

# Gun Range...from Page 1A

As a businessperson, Chambliss would also like to have the ability to accommodate shooters looking for a safe place to fire their weapons without having to brave the elements outdoors.

Chambliss previously asked the city for a permit but was turned down due to the wording of a city ordinance prohibiting the discharge of firearms within 1,500 feet of a business, among other protected places, inside city limits.

Blairsville Police Chief Michael "Bear" Baxter asked Chambliss in the meeting if the range would be handguns only, to which Chambliss replied yes, and that iPatriot "would restrict calibers, too," to nothing bigger than a .44 Magnum.

Baxter mentioned and Chambliss agreed that the process would entail compliance with insurance requirements, federal rules, OSHA regulations, and EPA air quality standards, all of which would take some time to undertake.

Chambliss said he plans to move across the street from his current location to a larger building with room for a four or five-lane indoor shooting range, noting that it's an expensive and

time-consuming process, "so it's not like it'll happen next week. It'll take months."

Mayor Jim Conley suggested that Chambliss write up a proposal to include answers to questions posed by City Attorney David Barrett and Chief Baxter sometime during the month.

With such a write-up in hand, Conley said the council could review and discuss the details in advance of further discussions at the next council meeting, and Chambliss agreed.

In other council news, Baxter said the Georgia Bureau of Investigation conducted a Georgia Crime Information Center Criminal Justice Performance Audit of the Blairsville Police Department on Jan. 8, as directed by state and federal mandates.

"We passed it with flying colors," Baxter said. "I can't take credit for that. My folks that are in those big positions, one in court and one in the Police Department ... they did a great job."

The council unanimously approved an invoice from Engineering Management Inc. in the amount of \$10,557.50 for preliminary engineering work on tying into the utilities with

the forthcoming Georgia 515 widening/relocation project.

Council members also approved a bookkeeping entry transfer of funds from the General Fund to the Airport Fund in the amount of \$188,247.03, mostly for capital projects completed at the Blairsville Municipal Airport in 2019.

"A lot of that \$188,247.03 is owed to us by GDOT," Conley said, adding that the money will be recouped in future contracts.

Most of the Leadership Union Class of 2020, sponsored by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, attended the City Council meeting that Tuesday night as part of the group's introduction to local government infrastructure.

Chamber President Steve Rowe said there is already a waiting list for next year's class.

Construction on the planned expansion for council chambers began at the end of January with the tearing out of a wall behind the council room and will continue through the end of February.

Council chambers were closed off on Monday, Feb. 10, and they will re-open after the extension is completed, which Mayor Conley is hopeful can be accomplished by the next regular council meeting date.

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