

'It's time to share the love'

County employees voice displeasure during public hearing on budget

By TIM CHANDLER
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"It's time to share the love."

Person County Sheriff Dewey Jones spoke those words Monday night to the Person Board of County Commissioners during a public hearing regarding

the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Jones and several other county employees, who were joined by a large contingent of other county workers in attendance, urged commissioners to not cut a proposed merit pay plan or increase in 401(k) contributions for employees. He and other county employees told com-

missioners they feel like the county's budget is, once again, "being balanced [on their] backs".

Employees currently receive a 2.5 percent contribution from the county for their 401k funds and are not required to provide matching funds for that percentage. County Manager Heidi York's proposed budget calls for a one percent

increase in 401(k) contributions and merit pay raises of one and two percent for employees.

York proposed a general fund budget of \$48,619,655, which is a decrease of \$1.2 million from the current year. York told commissioners earlier that county government spending had been decreased by nearly \$7 million in the

past three years.

It was pointed out in York's earlier budget presentation that a one-cent increase in the county's property tax rate would generate an estimated \$372,973 in revenue. The proposed budget does not include a tax rate increase, which would

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State House approves occupancy tax increase for Person Co.

By TIM CHANDLER
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"I think we're going to be okay in the Senate."

State Rep. W.A. (Winkie) Wilkins, D-Person, spoke those words Tuesday when discussing his bill to increase the hotel occupancy tax rate in Person County.

The bill, which, if passed would increase the hotel/motel occupancy tax in Person County from five percent to six percent, passed in the House of Representatives by votes of 88-27 on the second reading and 85-31 on the third reading.

The bill has now been forwarded to the Senate, where it will first be heard before the Senate Finance Committee, Wilkins said. He went on to reiterate that he felt confident the bill would receive a positive vote in the Senate.

"You have got some in both chambers who have signed no tax pledges," Wilkins explained. "Those are the negative votes you see [from the House of Representatives]."

Proceeds from the occupancy tax bill would go to help fund tourism promotion and the Person County Museum of History.

Wilkins said Tuesday that Rep. Bill Faison, D-Orange, "ran" the bill through the House Finance Committee last week for him while he was hospitalized at Duke University Medical Center with a ruptured appendix.

Wilkins was released from the hospital Monday after spending a week in the facility. During that time, Wilkins said he did keep up with things going on in Raleigh, including the progress of the occupancy tax bill.

"I was doing business from my hospital bed," Wilkins joked Tuesday. He went on to say he hoped to return to Raleigh Thursday.

"My plan is to go to session Thursday," Wilkins said. "I'm still pretty weak and trying to get my strength back right now."



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IT'S OFFICIAL — Roxboro Community School seniors toss their caps into the air at the close of Saturday afternoon's graduation ceremony at the Kirby Civic Auditorium.

'It seems like just yesterday'

RCS graduates largest class during 3rd commencement exercise

By GREY PENTECOST
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Roxboro Community School graduated its largest class yet during its third graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 4 at the Kirby Theater, with over 70 graduates in the class of 2011.

In their remarks, members of the graduating class recalled the students'

first days at RCS and also offered thanks to classmates, teachers, faculty, and family.

"It seems like just yesterday," said senior Jessica Murray in her welcome, "Mr. Finnigan was our science teacher, the cafeteria was Mr. Czynsz's room, the library was a huge empty space, and everyone in the entire school knew everyone else. From humble beginnings, and with the support of you all, RCS has transformed into a loving family, consisting of wonderful individuals who strive to be their best."

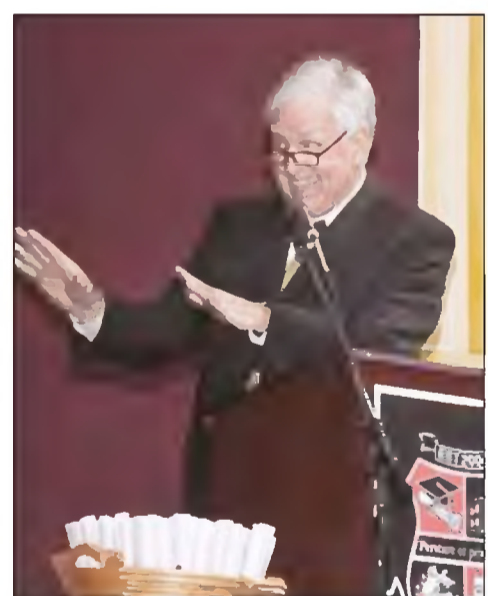
Also speaking from the student body were Salutatorian Olivia Meyers and Valedictorian Hannah Womack.

Meyers thanked teachers for pushing her class to do its best, and parents for getting the students to school. She also spoke about the cohesiveness of the senior class, sharing how students even helped classmates they didn't know very well on the night of their exit speeches.

Womack spoke about teachers that had been special to her over the years, also acknowledging administrative staff, her family, friends and her "Lord and savior Jesus Christ."

She challenged her fellow classmates to be "open-minded, headstrong and driven" as they began their new journeys.

First keynote speaker Dr. Terri Cates, a pediatrician with Roxboro Med-Peds, shared with those in attendance part of her journey, from graduating Person High School in 1994, to graduating from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and becoming a



Kenneth Martin / Smith's Photography

Former RCS Principal Sam Kennington addresses the Class of 2011 at Saturday's graduation.

pediatrician.

She said she "took the road less traveled," and gave up a lot to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. But Cates said she had no regrets, because she feels she is doing what she was called to do.

Cates told stories about a few of the children that have been her patients (names changed), using them to illustrate words of advice she wanted to share with the graduates.

Cates admonished the graduates to be honest with themselves.

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Dr. Terri Cates addresses the audience attending Roxboro Community School's graduation.

Funding for schools, PCC, VFDs restored; merit pay hike not approved

By PHYLISS BOATWRIGHT
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After three hours of deliberation Tuesday, the Person Board of County Commissioners decided to hold another work session before moving forward on adopting a county budget.

Prior to the decision to schedule another session, however, commissioners agreed to increase the amount of funding for Person County Schools by \$221,539 and to allot Piedmont Community College (PCC) an additional \$24,792. In the latest version of the county budget, volunteer fire departments will

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The Courier-Times "Weekly Poll"

This Week's Question:

What additional items do you think commissioners should approve in the upcoming budget for county employees?

- Merit Pay
- An increase in 401K contributions
- An across the board COLA raise
- All of the above
- Two of the above
- None of the above

Cast Your Vote On-Line At www.roxboro-courier.com

Results of our latest poll:

Do you think the decision by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to no longer operate its contact station at the Person County Senior Center was appropriate?

- Yes, it had to be closed due to funding issues - 25%
- No, it will adversely affect many people - 13%
- No, Person County needs an SSA office - 54%
- It does not matter to me - 8%

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Jeremy Eugene Bailey

Police obtain arrest warrants for 2 more sought in connection with recent shootings

By TIM CHANDLER
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Roxboro police announced Tuesday that arrest warrants have been issued for two additional men in connection with recent shooting incidents in the city that left four people injured.

Police are currently seeking Desmond Omar Mason, 23, of 390 Henderson Rd. Apt. 8B and Jeremy Eugene Bailey, 30, of 216 Lamberth St. in connection with the shootings that took place on Saturday,

May 28 and Monday, May 30.

The two face felony charges of attempted first-degree murder, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury and discharging a weapon into an occupied dwelling or vehicle. The two also face misdemeanor charges of going armed to the terror of the public.

Last week, police arrested Brentley Derrick Yancey, 23, of Fayetteville and Vernon Antwan Elliott Bailey, 21, of 74 Dylan St. on those same charges. Those two remain in the Person County jail

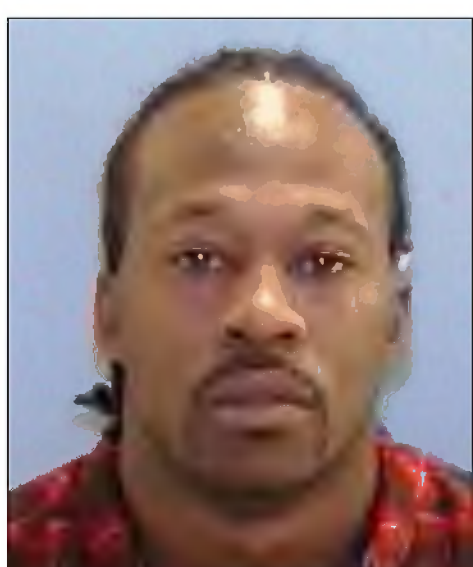
under \$500,000 secured bonds.

Yancey, a former Roxboro resident, is a member of the U.S. Army and was arrested last week at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville.

The May 30 shooting incident occurred at 1721 Sunset Drive in Ca-Vel Village shortly after 10 p.m.

At that location, shots were reportedly fired into a crowd of people attending a cookout, as well into as homes and vehicles. Two people suffered gunshot

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Desmond Omar Mason