

County Tax Rate Cut

By Wally Avett
Staff Writer

The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners Monday accepted a tentative county budget for 1971-72, cutting the county property tax rate a nickel, from \$1.55 down to \$1.50 per hundred of valuation.

The budget is to stand for about three weeks and will be adopted in permanent form by July 28, the commissioners said. It could be changed between now and then although they don't expect to make any substantial revisions.

Last year's budget was a total of \$1.5 million; this year's edition will be smaller, figured tentatively at \$1.35 million. This year's budget anticipates the county receiving at least \$75,000 from the new county one percent sales tax and several large expenditures of last year will not be necessary this year.

For example, the current revaluation of property in the county is almost complete, a \$40,000 item in last year's budget which is absent in this year's figures. Costs of the Medicaid section of the welfare program, which ran the county most \$50,000 over the past year, will probably run less than \$20,000, as the

State of North Carolina is expected to take over a larger portion of Medicaid expenses.

Even with the cutbacks, the commissioners still managed to include modest raises in pay for most of those on their payroll. The outstanding item in this category was the hiring of two new deputy sheriffs, approved by the Legislature against the wishes of the commissioners, at \$600 a month apiece.

A brief version of the budget is to be found on an inside page of this issue and a more detailed budget estimate may be inspected at the Courthouse.

Commissioners noted that for the last two years the tax rate has been based on 60 percent of assessed valuation and the percentage was not changed this year, meaning the five-cent cut is an actual reduction, and not bookkeeping "magic."

They also pointed out that in the total budget of \$1.35 million, the money from state and federal offices will come to \$623,000, the bulk of it coming in as state and federal shares of welfare programs.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Discussed at great length the

problem of garbage disposal for county residents, with emphasis on a proposed container system.

Commissioner W. T. Moore said he was opposed to the idea, favoring collection by private garbage services.

- Met with two of the private garbage collectors and talked of their routes and operations. Chairman Jack Simonds said he would not be opposed to giving them individual franchises, perhaps on a township basis. County Attorney Lonnie Hoover is to look into the possibility of franchises.

- Named Lee Nichols and Casteel Floyd to the Cherokee County Planning Board.

- Voted to sell the county's welfare lien on two acres of land in the Beaverdam section, owned by the late Cary Whitener, to Wesley Whitener for \$600.

- Adopted a resolution setting up a Cherokee County Housing Authority (25 members to be named at a later date) and appointed Ed Hyde to serve as its attorney. The group is to work toward providing low-cost housing in the county.

Bemis Land Up For Sale

Bemis Hardwood Lumber Company land, 15,500 acres of it, will go up for bids on Saturday at the high school gym in Robbinsville.

According to Doyle Brock, treasurer of the firm, the sale is being held for the benefit of the J. M. Bemis heirs.

The mountain land involved is mostly in Graham County, with a little in Cherokee, and constitutes a large percentage of the privately-owned acreage in Graham. The federal government, through its agencies such as TVA and the Forest Service, owns roughly half of the land in Clay, Cherokee and Graham.

The Bemis land going at auction Saturday in Robbinsville is in two large tracts, 6,000 acres in the West Buffalo section and 9,500 acres in the Little Snowbird section, with several miles of frontage on Snowbird Creek.

The smallest piece of land to be sold is eight acres and the largest on the auctioneer's listing is 421 acres. Elevations of the land for sale range from 2,200 to 5,500 feet.

Escape No. 3 Ends For Jones

Russell Lee Jones is back inside a cell at the Cherokee County Jail—or at least he was the last time anybody checked—after his third escape.

Jones was recaptured Sunday by officers near Andrews according to Cherokee Sheriff Blain Stalcup. The sheriff said Jones apparently sawed his way out of the jail again on June 16 and had been loose ever since.

The 22-year-old Graham County escape artist was originally locked up last Fall on breaking and entering charges and was first held in the Clay County Jail, from which he and a companion escaped in November. They were recaptured shortly, with counts of escape and car theft added to the original charges.

Rack in April, Jones sawed his way out of Cherokee County Jail and was caught a few days later in his home county with a stolen car.

Jones has been charged with escape again, for his third flight Sheriff Stalcup said, and will face a Superior Court judge here in Murphy later this month on a variety of charges.

One of the witnesses against him will probably be Highway Patrol Patrolman Zeb Phillips of Robbinsville, who has been in on the recapture of Jones each time he escaped.

Robert Bryson of Murphy, who was serving an 18-day sentence for public drunkenness, went out with Jones and was also recaptured last Sunday, walking along the Slow Creek Road near Marble.



Marble Scene...fatal wreck on bridge.

Car Hits Bridge, Driver Dies

The narrow cement bridges along US-19-129 between Murphy and Andrews claimed another victim Sunday, the second fatal bridge wreck recently.

John F. Howard, 42, formerly of Murphy, had been visiting relatives in the Marble area and was heading toward Andrews Sunday night, starting on the trip back to his home in Seneca, S. C.

Trooper Bob Ogle, investigating officer, said Howard's 1960 Rambler collided with the cement bridge in front of the Marble Elementary School at a speed of about 45 miles per hour, according to an eyewitness.

Howard was taken to the hospital at Andrews, where he died on Monday morning. The patrolman said a charge of drunk driving against Howard will be not pressed in court (not prosecuted).

Trooper Ogle said traffic on the main highway was blocked for about an hour and credited the Andrews Rescue Squad for assistance in routing traffic around the scene via the Hyatt Creek Road.

The previous Sunday a Murphy girl, Doris Ann Phillips, 15, was killed when the car she and four other teens were riding in struck a bridge at Tomotla.

The narrow bridges along US-19-129 have waist-high concrete walls and have figured in a number of accidents through the years. They were built in the early 1920's.

Funeral services for Howard were held Wednesday morning at 11 o'clock in the chapel of the Seneca Mortuary with burial following in Evergreen Memorial Garden near Walhalla, S. C.

He is survived by his father, John H. Howard of Fair Play, S. C.; his wife, Mrs. Odell McGuffin Howard of the home

in Seneca; three brothers, Bill Howard of Metria, La., Robert Howard of Murphy, S-Sgt. James B. Howard of Ft. McClellan, Ala.; four sisters, Mrs. Alice Stalcup of Camp Lejeune, Mrs. Wanda Waldrep of Fair Play, Mrs. Shirley Wilson of Charleston, S. C. and Mrs. Loretta Foster of Maryville, Tenn.

Jamboree Success; Boat Races Sunday

The Murphy Jaycees three-day Country Music Jamboree last weekend was quite a success, according to a club spokesman.

"We were well pleased with it," the Jaycee said. "Of course it was our first Jamboree and the crowds weren't quite as big as we had hoped for but money-wise we broke even and we gained a lot of valuable experience in staging the event."

He added that the Jamboree will "definitely be held again next year, and with the experience gained from this one, will be bigger and better."

Those attending the clogging exhibition, the country and gospel music shows were enthusiastic and generous with their applause.

The performers were "tickled to death" with the response of the audience.

The headlining Leamon Sisters from Chattanooga, for example, said it was one of the best audiences they had performed for. "We just wish they liked us this well in Chattanooga," they said.

The outboard motorboat races sponsored by the Jaycees

will be held Sunday afternoon at Hanging Dog Campground on Lake Hiwassee. This year for the first time the races are sanctioned by the National Outboard Association, with NOA officials to be in charge.

Known as the Elmer Taylor Memorial Marathon, the races on Sunday will not include the short heat runs spectators have seen in the past. Rather there will only be two races, both marathon events, each to last 60 minutes.

The first hour-long race begins at 1:30 and the second starts at 3 o'clock. Admission to the boat ramp area to see the races is free. The first event will be for five classes of limited outboards, the second will be for four classes of the big unlimited racers.

The NOA, a Jaycee explained, is the marine equivalent of auto racing's NASCAR organization. It sanctions races all over North America and drivers compete on a points basis. Sunday's race here is the only NOA event that day and is expected to draw top racers in the points competition from several states.



Investigate Knife Death

A Ramsey Hollow man was found dead Tuesday night in Murphy, lying in front of his home near Providence Hospital. Investigating, left to right, were

Cherokee Coroner J.B. Hall, Deputy Willard Bates, Police Chief Pete Stalcup and Sheriff Blain Stalcup. (Avett Photo)

Pearson Dead Of Knife Wound

A Murphy man was found dead of a knife wound at his home in the Ramsey Hollow section of town Tuesday night.

Russell Pearson, believed to be about 50 years old, was found lying on the gravel road in front of his home by neighbors and law officers shortly after 9 o'clock.

Cherokee County Sheriff Blain Stalcup and Murphy Police Chief Pete Stalcup are investigating but so far have filed no charges. Pearson's wife and Earnest (Boney) Dockery are being held for questioning at the Cherokee County Jail.

Cherokee County Coroner J.B. Hall ruled "death due to

internal bleeding resulting from a knife wound." He said Cherokee Medical Examiner Dr. Charles VanGorder had ordered that the body be taken to Waynesville for a full autopsy.

There was only one knife mark on the body, Coroner Hall said, a large wound in the chest which apparently severed one

or more major blood vessels.

The dead man was clothed only in shoes and a T-shirt, a cigarette butt clenched in the fingers of his left hand. Officers said both he and Mrs. Pearson had been drinking.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete at Ivie Funeral Home.



Jamboree Showstoppers

Some of the favorites of the crowd attending the Jaycee Country Music Jamboree last weekend in Murphy were the Carolina Sweethearts, top, local clogging champions shown in action on Friday

night. Susie McDonald Rogers, shown below, sang in the country music show on Saturday night and was called back by the audience later in the show to perform again. (Staff Photos)

