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Ordner withdraws from mayor’s race

Mia Overton
editor@thefranklinpress.com

Paul Ordner has withdrawn from the Highlands mayor’s race, leaving long-time incumbent Pat Taylor running unopposed.

Although the deadline to withdraw from the race was July 15, the Macon County Board of Elections said Ordner withdrew on Aug. 14.

“In a municipal election a candidate can withdraw at any point before coding has been submitted for the election or ballots are printed,” said Judy Fritts, deputy director for the Board of Elections. Ordner’s \$10 filing fee will not be refunded as state law allows refunding the fee only if the candidate withdraws three business days before filing ends, which would have been July 15.

Short term rentals was an issue Ordner wanted to see addressed and that also led to his withdrawing from the race.

“It looked like there was a block of votes that there was no way to get around,” Ordner said. “The short term rental issue has to be resolved.”

Ordner said he has lived in Highlands about eight months and a future run for office might be possible.

Going forward, Ordner said he would like to see the town tackle several issues such as an assisted living facility for senior citizens, harvesting water power from Lake Sequoyah, shuttles for students to participate in programs at Franklin High School, shuttles for residents and visitors to local sites such as Whiteside Mountain and Cliffside, and more advertising for winter activities.

“We’ll see what happens,” he said.

Unless there are successful write-in candidates, Highlands will not see any changes in its local government this year as town commissioners Amy Patterson and Eric Pierson are also running unopposed.

The Board of Elections said after filing ended that they had received questions about write-in candidates. There will be two lines on the ballot for write-in candidates in the commissioners’ race and one line for a mayoral candidate write-in. Should there be write-in candidates in the commissioners’ race, the top two vote getters will be elected to the board.

Early voting for the town election begins Oct. 16 with Election Day being Nov. 4. The deadline to register to vote is Oct. 10. Only those who live in the city limits can vote in the election.

ELECTION CALENDAR

Oct. 3

Absentee by mail starts

Oct. 10

Voter registration deadline

Oct. 16

Early voting open

Oct. 21

Last day to request absentee by mail

Nov. 1

Early voting ends

Nov. 3

UOCAVA last day to request a ballot

Nov. 4

Election Day

Information:

Macon County Board of Elections

828-349-2034

maconnc.org/board-of-elections

Office: Macon County Courthouse, 1st Floor

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Submitted photo

The Literacy & Learning Center is looking for volunteers to support its educational programs.

TL&LC seeks volunteers for school year

The Literacy & Learning Center is seeking volunteers to support its educational programs. There is a particular and ongoing need for individuals who can commit to volunteering throughout the entire school year, especially during the winter months.

TL&LC’s mission to enrich lives and expand knowledge for children, adults, and families is a year-round endeavor. Its after-school programs, individual tutoring, and ESL classes provide support that doesn’t pause when the seasons change. Many

of Highlands’ volunteers are part-time residents who typically return to their primary homes during the colder months. This creates a critical gap in volunteer availability precisely when students continue to need consistent academic assistance and mentorship.

The Center is specifically looking for volunteers who reside in the area year-round and can continue their service through the winter. Whether volunteers can commit to a few hours a week for group as-

sistance with after-school or provide one-on-one support, their consistent presence can make a difference in students’ lives. Year-round volunteers can provide stability and continuity, which are essential for effective learning and building strong relationships.

To learn more about how to become a TL&LC school-year volunteer, contact Caroline Cox at CCox@TheLiteracyandLearningCenter.org or 828-526-0863, or visit TheLiteracyandLearningCenter.org.

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Highlands Child Care Development Center
and the Literacy & Learning Center

For more information:
events@highlandschamber.org
828-526-5841

This event is made possible by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/
Visit Highlands, N.C.

907198

Charitable Giving
Strategies Presentation

September 17, 2025
12:00 - 1:30 PM

Highlands Community Building
869 N 4th St, Highlands, NC

Join us for an insightful presentation designed to empower both non-profit organizations and individual donors. Whether you're part of a non-profit seeking innovative ways to engage supporters, or an individual exploring meaningful and strategic ways to give, this event will provide valuable tools and guidance to help you create a lasting legacy. Lunch will be provided for registered attendees.

Julie Upshaw,
Attorney at Law

Co-Hosted by:

Robin Cook, CWS®, CTFA®
Sr. VP & Prosperity Advisor



For registration details, email msherwood@suncoastequity.com

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