



Folkston structure fire ruled arson

Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King announced today that a residential fire in Charlton County was intentionally set and has been ruled an act of arson. The fire occurred at 14 Presidents Road in Folkston on Monday, March 8. The 8,700 sq. ft. house was vacant, unsecured, and not connected to public utilities at the time of the fire. "The owner of the property was out of town when the fire occurred, and the house was totally destroyed," said Commissioner King. "We are assisting the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Folkston Fire Department on this case." Anyone with information about this Charlton County fire is invited to call Commissioner King's State Fire Investigators Unit at 1-800-252-5804. This anonymous hotline operates around the clock.

Homeland Council hears Spanish Creek Watershed Plan report

By JOHN MCCOY

The council of the City of Homeland held its regularly scheduled meeting on March 11, 2021.

During the meeting, the final report of the Coastal Incentive Grant to write a Spanish Creek Watershed Management Plan that will enable the local governments to apply for additional funding to correct the fecal coliform problems in Spanish Creek was given. Members of the St. Marys River Management Committee attended to answer questions. The St. Marys Riverkeeper is overseeing the sampling and cleanup event portion of the grant; the River Management Committee is working with the local governments. The grant Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland just completed was for the purpose of writing a management plan for Spanish Creek. Charlton County High School students and faculty, under the oversight of the Riverkeeper, did testing to help provide the matching hours for the grant. The school group's testing showed that the water treatment facility was not causing increased levels of E. coli. An Advisory Committee appointed by local governments, and a river cleanup by St. Marys Riverkeeper, provided additional matching hours.

Future funding requests will be for addi-

tional eDNA testing in Clay Branch to determine what species are causing the problem in that branch. Once the source of the problem is determined, grants to solve the problem will follow. Once the problem in Clay Branch is solved, the county will begin studying and solving problems in another branch. All of these grants require matching hours, and they will be provided by students doing E. coli testing and a committee doing education about Best Management Practices for maintaining septic tanks and for the proper disposal of solid waste (including farm animals).

The council also heard from Police Chief Brad Todd who stated that the inaugural E-911 Advisory Board meeting went smoothly with the expectation of monthly meetings to follow. The E-911 Advisory Board, which is still in the planning phase, discussed the possibilities of working with the Charlton County Sheriff's Office to ease the process of transitioning into using new software.

Councilman Kipp Taylor, who is a member on the Charlton County Fire Board, expressed the need for more firefighters. At its current state, the county has 32 volunteer firefighters and needs approximately 50 overall. With some going through background

checks, the number could soon rise closer to their goal.

The council also heard from the Water Department, who gave updates of necessary repairs being made around the city. In good standing with the Environmental Protection Division, the city also had no return water testing.

The Sanitation Department gave an update on the distribution of new disposal bins. As they have spread approximately 35 of the new bins around Homeland, they have already noticed an improvement in the cleanliness of the area. Helping reduce excess spillage and litter, the city still has 13 bins left to distribute and the Sanitation Department expects it will be able to restore some older bins to a condition that will continue to help out with issues of litter and spillage. In addition, it was reported that necessary maintenance has been done on cemeteries and parks in order to lessen sand spurs and litter.

As part of its effort to keep Homeland clean, the city reminds its residents there is a public dumpster that is also available on weekends. This dumpster does not accept "white goods" like home appliances or tires. For weekend access, residents are urged to call the phone number posted

SEE 'HOMELAND' ON 2

Board of Education plans for summer, approves agreements

By JOHN MCCOY

The Charlton County Board of Education held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 16.

To begin the meeting, Superintendent Dr. Brent Tilley delivered the financial report for the Board of Education's progress in the 2021 Fiscal Year. Dr. Tilley reported that the current fiscal year is 66.66% complete, with 21.7% of local revenues and 44.35% of total revenues collected. It was also reported that 53.61% of total budgeted expenditures at the current point of the fiscal year.

Dr. Tilley also gave the enrollment and attendance report for Charlton County Schools. It was

reported that the overall attendance for the school district is at 93%, and that with COVID-19 cases decreasing, there is an expectation for Charlton County Schools to maintain a low number of COVID-19 related absences. Since its last meeting, the Charlton County Board of Education's audit for the 2020 Fiscal Year was completed. Dr. Brent Tilley reported the audit, with nothing to be modified, was returned clean. He commended Patsy Allen on another job well done.

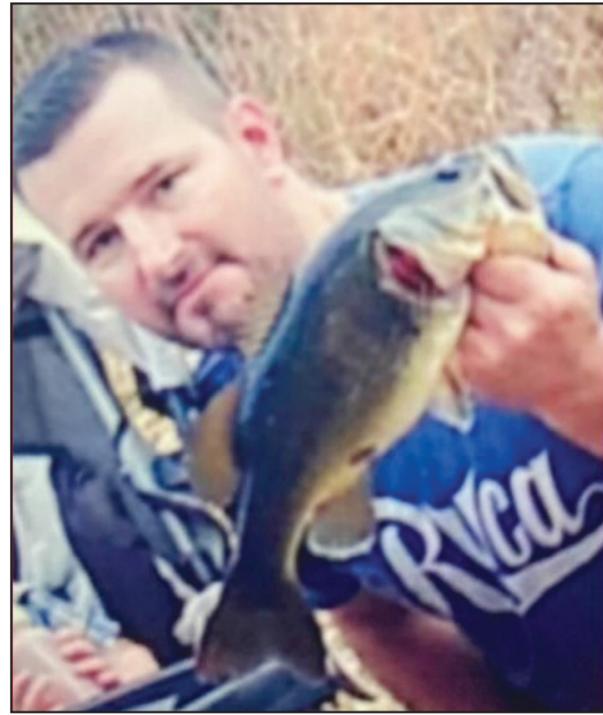
The Board of Education also received a status report for a 2021 Summer Learning Program. With funds from the CARES II Act, the board plans to address issues of CO-

VID-19 related learning loss at Folkston Elementary School, St. George Elementary School, and Bethune Middle School. The Summer Learning Program is set to begin June 1, 2021 and last until July 1, 2021.

During the meeting, the Action Pact Transition/Disabilities Agreement was approved. This agreement focuses on services that will be provided by Charlton County Schools and Action Pact to special education students in the Head Start Program.

The service agreement for Asset Works was also discussed and renewed. Asset Works will work on behalf of Charlton County Schools to generate re-

SEE 'BOE MEETING' ON 2



Missing St. George man found safe

Norris Howard, Jr., 38, of St. George was reported missing Tuesday, March 16 around 10:00 a.m. According to Charlton County Sheriff Robert Phillips, Howard was located on the St. Marys River Friday, March 19 at approximately 12:00 p.m. by volunteer searchers. He was found safe and was taken to an emergency room, where he was released to go home.

Man found deceased in RV Park

According to Charlton County Sheriff Robert Phillips, deputies responded to a welfare check at the Homeland RV Park on Wednesday, March 17.

Upon arrival at the park, deputies discovered the body of Loren Clay Thomas, age 60, of Hilliard, FL deceased in his camper. It appears that Thomas had been deceased for several days. A check with a family member revealed that Thomas had been suffering from various health issues and believed to have succumbed to those health issues.

Charlton County Coroner Blaine Murray responded to the call and completed his investigation also. According to the report, there was no evidence of foul play.



Canaday signs to play college softball

Senior Maiden softball player, Andrea Canaday, signed to play college softball last Friday for Dallas Christian College in Farmer's Branch, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. Canaday is part of the initial signing class for Dallas Christian as they will begin their first season of play beginning next spring. The Crusaders will be a part of the National Christian Collegiate Athletics Association. - by Glenn Hughes

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