

Parks and Recreation continued from front

ston said. She added that while she appreciates Hill's dedication and effort, she thinks it is time for more structure and better leadership.

Geddings also supports a change in leadership. After reading the Commission's mission statement aloud to the Commission, Geddings stated that he thinks highly of Hill, and appreciates his efforts and dedication in service of the Commission. However, Geddings does not believe that Hill has the time to serve effectively due to his business obligations in Atlanta. Geddings then nominated Troy Anderson as the new chairman and Amy Johnston to continue serving as vice-chairman.

Hill responded to both members by insisting that he is perfectly capable of running his business in Atlanta and chairing the Commission. He said that he does not visit Washington often because he does not want to seem as though he is micromanaging the Commission. "Me being in Atlanta to run my business does not interfere with what we are doing here. Now the reason I don't come up a lot, is because when I do come, it is as though I am checking on somebody," Hill said. "And so to say that because I am out of town is a reason why I should not chairing this board, I think that is an unfair statement."

Hill then said that he thought that he has done a "hell of a job," as chairman in making sure that the Commission stayed on track. Nevertheless, Johnston pointed out that Hill had failed to follow the meeting's agenda. She further stated that the Commission needs a chairman who will stay on task and maintain order. "While I appreciate your passion, I appreciate your expertise, I appreciate your experience in such organizations, we're jumping all over the place. We are jumping all over the place on the agenda, on this discussion, we're talking about four or five different things, and I feel like we need somebody that's going to keep us on task, and let's talk about one thing at a time, then we move on to the next, and we move on to the next. We need more order, and we need more organization, and I just don't feel that coming from you right now," Johnston said.

The December Christmas bonuses also surfaced at the meeting. Chairman Hill stated that he will take the matter up himself and either raise the money or require the employees to pay the bonuses back. He clarified that he will not take the bonuses from the employees all at one time, however. Hill further stated that he did not say he would repay the money out of his own pocket.

Johnston disagreed with Hill. "I don't remember it that way," she said. Hill asked her what she remembered. "I remember you saying that you would see that the money got replaced.

And that you would handle it," Johnston said.

"That's what I'm doing, handling it," Hill replied. "We'll do just like the other piece when this board said that employees did not, um, he did not work, then made him pay the money back, and then gave a um, a reprimand, and so that's what we'll do with this also," Hill replied.

"That wasn't discussed at the meeting," Johnston responded.

"Well that's what my recollection is, and I want to make sure that I clear it up," Hill said. He then asked for any further comments on the matter to which there were none.

Further confusion was added as Hill continuously pushed the commission to select three nominees for Johnston's seat to send to the City Council for approval. At their December meeting however, the City Council approved Johnston's reappointment to the Parks and Recreation Commission. City Administrator Jerry deBin, who was attending in the audience, verified this.

Reforming the Commission's resolution and governing rules was another subject of debate. Johnston and Geddings advocated for several changes, including changing the meeting day to every third Monday, to reconsider what constitutes a quorum, adjusting the deadline for requests to address the Commission, adding term limits, and installing Robert's Rules of Order as the Commission's guiding set of rules. She also suggested expanding the Commission to nine members: two county commissioners, two city councilmen, two county appointees, two city appointees, and one representative from the Wilkes County School System's athletic department to act as a liaison. Johnston added that the Parks and Recreation director should be enabled to appoint a secretary to the Commission. Presently, the director is supposed to serve as the secretary.

These suggestions also met resistance from Hill, who hesitated to make any changes on the spot. "This document right here, this is very outdated as to what we are trying to do to support our director, and to support the children here in Wilkes County. So you're absolutely right. Let's not rush to do this, let's do it and do it right," Hill said. Hill went on to suggest forming a committee to address the updating of the Commission's rules and resolution. Johnston disagreed with delaying the reforms and supported addressing them at the meeting. "I would like to make some minor changes tonight if nothing else, and we can update it as needed in the future," Johnston said. The Commission however, made no further progress with respect to Johnston and Geddings's suggestions.

The Commission did act and approve a temporary facility

rental price for three upcoming events. The three customers will be charged \$150 per day, which must be paid in advance. The event organizer must also have proof of insurance, arrange for security with the Wilkes County Sheriff's Office, and provide a \$50 deposit with a signed rental agreement.

Parks and Recreation Director Rodney Wellborn then presented his director's report. He updated the Commission on a situation that involved the Pop Warner Cheer Squad. According to Wellborn, East Georgia Pop Warner informed Lakeisha Harris and Carina Winfield of their suspension from Pop Warner over an incident that occurred while at competition. The hotel where the cheer squad was staying is now incrementally refunding the money that the Commission paid

to cover the squad's housing. Two payments from hotel have been received already.

Wellborn also discussed the Pop Warner basketball league. He revealed that 155 players are participating, as well as sixteen cheerleaders, who have joined the resurrected cheerleading squad. Wellborn stated that basketball is at its season midpoint. He also said that the new drills are being implemented successfully, and that game turnout has been good.

Soccer and Little League baseball registration has begun, with baseball's registration deadline set as February 18.

Pop Warner football registrations will be February 7 and 19. Wellborn said flyers going to the schools to get information out.

Wellborn also reported that the rear-end of the Commission's

work truck went out Sunday. A quote from Blackburn has been received for the repairs, which totals \$1,400. The price, according to Wellborn, includes tow fees.

Additionally, Wellborn reported a roof leakage over the lobby, gym, kitchen, and pantry. The ceiling has been damaged accordingly and needs repair.

Wellborn stated that there are three upcoming occasions for facility rentals. The rental occasions include a "mourning" in February and a 4H event on February 12. Wellborn added that 4H may need the gym an additional weekend in March.

The Commission approved the rental of their facility to Amethyst Wynn and Wilkes County Community Partnership.

The December minutes were also approved without incident.

Leslie Souther Graduates from Valdosta State University

Leslie Souther of Washington, Georgia, has earned a Master's of Education in Elementary Education from Valdosta State University.

Souther is among more than 800 students who completed their degree requirements during Fall Semester 2021.

"I am incredibly proud of our graduates for having the dedication to overcome countless obstacles, including this ongoing global health crisis, and to finish strong and reach this significant milestone," said Dr. Richard A. Carvajal, president of VSU. "I am similarly so proud of the world-class faculty and staff who supported these students through life-changing teaching, mentoring, advising, research, community engagement opportunities, and much more on their journey to this special day."

Established in 1906, Valdosta State University is a premier comprehensive university that offers both the extensive academic, cultural, and social opportunities of a major university and the small classes and close, per-

Washington resident savedcontinued from front

generating a better outcome for the victim. This coupled with a quick response from volunteers and off duty personnel who show up and work together makes for enhanced conclusions," Gilland stated.

For the month of January, Chief Gilland explained that the Washington Fire Department as responded 4 Structure fires in both the City and County. "We've had good response from personnel at each incident including personnel from Rayle, Tignall, Washington, and Wilkes Fire Service," Gilland reported. The fire department has also responded to: one vehicle fire, two grass fires, five motor vehicle accidents, sixty-eight medical assistance calls, four fire alarms, and fourteen miscellaneous calls.



The Pope Center, contact the City of Washington at 706-678-3277 or visit City Hall located at 102 E. Liberty Street.

The Washington City Council will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, February 14, 2022 at The Pope Center.

Roy L. Burns Senior Center will have a Valentine's Day Luncheon on February 8 at 11:30 a.m.



Sherri Bailey presents Fire Chief C.J. Gilland and Mayor William deGolian with the grant check

City of Washington awarded GMA grant

Submitted by
SHERRI BAILEY

The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) has awarded the City of Washington a grant of \$4,900 for the purchase of equipment and/or training to reduce the likelihood of injury to city employees. Eligibility was determined by specific requirements associated with safety and loss control efforts.

The GMA Safety and Liability Management Grant program was introduced in 2000 to provide financial support to aid members in improving employee safety and liability loss control endeavors. The funds can be used for the purchase of training services or equipment that reduce the probability of claims. Since inception of the program, hundreds of cities

have collectively received several million dollars to help fund the purchase of items such as bulletproof vests, training videos, confined space entry equipment, reflective safety vests, fire department turnout gear and camera systems for police departments.

The Safety and Liability Management Grant Program is made available to members of GMA's property and liability insurance program, the Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency (GIRMA), and GMA's workers' compensation insurance program, the GMA Workers' Compensation Self-Insurance Fund (GMA WCSIF).

Based in Atlanta, GMA is a voluntary, non-profit organization that provides legislative advocacy, education, insurance and employee benefits, financing and consulting services to more than 500 member cities.



Washington-Wilkes Little League 2022 REGISTRATION FEES
T-BALL \$35 / Child
Baseball / Softball \$55 / Child

Online registration available from January 5th thru February 17th

<https://clubs.bluesombrero.com/washwilkes/>

If you need assistance or do not have internet we will help!

If we can get enough local kids for each division we will play here only, no traveling. We will consider co-ed teams through coach pitch age to make enough teams.

Leagues open for signup to all ages 4 – 16 based on their age as of dates below: Baseball,

Coaches Pitch and T-Ball Age as of September 1, 2022

Softball Age as of January 1, 2022

If you have questions or need assistance, contact the following individuals

Dann Standard, President

dstandard@gmail.com



706-836-0442

Meghan Fortson, Vice-President

mea020989@gmail.com

706-318-6607

POP WARNER YOUTH FOOTBALL and CHEER

REGISTRATION

Will be held at the
Washington-Wilkes
Parks & Recreation Center
Lobby
from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

For further informatin call (706) 678-1454

SIGN UP DATES

February 7th & 9th

FOR AGES:

8U, 10U, 12U

wwparksandrec20@gmail.com