



Kings Mountain Herald

VOLUME 95, NUMBER 6

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1982

KINGS MOUNTAIN, NOR

Mauney Memorial Library
100 S. Piedmont Ave.
Kings Mtn., 28086

KM Citizens Protest Rising Electric Bills

By GARY STEWART
Editor

Over 50 Kings Mountain citizens angered by recent hikes in utility rates attended Monday's regular meeting of the City Board of Commissioners and aired their feelings.

The citizens got little satisfaction except to be told that the board shared their concern.

Most of the citizens, many of whom live in the Northwoods sub-division, said their bills for the month of December, which were received around the first of February, were double their previous bill.

The city has hiked electric rates twice since October because its rates have been increased by its supplier, Duke Power Company. On October 18, Duke increased its rates by 9 percent and the city increased its rates 6.3 percent. On December 1, Duke announced a 15.8 percent increase and the city increased rates 12.1 percent.

Bill Little of Southeastern

Consulting Engineers, which serves as electric consultants to Kings Mountain and 42 other neighboring cities, attended the meeting and attempted to explain the increases and answer the citizens' questions.

Katie Swann of 403-A Waco Road presented Mayor John Moss a petition containing over 160 names which "demanded an explanation for the drastic increase in utilities."

Ms. Swann also listed a number of names and compared the bills they received in January with the ones they received in December. In almost all cases, the January bills were double.

Little said the huge increase in the amount of the bills could have been for various reasons. They were due partly, he said, to the rate increases and partly because of unusually cold weather during December, and partly because the city did not read the meters until January 6 because of holidays and snow.

Little examined the bill of

Willette Alexander and said her bill doubled because she used 2,000 kilowatt hours one month and 4,000 the next.

Many people said their bills increased drastically but they did not use any more kilowatt hours. One woman said she was out of town two weeks during December and her furnace was turned off the entire month. "The only things running in my house were the refrigerator, hot water heater and two small clocks, but my bill jumped from less than \$200 to over \$400."

Ted Huffman, superintendent of the Public Works Department, visited the woman's home Tuesday and said the meter was running "very fast." He said she was not at home and that he would like to go back at another time and check some things on the inside of her home to try to locate the problem.

Others claimed their meters are not functioning properly and that low voltage in many areas of town results in the meter run-

ning too fast. Little said low voltage does not affect the meters and Huffman said his staff checked 50 meters last month and "not a one was found to be inaccurate."

Both Little and Huffman said, in most cases, when a meter is found to be not operating properly it is running too slow instead of too fast.

One resident of the Southwoods sub-division said the voltage in that area is sometimes so low that "you can turn on a hair dryer and the television goes off."

Another, who lives in Northwoods, said often during wind storms the power lines will begin blowing in the wind, lights will get considerably dimmer and the electric heat will go off.

Still another said that either the meters were not functioning properly or the meter readers were estimating the readings and not actually reading them.

Little suggested that all persons experiencing those pro-

blems contact the City Hall or Public Works Department and request that those problems be corrected. He suggested that any persons feeling that their meters were misread to request a re-reading. "If it was read wrong, it will reflect in the next month's billing because meters are never reset," he said.

Several persons expressed disgust that Little, who lives in Clover, was called in to answer their questions. "The mayor and the commissioners ought to be willing to talk for themselves," one woman said.

"All of us are unhappy about the high cost of utilities," Mayor Moss said. "We (the mayor and board) want to be good public servants and are concerned with this problem. We have 4,000 meters and often deal with a lot of situations that are very touchy, such as people who are spending almost their entire social security checks for utilities, and women who have four and five abandoned

children and just cannot meet their payments. We are very sympathetic and try to be very understanding. We are in a very tight economic period, yet the city has its obligations."

The only commissioner to speak was Jim Childers, who said his bill rose from \$72 to \$176. "I'm not happy about it," he said, "but I used it and I have to pay it."

One woman suggested that the city adopt a policy to allow citizens who are facing hardships to pay one month's bill in two months. Another said the city should allow all citizens—and not just senior citizens and the blind and handicapped—to estimate their yearly bill and pay 11 equal payments, and on their 12th payment, pay the difference between the estimate and the actual bill. That plan was adopted for senior citizens, the blind and handicapped at last month's meeting.

Turn To Page 2-A



PROTESTING RATE HIKES - One woman speaks as around 50 other citizens look on at Monday night's meeting of the Kings Mountain Board of Commissioners. City residents appeared

before the board to protest recent utility rate hikes which they claim doubled the amounts of their bills.

Photo by Gary Stewart

Commissioners Okay Sale Of Property

City commissioners Monday night approved the advertisement for sale of two parcels of property at the corner of Railroad Avenue and West Gold Street in the Community Development project.

Known as parcels three and five, the property is located beside Plunk Brothers Department Store and includes a corner building which must be brought up to codes standards or demolished by the purchaser.

Community Development Director Gene White said it would cost about \$6,000 to demolish the building and recommended that the city not demolish it, but to be sure all prospective buyers know that the building must be destroyed or brought up to codes standards.

The city will establish a minimum fair market value and will not accept bids below that minimum amount.

In another matter, Alma Mitchell, a resident of Cherokee Street, asked the commissioners to do something about water that runs all the way down the

street and stands in her yard. She said she lives in the last house on the street and water "runs downhill and stops in my yard."

She said she also has problems with tree limbs that are too close to power lines and asked that they be cut.

"One time my house almost caught fire because a limb broke and struck the wire and broke it half in two," she said. "If it would come a big wind storm and break the wires, the house would certainly catch fire."

Mayor Moss assured Mrs. Mitchell both problems would be looked into.

In other action Monday, the board:

*Approved a bid of \$14,000 from R. L. Dresser of Raleigh for rubber based tile flooring for the National Guard Armory. The Armory will be used by the youth basketball leagues.

*Approved a contract with A.M. Pullen Company, CPAs, to audit accounts for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1981, and ending June 30, 1982.

Turn To Page 3-A

Facilities Needs Okayed

The Kings Mountain District Schools Board of Education at its regular monthly meeting Monday night adopted the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on School Facilities.

Supt. Bill Davis told the board it needed to act on the recommendations so school officials will know exactly what to do in the event money becomes available in the future.

The citizens committee made its report at the November meeting.

Among the recommendations is a plan to close Central School, which would be converted into an administration building. Central, a three-story structure, does

not meet requirements for serving handicapped students.

That move would make it necessary to move the sixth grade back into the elementary schools, which currently serve grades kindergarten through five. The junior high school would then serve the seventh and eighth grades, and the ninth grade would be moved to the high school.

Those changes would require additional space at all the elementary schools and the high school and Davis estimated construction cost for that additional space to be a half million dollars.

In another matter, Davis told the board that equal funding for Kings Mountain students who

live in Gaston County will be "less of a hassle than we thought it would be."

Davis reported at last month's meeting that the district had been receiving only \$100 per student for 200 Gaston County students who attend school in Kings Mountain, and that Gaston County had often been late in its payments.

But since then, Davis said, he has talked with Superintendent Zane Eargle of Gaston County, who in turn has been discussing the matter with Gaston County commissioners, and has learned that Gaston County intends to pay Kings Mountain the same amount (\$325.91 per pupil) as it gives the Gaston County School

system.

Davis said Scott Cloninger, attorney for the KM system, has written a letter to the Attorney General's office seeking his opinion on the matter. Davis said as soon as that opinion is received, he will make a request of funds from Gaston County Commissioners.

In other action Monday, the board:

Turn To Page 6-A

Teens Injured In Wreck

Two Kings Mountain teenagers were injured in a single-car wreck Saturday on Road 2035 west of Kings Mountain.

Steven Neal Blanton, 15, of Route 5, Kings Mountain, is listed in critical condition in the intensive care unit of Charlotte Memorial Hospital, and Kevin E. Galloway, 15, of Kings Mountain, is in satisfactory condition at Cleveland Memorial Hospital.

According to Highway Patrol reports, Blanton was the driver of the car, which went out of control on a curve, ran off the right side of the road and hit bushes and a tree in the yard of Patterson Grove Baptist Church.

Trooper G.E. Mull estimated damages at \$2,000 to the car and \$200 to the trees and yard of the church.

Charges are pending further investigation.

Paul Ham Jr. Gives 89th Pint Of Blood

Paul Ham Jr. of Kings Mountain was presented a certificate of appreciation Friday by the Cleveland County Chapter of the American Red Cross for donating more blood than any other person in the city.

Ham gave his 89th pint of blood during the Bloodmobile's visit to First Baptist Church.

At the visit, 187 persons came to donate and six were deferred for a total of 181 productive pints. There were 14 first-time donors. The goal was 150 pints.

Others donating, who have given at least 25 pints of blood, included Yates Harbison 84, Bob Maner 81, Charles Mauney 70, Russell Harris 70, Russell Smith 70, Mearl Valentine 68, George Mauney 65, Jacob Houser 63, Joseph Sistare 62, Charles Wilson 56, Juanita Steffy 52, James K. Downey 48, Martha Houser 48, Fred Bridges 44, Mitchell Pruitt 43, Jacob Dixon 43, Samuel Adams 40, Tommy Bridges 38, Arlene Barrett 36, Kenneth Metcalf 36, Rev. William Bearden 30, James Herndon 27, Sylvia Franklin 26, Arthur Carroll 25 and Sandra Young 25.

Lynne Mauney, volunteer with the Red Cross, said the response was tremendous "and we'd like to thank all the donors who responded to the shortages that we have had. Due to the publicity the bloodmobile has received, the people realized



PAUL HAM

there is a great need in the winter time and we appreciate them coming."

Mrs. Mauney said the great response resulted in a longer than usual processing time. "We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding," she said.

She said nurses for the bloodmobile visits are sent from the Blood Center in Charlotte and the number of nurses are determined by the goal of the visit.

The Kings Mountain goal was 150 pints.

"Since more people came, there was more waiting than normal," Mrs. Mauney said. "One solution to the problem would be to make appointments and that will be considered in the future."

KMHS Tutoring Program Gets National Attention

A tutoring program at Kings Mountain Senior High has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in a publication of exemplary projects. The publication, *An Almanac of Tutorial Projects*, lists forty outstanding tutorial projects in the country.

The Peer Tutorial Program at the high school is made up of student tutors who help other students improve their basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. Tutors are under the direct supervision of classroom teachers. They are selected for their academic ability and their desire to help other students achieve. Each tutor works with one or two students on lessons

based on the student's individual needs. Both students and tutors build new friendships and practice needed skills—students improve their basic skills while tutors learn teaching skills. Both earn one unit of credit toward graduation. While students work with their tutors, the classroom teacher has time to work closely with a few students. She can concentrate on specific problems without neglecting her other students.

The tutoring program has been in operation at the high school for three years. It was started by Susan Patterson in her Fundamental English classes. A year later Denise LaVene added the tutorial concept to her Lear-

ning Disabilities Resource classes. This year 91 students and 40 tutors are involved. Teams of educational personnel from Union and Macon counties have visited the high school to observe the program this year.

An important measure of the success of the program is the pride in their work expressed by students, tutors, and teachers. This positive attitude is expected to have a positive effect on grades and test scores, and it has improved these students' attitudes toward the total school program. The combination of working together and caring for each other has resulted in feelings of success for everyone involved.