Aldermen Decide to Cut Several Town Programs

The chosen budget cuts will keep Carrboro from having to use town reserve funds to cope with the shortfall.

Thursday, March 7, 2002

By NATE DEGRAFF

There will be no fireworks at Carrboro's Fourth of July celebration this year. Residents might notice a few more weeds popping up at town parks this spring. Street conditions might deteriorate ter than motorists have come to expect. The state's financial crisis has hit

Faced with nearly half a million dollars in revenue shortfalls, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen slashed several town programs for the rest of the fiscal year at Tuesday night's meeting. "We thought the state would keep its promises," said Alderman Joal Broun. "And what they basically did was breach their promises."

On Feb. 5, Gov. Mike Easley

ced the state would withhold funds from local governments across North Carolina, including nearly \$300,000 from Carrboro. Lost interest earnings and sales tax revenues due to the recession further damaged the

Residents will barely notice some cuts the town will delay a \$130,000 financing payment and slice 10 acres off a planned 27-acre public works land purchase -acre public works land purchase - but

others might be more perceptible.
On Tuesday, the board discussed changes to the town's street resurfacing schedule. Seventeen years ago, the town adopted a street maintenance plan that has earned praise from transportation analysts.

In 2001, only 1 percent of the town's 35mile street system rated poorly, according to a recent report by the Institute for asportation Research and Education

But the board, feeling the budget pinch, voted to cut the town's annual contribution to the street plan in half.

Chris Peterson, the town's public works director, said the town's foresight made the cut possible. "Currently, the streets as a whole are rating in the top part. I'm comfortable standing here tonight and telling you this plan will work."

The Baily Tar Heel

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The board also lopped off more than half of Peterson's remaining grounds and maintenance budget. Robert Morgan, Carrboro town manager, clarified these cuts for the board. "You'll just have to accept that you'll have the grass cut less and have more weeds in places like down-town at the Century Center," he said. But residents still will be able to

reserve the Century Center for business

meetings and social occasions.

The board considered suspending reservations for the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends June 30, but decided

against the measure. "Stopping taking reservations is like saying we're closing the Century Center," said Alderman Mark

Dorosin. "I think that's inappropriate."

The debate continued on two of the town's trademark celebrations — Carrboro Day and the July 4th celebration.

The head told the four members.

The board told the four-member Carrboro Day delegation it would have to make do with \$2,000 less than its planned \$5,700 budget. Striking the Fourth of July fireworks was one of its final cuts.

Event planners must purchase the \$3,000 pyrotechnics months in advance,

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"Judging Amy"
43 Beginning on
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9 Adroit maneuvering
10 Have no choice
11 Sanford of "The Jeffersons"
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13 General tendencies
18 Latin beat
22 Prenuptial party
23 Comic Sandler
24 One-and-only
25 Break from a habit
26 Set free
29 Mass of hair
30 Sound of dis-

so the board decided eliminate the show

Through it all, the board avoided tapping into the town's reserve funds money set aside for emergencies.
"Anything we can do to avoid drawing
down the fund balance at the front end
is critical," said Alderman Alex Zaffron.
Mayor Mike Nelson praised the

board's efforts in handling an unexpect-ed budget situation. "The board exhibited a great deal of strength.'

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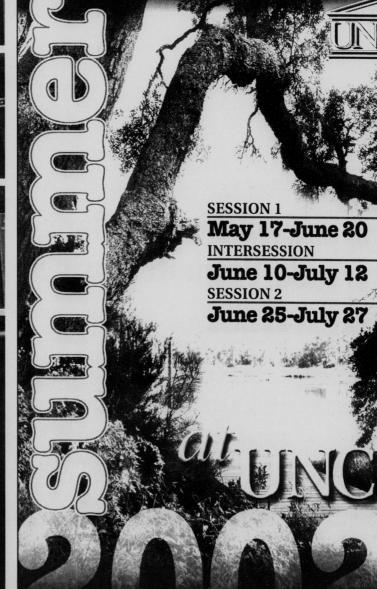
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