assist Union County with specified financial processes and policies to make sure transactions are properly processed and recorded.

Paris said this really

amounts to a training program for county accounting employees so that some processes and records identified in last year's audit as needing improvement can be addressed.

The commissioner approved a contract with environmental/geotechnical firm Point to Point Environmental in the amount of \$65,905 for creek impact and free product abatement.

Point to Point Environmental was chosen by the state to mitigate and clean up a recent leak from a fuel tank that was installed at the road department before Paris took office.

The money for this mitigation and cleanup came from a combination of public funding and self-insurance, and there was no out-of-pocket cost to the county, Paris said.

Paris accepted an Accountability Courts Grant from the state for the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant in the amount of \$118,087. The Accountability Court is part of the Drug Court, and the program funded by this grant has an 87% non-recidivism rate, Paris said.

The commissioner approved the acceptance of the Butternut Crossing road that leads up to the Blairsville Save-A-Lot Food Store into the county-maintained road system.

He proclaimed the week of Sept. 17 through Sept. 23 as Constitution Week, with Tuesday, Sept. 17, being Constitution Day.

Paris also proclaimed the month of September 2019 as Suicide Prevention Month.