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Town continues to struggle with money problems

The Hertford Town Council announced to a packed house its intentions of cutting some \$19,000 out of the 1980-81 budget in an effort to boost a depleted cash flow and recover a deficit of some \$36,000 left over from last fiscal year.

Hertford Mayor and Town Manager Bill Cox told a room full of town and county residents at the regular monthly

meeting Monday night that budget cuts were pending on incomplete audit figures. "We need the complete report to rework our '80-'81 budget," he said.

Representatives of the Local Government Commission are expected to study the recently approved '80-'81 budget, in addition to the pending audit figures from the '79-'80 fiscal year, and make

recommendations sometime next week.

In addition to the budget trimming, Cox said the council expected to increase town ice prices by 20 percent, a move which would generate about \$4,000 and put the plant back on "a break-even basis." The ice plant has been operating in the red.

The town is in the process of applying

for an emergency loan of \$39,000 from the Government Commission. Wallace Harding, a representative of the commission, told the council two weeks ago that the most effective method of securing such a loan was to show that steps were being taken to eliminate financial problems.

The council recently instituted a 30

percent increase in water rates, and raised sewer charges 15 cents per thousand gallons of water. The increases are expected to generate approximately \$26,984 in additional revenue for the current fiscal year.

Citizens speak out
Much of Monday's three hour meeting was given over to hearing questions,

comments, criticisms and suggestions from the residents in attendance.

The town-supported recreation department was a sore spot with the group, with many favoring its dissolution.

"How does the town support a

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Hertford budget is dissected

The 1980-81 Hertford town budget will probably fall subject to some trimming next week, as the council makes every effort to eradicate a deficit of some \$36,000 detected in last year's budget and boost a depleted cash flow.

Representatives of the Local Government Commission, of Raleigh, looked at the recently approved budget to project future cash flow and found some mistakes that could possibly add to the town's shortfall, including an excess of some \$100,000 budgeted into the electric fund, a possible deficit of \$20,000-\$40,000 in the general fund, and a water-sewer fund that is not supporting itself, despite a projected surplus in revenue.

Although the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY did a complete budget summary following the council's approval in June, several of our readers have indicated a desire to see a town budget break-down.

The town's revenue is divided up between a number of agencies, departments, and funds, with the largest portion going to electric expenditures. The \$979,770 budgeted for the '80-'81 fiscal year is a \$191,970 increase over last year's \$787,800.

Wallace Harding of the Government Commission said the projected electrical fund revenue is excessive by some \$100,000, a problem he predicted could

further add to the town's budget woes. Hertford Mayor and Town Manager Bill Cox said the fund's excess occurred because 1979-80 audit figures were not available at the time the budget was drawn up. Cox later indicated that electrical fund corrections were pending.

The 1980-81 electric fund is comprised of interest — \$2,000; miscellaneous revenue of \$939,770, (which Cox said is accrued from electric charges and usage); reconnection fees of \$3,000; and electric revenue from Wynne Fork housing of \$35,000, all totaling \$979,770.

Electric fund expenditures include \$39,000 in salaries and wages; \$17,846 of which goes to the head electrician, \$12,251.20 goes toward paying a linesman, and \$8,590 goes toward a groundsman.

The \$313 left over goes toward paying the town manager's yearly salary of \$20,525. Cox explained that his salary was pro-rated on the amount of work he is expected to do in the various departments, thus his total income is paid out of several funds.

Other electric fund expenditures include: \$6,000 operating costs; \$500 utilities; \$4,000 for the repair and maintenance of equipment and vehicle expense; \$25,000 for departmental materials and supplies, \$689,000 for electrical resale; \$3,000 for capital outlay

equipment; a \$181,300 contribution to the general fund; and a \$31,970 contribution to the debt service fund (water & sewer bonds).

The largest expenditure included in the electric fund is the \$689,000 budgeted for electricity for resale. Cox explained the amount as the actual cost of purchasing electricity from Vepco for resale through March 31, 1980, in addition to the estimation of the cost of usage for the months of April, May, and June.

The second largest department in the town's '80-'81 budget is the \$527,500 budgeted for the general fund, an increase of \$22,000 over last year's \$505,500. Revenues anticipated for the fund are:

Taxes: ad-valorem — \$75,400 (at a rate of 65 cents per \$100 at full valuation, based on a true valuation of approximately \$12.1 million and an estimated 91 percent rate of collection); animal taxes — \$50; tax penalties & interest — \$600; motor vehicle licenses — \$850; privilege license — \$2,500; interest on investments — \$1,000; utilities franchise tax — \$27,000; intangible personal property tax — \$2,500; beer & wine tax — \$6,900.

Also, Powell Bill Street Allocation — \$27,000; local option sales tax — \$27,000; ABC net revenues — \$19,000; mosquito control — \$500; housing authority \$2,800; law enforcement manpower grant —

\$20,000; county fire protection — \$6,500.

Also, building permits \$1,500; arrest fees — \$700; sales & service — \$9,000; cemetery revenues \$10,000; sales tax refund — \$3,000; gasoline tax refund — \$2,500; sale of ice — \$25,000; cold storage — \$200; contribution from electric fund — \$181,300; contribution from water-sewer fund — \$20,000; contribution from revenue sharing fund — \$20,000; contribution from Perquimans County — \$20,000; fees & charges recreation department — \$11,000; and contribution from county inspection — \$3,700.

The general fund supports nine departments within the town's operating structure, and foots the bill for most of the town employees' salaries.

The administrative department, which receives a \$76,000 chunk, pays \$36,000 in salaries and wages including \$16,473.60 to the position of town clerk-tax collector-finance officer; \$600 to the mayor; \$20 to each councilman for each meeting; and two full-time secretaries — one at \$8,923.23 and the other at \$8,580. A portion also goes toward the town manager's salary of \$20,525.

The general fund also supports the police department with \$84,000. Of that, \$56,000 goes toward salaries; \$13,156 to the police chief, and salaries ranging

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Hogs observed in Bethel Creek

Bethel residents fight to herd hogs from creek

Despite several years of efforts, two Bethel residents say they are having little success in ridding Bethel Creek of the hogs that wallow in its dark brown waters.

Henry Carney said that he has been trying to get something done about the problem for eight years, and has carried his fight as far as the governor's office, but that the hogs continue to foul the creek.

This is despite the fact that the law appears to be on Carney's side.

"We are writing you as a last resort. We have contacted every means in North Carolina except you," reads a letter to Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., signed by Carney and Harold Gensley.

Hunt's answer promised prompt attention and referred the matter to the state Department of Natural Resources and Community Development.

"We've talked to the clean water people many times and each time someone from the Washington, N.C. office comes out to inspect the problem and takes water samples," Carney said. He said that the two men are led to believe something will be done but that's about as far as it gets.

"The state authorities give you a lot of gobbledy gook. When they get through what they're trying to tell you is they can't do anything," Gensley said.

Carney has sent photographs to the governor, depicting dead hogs floating in the water and buzzards picking at them.

Both men say that dead hogs are discovered in the creek from time to time and are left there to rot.

"We've looked out there and seen 'em floating," said Gensley. "They've got a flock of buzzards that hang out there waiting for (the hogs) to die."

The water that blows up into a cove on Carney's property is muddy brown in

color and last week had a layer of foamy scum on its surface.

The air was heavy with essence of hog but the two men say it isn't the smell that bothers them. Hogs smell as bad out of the water as in, they say, and profess that their real concern is the quality of the water in the creek.

Jim Mulligan, regional supervisor of the state division of environmental management, confirmed that he has had complaints about the hogs in Bethel Creek, including dead hogs.

He said, however, that one hog producer along the creek has taken steps to correct his problem, and another has been instructed to keep his hogs out of the creek or apply for a concentrated feeding operation permit.

Mulligan said that allowing hogs into streams is against state regulations, but those regulations are extremely difficult and time consuming to implement.

"It doesn't mean I can go up and crack the guy for having hogs in the creek," Mulligan said. "It can be corrected today and become a problem again tomorrow."

"All it takes is 15 minutes with a backhoe to either create or eliminate a problem," he said.

Though Mulligan wasn't sure how much of a role animal wastes play in area water quality problems, he said they are a factor. "It definitely plays a part," he said. "There's no fooling about that."

But Gensley and Carney feel that the hog problem has almost killed Bethel Creek. They say the fishing has deteriorated, and the creek's recreational values are virtually nil.

"I wouldn't swim in it. If I fell in it I'd go home and take a bath," said Gensley.

"If I were doing it they'd put me in jail," he added.

County delays softball project, seeks shift to school site

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners opted to withhold its application for a recreational grant to develop a park site near Winfall in a Tuesday morning meeting.

Instead, the commissioners will work with school officials to come up with a plan for developing land adjacent to the county high school for joint recreational-school use.

The change of plans means that the county will miss a September deadline for getting its grant application in, and will now shoot for a Dec. 1 application deadline that could mean funding in mid-spring, according to Mac Sligh, the recently hired county recreation director.

A land and water conservation fund grant application had been prepared for the county based on a decision in fall of 1979 to contribute 14 acres of property

towards the construction of twin softball fields.

The commissioners had originally been told that the land could be used as a match for grant monies but later learned that it could not.

Sligh said, however, that if the county wanted to venture into a joint project with the schools, perhaps it should consider applying for another type grant, as the LWCF grant would give scheduling priority to the recreation department.

Sligh also said he had been told that the LWCF program frowns on funding projects on school property.

The move to attempt development of school property was made despite strong recommendations against it by consultants who favored the county owned site.

Stephen Moeller, a consultant with the department of natural resources and community development, met with town

and county officials on the matter recently, and prepared a list of comments on the question of switching sites.

Because of tree removal and grading, Moeller said that switching sites would cost the county more money in matching funds.

In addition, Moeller pointed out that the school property is close to a residential neighborhood, and that softball games and other activities might be going on as often as six nights per week.

Moeller also said that once funded, the project must remain forever, and this would rule out expansion into the park area by the school.

Finally, Moeller mentioned the possibility of scheduling conflicts.

"The school site has too many drawbacks to justify moving from the county-owned site," Moeller said in summary.

Perquimans County Schools superintendent Pat Harrell was in at-

tendance at the meeting, and said that the county board of education would be very much interested in meeting with the appropriate officials to explore the possibility of developing school property in a joint use arrangement.

He said that the board would like to be involved in the planning stages of the project and suggested that a meeting be arranged in the near future.

In another matter, the commissioners opened insurance bids on one umbrella-style policy that would meet all of the county's insurance needs.

Low bidder was Business Insurance of Raleigh, which offered a policy for \$14,164. Next came Twiddy Insurance and Real Estate in Edenton, at some \$19,000, followed by Hertford resident Pete Overman's Nationwide bid of some \$24,000.

The commissioners will study the bids to determine what kind of coverage each includes and make a decision at a future date.

Marching band will debut Friday night

They won't all be playing trombones, but tomorrow night 76 members of the Perquimans County High School Band will be stepping to the sounds of their own music as they make their marching debut.

Two years of hard work will have led up to the performance of four numbers during halftime of the Perquimans Pirates' opening home football game against Scotland Neck.

Band director David Ziemba promised an exciting show, despite the relative inexperience of band members.

"Even for our first show, we're way ahead of what most bands could do after two years," he said.

Ziemba attributed the rapid progress of the band to student enthusiasm. "The kids really want a band. They've worked hard," he said.

Spectators can expect to see the band assemble on the far side of the field, and

march toward the stands. The marchers will be in a diamond shaped pattern, with a four member rifle team across the front, and flag bearers down the sides.

The opening number will be "On the Line," a standard 2-4 march written for the marching band, Ziemba said.

Next will be a drum feature called "Li." Ziemba's own arrangement of a traditional American folk song.

In the drum feature, mallet and bell players will carry the tune, and the drums will provide the rhythm.

The third number is "Disco Strut," featuring a routine by the four member rifle squad.

Finally, a rock tune featuring the 15 member flag squad will wind up the show.

Ziemba said the first show will be fairly simple, but that the marching routines will become more complex as the season progressed. "Through the

season it will get more and more complex and we hope by the end of the season to have a final product," he said.

The only hitch at present is the arrival of uniforms. Ziemba said that about half of the uniforms have arrived but the rest of them were due Sept. 3., and were expected to be a week or more late.

"We're praying and writing letters and calling," Ziemba said. If the uniforms don't arrive in time the band will dress in white shirts and slacks.

Regardless of what they wear, though, Ziemba is eagerly anticipating the band's debut. "I started a marching band in Charlotte — so I've been through it before," he said. "But I've never been so excited as I am here."

Band leaders include Sheila Perry, drum major and head of the band, Edward Ashe, captain of the rifle squad, and Laurie White, captain of the flag squad.

Preparing to march

Perquimans band members practice in preparation for Friday night's debut at the high school football game against Scotland Neck.