

THE NEWS RECORD

Serving Madison And Northern Buncombe Counties

Vol. 88 No. 14

Thursday, April 7, 1988

25¢

County Election Board Gets Extra \$10,000

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The Madison County Sheriff's Department isn't the only county agency facing budgetary problems.

The Madison County Board of Elections received an additional \$10,000 appropriation Monday to enable election officials to conduct the May primary.

Funds for the extra allocation will come from an unexpected increase in

revenues from two sources -- the intangibles tax and senior citizen tax refunds, said Ralph Rice, county finance officer.

But if a runoff primary is required following May's balloting, county officials may have to make cuts in other county departments, Rice said.

"The problem is that they'll run out of money before we finish the May primary," Rice told the Madison County Board of Commissioners at

Monday's meeting. "They have requested additional money. Should we run into a second primary, they will probably need even more money than that."

Commissioners gave the election board the additional allocation two weeks after four county dispatchers were laid off and Madison County Jail closed because of budget problems in the sheriff's department. Those cuts were necessary despite an extra

\$46,000 allocation given the sheriff's department for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Rice told commissioners last month that, with the extra funding to the sheriff's department, the county will have only about \$2,000 left in its contingency fund for use in case of emergency. Commissioners were concerned Monday that they may not have enough money to pay for election expenses in the May primary.

"Have we even got the money to do this?" asked Robert Capps, board chairman.

"That's another question. We certainly don't have it in contingency," Rice said. "But there are a couple areas where we underestimated our revenues. I think we can probably handle the first one, but I'm not sure we could if we came up with a second primary, which is a very real possibility."

Rice estimated that the county will receive some \$5,000 more in intangible tax revenue than budgeted, and \$5,000 more in senior citizen tax refunds.

But Rice also had a word of caution for commissioners.

"There are some areas (of anticipated revenues) that are under what we budgeted. That's what worries me," he said.

Spring Creek Pledges \$20,000 A Year For School

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

A group of Spring Creek residents has pledged to donate up to \$20,000 a year to Madison County school officials to keep the community's school open for kindergarten through fifth-grade students.

That offer was made Monday night during an emotion-filled meeting of the Madison County Board of Education. About 50 people -- most of them from Spring Creek -- attended the meeting.

The school board in February announced plans to close Spring Creek School and bus students to a K-8 facility at Hot Springs. Students in grades 6-8 will have the option of attending a countywide consolidated middle school to be built in Marshall.

Bill Barutio, who represents the majority of parents of children who now attend Spring Creek Elementary School, told the school board that parents and residents would be willing to donate money -- up to \$100,000 over a five-year period -- out of their own pockets to keep the school open.

About 200 residents of the Spring Creek are willing to give up to \$2 a week, or \$100 a year, to pay the salary of one additional teacher at the school, Barutio said.

"They feel that's a reasonable cost out of their pocket to pay to keep a school at Spring Creek," he said.

With 61 K-5 students at Spring Creek, the school would be eligible for three state-paid teachers, Barutio said, and one teacher there now is paid by state and federal funds, Barutio said. Those teachers could teach grades 2-5. A fifth teacher, for a combination kindergarten-first grade class, could possibly be paid by grants from foundations and corporations, he said.

But until those grants can be obtained, Spring Creek residents will pay that teacher's salary -- up to \$20,000 a year -- themselves, he said. Barutio and his wife, Beverly, gave the board a letter of intent guaranteeing that amount of money.

The proposal would eliminate combination classes at Spring Creek (except for K-1). Combination classrooms are one of the main arguments for busing students to Hot Springs.

"Our proposal is for a K-5 school at Spring Creek," Barutio said. "Leave the door open for us to find funds to bring the 6-8 students back to Spring Creek."

School board members made no comment on the Spring Creek pro-

posal, but agreed to take it into consideration.

"I am not going to comment on the proposal you have made because I want to go over this carefully," said Jim Baker, school board chairman.

John Artley of Spring Creek asked for a commitment from the board to keep the school open for five years.

A joint private-public effort would be "a pilot program that could provide a model to other similar communities to meet their unique needs," Artley said.

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BILL STUDENC PHOTOS

Bill Barutio, left, speaks to the Madison County Board of Education about his community's desire to keep the doors open at Spring Creek Elementary School (above). Residents have offered to pay up to \$20,000 a year to keep the school open.



BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Commissioners To Study 'Sludgefill'

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The Madison County Board of Commissioners, responding to concerns that a company intends to dump "sludge" in the county, has formed a committee to develop regulations to control the disposal of sludge from wastewater treatment systems.

But James Griffin, one of three partners in Consolidated Landfill Co., says his company has no plans to use its property along Sweetwater Road for a sludge landfill.

"Our intention for that property when we bought it was to give Madison County a place for development as a landfill for the county's use," Griffin said Tuesday. "Beyond that, we don't have anything else in mind right now."

But several residents who attended Monday's meeting of the board of commissioners said they have heard that Consolidated Landfill Co. had plans for a sludge landfill.

"There seems to be some activity along the Redmon Road property

listed in the books as belonging to Consolidated Landfill," said Betty Wild.

"The purpose of this proposed ordinance is to address that," said Larry Leake, county attorney.

Wild was referring to documents in the Madison County Register of Deeds Office showing that Griffin and his partners, Brownlow Hyder and David Hyder, doing business as Consolidated Landfill Co., in September purchased three tracts of property in the Redmon area from Marshall Kan-

ner. According to deeds in the Madison County Register of Deeds Office, Consolidated Landfill owns a 69.48 percent interest in that property.

The company also has an option to buy the remaining interest on the property, held by Zeno Ponder (13.82 percent) and his wife, Marie (16.7 percent). That option to purchase will expire June 4.

Consolidated Landfill Co. originally purchased that property to develop as

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Mars Hill Annexation Request Withdrawn

By HASSIE PONDER
Staff Writer

The Mars Hill Board of Aldermen rejected one developer's annexation request Monday night, while developers of another tract of property withdrew their request for annexation.

During last month's meeting, Cliff and Diane Schommer had requested annexation of property off East View Drive for a proposed 24-house development. But because of problems in obtaining a right of way to

the property, the Schommers withdrew their request for annexation Monday.

Instead, they would now like for the town to simply provide a main water line to the property boundary.

The aldermen agreed to provide the water line to the property. The developers will provide the materials and town crews will lay the line.

Also at last month's meeting, Arpin Construction had asked for annexation of property on Old N.C. 213 near Shook's Grocery and for a municipal

water line to be brought to the property, the site of a proposed nine-house development.

However, because of a lack of funds to provide water service to the area, the aldermen denied the annexation request made by Arpin.

The aldermen did say they would try to reach some kind of agreement that will help Arpin obtain town water service at the site on Old N.C. 213. One possibility is that the town and Arpin may split the cost of installation and materials 50-50.

The board took no action on a third annexation request received last week -- from J.F. Robinson for a proposed housing development at Woodhaven.

Another problem brought to the attention of the town board Monday night was vicious dogs on South Main Street.

According to Bobby Zink, a pit bull and a doberman are causing problems in this area. Although the dogs are kept in a yard with a chainlink

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Marshall Man Killed By Train

From Staff Reports

A train hit and killed an elderly resident of a Marshall family care home last Wednesday night when he wandered onto railroad tracks in the Indian community.

The victim was identified as Ernest Woodruff, 96, of Rector Court Road, according to the Marshall Police Department.

Family Care Center in Marshall, was reported missing at about 8:40 p.m. last Wednesday, said Chief Deputy Don Peak.

The accident was reported to the sheriff's department by Southern Railway about 2:30 p.m., Peak said.

It is not yet clear what happened, he said. According to the Marshall Police Department, a

Barnardsville Gets Toll-Free Calling

From Staff Reports

For residents of Barnardsville, using their telephone to call other areas of the county is no longer the next best thing to being there.

Effective last Thursday, the telephone department in Barnardsville began calling other areas of

without being charged with a charge for making a long-distance telephone call.

But in larger Barnardsville residents can call Waverlyville, Asheville or any Buncombe community toll-free.

Residents of the town can't

Swing In Spring

Rocky Bailey, 11, of Mars Hill swings into the foreground of this view taken at the Mars Hill Recreation Park, Rocky, a