

# The News-Journal

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## School board cuts budget to 9.9% increase

By Ed Miller

Following a six-hour special session last Tuesday night, members of the Hoke County Board of Education adopted a "pared down" local budget of almost \$1.3 million.

The adopted local spending bill, which will be forwarded to the Hoke County Commission for further scrutiny, is up 9.9% or about \$117,000 over last year.

If adopted by the county commission, the local increase in the school budget would be equal to a 4-cent hike in the ad valorem tax rate.

Coming out of the school board's budget session was a combined federal, state and local budget for operating the Hoke County schools of \$11.6 million which is an increase of nearly \$1.2 million over the previous year.

According to School Business Manager Don Steed, a 10% raise in all salaries, handed down from the state, accounts for much of that increase.

Salaries account for about 92% of the total budget, said Steed.

In an effort to keep costs down for the Hoke County Commission, school board members cut about

\$19,000 out of the local portion of the budget, Steed said.

"They thought it (the requested budget) was just too high," said Steed.

Still, the budget adopted by the Board of Education is 9.9% higher than last year's.

The exact increase of this year's local budget over last year's is \$117,098, said Steed.

Accounting for most of the increase are raises in salaries, said the business manager, adding that many of the secretaries, assistant principals and student guidance

personnel were given 11 or 12-month salaries.

They were on 10 or 11 months to begin with, said Steed.

According to Steed, the cultural arts program was given a 5% increase over last year.

That increase represents only \$923 more than last year and lower than what was requested.

Vocational education, a line item that was also cut some, was increased 9.5%, for an actual increase of \$16,582, said Steed.

The exceptional children's program was increased 5%.

The central office of the Board

of Education was given an increase of \$2,000, said Steed.

That money will be used to buy computer components and programs, said Steed. The state had been providing that money.

The funding for computers had been cut out by the state, he said.

Hoke County and 61 other counties in North Carolina will have to come up with similar amounts to keep computers up to date, said Steed.

Steed said that if the county commission asks for "big money" or about \$100,000 to be cut out of

the local budget, some teachers will suffer.

Teachers in the cultural arts program, a total of seven positions, would have to be taken off additional months or cut all together.

According to Steed, if the teachers resigned, the school system would not be able to hire replacements.

There are four teachers now being paid out of local funds that are at the lowest pay grade, said Steed.

Their salaries represent \$69,000, he said.

(See SCHOOL, Page 9A)

## Deputies mulling law suit against county for overtime

By Ed Miller

Two former and one current deputy are threatening a law suit against Hoke County and the Sheriff's Department in an effort to recover overtime back pay.

In a letter dated April 25, Fayetteville attorney Lloyd Cliff Brisson threatened the county with a suit if back overtime is not paid to Deputy James R. Riley and former deputies Rodney Craig Hart and James W. Jones.

County Attorney Duncan McFadyen and County Manager William Cowan were mum about the overtime pay question and declined to comment Monday about the possible suit.

Hart is currently employed with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department, and Jones works for the North Carolina License, Theft and Weight Enforcement bureau.

"On behalf of Messrs. Hart, Jones and Riley, we would hereby demand from your office a full accounting of all hours worked, compensation due and overtime compensation due for the period of employment for each of the above during their employment as employees of Hoke County through the Hoke County Sheriff

Department," according to the letter from Brisson.

"Once this has been completed, we would demand from Hoke County full payment as to each individual for compensation due and any overtime compensation due for hours worked and not paid, as well as any interest that would be due on said amounts," the letter continues.

No dollar amounts are listed in the letter.

In the letter, Brisson quoted a United States Supreme Court ruling called "Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority," a case in which a precedent was set saying that "a local agency or government was not immune from minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act".

"It would now seem that local government workers such as the above who are law officers, should have come under federal wage and hour standards," Brisson's letter said.

Although a suit has not been filed yet, Brisson said in the letter, one will be if no response is given from Hoke County "within five business days from the receipt of

this letter."

The letter was hand delivered to the Hoke County office building on April 25, sources say.

Brisson said in the letter that the plaintiffs in the proposed action would be willing to forget about asking the county to pay for attorney fees if the matter is settled out of court.

Brisson is an associate of Edward T. Brady, according to the letter.

In a telephone interview Tuesday, Brady refused comment when confidential sources as to how the information about the legal action became public were not revealed.

Although Cowan, McFadyen and Sheriff Dave Barrington refused comment, Cowan did confirm receipt of the letter.

Under a recent North Carolina Supreme Court ruling, letters received by a public body are public information.

One source did say that a deputy with an annual salary of \$17,968 per year stood to make about \$386 per month if he worked 48 hours overtime in that month.

Salaries may have to be calculated from 1979, a source said.



### A horse is a horse

Although this horse looks as if he could talk, no one has ever admitted hearing him. However, he does

seem content to stay in his Rockfish area barn and wait for cooler weather.

## Raeford man in Hoke County jail after shoot-out killing

By Ed Miller

A Raeford man was being held Tuesday in the Hoke County Jail under no bond after he was charged with the Saturday night murder of another Hoke County man.

Jonathan Ray, 22, of Rt. 1, Box 590, is accused of the shooting death of Gary Michael Lomack, of Rt. 1, Box 580, said Hoke County Sheriff Dave Barrington.

Both men lived on Airport Road in the Tylertown area, said Barrington.

According to Barrington, last Saturday night's shooting was the culmination of an argument that

began over a bag of marijuana.

Both men were at the Brickhouse, a local nightclub in that area, when Ray apparently snatched a bag of marijuana from a woman with Lomack, Barrington said.

Lomack chased Ray back to his residence where the shooting occurred, the sheriff said.

Barrington said that both men were armed with .22 calibre guns. Lomack had a pistol and Ray had a rifle, he said.

Upon Lomack's arrival at the residence, Ray came out of the house and both men began firing

at one another.

Ray was hit in the left thigh and Lomack ran to the rear of the yard while Ray was still shooting at him, said Barrington.

Apparently, a bullet hit the man. He fell in a garden at the rear of the yard, said Barrington.

There was a single bullet wound in Lomack's body, in the chest, said the sheriff.

Barrington said, Ray was arrested on the scene.

"It will be up to the district attorney to decide what charge of murder to place on Ray," said Barrington.

Lomack's body has been sent to Chapel Hill for an autopsy, said Barrington.

The dead man would have been 28 on July 21, said the sheriff.

Hoke County deputies Eddie Allen, Ronnie Odom, Alex Norton and Mack High investigated the case.

In another area incident, Allen Henning was assaulted by a masked man while he was checking on the security of Jimmy's Exxon, according to reports.

Henning was escorting a woman home but stopped to check on the station before going to his house,

according to reports.

Henning was investigating some movement behind a dumpster near the store when the masked man jumped out and hit him with what looked like a blackjack, reports say.

The assault occurred last Friday, according to reports.

Also last Friday, Lisa Poe reported an attempted first degree breaking and entering.

According to reports, Poe was asleep in her bed when she heard someone trying to get into her trailer.

The woman called the Hoke

County Sheriff's Department and her landlady, reports show.

Tony Patterson, son of the landlady, almost caught the crook, according to reports.

Patterson approached the man, who had just ridden into the mobile home park on a bicycle, and asked him what he was doing, reports say.

The would-be burglar tried to run but Patterson would not let him get away.

A fight followed and the intruder got away in the struggle, but

(See MAN, page 10A)

## DSS board OKs proposal to protect case workers

By Ed Miller

The Hoke County Department of Social Services (DSS) Board voted unanimously Monday to pass a resolution endorsing a proposed legislative amendment which would help protect social service employees in the future.

The bill gives DSS workers the same protection under the law as school administrators, court officials and law enforcement officers.

According to Hoke County DSS Director Ken Witherspoon, there are many social workers who must visit peoples' homes in the course of duty.

Some of these people are angry and frustrated, he said, adding that a number of such workers were attacked, harmed or threatened last year.

The pending legislation would make threats on DSS employees punishable by the same standards

as threats or attacks on law enforcement officers.

According to the resolution, penalties imposed on persons convicted of assaulting police officers or sheriff's deputies or school teachers or court officers are "more severe" than those for private citizens.

DSS employees currently are not equally protected, said Witherspoon.

"Protective service workers are the most vulnerable," the director said.

In other discussions during the meeting, Witherspoon informed board members that another butter and cheese distribution is planned for the end of May.

This will be the largest distribution to date, said the director.

A total of \$45,000 worth of butter, cheese, flower, milk, corn meal, rice and honey will be given away, he said.

(See CARE, page 10A)



### Happy salesmen

Mary Gwen Thomas, (the clown on the right), and Kim McNeill, (the clown on the left), happily peddle balloons to raise money during Arts in the Park on Sunday, while Raeford Fire Chief Crawford Thomas, (the father of one of the clowns -- rear),

chats with School Board member Eddie McNeill, (behind the balloon). We take a look at the weekend's community activities on page one of Section B in today's News-Journal.

## Around Town

By Sam Morris

We got 1/4 inch of rain in Raeford Sunday night. Of course, we need plenty more rain, but every little bit helps. I believe the grass turned green from this small amount.

It has been the hottest and driest April I can remember. We have had more 90 degree days than ever before. Records fell all over the state during this hot spell.

A cold front moved in after the rain Sunday, but it still is hot for this time of year. The forecast calls for more rain Thursday. Let's hope so, we need it.

From all reports, around 30 people showed up at the depot Saturday and much work was completed. The powers-to-be said that they could use the help for a few more weekends.

There was a large crowd at the (See AROUND, page 9A)