Budget

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It was clear from the beginning of the meeting that Robinson was not about to let the issue go gently into the night. Instead of saying "here" or "present" during the aldermen roll call, Robinson responded, "overtaxed."

Robinson moved for no consideration, after he and Whiton were on the losing end of a vote to require non-profit officials – who were allowed to address the board even though the budget vote was axed – to swear, under oath, to answer all the aldermen's questions truthfully.

"Telling the truth is not too much to ask," Robinson said, shortly after introducing the motion. "For a $25 ticket, we have people put their hands on the Bible....We are not giving out money in the amounts of little tickets here."

The six other board members – Robinson branded them "the cover-up caucus" several times during the meeting – and Mayor Jack Cavanagh frowned at the idea.

"This is not a court; we are not going to make assumptions that the citizens of Winston-Salem are liars," Cavanagh said.

Many agency officials who spoke at the meeting were trying to save sinking ships. The board's finance committee voted last week to cut funding for some of the agencies.

Several people spoke on behalf of the Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention, which had requested $31,500. The finance committee, though, talked about the possibility of giving the group only about $7,000 to help cover its annual Project Graduation event.

Maurice Horsey, the executive director of the Winston Lake YMCA, asked the city to support his agency. The agency had asked for $95,000, but the finance committee voted to recommend that it receive $85,000.

The finance committee talked about cutting SciWorks' $275,000 request by 10 percent. The agency's executive director asked the board not to cut funding. She said that non-profits have been painted as the enemies in the budget talks.

"I'm not exactly sure when non-profits became the bad guys," Beverly Sanford said.

Twana Wellman, the executive director of Experiment in Self Reliance, returned to City Hall two weeks after Robinson had publicly criticized her and a week after the finance committee tied on whether to grant the agency its request of $145,200.

During the May 25 meeting in which Robinson was silenced by his peers, he had questioned Wellman about using the agency's credit card for personal expenses and her membership to the Piedmont Club, a local, exclusive social spot.

ESR's board of directors has thrown its support behind Wellman, saying that it approved the use of agency credit cards for personal use by executive directors as long as the agency is reimbursed at the end of each month.

The board also says it approved the purchase of the club membership so that Wellman could use it for fund-raising.

Wellman once again pushed to the board the importance of ESR, which provides many services for the poor and the homeless, even bringing along a young woman who has benefited from ESR's efforts.

Near the end of her remarks, Wellman brought up the infamous meeting last month.

"Our agency is an accountable agency....We have provided you with all the information about the agency's spending," Wellman told the board. "Please consider the $145,200."

A different Wellman attended Tuesday's meeting from the one who stood speechless and shocked last month as Robinson grilled her. Wellman walked to the podium with strides of confidence and with a look of determination on her face. Rarely did she flash her usual friendly smile.

Wellman's confidence level peaked when she refused to answer questions from Robinson, who was the first alderman to raise his or her hand after Wellman finished her remarks.

Wellman told the board that Robinson had paid ESR a visit since the last meeting and had interviewed ESR's board and called several of the agency's donors.

Robinson had ample time to ask any questions he may have before the meeting, Wellman said.

"Mr. Robinson had an opportunity all week long to come to our agency....I do not wish to address any other questions Mr. Robinson has," she said as supporters applauded.

Her stance did not sit well with Robinson, who told the board that it would be unbelievable if it supported an organization that cannot answer questions about finances.

Robinson's ally was equally outraged.

"If people are coming to the public trove, you have to be ready for public scrutiny," Whiton said.

Last week, Alderwoman Vivian Burke had suggested that ESR was singled out. She asked the city manager's office to question other agencies along the same lines that Robinson questioned Wellman.

According to information from the city manager's office, six other agencies requesting money from the city have memberships to the Piedmont Club. But Robinson says, unlike other agencies, ESR has no unrestricted funds, meaning all money that is donated to the agency must go toward a specific purpose. The agency had no money to buy the club membership, Robinson contends.

ESR is the only agency requesting city money that allows its executive director to use credit cards for personal use, according to the survey of the agencies.

In letters ESR sent to aldermen; members of the board of directors said they are willing to take a another look at their policy.

After the meeting, Robinson denied that he singled Wellman out for criticism. Robinson said he scrutinized all of the agencies.

"I'm the first black alderman in the history of Forsyth County to have questioned funding for Old Salem, SciWorks..., "Robinson said "The idea that I'm picking on the black woman is a lie on its face."

Summer vacation plans and personal commitments prevented the board from coming to an agreement Tuesday on a new date to vote on the budget.

Alderwoman Joycelyn Johnson said after the meeting that she was disappointed by the delay. She said since the budget process started early last month, there has been plenty of time for aldermen to meet one-on-one with agencies to address any issues they may have.

"There are personality wars going on, and we have to get past that," Johnson said. "We have a whole lot of other things we need to be working on."

The board also heard from a number of manual labor city employees at the meeting. Some had heard that the proposed budget provided no money for raises for manual laborers. But the budget does provide raises of up to seven percent for all city employees, according to the city manager. Other city workers told the board that they were simply underpaid for the much-needed services they provide.

A study last month revealed that workers in Greensboro in the same positions sometimes make thousands more than their Winston-Salem counterparts.

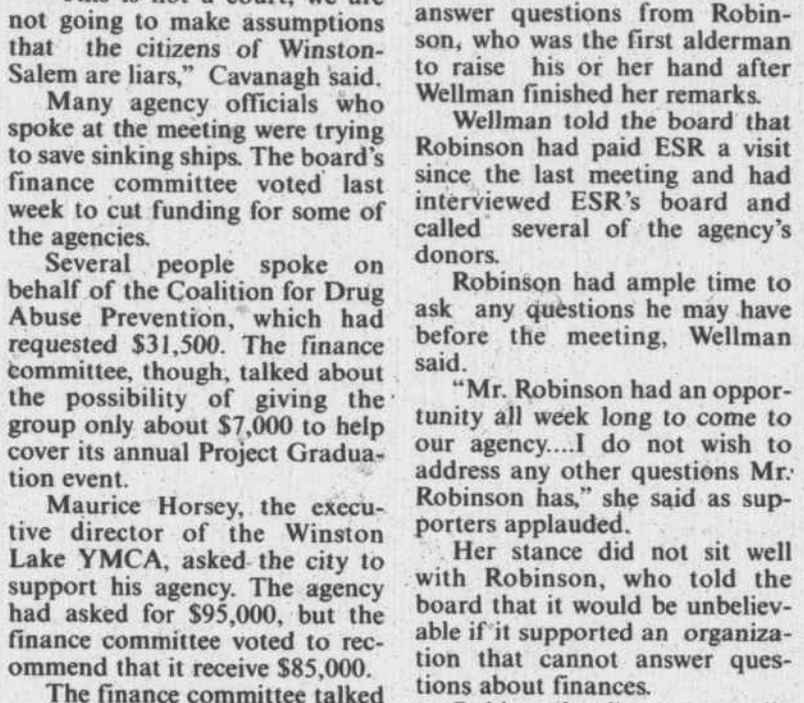
"Pay us for what we are worth....We feel that we are not being appreciated," a maintenance worker told the board.

Many of the workers were angry that the city was doling out money to outside agencies and seemingly overlooking its own. The anger led to boldness in many cases. One worker told Robinson that he will challenge him for his seat come the next election.

Another worker chided the board for not working together.

"I don't see unity among our elected officials," said Curtis McLaurin, a worker in the sanitation department. "The city is not being run right....It starts at the head and trickles down."

Burke and Johnson gave them some support, telling city officials and other board members that the issues should be looked into.



Joshua Crowell of The Garbage Company reaches for more receipts from Daniel Harris and Lenwood Thompson III of Candation Candy Company during the trade fair.

Money

from page A3

The Home of Computers was named the best financial planner. Joshua Crowell of The Garbage Company won the Rising Star Award.

Entrepreneur Elizabeth Crawford said she was glad that she took part in the camp. "This program has helped me a lot and challenged me to set goals for the future. I made many new friends here also," she said.

Ruffin was delighted to be a part of the celebration of youth in business.

"Lorraine Hansberry once said, 'To be young, gifted, and black," oh, what a lovely, precious dream," Ruffin said. "What an exciting opportunity to see young people come and lay out their business plans. We, the elders are very envious of you. When we came through, the doors of opportunity were blocked....Take that money you won to Mechanics and Farmer's Bank. Buy stock....You are smart, bright. Your mind is a pearl. You can do anything in the world."

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BLACK MASK (R) ..... 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00 12 MID FRI & SAT
THE MUMMY (PG-13) ..... 1:30 4:15 7:00 9:30 12MID FRI &SAT
ELECTION (R) ..... 1:15 3:30 7:00 9:45 12 MID FRI & SAT
THE LOVE LETTERS (PG-13) ..... 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00 12 MID FRI & SAT
Presented in THX
AUSTIN POWERS (PG-13) ..... 12:00 2:15 4:30 7:00 9:15 11:30 FRI & SAT
THE MUMMY (PG-13) 2:00 4:45 7:30 10:00
STAR WARS (PG) 2:15 5:00 7:45 10:30
STAR WARS (PG) ..... 1:30 4:15 7:00 9:45 12 MID FRI & SAT
INSTINCT (R) ..... 1:30 4:30 7:00 9:30 12 MID FRI & SAT
AUSTIN POWERS (PG-13) ..... 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:30 9:45 12 MID FRI & SAT

Carmike 10 922-1301
3040 REYNOLDA RD.
LIFE (R) ..... 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30 12 MID FRI &SAT
THE MATRIX (R) ..... 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45 12 MID FRI &SAT
TEN THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU (PG-13) 1:30 3:30 5:20 7:20 9:20 12 MID FRI &SAT
BLACK MASK (R) ..... 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00 12 MID FRI & SAT
NEVER BEEN KISSED (PG-13) ..... 1:00 4:30 7:00 9:35 12 MID FRI &SAT
THE 13TH FLOOR (R) ..... 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30 12 MID FRI &SAT
NOTTING HILL (R) 1:00 4:00 7:05 10:00
NOTTING HILL (R) ..... 1:15 4:15 7:15 9:50 12 MID FRI &SAT
Presented in THX
STAR WARS (PG) ..... 1:30 4:15 7:00 9:45 12 MIDFRI & SAT
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Marketplace 6 727-1787
2095 PETERS CREEK PKWY.
LIFE (R) 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30
LIFE (R) 1:30 4:30 7:30 10:00
TRIPPIN (R) 1:15 3:15 5:15 7:15 9:15
FOOLISH (R) ...4:00 9:00 TWIN DRAGON (PG-13) 2:00 7:00
SHAKESPEAR IN LOVE (R) 1:30 4:00 7:00 9:45
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