

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 54, No. 24

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, June 19, 1986

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County Commissioners axe proposed tax hike

By JANE B. WILLIAMS
Perquimans County Commissioners addressed the proposed \$2,700,181.00 Fiscal Year Budget for 1986-87 on Monday night dur-

ing a public hearing at the County Courthouse.

W.W. (Welly) White, Jr., chairman of the Board, told the group of approximately 25 people that

the Board had met on Wednesday night and cut the proposed tax hike from four-cents to two-cents, bring the ad valorem tax rate to 68-cents per \$100.00 eval-

uation.

White stated that among the reasons for the two-cent increase this year is the planned cessation

of Revenue Sharing Funds in October, and an increase in mandated federal and state programs. The county anticipates receiving \$63,800 in Revenue Sharing Funds prior to the cut, in comparison to the \$178,000 received in the current fiscal year.

Including the amount expected by October, the county will have approximately \$153,600 on hand from Revenue Sharing in the upcoming fiscal year. Investment earnings have created \$2,000, and the county has \$87,800 on hand in left-over funds.

Revenue Sharing Funds for the upcoming year are expected to go towards replacement of a sheriff's department vehicle at a cost of \$11,000; replacement of a county water tanker at \$55,776; purchase of a truck for the dog catcher at \$7,000; a \$16,500 partial payment for a new tax office computer; and a \$33,500 appropriation for the county's volunteer fire departments. The remaining \$29,824 will go into the county's general fund.

The major concerns presented by those in attendance on Monday were the increase of taxes, county reserve fund balances, and the plight of the local economy.

Many of the group assembled were senior citizens from Bethel Township. They expressed concern over a larger tax bill that would create hardships for those residents living on fixed incomes.

Bethel resident Charles White accused the Board of operating illegally by taxation for the purpose of creating a surplus. "It's illegal to tax money to put it in the bank," White said.

John Jennings, a Republican Candidate for County Commissioner, joined White in chastising the Board for a reserve in the bank, calling it "overtaxation".

In defense of the expected \$1,230,000 reserve fund at the end of the current fiscal year, County Manager Randy Keaton stated that having a reserve was due to good management and good planning.

Commissioner Lester Simpson echoed Keaton's remark, stating that the Local Government Commission says it's good business to operate with a reserve.

Commissioner Thomas Nixon addressed the issue saying that the county did not tax for the purpose of building up a bank account. He told the group that the present reserve has been built up over a 20-year period.

In replying to Mr. Charles

White's comments regarding illegalities, Nixon told him that "You've farmed long enough to know that you've got to have a little saved up to take care of what's necessary."

Nixon assured him that "every dime of fund balance left this year has been put back into this budget."

White then stated that "In other words, you ain't cheating this year, but it has been done in previous years."

Members of the Board assured those present that taxes had not been increased to create a surplus. Monies that are currently on hand in reserve have been created over a number of years from unused budgeted funds.

Keaton also pointed out that in the upcoming fiscal year, the tax rate is five-cents lower due to interest generated from the county's reserve fund.

Several people concerned with the current situation in agriculture asked the Board to consider the farmer when implementing a tax increase.

Billy Williams told the Board that the reserve of the farmer was about gone, and asked them to "help us out as much as you can," adding that when the farmers were better off they'd help out the county.

Williams was joined in his plea by Shirley Perry, Republican Candidate for the North Carolina General Assembly, who told the group that "Farmers are barely hanging on now." She reminded the Board that "this is a rural county that depends largely on farmers."

John Jennings encouraged the Board to use the county's reserve funds to work towards industrial development.

A petition asking the Board to leave the county's tax rate as it was presented by Mrs. Elaine Phillips. The petition contained 49 names, mostly senior citizens.

The proposed budget was changed following the hearing when the Board adjourned to their regular monthly meeting. After consideration of comments gathered at the hearing the Board elected to leave the county's tax rate at 66-cents, with no increase for the upcoming year. The Board anticipates a \$189,000 fund balance at the end of the current fiscal year, which would account for a one-cent drop in the proposed tax rate. The additional monies needed to fulfill the 1986-87 budget requirements will come from the county's reserve account.



LOCAL BEAUTY—Perhaps no other animal or bird known to man is as beautiful as a swan. This beauty has been spotted

recently in the Perquimans River on U.S. 17 Business near the Perquimans River Bridge. (Photo by George Wilmore.)

Local schools receive accreditation

By SUSAN HARRIS
Bill Britt, Director of the Northeast Regional Center for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, presented an accreditation certificate from

the state to the Perquimans County Schools at the Board of Education meeting on Monday night.

Britt emphasized to Board members that the accreditation

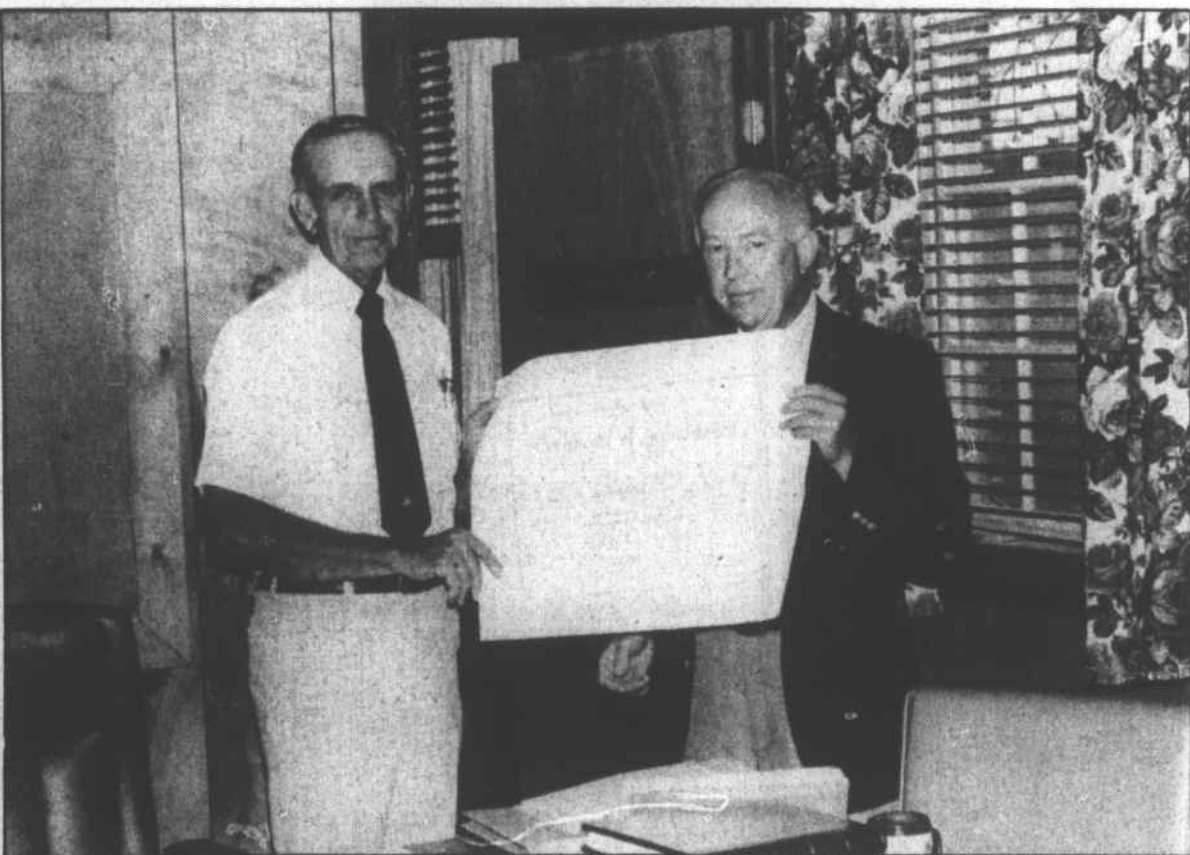
process is not mandatory, but rather is a voluntary program.

In order to be considered for accreditation, the school system performed a self-study of its programs and personnel. The study

co-ordinators determined the present status of the programs and personnel. Then goals for five to six years in the future were set, and plans were mapped to reach these goals. The study was then submitted to the state for review and recommendation to the State Board of Public Instruction.

Britt commended the efforts of the personnel who prepared the study for review. The Board recognized Susan B. Winslow and Shelton Davis as co-ordinators of the project, and thanked them for their work in compiling the required information.

The Perquimans County Schools are now accredited by the State of North Carolina and the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges.



RECEIVE ACCREDITATION—The Perquimans County School System received a Certificate of Accreditation on Monday night from the State of North Carolina. Receiving the Certificate was Board of Education Chairman

Clifford Winslow (left). He was presented the Certificate by Bill Britt, Director of the Northeast Regional Center for the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. (Photo by Susan Harris.)

Haskett urges preparedness for emergency situations

"Being prepared for the hurricane season can make a significant difference in your ability to cope with the violent storms," says Keith W. Haskett of the Perquimans County Emergency Management Agency.

Each North Carolina Coastal county has an emergency plan to combat the menace, and individuals need to be prepared for threats to their safety. Remember, hurricanes are unpredictable in their destructive capabilities, so you may have to rely on yourself for a period of time during one of these storms.

A hurricane begins as a tropical storm somewhere over the ocean. Rotating in a circular pattern, the storm quickly picks up

speed and momentum, reaching wind speeds of 74 miles per hour and is thus labeled a full-force hurricane. The strong winds and heavy rains of a hurricane can pose a threat to human life and property, but the most dangerous element of a hurricane is the storm surge. As the storm moves across the coastal area, tides of three to ten feet above normal are common occurrences. In some cases, surging tides may rise above 20 feet and flood low-lying areas. It is never too early to set aside the supplies you would need during a hurricane emergency. People traditionally stock supplies such as extra medication or an extra pair of glasses for emergency situations. A hurricane emergency is no less im-

portant, and special precautions or preparations should be made for your protection.

The Perquimans County Emergency Management Agency along with the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service suggest that a list of hurricane preparation supplies should include several day's supply of drinking water and non-perishable food, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.

Information on hurricanes and evacuation planning can be obtained by contacting the Perquimans County Emergency Management Agency.

Terrill sworn in as officer

HERTFORD—Police Chief Marshall Merritt announced last Thursday that the town's Police Department was now back to full strength with five certified officers.

The announcement came following the swearing-in ceremony of Officer Stephen Terrill, a 41-year old Elizabeth

City native and a recent graduate of the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course offered through the College of The Albemarle.

Terrill was sworn in Thursday afternoon by Perquimans County Clerk of Court Jarvis Ward in the Clerk's Office.

A Navy veteran and former science teacher, Terrill considered changing to law enforcement as a career for many years prior to making his decision.

Terrill, who resides in Pasquotank County, enjoys hunting and fishing.



Officer Stephen Terrill, right, is pictured as he Jarvis Ward, Clerk of Court in Perquimans County, is sworn in as a law enforcement officer by County. (Photo by Jane B. Williams.)