



Photos by Todd Luck

(Above) Courtney Mack bundles some greens, which she's about to give to Roberta Jackson, as her daughter, Grey Mack, looks on.

(Right) Arthur Jackson and Courtney Mack pick greens out of their garden for their Christmas Eve giveaway.



Giving the gift of greens

Courtney Mack and Arthur Jackson spent a cold and rainy Christmas Eve morning giving away collard and mixed greens from their community garden on Cameron Avenue. The couple are graduates from Forsyth County Cooperative Extension's Urban Farm School. A local resident lent them land for their garden. They planted the crops in October and decided to give their first harvest to the community.

Commissioners to vote on bonds for maintenance needs

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

In their first meeting of 2017, Forsyth County commissioners will be voting on \$21.8 million in bonds for maintenance needs of county government, local schools and Forsyth Technical Community College.

A public hearing will be held on the validity and advisability of the bonds during the commissioners' Jan. 9 meeting. These are general obligation bonds that do not require voter approval and are unrelated to the \$430 million bond referendums voters approved in November. The bonds are known as two-thirds bonds because their amount can be up to two-thirds of the debt the county retired in the previous year. Two-thirds bonds are issued every two years to address long-term maintenance needs for the county.

County Commissioner Chair Dave Plyler said that it's important to keep up with capital needs.

"It's an investment in our future when you get right down to it," said Plyler.

He gave the example of the long-needed renovations on the Forsyth County Hall of Justice, which, due to infla-



Plyler

tion, will now cost the county more than \$110 million. Options were presented to the commissioners this year for a new or renovated courthouse, but they have yet to act on it. However, the two-thirds bonds do contain \$5 million that will go toward the eventual project and will act as seed money for design and planning work on the courthouse.

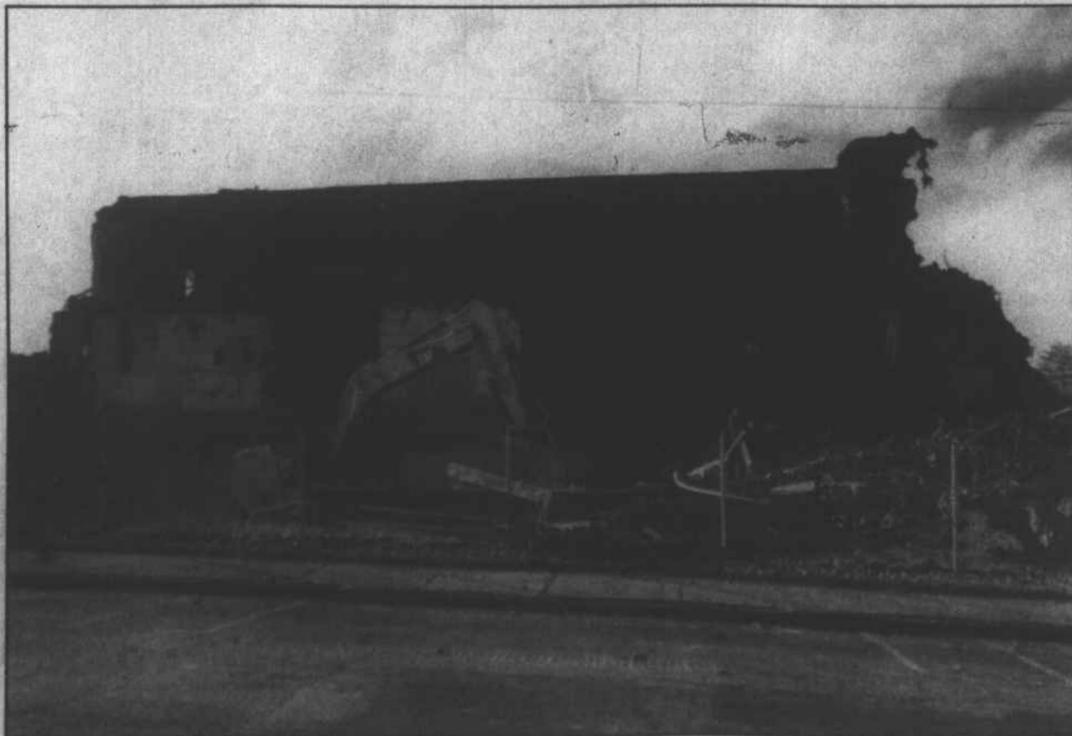
The other two-thirds bonds are \$8.5 million for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, \$2 million for county parks and \$4 million for county facilities including libraries and \$2.3 million for Forsyth Tech. By state law, counties are responsible for funding the construction and maintenance of facilities at community colleges like Forsyth Tech.

Bond referendums generally involve large construction projects, like new schools and libraries. The projects for two-thirds bonds are usually smaller, upkeep projects like replacing a roof, resurfacing lots or major work on

heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. For instance, the largest school system project is \$1.2 million for replacing parts of Bolton Elementary's HVAC system. There's also \$130,000 for a new roof on Bolton's annex and another \$120,000 to replace the boilers there. Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy and Cook Literacy Model School are also getting new roofs in parts of their schools.

Other projects include almost \$2 million in repairs to the county's Law Enforcement Detention Center, \$450,000 to replace the roof and parking lot at Reynolda Manor Branch Library and \$510,000 to renovate the lobby and do major HVAC work at Forsyth Tech's Allman Center. Most of the parks bond, about \$1.3 million, will go to Tanglewood Park, where most of the county's park assets are. The 23 projects at Tanglewood include roof replacements, water and sewer work, and paving the parking lot of the Tanglewoof Dog Park.

Unlike other bonds that increase the county's overall debt, two-thirds bonds have in the past had the full support of the county commissioners and are expected to once again when they come to a vote next year.



Fire investigators complete search of former Brown Elementary School

SPECIAL TO
THE CHRONICLE

Fire investigators have completed their search of the former Brown Elementary School, which was destroyed by fire Dec. 20. They found no sign of human casualties. However, the cause of the fire is still under investigation. The investigation of the fire was initially hampered by the structural instability of what remained of the school after the fire. The building is near 11th Street and Highland Avenue. It was purchased by Winston-Salem's Housing Authority recently to turn the building into affordable housing.

City of Winston-Salem photo

This photo shows equipment used to complete the search for casualties of former Brown Elementary School.