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Kenansville May Not Need To Raise Its Taxes

The proposed \$186,122 general fund budget for Kenansville's 1983-84 fiscal year includes no tax increase and reduces the general fund contribution to the water and sewer fund, which is nearing self-sufficiency.

The annual budget hearing will be held at 7 p.m. June 20 in the town hall.

The town's tax rate of 69 cents per \$100 assessed valuation is expected to bring in \$82,000. Other major revenue sources are \$27,000 from franchise taxes, \$21,636 from sanitation collection fees, \$17,800 from local government sales taxes, \$15,000 from the state gasoline tax through the Powell Bill allocation, \$3,000 from ABC store profits.

Major expenditures from the proposed budget are \$58,511 for administration,

an increase of about \$8,000 from the current level; \$42,644 for police, up \$6,000; \$12,100 for fire protection, up \$9,100; \$51,415 for streets, up almost \$10,000; \$20,302 for sanitation, down \$7,000; and \$1,150 for cemetery expense.

Anticipated water and sewer department revenues, including the town's contribution, are \$101,590 compared with \$126,984 for the current year, during which repairs totaled \$25,000 and painting the water, \$12,000. The new budget includes only \$8,500 for repairs and \$4,000 for painting. Income from water and sewer fees is expected to total \$90,500, an increase of \$6,500 from the current year.

During its Monday night meeting the board awarded a contract \$6,189.80 to Raywood Kennedy to build

an addition to the maintenance shed to house the new town garbage truck. The shed was not large enough to house the new equipment.

The board also approved a variance from the town livestock ordinance to permit livestock to enter the county fair Oct. 3-8. The ordinance bars the housing of large animals with the city limits.

It also awarded a paving contract for \$4,839 to C.E. Turner of Pink Hill.

The town gasoline contract was awarded to Stephens Hardware for 4 cents a gallon under the regular tank price.

The board received \$3,850 from the town ABC store as its share of the past year's profit. This was an increase of \$550 from a year ago. Two years ago the store made no profit. ABC profits are split 55 percent to the town and 45 percent to Duplin County.



Audit Advice For Duplin Hospital Draws Praise

The recommendations of a study of Duplin General Hospital commissioned last month "will be carried out as closely as possible," hospital and county officials said this week.

The hospital's operating costs have exceeded income from patient fees for more than a year. The county commissioners hired the auditing firm of Price-Waterhouse of Atlanta and Raleigh to study the financial situation and recommend improvements.

The report blamed much of the hospital's problems on lack of support by county residents. Only 34 percent of Duplin residents needing hospitalization come to the local hospital.

It also cited delayed collection of money due; delayed payments of bills, causing loss of discounts; an oversized board of trustees; over-staffing; the need for better use of the facility; and the lack of a program to sell the hospital to the community.

The study recommended

the county provide \$335,000 more for the hospital during its current fiscal year to help speed up payments to take advantage of discounts and to begin some upgrading equipment, especially for billing.

Improved collections and faster payments would increase the hospital's 1983 income by \$280,000 according to the study, and \$80,000 a year in the following years. A 5 percent increase in patient load plus recommended improvements would make the hospital self-supporting in two years, the study said.

Commissioner D.J. Fussell of Rose Hill said, "We didn't hire them just for reading matter. We wanted facts. We had facts, more or less, but we needed an expert to tell us just what was needed."

"It's hard for us (as a board) without real expertise in the field to go before the people with the problem," he said. "Anything of this size should have some expert advice."

Both Fussell and board Chairman W.J. Costin of Warsaw said they believe the hospital can overcome its problems. They agree with the study that the size of the board of trustees should be reduced and that the hospital needs to improve bill collection.

A committee of the board of trustees, headed by H.M. Price of Rose Hill, recommended last month that the 26-member board be reduced to 13 members. The Price-Waterhouse study advised a reduction to nine.

Commissioner Allen Nethercutt of Chinquapin, who voted against commissioning the study, said "It's exactly like I thought it would be and we could have used that money someplace else."

The study is expected to cost about 20,000. Costin said the commissioners have made no decision about the hospital, but probably will do so before Oct. 1, the start of the hospital's fiscal year. He said the county board has little

authority over the hospital except during annual lease negotiations for use of the county-owned building.

During their June meeting Thursday night, hospital board members called themselves "lame ducks" and deferred most action until the issue of the board's size is resolved.

The hospital received \$25,000 from the county Thursday. This year, the county has provided \$145,000 in addition to the \$105,000 payment on hospital bonds the county has paid each year since the bonds were issued in the 1950s.

Hospital administrator Richard Harrell said the average daily patient load of about 59 for the first seven months of the hospital year has increased by five over the same period last year. The hospital has 90 beds. He attributed the increase to the higher number of physicians in the county--from seven in 1976 to 18 now, with three more expected this summer.

Harrell and Annie B. Houston, director of nursing,

said the over-staffing noted in the study results from lack of use.

"You have to maintain your basic staff with capability of handling the immediate patient load plus some emergency load," Harrell said. He said the staff that cares for 60 patients can care for 70 with some part-time help.

Mrs. Houston said the arrival of several obstetricians has led to a dramatic increase in the number of births at the hospital. Harrell expects 250 births at the hospital this fiscal year, compared with 20 three years ago.

Harrell also said discussions with the county Mental Health Department about its moving from the top floor of the newest hospital wing have begun. "We hope to take this floor over next year and place 16 patient beds in it," he said.

The floor has been leased to the Mental Health Department for about \$30,000 a year, about the same amount one patient bed would bring in during a year.



NEW PHENIUS ARRIVES AT THE LIBERTY CART. John Rice a curly-haired man more than six feet in height arrived in Duplin County to join the 1983 production of the outdoor drama The Liberty Cart in Kenansville. Rice arrived last Friday and traveled with members of the cast to be a

part of the weekend celebration of arts and drama in the Jacksonville Mall. Rice comes to The Liberty Cart after two years as the lead in Blackbeard, an outdoor drama in Bath, he is a resident of Bowling Green, Ohio he works as a teacher of speech and theatre

Beulaville Trash Collection Fees To Rise \$1

The 1983-84 Beulaville Town budget was presented to the Beulaville Board of Commissioners, June 6 with a proposal to raise trash collection fees and give town employees a salary increase.

The town tax rate will remain at 60 cents, but the new budget proposes an increase from \$2 to \$3 for trash collection of residential customers and \$6 for businesses. Also, a proposed limbs, tires, or other debris fee of \$25 per truck load is slated in the 1983-84 budget.

A public hearing will be held on the budget, June 27 at the Beulaville town hall at 7:30 p.m. Within the general town budget for 1983-84 Beulaville projects \$210,300 in expenditures; the water and sewer fund is set at \$115,900 and \$26,600 is expected in the revenue sharing fund.

A salary increase of five percent was originally submitted to the Beulaville Town Board in the 1983-84 budget. Commissioners Franklin Boyette made the motion to raise town employees salaries to 10 percent, the second came from Commissioner Rabon Brown. The salary increase for town employees is the first in two years, Boyette said. Town accountant Doug Clark estimated the additional five percent salary increase

would cost Beulaville about \$6,000.

The Board voted unanimously not to renovate the old Beulaville town hall, and if additional space was needed in the future a new building would possibly be constructed. The motion was made by Commissioner Franklin Boyette. Carl Pate, Chairman of the citizens' committee to renovate the old town hall appeared before the board estimating the reconstruction costs at \$12,500 excluding any heating or cooling system.

Univision Cable Television was granted an extension until July 1 by the Beulaville town board. Gail Bailey of the Univision Cable service appeared before the board to request an extension and informed the Commissioners of available service to 185 homes in Beulaville. Of the 185 homes connected 73 homes had subscribed to cable service, Bailey explained. Within the town, the cable representative said, 299 homes are yet to be connected and Univision expects at least 150 of the waiting group to subscribe. Connection delays have been caused by unreleased right-of-ways to some Carolina Power and Light poles within Beulaville, Bailey explained.

Fire Chief Millard Decker of Beulaville appeared before the Board to request exemption of the town fire

department from OSHA standards. Decker estimated \$8,000 would be needed to bring the Beulaville fire department up to the standards required by OSHA. The funds would be needed to replace breathing masks, Decker said. The Beulaville town board approved the request to exempt the fire department from OSHA standards.

Beulaville Commissioners approved payment of \$25 per night meeting of the town board to Clerk Carol Miller. The Board also approved new town hall hours, closing Saturday morning and opening daily Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Planning Board for the town of Beulaville was granted \$300 by the Town Commissioners to finance a project to study extraterritorial zoning. Earl Spell, Planning Board member, informed the Commissioners of an estimated \$130 is needed for map work and recording fees at the Duplin Register of Deeds Office in order to pursue the extraterritorial zoning project.

Extraterritorial jurisdiction can be extended up to one mile beyond the town's corporate limits. Zoning would be the only jurisdiction within the territory, no taxes would be assessed and no town services provided to

Faison Produce Sales Are Off To Late Start

Volume is increasing on the Faison vegetable auction market, but the areas produce marketing season is about two weeks late, farmers and crop reporters said.

"It's the first time in my 26 years here as auctioneer the market opened after Memorial Day," Jimmy Joliff said Thursday. The market opened Monday.

The exceptionally wet, cool spring delayed crop planting and growth in the region.

The market--the largest vegetable auction in North Carolina--normally would be handling squash, beans and table cucumbers by this time, Joliff said.

Wednesday's sales consisted of zucchini and yellow squash and an occasional hamper of green beans. Thursday is normally an off day on the market, he said.

Cucumbers will begin appearing in volume late next week, Joliff said.

Steve Skuba, market reporter for Market News Service, said activity has been "very limited" at rural marketing sheds in Sampson, Johnston and Duplin counties because of the late-ness of the crop.

Prices have been good, he said, especially compared with last year when the bottom fell out of the market early because of overproduction.

Top-quality zucchini

squash have been bringing more than \$6.50 for 25-pound cartons; top-quality yellow squash get \$6.45 to \$6.60. Fifty-pound cartons of oversized squash have brought \$3 to \$5.

In an average year, the major portion of South-

eastern North Carolina's early-summer vegetable season has passed by the time the Virginia-Delaware-Maryland Eastern Shore and New Jersey seasons peak. Planting was delayed a few days in those areas and there is some indication their marketing

seasons will be delayed as well.

Unless the marketing seasons in those areas are late, their produce will come in when the volume from South-eastern North Carolina is at a peak. That would create stiff price competition for vege-

table producers of all three areas.

Skuba said farmers and others wishing to keep up with the latest prices for vegetables can hear recorded quotes by calling 267-9361 or 267-5331 at the temporary Market News Office from the auction market here.



PRODUCE BUYING BEGINS IN FAISON. Produce sheds began accepting vegetables from local farmers last week, after delaying the opening almost two weeks because of late planting seasons. Squash and beans dominated the market throughout the week, buyers said, with an occasional basket of pepper appearing. Prices for squash

fell by the end of the opening week. Due to the late planting season the local produce will be in competition with vegetables grown in the South Carolina and Virginia market belts. Pictured above, buyers follow the grader down the line of produce as he marks the government grade on the vegetables.