

Revenue Fund Loss Forecast

By KAY HORNER
News Editor
Elimination of the federal Revenue Sharing program as proposed by President Reagan could mean a loss to Warren County of several hundred thousand dollars it has counted on in the past for funding of the Warren County Jail, Warren General Hospital, and Warren County volunteer fire departments and rescue squad.

Although several proposals regarding the Revenue Sharing program are currently being considered by Congress, Warren County officials who attended a meeting last week of the National Association of Counties (NACo) in Washington, D.C. expressed little hope Monday at their regular meeting for continuation of the program.

"My personal view is that we're fooling ourselves if we say it (elimination of the program) is not going to happen," Commissioner J. T. Fleming told fellow board members. "They say they don't have the revenue to share. With the federal indebtedness, it's costing too much. We may get an override in this budget, but that will be it. We're either going to have to cut back or raise taxes."

It has been estimated that the ad valorem tax rate for Warren County taxpayers would have to be increased from \$1 per \$100 valuation to \$1.15 per \$100 valuation to make up for funds lost through the federal program.

Revenue Sharing funds for 1984-85 account for about \$340,000 of the county's more than \$4,803,000 budget.

Chairperson Eva M. Clayton, who also serves as treasurer of Women Officials in NACo, was part of a delegation that attended a briefing at the White House on issues of special concern to local governments.

"I came away with a real sense that they're deadly serious (about budget cuts)," Mrs. Clayton said. "They're not playing politics."

"We have two alternatives," Commissioner Francis Alston commented. "Taxes go up or we cut out services. But my suggestion is that we all write to our congressmen and senators asking them to support continuation of Revenue Sharing and asking the president to withdraw his proposal."

The commissioners endorsed a resolution to be sent to Senators Jesse Helms and John East and Second District Congressman Tim Valentine urging continuation of (Continued on page 8B)



Owens-Illinois, an Ohio-based company which is completing work on a \$20 million corrugated box plant near Ridgeway, has donated two Scott Air-Paks to the Norlina Volunteer Fire Department. Presentation of the life-saving equipment was made last week by two members of the company who work for

O-I, Morris and Wayne Aycock. Shown above during the presentation ceremony are, from left, Al Bennett, assistant chief of the Norlina Department; Gene Frey, O-I production manager; Wayne Aycock; and Mike Theiler, O-I personnel manager. (Staff Photo)

Oldest Building Wanted For Offices

The Warren County Capital Development Committee, appointed last December by county commissioners to evaluate facility needs of county government, has received a proposal from a local real estate and investment group for renovation of a building on Warrenton's Main Street for purchase or lease by the county for office space.

The proposal, by The Warren Group, calls for the group's purchase and renovation of the building currently housing Davis' Uptown Fashions for a subsequent lease or lease-purchase arrangement with the county.

According to Brad Carroll, committee member, a rough estimate of cost, after renovation, for the 6,020-square-foot building has been figured at \$150,000.

"The other alternative of providing additional space is new construction which would be very, very expensive," Carroll commented, citing estimates of \$40 to \$45 a square foot for new construction versus \$25 for renovation of an existing facility.

The building, now owned by Bill Davis of Warrenton, was built around 1830 and is believed to be the oldest on Main Street, Carroll said, adding that purchase by the county would not only provide badly needed office space but would also prove "exciting" for those interested in preservation.

"This would give the county an opportunity to maintain the historical significance of the county while meeting additional space needs," Carroll said.

The board accepted the report by the Capital Development Committee and went on record in support of the committee gathering further information on the proposed project.

However, Chairperson Eva M. Clayton cautioned that the board's action was not to be construed as a commitment to the project.

"One caveat I'll share is that all of this is contingent on having enough money," she concluded.

A question of conflict of interest in that Warrenton businessman Monroe Gardner, a member of the Capital Development Committee, is also one of the owners of The Warren Group was raised by Commissioner J. T. Fleming.

But Carroll assured the board that Gardner had not participated in formation or presentation of the proposal, and would continue to distance himself from the project.

"My remarks are not anti-project," Fleming said, "but I just wanted to get the issue out of the way."

Representing The Warren Group in making the proposal to the Capital Development Committee was James C. Harris, Jr., president and part owner.

In other business, the board also heard a report from James Dugan, III, architect with C. Robert Shields of Rocky Mount, on renovation in progress at the Warren General Hospital facility.

Dugan appeared at the request of the board to address questions raised by a local citizen about

methods and materials used in replacement of the roof at the hospital and the cost involved.

Dugan responded item-by-item to two pages of comments forwarded to the board by a citizens' advisory committee appointed recently to study alternative methods of care at the hospital.

The comments addressed specific materials used in the roof installation and cost variations.

Dugan responded to each one individually and assured the commissioners that materials in the roof construction had been installed according to manufacturer's specifications, and that costs savings of about \$8,700 below the amount bid would be credited to the county.

Inspections have been conducted weekly by Dugan, whose firm is overseeing the project, and inspection reports have been sent to the office of the county manager, Dugan said.

School Board Takes No Action

Decision Delayed On Building Use

By KAY HORNER
News Editor

Unanswered questions about the legality and logistics of subleasing school property to a private, for-profit concern led school board members Monday night to postpone action on a proposal that called for location of a vegetable processing and packaging plant on the campus of John R. Hawkins School in Warrenton.

The proposal came from John R. Hawkins Alumni, who currently lease three buildings on the campus from the School Board and would like to sublease two of the buildings to Farmers Best Food Industries, represented locally by L. C. Cooper, who serves as a consultant to the company.

According to the lease agreement with the alumni association, a sublease can be granted only with the board's approval.

Cooper explained that vegetables produced by local farmers would be received, washed, and packaged at the facility, which would also house offices for the operation.

Cooper estimated that \$12,000 to \$15,000 would be used to renovate the former administration building for use as the main plant. A second building would be used

for storage.

Plans call for the enterprise to expand to another site in about three years.

Questions about school property being used by a private, for-profit company were

raised by Board Attorney Lewis A. Thompson of Warrenton.

"It's one thing to lease a facility at little or no cost to a public service organization," Thompson said. "But you're ex-

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Mayor Tells Board

Tag Sales Largest In Recent Years

Routine matters were the business of Warrenton's Town Board at the regular monthly meeting Monday evening in the Town Hall. The commissioners spent an hour, discussing the usual committee reports and announcements before going into executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Mayor B. G. White reported that a concerted effort had been made during the past two weeks by the office staff and the police department to remind the residents of Warrenton of their responsibility to display town tags on their vehicles. Since January 1, he said, a total of 605 tags had been sold in the town office, the largest number in recent years.

With spring approaching, beautification of the town took a front seat on the agenda, and the board voted to purchase a \$300 edger for use in trimming along the sidewalks. A letter from Richard Hunter, representing the town's Beautification Committee, was read, noting the committee's approval of George Burwell's request to remove two trees from his property on Bragg Street. It was noted that Burwell planned to replace the trees as well as another tree which had been cut down recently.

Finance Commissioner Eddie Clayton presented a number of budget amendments for consideration by the board. All but one involved minor transfers (Continued on page 8B)

Lake Gaston Infestation Targeted

Concern over the growth of an aquatic weed in Lake Gaston has led to the formation of the Lake Gaston Council composed of representatives of the five counties surrounding the lake.

Warren County commissioners Monday appointed Agricultural Extension Chairman Russell King, Soil Conservationist David Harrison, and Lake Gaston resident Jack Brunton to the council, which will work with appropriate authorities to control the weed.

According to King, the weed poses no immediate threat to the lake. However, complaints from residents increased significantly in 1984 and there is concern that the water quality of the lake could be potentially impacted by uncontrolled application of chemicals

by individuals attempting to eliminate the weed.

The council plans to apply for federal and state funds to control growth of the weed, and Virginia Electric & Power Co. (VEPCO), which constructed the lake for hydroelectric generation of power, has agreed to pay a local match of 15 percent of the weed control project.

The weed, while providing excellent cover for young fish, is counter-productive because the lake bottom that would normally be available for nest-building fish, such as largemouth bass, is obliterated, King said.

Approximately 300 to 500 acres of the 20,000-acre lake are currently infested, King said. About 25 acres were treated with spraying last June with fair to good results.

Three Grass Fires Reported

Burning trash and brush has been listed as the cause of three fires that destroyed almost three acres of grass and woodland in Warren County this week.

On Tuesday, Warrenton Rural Volunteer Fire Department extinguish-

ed a grass, brush and woods fire on property owned by Earl Williams in the Quick City area of Warrenton, according to Capt. Walter Gardner with the department. The N.C. Forestry Service assisted in extinguishing the blaze,

reported at 12:40 p.m.

Land adjacent to Williams' property was also burned, but the owner of the property was unknown.

On Sunday a fire on property owned by Joey Greer on Embro Road (Continued on page 8B)



Winners of the Spelling Bee last Thursday at Warrenton County High School are pictured, left to right, Dawn Howard, third place; Amie Ridout, second place; and Angela Ballance, first place. The contest

was sponsored among students in grades four through eight in the county's schools. (Community Schools Photo)

Miss Ballance Spelling Champ

Angela Ballance, an eighth grade student at John Graham Middle School, was named the top speller among Warren County's 4th-8th grade students at the conclusion of the Spelling Bee held at Warren County High School on Thursday night.

Miss Ballance correctly spelled "oxidation" and then "philosopher" to take top honors. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ballance of Warrenton. Second place was captured by Amie Ridout, a sixth grader at Hawkins School. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Egerton Ridout, Jr. of Warrenton.

Dawn Howard, an eighth grade student at Norlina Middle School, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Howard of Littleton, took third place.

Eighteen participants competed in the spell-down representing grades four through eight. In previous years the Spelling Bee had been limited to sixth graders.

This year's contest was sponsored by the John R. Hawkins Alumni and Friends, Inc. All participants and alternates received certificates and prizes.