

# The News-Journal

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RAEFORD, HOKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

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## Raeford tax rate raised by one cent

**By Warren Johnston**  
Members of the Raeford City Council voted unanimously Monday night to hike the ad valorem tax rate by one cent in order to give municipal employees a 5% raise in pay.

The increase was a compromise from a budget recommended by City Manager Thomas A. Phillips which included a two cent tax hike and a 7.5% raise for workers.

Action on the budget came during an advertised public hearing on the city's financing.

Other than city employees, only three agency directors, who were requesting funds, attended the meeting.

A 2-cent hike this year would keep the city on an even basis with the inflation rate and would ward off a larger tax increase next year,

Phillips told the council members prior to the vote.

Councilman Benny McLeod suggested the tax compromise and cutting of the pay hike to 5%.

The budget was given unanimous approval, although before the vote both councilmen Vardell Hedgpeth and Bob Gentry said they opposed any increase in taxes.

"The county is talking about a 9-cent increase. I would like to see us hold with what we got," Gentry said.

In addition to the approved raise, most city employees will also receive a 2.5% merit pay hike during the coming fiscal year.

The hike brings the city's budget to \$2.67 million, which is up about \$168,000 over last year, Phillips said.

The increase is 6.3% higher than the previous year and in line with the current rate of inflation, the city manager said.

### Sales tax down

Although figures issued by the North Carolina Department of Revenue show that the city should receive from the newly imposed one-half cent sales tax more than \$63,800 during the coming fiscal year, the adopted Raeford budget only includes revenues of only 54.8% of that figure, or \$35,000.

Phillips defended the \$28,800 difference on Tuesday by saying that the budget was "conservative."

"This is the only time of the year we can raise local taxes. We have to make sure we won't run out of

money before the end of the year," Phillips said in an interview.

Revenues from the one-half cent sales tax are new. The city does not have a history of collections to rely on for the budget, he said.

"We don't know if we can depend on them," he added.

Each cent on the city ad valorem tax rate would mean about \$12,000 in revenue.

The difference between the budgeted sales tax revenue and the state's figures for collection is more two cents on the local tax rate.

According to the state figures, Raeford received \$15,960 for the first quarter of this year. The money is paid on a per capita basis and is expected to increase when more large counties join in the tax. The first quarter figures did not

include counties like Lee, Wake and Mecklenburg which have now joined the tax.

### Garbage rates set

The budget also includes the establishment of commercial garbage pickup rates.

The service, which includes three pickups per week, would cost the users of the largest containers \$14.56 per month.

As a trade off, Phillips told council members the city could eliminate business privilege taxes. However, \$5,000 in revenues from privilege license fees are included in the budget.

The matter could be reviewed later in the year, Phillips said.

When Raeford got into the com- (See CITY, page 12)



### Explaining

City Manager Tom Phillips explains the budget proposal for the coming fiscal year during a public hearing Monday night. Phillips is assisted by City Clerk Lisa Clinard.

## Vandals hit Hoke church

**By Ed Miller**

Vandals have taken a large toll on the windows of the Piney Grove Mission Church during the last two weeks.

On Friday, June 1, church officials reported that all the basement windows on one side of the church had been broken, as well as all the windows in the church office.

Some of the stained glass windows had also been broken out, a Hoke County Sheriff's Department report says.

After the first incident, there were rocks and pieces of broken cinder blocks found inside of the church, reports says.

Last Wednesday, William Hollingsworth reported that 19 more windows had been broken out of the church.

There were three children seen leaving the area shortly after the incident, Hollingsworth reported.

The vandalism are under investigation.

## Around Town

**By Sam Morris**

Summer is with us and it's still a week before the calendar calls for it. The 90° weather for the past week has caused most air conditioning units to work full time. The forecast is for the same kind of weather for the remainder of the week.

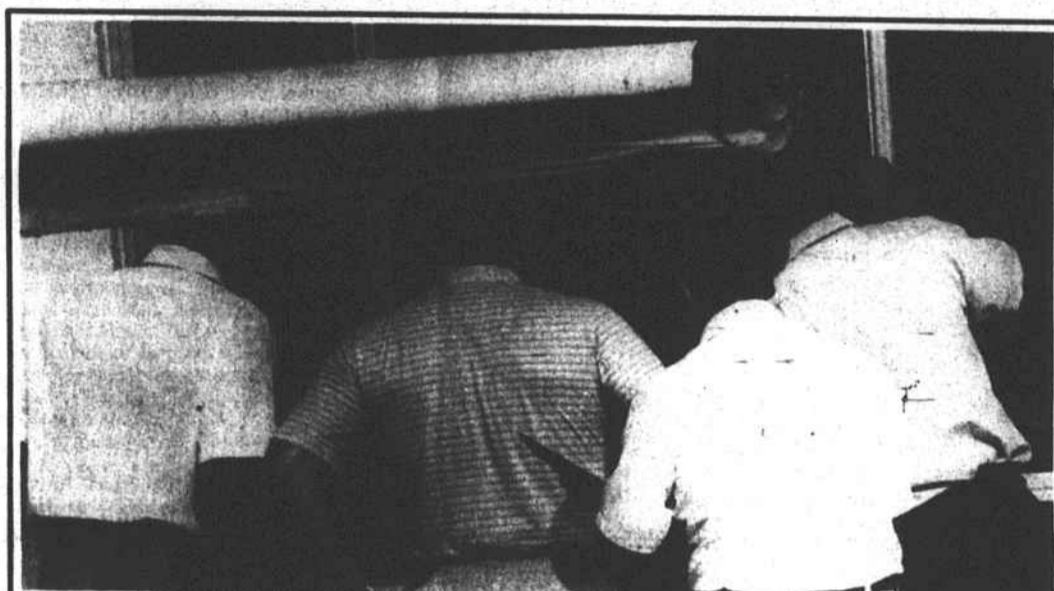
It has been about two weeks since we have had any rain and this is causing problems to the gardeners in the county. It seemed for awhile that the weather was perfect for the green thumbs, but times have changed.

Maybe a thunderstorm will form over the county in the next few days.

Over 2400 people voted last Tuesday in the second primary in Hoke County and this was more than some of us expected. Of course this is not anything to brag about, because it is still only about 30 percent of the folks that had the right to vote in the county.

I was sitting at my desk in *The News-Journal* office on primary day and from the desk I can see the city parking lot in front of the office. On that afternoon I saw Bill McFadyen in his wheelchair, accompanied by his father, N.L. McFadyen, coming across the parking lot to go to Precinct, Raeford 2, to cast his ballot. Can you imagine the thoughts that went through my head concerning people voting? It took much effort on Bill's part to cast his vote, but so many that could have just walked to the voting place failed to do so on the primary date. Wouldn't it

(See AROUND, page 12)



### I don't think there's anybody in there

Members of the newly appointed airport authority attempt to view the inside of the existing terminal building through a window during an inspection of the Raeford-Hoke County Airport on Monday. The authority members found the door to the structure was locked, but could see a playpen, a couch, some

toys and a parachute which were inside the building. The group will be meeting in the first regular session on Thursday. Those attending Monday's tour were: left to right: L.E. McLaughlin, John Plummer, Frank Baker and Wayne Byrd.

## State airport grant funds not restricted to terminal

Although a \$75,000 matching state grant is earmarked for construction of a new terminal at the Raeford-Hoke County Airport, the funds could be used for other "high priority" projects at the facility, a spokesman for the state Aeronautics Council said Monday.

The state money must be matched on a 50-50 basis. Last week county officials questioned the need for a \$150,000 terminal at the airport and suggested that members of the local airport authority find additional uses for the funds.

If the airport authority chooses to alter the grant request to include other projects like runway lighting, taxiways and other non-income produc-

ing improvements, the revision will probably be approved by the Aeronautics Council, spokesman Jay Pate said.

The revised request will be compared with other projects in the state and if the council decides that the application should be given a high priority, then the Hoke County grant will be approved, Pate said.

"Based on past history, they have never denied a request unless it was considered low priority," the spokesman said.

"They have always tried their best to fund them," he added.

Constructing taxiways, improving runway lighting, increasing the apron area, resurfacing or lengthening runways would have high priority, he added.

Under the provisions of the grant, projects like building hangars which could be rented to generate revenue are not eligible for funding.

Those types of projects can be funded through conventional sources, Pate said.

Both Raeford and Hoke County administrators have included \$47,500 for the airport in the recommended budgets for the coming fiscal year.

In the recommendations, \$37,500 each would be used to match the state grant and \$10,000 each would fund other improvements and operating expenses at the airport.

Members of the airport authority are expected to decide about the use of the state funds before the end of the fiscal year.

## Cash, chemicals stolen from area firm

Thieves netted almost \$22,000 in chemicals and cash last week following a break-in of an Arabia-Dundarrach area business.

The break-in at Farm Chemicals Inc., which is located at the old Mildouson School, apparently occurred sometime last Wednesday, company owner Alfred K. Leach told investigating Hoke County Sheriff's deputies.

A safe containing about \$800 in cash and farming chemicals reported to be worth over \$21,000 were taken, reports show.

Leach reported that the lock had been removed from the main door of the building and bars securing the doors on the north end of the building had been taken off.

Some sort of cutting tool was used to remove the lock on the main door, reports say.

Although an investigation is continuing, there are not many leads in the case, Sheriff Dave Bar- rington said this week.

Footprints, as well as tire tracks, were found around the scene, reports say.

In an unrelated incident, a Raeford man had to undergo surgery following a stabbing in Hoke County last week.

James McLean, 60, was allegedly stabbed by his 25-year-old daughter, Karen McLean, reports say.

The incident is alleged to have occurred after an argument during which McLean hit his daughter with a cooking pot, reports say.

Karen McLean said in the report that she was defending herself when she ran at her father with a knife.

McLean was taken to Cape Fear Valley Hospital where he underwent surgery for the wounds, the report says. He is apparently recovering.

Karen McLean was served with a warrant accusing her of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to seriously injure but was not put in jail, a sheriff's department spokesman said.

According to the source, she was taken to the department for questioning.

In other matters, Carolina Power and Light (CP&L) spokesman Donald W. Needham reported to sheriff's deputies that, on two occasions last week, spans of wire were stolen from poles in Hoke County.

(See STABBING, page 11)

## County cuts tax plan, mulls sheriff's woes

**By Ed Miller**

One cent was shaved from a proposed nine-cent tax rate increase by members of the Hoke County Commission Monday night during a budget work session.

Although no official action was taken by the commissioners during the work session, most areas of the county's budget were scrutinized and cuts were suggested.

The brunt of the commission's cuts Monday night fell on the proposed school budget.

While no proposed cuts have been made on items put into the school budget from the "blue ribbon" facilities study committee, the commissioners recommended county school appropriations of \$1.16 million be sliced by more than \$33,000 to \$1.12 million.

The Board of Education had asked for an original figure of \$1,249,819, but that figure was cut by County Manager James Martin to a recommended \$1.16 million.

If made official, the final figure proposed by the commissioners will be \$120,669 less than the original request by the school board.

Other proposed cuts dealing

with the school's budget, which were suggested Monday, dealt with the revenue sharing portion of the request.

Commissioners proposed that four mobile classrooms, to be put at J.W. Turlington School, not be bought and a paving project at South Hoke be cancelled. By cutting the revenue sharing expenditures, \$42,000 would be saved.

Commissioners are expected to suggest that the Board of Education use an alternative plan recommended by the "blue ribbon" committee to solve the noise problem in classrooms under the Turlington gymnasium. That alternative is to not use the gym during class hours.

In discussing cuts in other areas of the county budget, commissioners were divided on a proposed 7.5% pay hike for county employees.

While none of the Board members were against a salary increase, commissioners James Albert Hunt, Neil McPhatter and Cleo Bratcher voiced approval of the total raise while Chairman John Balfour and Commissioner (See COUNTY, Page 11)

## Hoke officials urged to huddle with DOT on highway widening

Members of the Hoke County Commission and other "concerned citizens" should schedule a meeting with state highway officials to determine what improvements should be made to U.S. Highway 401, District Highway Commissioner Martha Hollers said Monday.

Hollers, who said she had been contacted by U.S. Rep. William G. Hefner about the road, said local lobbying was the key to getting improvements made to the 10.6-mile stretch between Raeford and 71st High School.

About \$200,000 has been approved for improvements to the Hoke County portion of U.S. Highway 401 for the coming fiscal year, and local officials and others should meet with state Highway Administrator Billy Rose to determine where the money should be spent.

The funds, which were slated to be used for adding asphalt shoulders to the highway, could be shifted to fund a passing lane or for other improvements in (See MEETING, page 8)



### What a mess

This dumpster, serviced by a contractor for Hoke County, was overflowing last week. Located on Rockfish Road, just above Scurlock School, the dumpster has been the cause of complaints to the county. According to sources, area residents have been trying to clean up the trash periodically, but faced with this scene, they have apparently given up. (Photo by Pam Frederick)