



The Granite Tablet



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A Publication of the Granite Falls History Committee

October 2023

MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT *Three Seats to be Open on Town Council*

Seven (7) men are vying for three (3) seats coming open on the Granite Falls Town Council in December. They include incumbents Jim Mackie, Mike Mackie, and Tracy Townsend along with newcomers Brandon Dupell, Douglas Dupell, Jamie Hagerty, and Mario Mastroeli. Early, one-stop voting will be conducted at the William B. Shuford Recreation Center on Pinewood Road according to the following schedule:

Thursday, October 19 - Friday, October 20
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Monday, October 23 - Friday, October 27
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Monday, October 30 - Friday, November 3
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 4
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Polls will also be open at the rec center on Election Day, Tuesday, November 7, 2023 from 6:30 a. m. until 7:30 p.m.

For instructions on casting absentee ballots, go to www.caldwellcountync.org and click on "Government," "Board of Elections," and "Absentee-by-mail Voting."

The Caldwell County Board of Elections is located at 120 Hospital Avenue in Lenoir. The office is open on weekdays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. The phone number is 828-757-1342.

Meet and Greet

The Granite Falls Historical Association hosted a Meet and Greet for town council candidates on Saturday, October 7, 2023 from 2:30 until 4 p.m. at the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. The following candidates attended the event and spoke about their experience and what they want to accomplish if elected: Brandon Dupell, Doug Dupell, Jamie Hagerty, Mario Mastroeli, and Mike Mackie. Jim Mackie and Tracy Townsend were unable to attend because they had made a prior commitment to help with a charity fundraiser for the Lions Club. Tracy's wife, Vickie, read a statement he prepared describing the accomplishments of the Town Board while he has been a member and the goals he has for the future. Attendees had an opportunity to ask questions after the prepared presentations.



NEW POLICE CHIEF IN TOWN *Brine Branham*

Brine Branham (photo below) became the 21st Chief of Police for the Town of Granite Falls on Monday, October 16th. Town Paula Kirby administered the oath of office, while Mrs. Branham held the Bible (photo above). Branham succeeded Chris Jenkins, who will work for the town in a different capacity until he retires at the end of the year. Chief Jenkins began the swearing-in ceremony by introducing his successor. He noted that Branham had been preparing for the role ever since he joined the police department. After he signed official paperwork, Chief Branham thanked town officials, family, friends, co-workers, and God.

To see a video of the swearing-in ceremony made by Linda Crowder, go to the Facebook page for the Granite Falls (N. C.) History and Transportation Museum.





The Town of Granite Falls celebrated customer appreciation day in the Town Office on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 by giving out light refreshments and promotional materials.

TOWN OF GRANITE FALLS Celebrates Public Power Week October 1 - 7

The Town of Granite Falls, along with more than 2,000 other community-owned, not-for-profit electric utilities that collectively provide electricity to 49 million Americans, celebrated Public Power Week (#PublicPowerWeek) October 1 - 7.

“Public Power Week celebrates the reliable, affordable, and environmentally friendly electricity the Town of Granite Falls provides to our community,” said Town Manager Jerry Church. “Public power puts the people of Granite Falls first, and Public Power Week gives us the chance to emphasize the advantages of locally grown, locally owned power to our citizens,” said Church. “Our service is reliable and safe and we take pride in serving our friends and neighbors;” said Church “the Town of Granite Falls is proud to have served our community for 108 years.”

In 2022, the Town’s Average Service Availability Index, through the American Public Power Association, indicated that electric service was provided on average of 99.9651% of the time to all electric customers. In addition to being a reliable public power provider, the Town of Granite Falls is one of the most environmentally friendly power providers in the State of North Carolina. The Town of Granite Falls and 18 other North Carolina public power communities receive energy from the North Carolina Municipal Power Agency Number 1 (NCMPA1). NCMPA1 owns 75% of a generating unit at the Catawba Nuclear Station, which provides over 97% of our energy needs. The Town also receives around 1% of our energy needs from hydroelectric providers. As a result, about 98% of the Town of Granite Falls’ electricity comes from emissions-free generation sources.

McKisack Associates

Today, the Town of Granite Falls provides electric service to 2,205 residential customers and 407 commercial and industrial customers. (Town of Granite Falls News Release)

Special Events - Mark Your Calendars!

Thursday, November 9 at 10 a.m.— Veterans Day Program at the William B. Shuford Recreation Center

Monday, November 20 from 6:15 - 7:30 p.m.— Festival on the Square and Tree Lighting and Light Up Granite Falls Christmas Trees - downtown Granite Falls

Saturday, December 2 at noon — Granite Falls Christmas Parade - downtown Granite Falls



Sunday, December 17 from 2 until 4 p.m.— The Granite Falls History Committee will host an open house at the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum (shown above) located at 107 Falls Avenue. Members will serve refreshments and provide guided tours of the building, which is the oldest residence in Granite Falls. The original owner of the building, Andrew Baird, received a land grant on December 11, 1792 for the purpose of establishing an iron forge using the power of the falls on Gunpowder Creek that gave our town its name.

Sunday, January 7 from 2 until 4 p.m. - Celebrate Twelfth Night (Epiphany) and the town’s 125th year of incorporation in the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum, where local history began. History Committee members will serve refreshments and provide guided tours.

PARKS AND RECREATION Basketball Registration

Parks and Recreation staff will accept registrations for basketball through Monday, November 6, 2023 for the following age groups: 4-6 co-ed, 7-8 girls, 7-8 boys, 9-10 girls, 9-10 boys, 11-13 girls, and 11-13 boys. Participants must be at least 4 years old by November 15th and less than 14 before November 15th. Parents/guardians must register in person at the Recreation Center, agree to a parent code of ethics, and pay a fee by cash or check (\$40 for residents and \$65 for non-residents).

Dateline: Summerville, N. C.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN!

“The Best Laid Schemes o’ Mice an’ Men Gang Aft Agley”

Editor’s note: In 1786, the Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote a poem with these words “the best laid schemes of o’ mice an’ men gang aft agley” to express the fact that things don’t always turn out the way we plan. If Abner Summers and his business partners had had their way, the Town of Granite Falls would have been the Town of Summerville, and I would be calling our history book *Dateline: Summerville, North Carolina*.

According to *Etched in Granite, the History of Granite Falls, North Carolina* (page 26), Mr. Summers, Willie Gaither, and James M. Bogle (Mr. Gaither’s father-in-law) entered into business as A. Summers and Co. in the early 1830s. They purchased 129 acres of land to establish a town with the center being at the intersection of Horse Ford Road (now Hwy 321A) and Lovelady Ford Road (now Dry Ponds Road). They planned to develop the town around a store and post office owned by Mr. Summers. Mr. Summers built his store and moved the Lovelady Post Office to it. He served as postmaster until 1857. After Caldwell County was formed in 1841, the militia district became known as Summerville or Summers Township. The town never grew, and the name changed to Lovelady Township in the 1870s. Ironically, the Town of Granite Falls grew up around a store and post office built by Samuel Green Hill Jones in the 1850s.

On Friday, October 13, 2023, while giving a tour of the museum to Josi Ward, a historical researcher with Foreground Consulting, LLC., I mentioned that an old house on the corner of Dry Ponds Road and Hwy 321A had been burned by the Granite Falls Fire Department. She told me that her records showed that the two-story home was originally a two-room log cabin built by Abner Summers in 1834. I knew the house as the home of Hallie Bush. Oddly enough, she was an employee of the Granite Falls Post Office, a successor to the Lovelady Post Office. I remember the house being bricked during her lifetime (1905 - 1992, according to the Find a Grave website).



Jason Hines, a chaplain with Sawmills Volunteer Fire & Rescue (which had joined Granite Falls FD to use the fire for training), posted some photos of the fire on Facebook. When I asked permission to use one of them, he told me that the owner had asked the Granite Falls Fire Department to burn the

house. After meeting stringent guidelines for environmental safety and quality, the GFFD conducted training exercises that met N. C. certification requirements for firefighters. The photo with the article shows Jason’s son, Landon, and two other trainees working toward state certification for junior cadets.

According to the Caldwell County GIS website, Associated Properties, Ltd. owns the property and the property next door, which is occupied by Associated Hardwoods. I hope the business uses the cleared

(SUMMERVILLE continued on page 4)



CALDWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS HALL OF HONOR More about Gary Poe

Gary Dean Poe was born on November 2, 1943 in Caldwell

County to the late Henry and Annie Elizabeth Flowers Poe. He grew up in Granite Falls and graduated from Granite Falls High School in 1962. After graduating from Appalachian State University in 1966, he taught high school science for thirty years in Ashe County. While at Ashe Central, Poe coached an all-conference football team. The players called him “General.”

Poe served on the Ashe County Volunteer Initiative Board and the WE Care Committee with the Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission to raise funds for those in need of fuel assistance. He also served on the Ashe County Historical Society Board for 25 years and the Museum of Ashe County History Board for 12 years. He was instrumental in converting the 1904 Ashe County Courthouse into the Museum of Ashe County History. After his death, the museum named the outdoor performance area “The Gary Poe Stage.”

After retiring from education, Poe pursued a love of music and history by hosting and producing “The Ole Time and Bluegrass Music Show” on WKSK in West Jefferson. The program originally aired on Saturday morning, at, in Gary’s words, “a little after 11.” It was so popular that the station added a second show on Monday night in 2002. While producers played the songs, Gary gave insights into the history and origin of the artists and their music.

For his volunteer work in Ashe County, Poe received the Governor’s Medallion from Beverly Purdue in 2011 and from Pat McCrory in 2016. After his death, the Ashe County Board of Commissioners passed a proclamation designating Gary Poe Day to be observed “a little after 11” on Saturday, October 9, 2021.

Poe passed away on July 9, 2021 at his home in West Jefferson.



Back Row (L-R): Mayor Pro-Tem Tracy Townsend and Councilmember Larry Knight Front Row (L-R): CCC&TI President Dr. Mark Poarch, Mayor Caryl B. Burns, Caldwell County Schools Superintendent Dr. Don Phipps, Councilmembers Jim Mackie, M.D. Townsend, and Mike Mackie

GRANITE FALLS TOWN COUNCIL Stays Informed about Education in Caldwell County

During a regular meeting on October 16, the Granite Falls Town Council heard news about Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute from President Dr. Mark Poarch and news about Caldwell County Schools from Superintendent Dr. Don Phipps. Every year, the Council invites Dr. Poarch and Dr. Phipps to provide updates because of the importance of the college and school system in strengthening our communities and for their roles in driving future growth through economic development. This year, the Town Council recognized Dr. Poarch for being selected as the 2023 Wells Fargo North Carolina Community College President of the Year and Dr. Phipps for being selected as the 2023 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year. Each received a special gift from the Town of Granite Falls. (source: news release from the Town of Granite Falls)

(SUMMERVILLE continued from page 3)

property to expand. If so, it would a fitting tribute to Abner Summers and his business partners who had an unrealized vision to expand his store into a town.
- LRC



The Granite Tablet is a publication of the Granite Falls History Committee, which manages the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. The museum is located in the historic home of Andrew Baird, an early settler. The building is the second oldest residence in Caldwell County. The Baird House was built around 1795 with additions made over the next hundred years. The house remained a residence until 2001 when the owner sought permission to have it burned down due to the high cost of maintenance. Recognizing the historical significance of the building, the Town of Granite Falls purchased the home with the intentions of turning it into a museum. With the help of a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation and hours of hard work by dedicated people, the vision became a reality. The Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on February 18, 2007. Visit us on Facebook under "Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum." Our website is www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org.

Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum - 107 Falls Avenue, Granite Falls, North Carolina 28630 - Phone: 828-396-2792

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GRANITE FALLS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION Annual Meeting

The Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. held its Sixth Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 20, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. President Linda Crowder updated members on the following projects: history book update, Pinecrest Cemetery, and Baird Cemetery. She reported that *Dateline: Granite Falls, North Carolina* should be published in late summer 2024. She asked for volunteers to help proof her work and to determine if anything needs to be added or removed. In addition, Linda reminded members that the book would also include memories about Granite Falls and asked them to share theirs.

After discussing the book, she reported that the Association Board plans to expand the Pinecrest Cemetery listing to include GPS coordinates and that Chris Newsom planned to work with a local Boy Scout troop on the project beginning in November. Linda had nothing new to report about Baird Cemetery.

During the business session, members authorized the Board of Trustees to serve as an Audit Committee, and they re-elected President Linda Crowder, Vice President Jeanne Whisnant, Secretary Joe Kaufman, and Treasurer Adele Mangan. The Association Board of Trustees will meet on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 2 p.m. in the museum to audit the financial records and begin planning work for the 2023 - 2024 year. The meeting will be open to all members.



Rick Justice (left) with Sherrie Sigmon

Following the business session, Sherrie Hartsoe Sigmon presented a program about the history of Rhodhiss. Town Manager Rick Justice assisted her. He had copies of Sherrie's book *Weaving the Heart Threads of a Mill Village: Rhodhiss, North Carolina* for sale for \$35.00 each. Linda Crowder put a video of

the program on the Granite Falls (N. C.) History and Transportation Museum Facebook page.