

### Winter hangs on, but spring is coming

A late-day sun breaks through the trees along Little Shepherd Trail, lighting up a stretch of road where winter's still hanging on, but not for much longer. Spring officially arrives Friday, March 20. (Photo by Stephen Kincer)

## Judge suspends attorney

(Continued from Page 1) failed to return phone calls and text messages, missed court appearances and did not file required documents. She also failed to appear for a scheduled hearing on Jan. 21, according to the record.

Schaaf initially found Taylor in contempt but granted her a hearing on Feb. 18 after she filed a motion to vacate on Jan. 26 — a motion the judge described as lacking “significant support.”

“The motion requested a hearing at the court’s regular motion hour in London on February 18, 2026, although Taylor did not properly notice the hearing, resulting in a deficiency order,” Schaaf wrote. “A deficiency order was also entered because the proposed order had blanks, which is not permitted.”

The judge noted that Taylor failed to comply with that deficiency order, prompting the court to schedule the hearing itself. She later submitted a revised proposed order.

In her defense, Taylor cited “excusable neglect,” claiming her registered court email had been “hacked and compromised.” She also



Attorney Jennifer Taylor, left, and Elizabeth Jones spoke with a TV news reporter in January after Jones filed a federal lawsuit against the Jenkins Independent Board of Education.

referenced medical issues and said she would provide documentation, but according to the court order, she failed to adequately explain the missed filings or lack of response over several months.

“Taylor’s excuse regarding her recuperation in a remote location is also extremely questionable,” Schaaf wrote. “She suggests that the recuperation prevented all work, but admitted she was able to communicate with certain clients on a landline ... She also dealt with multiple matters in other cases during the alleged recuperation period.”

Schaaf said the record supports a finding of “gross dereliction of her duty” to her client.

The court also conducted what it described as a “thorough review” of Taylor’s cases in both District and Bankruptcy courts and found similar issues.

One example cited was a criminal case involving Corey Emmanuel Skiles, who is charged with possession with intent to distribute more than 500 grams of methamphetamine.

Taylor filed a last-minute motion to continue his sentencing but then failed to appear for the rescheduled hearing, according to the order.

The ruling lists 14 Bankruptcy Court cases in which Taylor failed to appear for hearings, failed to file documents or had cases dismissed. In District Court, judges have ordered new attorneys to be appointed or have notified parties to seek new counsel in at least five cases.

In one handwritten filing, defendant Jose Carlos Miranda Morales — who faces multiple drug and financial charges — asked the court to remove Taylor and appoint new counsel, stating he and his family had been unable to contact her.

“I have been in here for almost 18 months and me and my family have tried to communicate with her and she does not respond,” Morales wrote.

In the lawsuit against the Jenkins school board, the judge has given plaintiff Elizabeth Jones 30 days to retain new counsel or notify the court that she intends to represent herself.

## It’s been a long road back for library

(Continued from Page 1) section. Although the upper level did not flood, it still does not meet federal requirements that finished floors be at least one foot above the floodplain.

Because of that, the building is currently ineligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency funding, and the library board cannot obtain flood insurance unless engineers can find a way to bring the structure into compliance.

Summit Engineers and Architects, which has been working on the project for more than three years, is now considering options to



A marker outside the library shows the July 2022 flood level. Officials continue working on plans to bring the structure into compliance with federal floodplain standards.

“floodproof” the upper level.

Architect Charlie Robinson said his latest proposal is to build a new floor on top of the existing one, raising it about eight

*“They’re five inches below having it one foot above the floodplain. Just don’t put anything valuable down low.”*

inches.

“The problem I have is before it gets up to the floor,” Robinson said. “Once you get up to that floor, it’s difficult to waterproof — but I can deal with that.”

Earlier ideas included asking Letcher County Floodplain Coordinator Perry Fowler to resurvey the building in hopes of lowering the floodplain designation, or installing a waterproof membrane around the structure and replacing the lower exterior wood with more water-resistant materials. Robinson said he has now largely settled on raising the floor.

Fowler, however, said the issue may be simpler to address.

He said the building is only about 4.8 inches below the required elevation, and state officials have indicated that “wetproofing” would meet requirements and allow the library to qualify for flood insurance.

“Wetproofing is what the state recommended, and they’ll still be able to get their flood insurance,” Fowler said.

Wetproofing involves making the building water-resistant while ensuring that any materials below the flood level will not be damaged if water enters. That includes installing non-absorbent flooring and wall materials at least 4.8 inches high, and avoiding placement of vulnerable items below that level.

“They’re five inches below having it one foot above the floodplain,” Fowler said. “Just don’t put anything valuable down low.”




Some library board members raised concerns about adding a second floor layer, including whether it would leave electrical outlets and switches too low and whether moisture could become trapped between the two layers.

Robinson said ventilation holes could be

added to allow the space to dry, and waterproof insulation could be installed between the floors.

Other planned improvements include adding a waterproof membrane around the building to the required height, raising windows above that level and replacing the lower exterior wood with water-resistant materials such as stone.

That plan replaced an earlier proposal to build a floodwall around the structure. Soil tests conducted in recent months showed that option would require trenches up to 20 feet deep to support the wall.

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