

MONTHLY MANAGER'S REPORT

Monday, April 19, 2021



Finance Department

The finance department has won the Distinguished Budget Award for the fourth year in a row for the July 1, 2020 budget. This award is the highest recognition for budgeting excellence in North America.

This award represents a significant achievement by the county and reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meet the highest principles of governmental budgeting.

In order to receive this award the entity had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess how well the county budget serves as: 1) policy document, 2) financial guide, 3) operations guide, 4) communications device.

Budget documents must be rated proficient in all four categories and in fourteen mandatory criteria within those categories to receive the award. Award recipients have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provide an excellent example for other governments throughout North America.



Information Technology & Facilities Maintenance

The Information Technology and Facilities Maintenance Departments staff engaged in a multi agency effort with the Sheriff Department & Court-house staff to turn the Aquatic Center basketball court into a socially distanced courtroom. The layout and technology of this new location was initially tested for the bi-weekly drug court on Fridays. After having shown success in these initial tests, it was decided the new setup was ready to handle the resumption of Jury Trials on April 5, 2021, a little over a year since COVID-19 caused Jury Trials to cease due to social distancing requirements.



Parks and Recreation

HCPRD hosted District and State basketball tournaments February 26-27 and March 5-6. A total of 23 teams participated. One team won State Basketball for 7-8 Girls.

In early April there was a total of 29 participants for Spring Break camp at the gymnastics facility. It was a one week day camp full of field trips and fun activities to keep kids physically active and entertained while out of school.



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Emergency Services



Total Fire Apparatus Responses:	294
Total EMS Unit Responses:	606
Community Paramedicine:	131
Total Unit Responses:	1,031

As a result of the extreme weather experienced on March 25, 2021, Habersham County experienced flooding, washed out roads, downed trees, and lighting strikes.

Consequently, Habersham County Emergency Services responded to two residential fires caused by lighting strikes. Habersham County also experienced wide-spread flooding in multiple places. The worse flooding was at Pitts Park located in downtown Clarkesville. Flooding and damage from this storm caused temporary closures on Shoal Creek Rd and Odis Barron Rd.

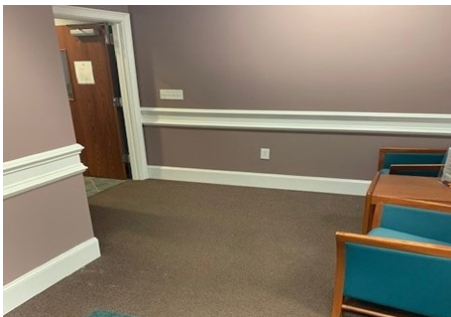
A wind event was also experienced on the Tallulah Gorge Scenic Loop, School Road and Nunnally Road. This event was pre-dominantly around Tallulah Falls School.

The Emergency Services Training Department continues to put on monthly classes for initial certifications, recurrent and required CEU EMS and Fire training. The department offers congratulations to the individual participants for their effort and success in completing these challenging classes and exams in the month of March as well as appreciation to the instructors and mentors that aided them.



Facilities Management

Facilities Management worked on several project in the past month. Due to water damage caused by Tropical Storm Zeta, the baseboards in the Clarkesville Library had to be replaced. An addition of a closet area at Deep Creek Fire Station is almost completed. The added space will accommodate a dedicated uniform storage room. Repairs were completed on the Habersham Mills Fire Station septic system.



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Public Works

Airport:

Habersham County released a bid request in March 2021 for construction of a 10 unit hangar which was open on Thursday, April 1, 2021. Although 9 prospective bidders acquired construction plan documents and 6 contractors attended pre-bid meeting, we did not receive any bid responses to build the 10 unit hangar. The next steps are to separate the project into three parts: A) Site Development B) Hangar Building Purchase and C) Building Construction.

Staff is working with the Georgia Department of Transportation to allow for a change order for the current airport grading contractor to provide grading for the airport hangar. If that's permitted, the county will purchase the building supplies and then rebid the project for labor and construction management services to assemble the building and finish construction of the 10 unit hangar.

Avigation easement proposals have been offered to neighboring land owners. Staff is currently in negotiations. The contractor started work on the taxiway realignment project on February 1st. Paving is complete and grading is 90% complete. The project should be wrapping up in the next couple of weeks.



Landfill:

Dirt hauling is ongoing to cover cells 3,4 &7. Staff completed work on installing a wind fence to help control wind-blown litter. The access road to Cell 5 has been extended for easier traveling. RFP's are being advertised for hauling leachate and recycling materials

Road Department:

Road Department employees paved and opened New Liberty Rd on March 23rd. On March 26, Habersham County held an official reopening ceremony. The general contractor on the job was Higgins Construction. Grading and concrete services were provided by North Georgia Concrete. JM Smith Engineering drafted the civil design and KCI provided the site inspections. Southern Geotechnical Consulting provided materials testing.

The heavy rain event on March 25th caused three roads to be washed. Those roads have since been repaired and are back open, with work ongoing to repair rough gravel roads. This has contributed to an 18% increase in work orders for the month of March compared to February with 202 work orders completed for the month.

Progress has been made on Pardue Mill Bridge. The contractor has moved in and has filled cavities under abutments. Water line casing is nearly complete and 7 of 12 micropiles are complete.



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Planning and Development

New signage and landscaping has been installed at the Habersham Business Park. Additional signage and roadway lighting will be installed in the near future.



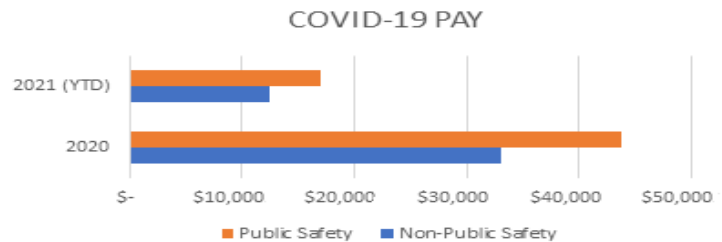
Human Resources

Employees received a 3% COLA increase approved by the Board on 2/15/2021. The Human Resources Department worked to ensure over 350 full-time and part-time employees received the raises on the March 5, check. All pay tables and job postings were updated to reflect the new starting pay for all positions.

The Human Resources Department coordinated the Safety Training for March by providing information on the COVID-19 Vaccination. The training provided key facts about the vaccine and information on what to expect before, during and after getting the vaccination.

Absences due to COVID-19 exposures and/or diagnoses continue to remain constant with over 30 employees have needed to utilize the Interim Sick Leave since the first of the year. Below is a chart and graph showing the total costs and hours used for 2020 and 2021 to date.

Interim Sick Leave Usage						
	2020			2021 (YTD)		
	Employees	Hours	Pay	Employees	Hours	Pay
Non-Public Safety	48	1950	\$33,031	14	729	\$12,486
Public Safety	42	2862	\$43,808	16	959	\$16,982



The county lost 20 full-time employees and 5 part-time employees in February and March. The annualized turnover rate is projected by the end of FY21 to be an overall 29% (30% FT, 28% PT). The Human Resources department is currently recruiting over 20 positions which includes full-time, part-time, and volunteer positions. The county hired 11 full-time employees and 12 part-time employees including one temporary.

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Senior Center

The Vet-to-Vet meetings have resumed after a year of not meeting due to the COVID restrictions. Carolyn Culpepper with the Northeast Georgia Medical Center Hospice hosts the event at the Senior Center once per month. The meetings are open to any veteran of military service. The NGMC provides coffee and danishes for the group, while they have fellowship and share their personal stories.



The Senior Center held several activities leading up to the Easter holiday. Craft supplies were donated to the center by the community and volunteers assisted participants in making plastic Easter egg bunnies; painting flowerpots and decorating Easter hats. The hats were displayed in the center and clients were invited to vote on their favorite. The annual Easter egg hunt was held on March 30, followed by lunch and the announcement of the hat decorating contest and easter egg hunt winners. Over 300 candy-filled eggs were donated by the Senior Center Membership and all the prizes given away were donated by a Senior Center client.



Year to date, the Senior Center has provided 38,397 meals to Habersham County senior citizens. For the month of March alone, the center delivered 36 bags and 73 boxes of various food commodities. Meals on Wheels is seeking volunteers to deliver meals. While they were fortunate to add 2 new volunteers to their ranks this past month, the Senior Center only has 67 total volunteers with approximately 13 on leave due to COVID.. It takes a minimum of 100 to run the program comfortably and allow current volunteers to take days off for personal reasons

COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Site at Fairgrounds

Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) is now providing COVID-19 vaccinations with no appointment necessary at the Habersham County Fairgrounds Mass Vaccination Site located at 4235 Toccoa Hwy in Clarkesville. The site is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Individuals 16 years of age or older are eligible to receive the vaccine, however eligible 16 or 17-year-old vaccine participant must bring proof of age to the vaccination appointment in the form of government-issued identification or a birth certificate.

Though the site is now accommodating people without an appointment, it is still requested and recommended that those wishing to receive the vaccine schedule an appointment to make the process quicker and ensure that adequate supplies will be available to ensure that they receive the vaccine.

All adults 16 years of age and older can preregister for an appointment at any Site by visiting myvaccinegeorgia.com or by calling 844-275-5388 (TTY: 844-275-8938).

