

# Duplin Times

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## Department Requests Exceed This Year's Budget

If all Duplin County government departments get the money they have requested for 1983-84, the county budget will total \$11,811,178, almost \$4 million more than this year's budget of \$8,542,259.

The departmental requests were submitted to the county commissioners last week by budget officer Ralph Cottle.

After much discussion, the board appointed Chairman W.J. Costin, Commissioner Calvin Coolidge Turner and Randolph Maddox of Rose Hill to a committee to recommend a consulting firm to study the financial situation of Duplin General Hospital. The hospital board is to name

two members to the committee.

One of the major increases requested in the proposed budget is \$1 million for the hospital, which has been facing financial difficulties.

The requested budget, if it were to be fully approved, would require a tax rate of \$1.32 per \$100 valuation, almost double the current 70-cent rate, Cottle said.

Cottle estimated the county's assessed valuation at \$660,310,903. The county property tax would have to fund \$8,150,314 of the requested total, which would require a \$1.32 tax rate — assuming the county can collect 93.6 percent of what taxpayers owe.

Board members have repeatedly stated they will not increase the tax rate. To retain the current 70-cent rate, the board will have to slash \$4,325,224 from budget requests.

Among major increases requested were \$1 million for the hospital, \$1 million for schools, \$80,000 for James Sprunt Technical College, \$136,000 for the Department of Social Services for its Medicaid program and \$93,000 for law enforcement.

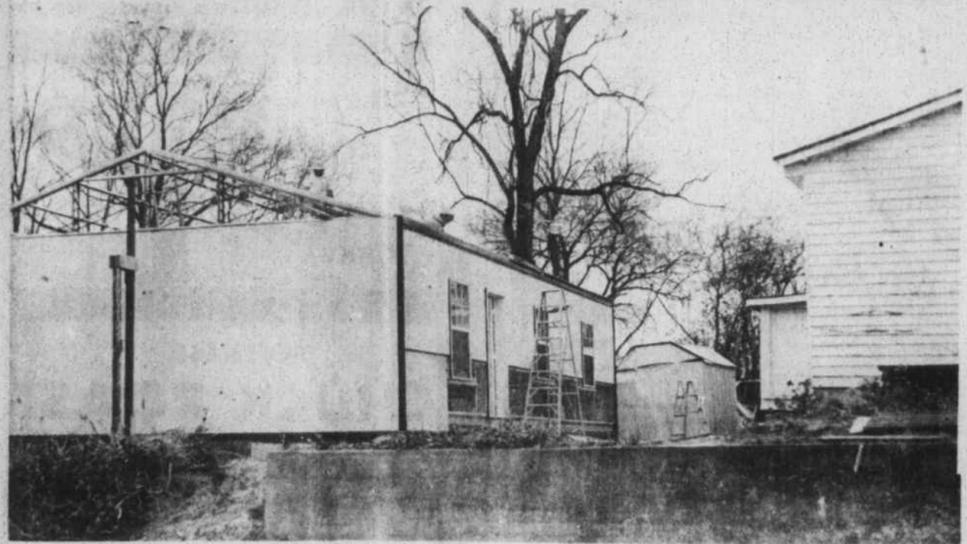
Cottle said unless Congress approves continuation of revenue sharing, the county will lose \$657,000 in anticipated income next year. That would be the equivalent of slightly more

than 10 cents of the tax levy.

In other business, the board approved the sale of the former poultry diagnostic laboratory building in Rose Hill to Church of God of Prophecy for \$6,000.

Also approved was a 2 percent discount for early payment of property taxes in July and August. The county made a profit of about \$15,000 last year by investing the money paid in and receiving \$34,978 in interest. The discounts totaled \$19,983.

The board approved a \$9,300 request from Carl Price, James Sprunt president, to transfer unbudgeted college fund reserves to the current expense fund.



## Kenansville Property Owner Threatened With Jail Sentence

A District Court judge last week threatened to jail a Kenansville property owner who has defied previous court orders to stop construction of an office without a building permit.

The order is effective until settlement of civil action brought by the town.

Rick Summerlin, who lives on Limestone Road, owns the lot on which his house stands.

Because of a town ordinance banning two main buildings on one lot, Building Inspector Tyson Bostic, who is also police chief, refused to issue Summerlin a permit for the steel-framed, residential-type structure Summerlin planned to build for an office and model home.

Summerlin contended the town was wrong in rejecting his request and went ahead with construction.

The town obtained an order from Judge Walter Henderson telling Summerlin to halt construction, but Summerlin ignored the ruling.

District Judge Kenneth Turner issued a continuation of Henderson's training order, which Summerlin also ignored.

On Wednesday, the town asked District Judge Alex Erwin III to order the work halted. Erwin ruled the temporary restraining order will stay in place until the town's suit can be heard in District Court. No date has been set for the hearing.

Erwin ordered Summerlin to put up a \$2,000 good faith cash bond and agree to go to jail for 15 days if he does any

more work on the nearly completed structure before the trial.

Meanwhile, Summerlin is seeking a writ of mandamus

demanding the town issue the permit and pay him damages for delays.

Summerlin contends he is not in violation of the town

ordinance. He says many other people have built two main structures on single lots and everyone should be treated alike.

## Beulaville Board Meeting Settles Recreation Question

Town Mayor Wilbur Hussey was authorized by the Beulaville commissioners to co-sign recreation department checks during the regular meeting of the town board April 6.

Alfred Basden reported from the Beulaville Recreation Committee requesting a co-signer be appointed from the town officials for checks to be issued from the recreation department in the future. A savings account of \$7,800 will be converted into checking, Basden explained.

"The recreation committee does not want to incorporate," Basden explained. "We will go any way the town board wants us to (concerning the expenditure

of the \$7,800). And, we have no problem with a member of the town board or mayor co-signing checks with the recreation officials." Funds in the savings account were raised in past years by members of the recreation committee and local citizens, Basden explained.

Commissioner S.A. Blizzard made a motion to appoint Mayor Wilbur Hussey as co-signer for recreation department checks along with Recreation Committee Chairman Alfred Basden and treasurer Ada Brown. The motion was seconded by Franklin Boyette and unanimously approved.

The citizens committee for renovation of the old Beulaville town hall, appointed by the town board, reported a \$12,500 estimate to restore the structure. Commissioners Blizzard and Elvis Sumner had reported a \$23,640 estimate to restore the old town hall and recommended the construction of a new building to replace the old structure if need existed for additional space, during the February meeting of the town board.

Sarah Bolin and Anna Guy presented the estimate to the board. The estimate included costs of removing the top and replacing with a shingled A-roof, rewiring, drop in ceiling and insulation, bathrooms with handicap facilities, leveling the floor, refinishing the walls, and insulation.

"I think the price came about by the fact the people who bid on the project gave us low bids because they would be doing something for the town, Mrs. Bolin said. "We received two bids on most of the work and most were local people bidding."

Bolin, Carl Pate and Anna Guy were appointed to the citizens renovation committee during the March meeting. Beulaville commissioners tabled the renovation question until board members could study the report from the citizens' committee.

The board granted Univision Cable TV a 60-day extension to complete installation. John Fecteau, Univision installation manager, pointed out problems with right-of-ways for aerial lines on Carolina Telephone and Telegraph and on Carolina Power and Light poles and the weather causing delays for the company. The board unanimously approved the 60-day extension.

Date for a HUD grant public hearing was announced for April 18 at 7 p.m. at the Beulaville town hall. Following at 7:30 p.m. will be a rezoning hearing to consider recommendations from the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The DOT suggestions are for sections of Highway 24 in Beulaville including the removal of parking on the south side of Highway 24 from Smith St. westward 100 feet. Parking is also suggested to be removed on the north and south sides of Highway 24 from a point 25 feet west of Railroad St. to a point 25 feet east of Railroad Street. Parking is recommended to be removed on the north and south sides of Highway 24 from a point 25 feet west of Lee Street to a point 25 feet east of Lee Street.

The board received estimates of surveying the town to establish boundaries and mark lines. William Blanchard of Wallace submitted a \$4,800 estimate and Joey Brochure of Kinston, \$2,940. No action was taken on a town survey.

A resolution from the League of Municipalities was approved by the Beulaville commissioners. The resolution called for the reenactment of general revenue sharing.

The board approved a motion not to participate in the employee retirement tax shelter program due to the lack of interest expressed by the town employees.

A budget amendment was made from general revenue-sharing to pay for a used trash truck to be purchased from the town of Pink Hill. The truck will cost \$5,000. Blizzard made the motion to amend the budget for the purchase of the trash truck. The motion was approved.

The March police report was submitted to the board. The report included 14 traffic and 13 criminal violations and 25 general calls.

## Kenansville Jaycettes Sponsor Benefit For Lori Mitchell

The Kenansville Jaycettes are sponsoring a benefit for Lori Mitchell, a third grade student at Kenansville Elementary, and a member of Pearsall's Chapel Church. Lori has been hospitalized at Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville since March 11 due to an injury sustained in an accident.

The Jaycettes will sponsor a hot dog and bake sale on Friday, April 22 from 3:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. and on Saturday, April 23, from 10 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. Baked goods will be available on Saturday. These sales will be located at Jackson's IGA parking lot in Kenansville.

Anyone wishing to make a contribution may contact co-chairpersons Chris Bass at 296-1867 or Phyllis Worsley at 296-0329. All support will be greatly appreciated.

## Cancer Benefit

The American Cancer Society campaign this year in Duplin County is April 16-24. The Beulaville American Cancer Society committee consists of Alice Anne Page, chairperson, and assisting chairpersons Jackie Crute, Cathy Blizzard and Marcie Lanier.

These ladies are involved in raising money for this non-profit organization. To help obtain money, a bridge benefit has been planned for April 22 from 7:30 to 11 p.m. The benefit will be held in the educational building at the Beulaville Presbyterian Church located on Hwy. 24. The entrance fee is \$5 per person or \$20 per table. The deadline for entry is April 20.

A federal judge last week (Tuesday) sentenced John L. Sorrell Jr. of Wallace to five years in prison and fined him \$10,000 — the maximum penalty — after a jury found Sorrell guilty of income tax evasion.

After a three-day trial, the jury took 40 minutes to find Sorrell guilty of willful failure to report \$295,000 in income in 1976. Prosecutors say he acquired the money by using a "devious scheme" to defraud his mother and four cousins.

The defendant should have paid \$148,000 in income taxes on the money, said an Internal Revenue Service agent who testified as an expert witness.

Before sentencing, U.S. District Judge James C. Fox said he would not offer an opinion on Sorrell's dealings with his family because he was charged only with income tax evasion. But Fox said Sorrell had "devised a complex and ingenious

scheme" to commit his crime.

According to federal prosecutors, Sorrell had a money-making plan that involved separate sales of land and timber that belonged to his relatives.

The land in question was S and J Farms Inc., including 635 acres in Pender and Duplin counties. Sorrell's mother, Mae Johnson Sorrell, held a half interest in the farm. Four of his cousins shared ownership of the other half. The cousins, Cora Jane Johnson Bostic, Dorothy Johnson Lane, Carson Johnson and Fletcher Johnson, all testified against the defendant.

Witnesses from Georgia Pacific Corp. testified that in 1976, Sorrell arranged the sale of timber from S and J Farms to Georgia Pacific for \$475,000, beginning negotiations in the summer or earlier. The cousins testified that they knew nothing about the negotiations.

Meanwhile, Sorrell also arranged the sale of S and J Farms to a man identified as Ronald H. Braswell. Under the terms of the sale agreement, Braswell was to exchange unspecified land known as Dixie Farms Inc. with Mae Johnson Sorrell for her half interest in S and J Farms. Braswell was to pay \$45,000 to each of Sorrell's four cousins for their shares.

Prosecutors said nobody named Braswell ever bought S and J Farms and that the man who posed as Braswell during transactions was an imposter.

They said Sorrell deeded documents related to ownership of Dixie Farms to his mother, had \$45,000 paid to each of his four cousins from the Georgia Pacific timber payment and pocketed \$295,000 in cash, which he failed to report as income.

Prosecutors said he acquired the cash, a briefcase full of \$100 bills, in a meeting with a Georgia-Pacific representative in the vault of a Whiteville bank.

When the person identified as Braswell failed to purchase land for Dixie Farms, all the land that had composed S and J Farms reverted to Sorrell's mother.

After Sorrell was sentenced, his wife, Mary, and cousin Cora Jane Johnson Bostic argued outside the courtroom.

Mrs. Bostic told prosecuting lawyer Justin Thornton that Mrs. Sorrell had told her, "God will make you pay."

Mrs. Sorrell told Thornton she had not threatened Mrs. Bostic. Mrs. Sorrell and her two daughters left the building in tears, saying Sorrell is not guilty.

Thornton and lawyer Mark Friend, both with the tax division of the U.S. Department of Justice, argued the government's case.

Sorrell was defended by Wilmington lawyers William Shell and Alex Fonvielle Jr.

## Request Uncorks Several Surprises For Duplin Winery

Duplin Wine Cellars officials were unsure what — if anything — would turn up when they asked North Carolina residents to search their attics, basements and packhouses for discarded wine bottles and other winemaking artifacts.

"Initially, it was a shot in the dark," said Pam Pope, public affairs officer for the winery. "We didn't know if anything existed at all."

But just over a month after the first notice went out, about 60 items have been received, including wine bottles from the 1830s.

"We have been quite surprised with the response," she said.

The search is part of Duplin Wine Cellars' attempt to revive the wine industry in North Carolina, which was once the top winemaking state.

Duplin Wine Cellars, largest of the state's four wineries, will hold a rare wine and artifacts auction April 30 in Rose Hill, where the winery is located.

Mrs. Pope said one of the finds is a Medoc Vineyard bottle from the 1830s. The Medoc Vineyard, in Halifax County, was the nation's first commercial winery.

Mrs. Pope said she has also received a call from a man who said he has 20 shares — at \$100 a share — from the Medoc Vineyard.

A number of bottles are those used by the Paul Garrett winery, whose Virginia Dare wine was the best-selling wine in the nation before Prohibition. Those bottles are also from the 1830s.

The age of the bottles is only part of the attraction for collectors.

"Many of the bottles are heavily embossed on the glass itself," Mrs. Pope said. Others have less costly paper

labels. Bottles are not all that will be auctioned. Mrs. Pope said she has received an antique grape crusher and a bone cutter, which was used to cut holes in wine barrels.

Mrs. Pope said the idea for the auction "really began because we became aware most people were not aware of the history of wine making in the state."

Mrs. Pope said a revival of wine making would benefit not just the industry but also the state through increased tax revenues.

She said for every 1,000 gallons of brandy — which takes five times as many grapes as wine — the state and federal government would receive \$10,000 each in excise taxes.

Duplin Wine Cellars produced 3,000 gallons of brandy last year — the first year a winery in North Carolina could produce brandy legally since 1909, she said.

