

Duplin to hold hearing on sales tax

KENANSVILLE—The Duplin County Board of Commissioners plans to hold a public hearing to determine the opinion of county residents on increasing the local option sales tax by one-half cent. The board Monday agreed to study the question this week and decide at its regular meeting Aug. 1 on a date, time and place for the hearing.

Before adjourning last week, the N.C. General Assembly authorized counties to allow counties to levy an additional one-half cent sales tax on each \$1 of taxable goods. The money would be used for schools and water and sewer system improvements.

Board Chairman W.J. Costin estimated the added sales tax would bring Duplin about \$900,000 a year.

"I'm glad we're finally getting a fair shake on this sales tax collection. We've been cheated out of a half million dollars a year by the tax (the present 1 cent local option sales tax) going back to where the counties where sales were made rather than to counties on basis of population," he said.

The law authorizing the additional half-cent levy provides that it be distributed on basis of population. Rural counties long have objected to the local sales tax proceeds being distributed to the point of origin which they have contended unfairly benefitted the populous counties where large shopping centers are located.

"If we need it let's put it in," said Commissioner D.J. Fussell.

County Manager Ralph Cottle said the county public school system and

James Sprunt Technical College at Kenansville could use additional money. The only other money source for the needed improvements would be the property tax, Cottle said.

In other business, the board approved an \$800 request from Tax Collector Norman Sandlin in order to have a county employee trained to search titles to speed tax collection work.

Sandlin said 373 garnishments for unpaid taxes amounting to \$78,588.92 have been issued since March 14. He said 60 percent of the amount has been collected. Sandlin expects to collect between 98 and 100 percent of the total.

Cottle reported an federal grant of \$697,900 had been tentatively approved for the Albertson water district. The grant was made pending approval in a referendum of a \$314,000 loan.

The county should study whether a

central telephone system would save the county money, Cottle said.

Kenneth Futreal, county soil conservationist, was authorized to use a jobs bill grant of \$1,600 a month from July through September to hire a secretary for two days a week and a technician to work on the Limestone and Muddy Creek watershed projects in east Duplin County.

The board voted to renew the Duplin General Hospital lease for one year for \$1. The present lease doesn't expire until Oct. 1, but hospital officials needed to know the hospital's status to make plans for the next year.

Christine Williams, register of deeds, reported her office collected \$88,344 in fees during the last fiscal year. The total was just \$4 more than in the preceding year.

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Men Thrown From Car In Accident

Two Duplin residents were seriously injured at 5:55 a.m. Monday when the car in which they were riding skidded, overturned and threw them onto the road, the State Highway Patrol reports.

The one-car accident occurred on U.S. #117 about a mile south of Rose Hill, according to the report filed by State Trooper R.I. Hammond.

Bradley Kent Sanderson, 21, of Route 3, Wallace, and Michael Dale Decker, 22, of

Route 2, Wallace, were taken to Duplin General Hospital, then transferred to New Hanover Memorial Hospital (NHMH). Sanderson was transferred to Duke University Medical Center, where he was listed in fair condition as he underwent surgery Monday night. Decker was listed in serious condition Monday at NHMH.

According to Hammond's report, the car was headed south on a straight stretch of U.S. #117 when the 1979 Toyota owned by Sanderson

ran off the right side of the road, skidded back across the road, hit a ditch on that side of the highway and overturned, throwing the men from the car.

Hammond estimated the car was moving at 70 mph

when it ran off the road. He reported that both men were unconscious when he arrived and he was uncertain which man had been driving.

The accident demolished the auto.

Representative Jerry Studds, of Massachusetts, were officially censured by the House for sexual misconduct with House pages. In one case it was a heterosexual act with a female page and in the other a homosexual act with a male page. In both instances, guilt was freely admitted to the committee, and the members agreed to procedures that protected the identity of the young people involved. In one case three years had elapsed since the event took place and in the other ten.

I felt that the action of both men was an extremely serious breach of the trust placed in House members by parents who send their teenage children here and, in effect, put them in our keeping. I voted, together with a large majority, to impose censure instead of a milder punishment called a reprimand recommended by the Ethics Committee. There were substantial legal questions as to whether we could actually expel these men for offenses committed in past Congresses.

Setting High Standards

It is, I think, a credit to the Ethics Committee and to the House that nobody attempted to run and hide. We did what had to be done. It is significant that neither the press nor any outside agency discovered these violations. They were uncovered by the committee itself as a result of a very intensive investigation by its own staff. It is also significant that there was no leak of any kind until the official announcement was made.

I suppose that, unfortunately, we will continue to have some misconduct by Congressmen. As one member put it yesterday, "You can't dip clear water from a muddy stream." The implication was that Congressmen come from a public that is not perfect.

The important thing is that we set a high standard for the House and hold our members to it no matter how distasteful it is to us to impose appropriate punishment when they fail to measure up.

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Congressional Censure

Being officially censured by his colleagues is, without doubt, the most humiliating experience a Congressman can undergo. The procedure is that a resolution calling for the censure is brought to the floor by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, unofficially called the Ethics Committee.

The resolution is read by the chairman of that committee as well as the specifics of the conduct of the accused member which gave rise to the charges. The member charged must, of course, sit through the proceedings.

Like any other resolution, this one is debatable, and within the time allocated for that purpose, any member is free to ask for recognition to comment on the resolution, the action of the Ethics Committee and the alleged conduct of the member involved.

History of Censure

In the entire history of the Congress, only 21 members have been censured. Only five of these were in this century, and I have had the unpleasant duty of voting on four. In 1979, I voted to censure Charles Diggs of Michigan, who had been convicted in a jury trial for requiring a member of his staff to kick back to him for his personal use a substantial portion of her salary. In 1980, I cast a similar vote against Representative Charles Wilson of California, who had accepted a large sum of money from Long Sun Park, a Korean national, and then lied about it under oath to the committee.

Last week, Representative Phil Crane, of Illinois, and

Deaths - Funerals

THADEUS HOWARD
DEEP RUN - Thadeus Howard, 57, died Monday. Funeral, Howard & Carter Funeral Home. Burial, Pine-lawn Memorial Park.

Surviving: wife, Mrs. Mary Lee Howard; son, Roger Keith Howard of Greenville; brothers, Norwood Howard of Salisbury, David Howard of Deep Run; sisters, Mrs. Helen Smith, Mrs. Letha Byrd and Mrs. Thelma Turner, all of Deep Run, Mrs. Hildred Aldridge of Kinston, Mrs. Linda C. Hill of Wilmington.

CHARLIE S. JOHNSON
WALLACE - Charlie Samuel Johnson, 63, died Monday. Funeral, Bethel Wesleyan Church. Burial, Rockfish Memorial Cemetery.

ROSCOE ROBINSON
DEEP RUN - Roscoe Robinson, 86, died Monday. Funeral, Woodington Ward Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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