

West Craven Marching Eagles give out 1980 awards. Story and picture, page 3.

HIGHLIGHTS

New Craven County industrial park site is ready for action. See page 12.

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\$2 Monthly Garbage Fee Included In Budget

BY JONATHAN PHILLIPS

Vanceboro's property tax rate will stay at 65 cents per \$100 of valuation in 1980-81, the same rate the town has had for eight years.

That's the good news.

The bad news for town residents is that in the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, they'll have to pay a fee of \$2 a month for garbage collection.

The Town Board said in their meeting this week that the fee is necessary if the town is to maintain services without raising taxes. The Board also gave tentative approval to the 1980-81 town budget.

The approximately \$188,000 budget contains only minor differences from last year's budget.

The garbage pickup fee was proposed by board member Alton Whitley and approved unanimously. The money will go mainly to give the town's seven employees a seven percent pay raise.

The original budget proposal, based on the 1979-80 budget, contained no differences from the earlier budget other than a five percent pay raise for town workers.

With inflation far exceeding 5 percent, board member Daphne Cleve was worried that 5 percent might not be enough.

"We usually give them 5 percent anyway. Is that the best we can do?"

"It is without raising taxes," Mayor Jimmie Morris said.

"You could put a \$1 a month fee on garbage collection and pick up \$4,200 a year. I've been feeling for years we ought to have a garbage collection fee," Whitley said.

Everybody uses, everybody pays

Whitley said property owners are bearing the burden of paying town bills with taxes. Refuse collection costs make up well over half of the town's tax revenues.

He said renters and other non-property-owners get the same garbage pickup service as property taxpayers without paying.

Board member Howard Tyre agreed.

"That (a fee) would be the fairest way. Everybody that used it would pay for it," he said. He proposed, and the Board agreed, that the fee be tacked on to Vanceboro water and sewer bills.

When the time came to make the motion, Whitley upped the ante to \$2. Mrs. Cleve balked momentarily at

that figure, but eventually went along with the rest of the Board.

"I don't believe there's anybody in town that \$2. a month would hurt," Whitley said. "That comes to 50 cents a week, and that's a darn good price for having somebody come empty your garbage can." About 350 Vanceboro households and businesses have refuse pickup service.

June 23 meeting set

Regulations require that the tentatively - approved budget be tabled for 20 days before final approval. The Board set a special meeting for 8 p.m. June 23 at Town Hall to apply the final stamp of approval.

The budget is a lean one, with very little in the way of contingency funds to provide for an emergency. There is

\$3,400 in a line item marked "miscellaneous," but all other line items are specifically obligated.

"We haven't raised taxes for eight years, and we've worked ourselves up to where we don't have a dime to spare," Morris said.

The biggest expenditures go for a variety of administrative expenses --running town business-- totalling \$27,200. The largest single line item is salaries for garbage collection, totalling \$22,400. The next largest line item is \$18,350 for paying back interest on the loan for the town's sewer system.

On the revenue side of the ledger, the largest income

(See board, page 12)

Man Burns In Fire

A young Vanceboro man was apparently burned to death last weekend when his River Road home caught fire.

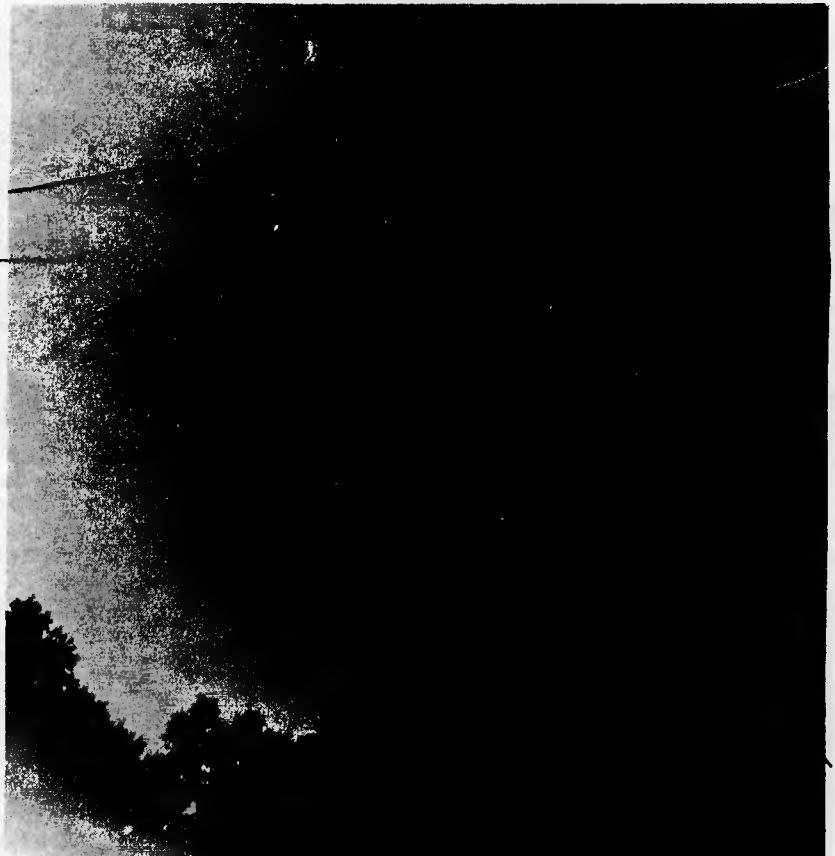
The charred body found in the house has been identified as Johnny Wayne, 23. Wayne was the only occupant of the house. Herman Lewis of the Vanceboro rescue squad said the body was "burned beyond recognition."

But Craven County Fire Marshall Henry Sermons said belongings found on the body and "all other indications" identified the victim as Wayne.

Officials are blaming a cigarette for the fire. The call came in about 5 a.m. on Saturday, May 31, Lewis said, when a passerby spotted the fire.

The Vanceboro Fire Department quickly put out the blaze, Lewis said, and the body was transported by an ambulance to Craven County Hospital.

Sermons said damage to the uninsured wood-frame house has been estimated at about \$3,000. The home was owned by Curtis Broadway, and officials said Wayne lived there alone.



WHILE FIREMEN battled a tragic blaze on River Road Saturday that left one man dead, this man presented a deceptively serene picture. He was cutting off the power to the burning house. (Photo by Timmy Weatherington)

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Elementary School

Contractors Get Ready To Bid

BY JONATHAN PHILLIPS
Highlights Staff

The dark cloud of recession may have at least one silver lining for Craven County taxpayers.

It may enable the construction budget for the new Vanceboro Elementary School to stay within the original \$2 million allotted for the project.

That, at least, was the hope of the Craven County Board of Education at their regular meeting last week. The Board unanimously approved a motion allowing the county and architect Bobby Stephens to begin taking bids for the project. Stephens said bid proposals will be presented to the Board at their July 17 meeting.

Stephens said he has been concerned with the budget. Original plans made allowances for inflation, he said, but inflation has far exceeded expectations. But a very slow construction market due to the recession may help keep bids low.

"There are not a lot of jobs being advertised of this size. There are an awful lot of contractors looking for jobs over 50,000 square feet," Stephens said. The school plans call for about 50,000 square feet of floor space.

"I'm hoping the competition will get us some good bids."

Stephens said plans "are about 99 percent complete." Engineers will complete their work and call for bids within the next few days. The bidding process will take about 30 days,

Stephens said, leaving him several days to get the information summarized for the July 17 school board meeting.

From the time bids are taken, Stephens and school superintendent Hiram Mayo estimate that construction will take about 18 months.

"This is a three-year program. We approved it last year, and at one time I thought it might be possible to speed things up a bit. It doesn't look that way now. But we're right on schedule," Mayo said.

He said the new school would likely not be ready for occupation when the fall semester begins in August, 1981. Students could move in sometimes during that school year, he said, or in August, 1982.

"When you rush something, you don't get it right," he said.

The nearly-complete plans contain very few changes from the preliminary drawings. The building must meet standard building specifications as well as criteria set forth in a 53-page guide book the board approved last year.

Stephens said the brick structure "is basically the same as we've been doing with West Craven and Havelock, except we'll have sloped roofs with shingles. Most of the rest will be the same."

The motion to go ahead and receive bids was made by Vanceboro-area board member Roger Forrest and seconded by Jane Atkinson.

"I feel like we have a very fine school here," Stephens said.