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Board Wrestles With Welfare Budget

Long-Range Plan OK'd

By Wally Avett
Staff Writer

The Cherokee County commissioners approved a long-range plan for water-sewer lines in the Andrews-Murphy valley and okayed part of the welfare budget for the coming year in a busy session on Monday.

The State Planning Task Force of North Carolina, aided by an Appalachian grant, prepared the study on the Andrews-Murphy valley. A preliminary version of the report was shown to the commissioners in January of 1970 and they approved it then. Ned Tucker, field coordinator for the

Southwestern Planning and Development Commission, headquartered in Sylva, came Monday to present the commissioners with the final published version of the plan. At his suggestion, they formally approved it and sent copies of their resolution of approval to the proper agencies.

Basically, the plan calls for laying water and sewer lines from Andrews to Murphy over the next 30 years, the estimated cost of the systems to be about \$10.5 million. The two towns and the valley between them would be supplied with water by a reservoir on Junaluska Creek and the valley sewage system would end at a treatment plant at Murphy. Both systems would run by gravity.

They did approve the public assistance section of the Social Services budget, which is aid to the aged, aid to the disabled and aid to dependent children. The aid to the blind budget was also approved.

There was a slight increase in the county's share of the aid to the blind program, Ayers said, because the number of blind people receiving assistance has increased from 28 to 37. The other aid programs' budget was also increased, Ayers pointing out that the county's share has been upped in that category from 12 percent to about 13.5 percent.

The commissioners also approved a pay raise for employees of the Social Services Department, who are paid from federal, state and county monies. Ayers asked for a five percent raise, saying they needed the extra money to remain competitive with other jobs requiring similar educational standards.

The Cherokee commissioners went along with the request, saying they feared the state and federal part of the county's welfare monies might be cut if they refused. Ayers said after the meeting that the 10 employees in his department come under the jurisdiction of the State Personnel Act and indicated that the commissioners' fears were justified, that the pay plan is a prerequisite in getting state and federal money.

The county's share of the administrative cost of his department will increase this year to \$32,694 from last year's \$27,617 but Ayers emphasized that the increase is not all due to the pay raise.

The state of North Carolina in years past has paid 20 percent of the administrative costs of his department (salaries, office expenses, etc.) according to Ayers, but this year has cut that figure back to 15.6 percent and the county has had to pick up most of the slack.

He said if the state had continued to pay 20 percent of the costs, the increase due to the pay raise would have been only about \$1,000.

In other action, the commissioners: - Named Commissioner Jack Lovingood to represent them on the Resource Conservation and Development steering committee.

- Accepted the telephoned resignation of Joe El-Khoury from the Cherokee County Rural Development Authority and named Jack Phillips to take his place.

- Voted to advertise delinquent taxes in June and hold the tax sale the first Tuesday in July.

"In my opinion, Cherokee County has the most valuable piece of real estate in North Carolina," Tucker said. He said the valley is well-suited for industrial development and could accommodate industry which would provide 5,000 jobs. He voiced a fear that if development of the valley is not guided, it may be taken over by "high-priced promoters."

Tucker advised the commissioners that after approving the water-sewer plan, they should contact the Conservation and Development Department in Raleigh and set aside an industrial park in the county for location of plants in the future.

V.O. Ayers, who heads the county Social Services Department, formerly Welfare, brought in his budget for the coming county fiscal year, which begins July 1. The commissioners said other county departments will have until May 15 to present their budgets.

The focal point of the Social Services budget is the Medicaid section, which like other Social Services functions is funded by the federal, state and county governments, the federal government paying the largest part.

Last year the county's share of Medicaid was set at \$36,640 but that was not enough as poor people availed themselves of free medical services, free dental work, eyeglasses and drugs under the new Medicaid program. With Medicaid running beyond its budget, the commissioners approved transfer of funds from other welfare accounts which were running below the expected level. Ayers reported that through March, the county has spent \$44,361 on Medicaid.

He proposed that the county's share of Medicaid for the coming fiscal year be set in the budget at \$72,380 and the commissioners balked at that increase. There is much talk in Raleigh and the General Assembly, they said, of the state taking over the Social Services system, relieving the counties. The commissioners deferred any action on the Medicaid budget until their regular May meeting, hoping for some sort of relief from the Legislature.



Mr. and Mrs. Jim Roberts and children..... boat dock operators

New Family Arrives To Operate Boat Dock

An Asheville family moved to the Grape Creek section of Cherokee County last week as the new operator's of what was formerly known as Elmo's Boat Dock.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Roberts and their three children say they're "here to stay." They will be living at the lodge at the boat landing.

They have purchased the facilities from Mrs. Jo Taylor, widow of the late Elmer Taylor, who operated the dock for several years before his death in a speedboat accident. They are in the process of making an

application to the U.S. Forest Service, which controls Hiwassee lakeside lands, for a 10-year use permit to operate the dock.

Cherokee Gets Ranger

Harold L. Coleman has come back home to Murphy as the new Cherokee County forest ranger.

He says he hopes to open "as soon as possible," offering bait, gas, boats and motors for rent and storage for boats of all types.

"This year we'll probably have to tie boats to cables and leave them in the open," he said, adding that the deadline for removing all barrels and replacing them with other methods of flotation is the first of 1972.

The dock's three boat slips, which float largely on barrels, are in a dilapidated condition, he said, and will probably have to be replaced entirely.

Easter Services Planned In Clay

A countywide Easter Sunrise Service will be held at Hinton Rural Life Center Sunday beginning at 6 a.m. The Rev. P.H. McCann, state supervisor of the Church of God of Charlotte, will be the speaker. Special music is planned.

On Thursday night April 8, a Communion service will be held at the Hayesville First United Methodist Church beginning at 7:30 p.m.



Harold L. Coleman



School Pupils Join Campaign

Pupils at Murphy Elementary joined in the clean-up and beautification movement now sweeping the area this week. Mrs. Talitha Goodwin's class, top, chose as a class project the

Murphy Garden Club's picnic area and went to work picking up litter there. Mrs. Eric Townson's class was busy in the rocky soil of the school playground, the boys planting vegetables and the girls planting flowers.

Clean-Up, Beautification Drives Beginning Across Cherokee, Clay

Spring cleaning is a customary exercise in many homes and this week it spread to the communities at large as various groups began their campaigns.

In Murphy, Mayor Cloe Moore has declared litter an eyesore that discourages new business and new residents and proclaimed the third week in April as Extra Effort Days, calling upon all citizens to keep the town free of litter.

The Murphy Garden Club is staging its annual clean-up and anti-litter drive for the third week of April.

Mrs. Holland McSwain is litterbug chairman and she and her committee are formulating plans to make a clean-sweep of Murphy. Details will be announced at a later date but in

the meantime they are asking all citizens to begin to collect trash and other unsightly articles from their houses and yards. Trucks are scheduled to pick up trash on Thursday, April 22.

Other members of the Litterbug Committee are Mrs. Francis Bourne, Jr., co-chairman; Mrs. Eric Townson; Mrs. Frank Forsyth, Mrs. Hans Beerkens, Mrs. Dan Lamb, and Mrs. Walter Mauney.

At Brasstown, the 4-H Club began a clean-up drive on Monday of this week, with cash prizes to be awarded on April 24 to the top four trash collectors in the club. Mrs. Barry Wheeler said the money prizes will go to the biggest collectors of bottles, cans and non-burnable items.

The collected trash will be taken to the dump at Hayesville, she said, and the 4-Hers will have it bagged up. However, volunteer labor and trucks are needed to make the

haul anyone wishing to help on that Saturday, April 24, should call Mrs. Barry Wheeler.

At Hayesville, an enthusiastic group met at Hayesville School auditorium last Friday night to make plans for the annual clean-up sponsored by the Clay County Lions Club. That drive, now under way, got a big boost this week as it developed that Sam Cox's junkyard is being cleared of old car bodies and the operation can handle any old cars that are delivered to the yard.

Cox said the operation began Monday and the crusher will accommodate any old car bodies which are brought in, but he requested that whole bodies, not just parts, be delivered at the yard, located about a mile west of Hayesville. The offer is good, he added, only while the crusher is stationed at his junkyard.

At the Friday night meeting

in Hayesville, Carl Moses reported that the Clay County Rescue Squad will be glad to assist in burning down old unsightly buildings but should be given a few days' notice.

Mrs. Edgar Price, heading the beautification committee of the Homemakers Club, said members of the club plan to plant and cultivate flowers on the Courthouse lawn in Hayesville this Summer, and will encourage planting of dogwoods and painting of mailboxes throughout the county.

Bill Bradley was commended at the meeting for furnishing a truck being used by Operation Mainstream workers cleaning up town and county property around Hayesville. Those at the meeting also agreed to write to Reynolds Aluminum Co. on the possibility of collecting aluminum beer cans for re-cycling the metal in them.

Primary Set At Andrews

Andrews will hold a Democratic primary next Tuesday in connection with its town election, set for May 4.

The deadline for filing for mayor or one of the four council seats passed by Tuesday with no Republicans at all filing.

Ty Burnette, Democrat, is unopposed for the office of mayor.

The four Democratic councilmen, Leo Hurst, Paul Parker, Ray Hogsed and John Raxter, have all filed for re-election and are faced with four challengers-Democrats DeWitt Sharpe, Roy Williams, Sam Ward and Gordon Phillips.

Mrs. Zora Bryson, town clerk, said all voting will be at the Town Hall next Tuesday, from 6:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. The top four vote-getters will then be the Democratic candidates in the general election.

The general election is required by law, Mrs. Bryson said, regardless of the fact that there will be no printed opposition on the ballot for the Democratic candidates.

APRIL 1971						
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LEFT TO RIGHT
KAREN RUTH MOORE
-Mr. & Mrs. Ferd Moore
ANGELA LEIGH HENDRIX
-Mr. & Mrs. Jim Hendrix
TAMARA LYNN BARTON
-Mrs. Mary Frances Hughes
MARGARET LYNN HALL
-Mr. & Mrs. John Burton Hall



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