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Town Meeting Explains Sewer Bond Issue

BY ROBERT KOENIG
Editor

The last in a series of public meetings to explain the proposed sewer bond issue was held in the Marshall Town hall on July 29. Town officials and a consultant on the proposed project answered questions regarding the project.

The bond issue to improve the sewer system will be decided by Marshall voters in a public referendum on Aug. 26.

The voters will be asked to decide whether or not to approve a \$600,000 bond issue to upgrade the town sewer system in order to comply with federal Environmental Protection Agency standards

and provide sewer service to several areas of Marshall which presently do not have such service.

Marshall has already received more than \$700,000 in state and federal grants to assist in the project. The town's share of the cost of the project will be financed by the \$600,000 bond issue. A guarantee of \$496,000 has been obtained from the Farmers Home Administration. The FmHA will purchase the bonds at an interest rate below the current market rate. The FmHA will also give the town outright grant of \$275,000 to finance the construction.

In addition to the FmHA money, the Appalachian Regional Commission has approved a \$200,000 grant and the state of North Carolina has approved \$289,000 for the project.

According to Gary McGill, consultant on the proposed project, the sewer upgrading is long overdue. He told the meeting, "We've been trying to do something about the sewage problem for eight years now. Getting the project started has always revolved around obtaining federal funding. Money for these sort of projects has always been available. The problem was

that funding was always allocated on a priority basis based on population and the volume of sewerage. Smaller towns like Marshall have suffered because the funds always went to larger cities and towns. It took a long time, but Marshall has finally climbed on the priority list. We had gotten grants in the neighborhood of \$100,000 to get through the preliminary stages of planning. We were ready to go last year when funding from the Environmental Protection Agency dried up. Towns like Marshall had no hope of having their water and sewer projects funded

anymore. We could either have thrown up our hands and said, 'We'll wait it out,' or seek alternative funding sources."

The alternative funding he referred to includes the grants from the FmHA and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

McGill stressed that the Aug. 26 referendum must pass if the grants are to be used in the project. He said, "Nothing will be done if the referendum does not pass. We can't hold onto the money because of the competition for grants. If the referendum goes down, the grant money will go elsewhere."

McGill also warned the meeting that the state EPA has been patient with the situation in Marshall, waiting until something could be done to clear up the raw sewage being dumped into the French Broad River. He said, "They've said that if the referendum doesn't pass that they will come in and do something about the problem. They haven't been specific, but it could be very bad for the people of Marshall."

Mayor Lawrence Ponder warned the citizens of the economic consequences facing Marshall if the referendum is not approved.

He told the audience, "Aug. 26 is the most important day in the history of this town. We've got to approve this bond issue if Marshall is to grow. We're mighty fortunate. Hundreds of communities would love to have the opportunity we have here now. American Greeting Card is moving ahead with their plans to build a plant here as if the bond issue will pass. If the sewer bonds aren't approved, they will have to move elsewhere."

Town attorney Ed Mashburn cited the pollution aspect of the project. He told the audience, "No one did this just to give a contractor a job.

It was designed for the public health and safety. Water standards for the French Broad River weren't designed by a bunch of bureaucrats, they were designed according to health standards. One death as a result of sewage wouldn't be worth the entire cost of the project."

McGill told the meeting that work on the new project could begin about a month after the bond issue is passed. The project would be undertaken on a priority basis, with the Walnut Creek area being first to get needed repairs. McGill estimated that the entire project could be completed by

Rollins Cleans Up

The Madison County community of Rollins lies just one mile south of Marshall on the former US 25 and 70. It's only a mile-long stretch alongside the Southern Railway right-of-way, but it's a small community with a big heart.

Concern, enthusiasm and cooperation make Rollins a fine little corner of Madison County. These days, it's a pretty corner of the county,

too, thanks to the combined efforts of many of the residents.

Set against the pleasing backdrop of the French Broad, Rollins residents have planted trees, shrubs and flowers and set up front yards with rock gardens and fences.

Rollins Road is home to less than 100 families. It starts at Ernest Rector's home and runs down to Texie Arrowood's on the south end of the road. Along the way, there are a wide variety of home styles, ranging from the old

two-story homes of W.F. Deaver and Herman Shipley, built in the 1920's to other permanent homes and several attractive mobile homes.

The community has united to participate in the Western North Carolina Beautiful competition, a community beautification program sponsored jointly by the WNC Community Development program and the N.C. Extension Service in 17 WNC counties.

Prizes range from \$50 to \$400. Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Allen are the leaders of the com-

munity effort. They and their neighbors have transformed many corners of their community.

Early in the spring, members of the historic Ponder's Chapel Church erected a new church sign and planted azaleas, junipers, dogwood and several annuals.

Many of the Rollins residents have resolved to clean up and beautify pieces of untended property that have become eyesores. Another project the residents have in mind is the restoration and

completion of the boat access and picnic area constructed by the TVA.

The concerned citizens of Rollins welcome the participation of all the members of their community in this worthwhile improvement project. Their dedication to their community can be an inspiration to everyone in Madison County.

The contest judging is set to take place next week. Win, lose or draw, the people of Rollins are winners with a shining community.



MEMBERS OF THE BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT stand with a new sign they recently erected at the entrance to the Rollins community. From left, they are Gerri Allen and husband, Jerry Allen, John Ray, Annie

Ray and Janice Wild. The sign was made by Mrs. Allen's son Victor Greene.

Blue Mold Found In County

It has been reported that a number of tobacco farmers in Madison County have discovered blue mold in their fields. Blue mold is the most devastating disease that can strike the crop.

Despite the presence of the disease in the county, there is no cause for alarm at this time. According to Agricultural Extension agent Gary Ealey, "There is blue mold present in some fields in the county, but only in fields that were not treated with Ridomil. We've seen five or six cases of blue mold this week, but it's a very small amount, maybe one percent of the county's crop.

Blue mold can destroy a field in just a matter of a few days. According to Ealey, "You can find blue mold on a Friday and see the entire field

destroyed by Monday morning."

The Agricultural Extension office recommends spraying fields with a mixture of one quart Ridomil per acre. Farmers who detect the disease should mix one ounce of the pesticide to each gallon of water used and apply the mixture in a spray around the base of the plants.

Despite the limited outbreak of the disease, the outlook for county tobacco farmers is good this year. Ealey said, "We expect to have the best tobacco crop in several years this year." He also noted that the minimum average support price for the crop this year will be \$1.81 a pound.

The first cutting of the Madison County crop is expected to begin about Aug. 15.



VA ADMINISTRATOR Robert Nimmo and Bill Hendon

County Jobless At 8.2%

The latest figures released by the N.C. Employment Security Commission on Friday indicate that Madison County's unemployment rate for June stood at 8.2 percent of the work force, a full percentage point below the statewide total of 9.2 percent. Nationally, the rate stood at 9.8 percent in the same period.

Employment Security Commission figures show that the 8.2 percent figure represented 730 jobless workers.

Glenn Jernigan, chairman of the ESC said the jobless rate rose in 56 of North Carolina's 100 counties in June while 38 counties reported an increase in employment. He said, "A major contribution to the increase comes from the annual influx of students from schools and colleges who enter or re-enter the labor force."

Major layoffs at several furniture manufacturers in Davidson County accounted for that county's 18.4 percent unemployment rate, a 7.7 percent increase over May's figures. Swain County

reported an unemployment rate of 23.6 percent, the highest in the state. Rural Allegheny County reported an unemployment rate of 3.8 percent, the lowest in the state. Orange County, which had the lowest rate for the past seven months, saw its rate climb to 3.9 percent.

Unemployment increased in eight of the state's ten metropolitan areas. The Charlotte/Gastonia area increased from 6.5 percent to 6.9 percent; Greensboro/Winston Salem/High Point from 7.7 percent to 9.3 percent; Raleigh/Durham from 4.2 percent to 4.4 percent; Wilmington from 9.9 percent to 10.9 percent; Salisbury/Concord from 6.9 percent to 6.9 percent; Burlington from 10.4 percent to 12.5 percent; Jacksonville from 6.9 percent to 6.1 percent and Fayetteville from 7.8 percent to 8.3 percent. The Asheville area decreased from 7.4 percent to 7.3 percent and Hickory from 8.8 percent to 8.3 percent.

VA Chief Visits Asheville

Veterans Administration chief Robert Nimmo visited Asheville on Monday for a tour of the VA facilities in Oteen.

Nimmo and Congressman Bill Hendon toured the Oteen facility together. Following the tour, the visiting administrator addressed a luncheon gathering at the Grove Park Inn Country Club. Nimmo, a Californian appointed to head the VA by President Reagan in 1981, assured the audience that Veterans Administration care for elderly veterans will not be cut despite the current federal budget restraints.

An \$11 million has been proposed for the Oteen center. Hospital administrator Arthur Landy proposed the addition during Nimmo's tour of the facility. Saying that 25 percent of the nation's veterans will be over 65 by the year 1990, Landy proposed the addition

planned in 1987 for a 1990 completion.

The VA already has approved a \$5 million renovation of the hospital's surgery and surgical intensive care unit in 1985.

In his first year in office, Nimmo has been one of the most controversial administrators to head the VA. At Monday's luncheon, he told the audience, "Here I am. As you can see, I haven't got any horns growing out of my head, regardless of what you may have heard. I'm losing my hair, but I haven't sprouted horns."

Nimmo has come under fire for implementing cuts directed by President Reagan. He told the audience, "A year ago, President Reagan charged me with the task of finding ways to contain the costs of veteran care so that the costs do not become so exorbitant as

to lose the taxpayer's support."

Citing the need for increased medical research, the VA chief told the gathering that the VA will spend \$183 million for medical research in 1983. Some of that money will be used to study the Agent Orange problem. He also told the crowd that he will recommend increasing the medical research budget in 1984 to study the effects of the defoliant.

Nimmo denied ever referring to Vietnam veterans as a "coddled bunch" and pointed out several areas in which his agency is working to assist Vietnam veterans. In addition to the Agent Orange research, Nimmo pointed out that the Vietnam Veteran Outreach program has been expanded to include 130 centers throughout the country. Six more centers are currently

under construction.

Regarding older veterans, Nimmo said that his agency is studying the migration of older veterans in order to meet their needs in the future. He said that many older veterans have moved to Sun Belt states from the north and Midwest. Nimmo assured the gathering that the administration remains committed to caring for veterans, saying, "We understand the contributions veterans have made throughout the years. Even if there is never another war, and history would dictate otherwise, 100 years from now, we will still be in the business of caring for the orphan and the widow of he who has borne the battle."

Following the luncheon, Nimmo returned to Oteen to meet with members of the facility's staff. A reception was held later in the day at the VFW hall in Leicester.

Mars Hill Man Drowns

James Paul Shepherd of Mars Hill drowned on July 27 when a boat from which he was fishing capsized in 14 feet of water according to the Madison County Sheriff's Department.

Shepherd and two friends, Michael Sutton, 14, and Jimmy Lee Davis, 19, had been fishing from the boat in an isolated two-acre farm pond off Gabriel's Creek Rd. The three men went swimming and captured their boat attempting to climb back into it.

Sutton and Davis were able to swim safely to shore, but saw only bubbles where

Shepherd and the boat had been.

The two men called the Mars Hill Fire Department at about 5 p.m. The Fire Department notified the sheriff's department and the Buncombe County Rescue Squad.

The Rescue Squad found the body at about 8:50 p.m. County medical examiner Dr. Otis Duck was called to investigate the incident.

Dr. Duck reported that autopsy conducted by Dr. Carl Biggers of Asheville confirmed that Shepherd had died of drowning.

County Homes Below Standard

Substandard housing continues to be a problem in Madison County, according to a story published Monday by the Associated Press. According to the report, the 1980 census figures reveal that five percent of North Carolina's 2.3 million housing units were substandard.

North Carolina continues to rank 43rd in the amount of substandard housing, with a rate twice the national average. Madison County has one of the highest rates of substandard housing in the state, with more than 20 percent of all county homes being below standard. Northampton, Gates, and Bertie counties also have rates over 20 percent.



GRADUATES OF the Madison County Day Care Program hold their diplomas up. The graduates will move

on to elementary school next week. From left to right, they are: Gabrielle Greaser, Jennifer Woodruff, Beverly Allen.