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DSS program calls for more help

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

Caseload redistribution will increase efficiency at the Department of Social Services, but additional help may be needed when another program is added this fall, according to a DSS spokesman.

Income maintenance specialist Tanya Currin explained to DSS board members at their meeting last Tuesday that cases would be divided alphabetically among the workers.

This method of distributing the workload will increase efficiency, Currin said.

"Dividing the caseload into two sections will make the information coming in on cases easier to deal with since it will be easier to determine who has what case," said Acting Director Susan Moss.

However, case distribution will probably need to be looked at again when a new program may be established this fall.

The program is entitled Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) for unemployed parents and is in the state legislature right now, Currin said.

The program would most likely be approved to be functional in September or October, Currin said.

N.C. DSS Director's Assistant Bonnie Allred said last week that three different bills including AFDC for unemployed parents have been introduced to the Senate.

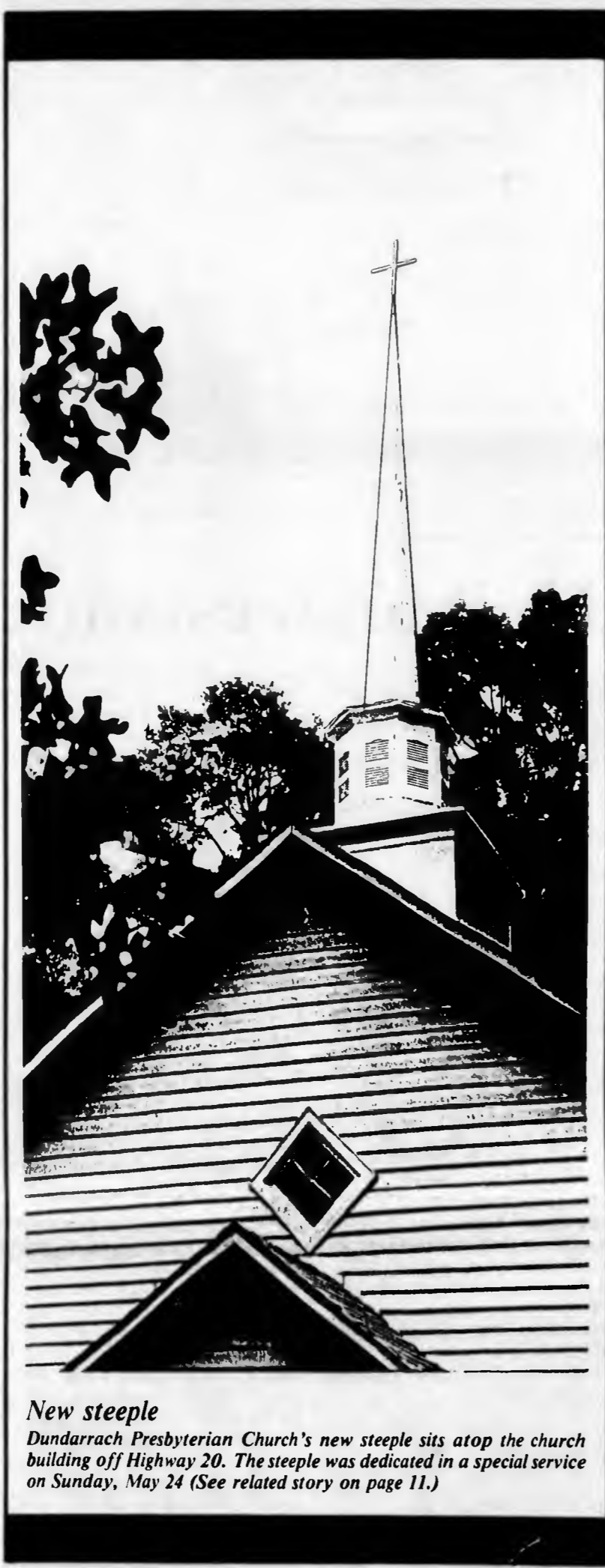
Allred explained that the program would be similar to the AFDC services now provided. Currently AFDC assists families whose children have been deprived of parental support through death, physical or mental incapacity or continued absence from the home.

"With this bill people would be served who were in families where the principal wage earner became unemployed," Allred said.

The program would provide benefits to those who had currently exhausted their Employment Security benefits, she said.

Under the current wording of the bill, if passed, the program would be effective July 1. According to Allred, an extension of this date has been requested so that

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New steeple

Dundarrach Presbyterian Church's new steeple sits atop the church building off Highway 20. The steeple was dedicated in a special service on Sunday, May 24 (See related story on page 11.)

No increase in tax rate

City approves budget

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

Members of the City Council approved their 1987-88 budget of \$3.7 million with no tax rate increase.

The budget represents a decrease of \$143,955 over that of last year.

"City residents will not face a tax, water or sewer increase," said City Manager Tom Phillips.

Phillips said, in his presentation to council members, that the budget will provide for the improvement of the sewage treatment plant, sludge handling, expansion of the landfill and repairs to city streets.

The budget represents a decrease of \$143,955 over last year, Phillips said, with a tax rate of 58 cents per \$100 valuation. The tax valuation for this year amounts to \$143 million, or an increase of \$5 million over last year.

Tax collections are based on a collection rate of 97.5 percent.

Last year, water and sewer rates increased resulting in this year's rates remaining the same, Phillips said. The city's practice of investing in capital reserve funds will enable major renovations to be made at the waste treatment plant without raising the rates.

The capital reserve fund, funds set aside and earmarked for specific capital improvements, amount to \$685,000. Phillips said the funds will be used for purchase of vehicles as well as improvements to utility service operations.

Sewage plant and other water and sewer improvement will be made through the use of these funds, \$264,800 as well as those anticipated from a federal Environmental Development Act grant of \$457,200 and \$40,000 anticipated from the county.

Phillips said the budget does not allow for a cost-of-living increase for the city employees, but does reflect a five percent budget adjustment for department heads to reward outstanding employee performance with a merit increase.

Sewage plant improvements include \$220,000 for the construction of a grit chamber at the sewage plant and \$70,000 for development of a better solution to disposing of sewage sludge.

Revenue sharing will no longer be available to the city this year. There are \$12,500 left in the budget from revenue sharing funds.

In other business, the city adopted the sewer use and pretreatment ordinance. The ordinance includes requirements local industries are to fulfill in order to be in compliance with their discharge wastewater permits.

The permits were recently updated by Black and Veatch Inc. engineering firm.

In additional business, council members received a petition to reinstate the position of city dog warden from Catherine Shepard.

Shepard had obtained 257 signatures from Raeford residents who agreed that the position should be reinstated in order to enforce the leash law.

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Tax increase considered

County reviews proposed budget

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

Hoke County Commissioners on Monday reviewed the proposed 1987-88 budget which will provide needed improvements in school facilities and community development while raising the tax rate to 84 cents.

The three-cent tax rate increase will generate \$98,808, according to County Manager William (Bub) Cowan, who presented the budget.

If commissioners approve the budget, the county tax rate will increase from 81 cents to 84 cents per \$100 valuation.

Under this rate, the owner of a house assessed at \$20,000 in value would see the tax bill increase from about \$162 to about \$168.

Cowan explained that the tax increase resulted mainly from the loss of revenue sharing funds, a loss of a total of \$9,507,750 in the tax base due to the repeal of the household personal property tax and a mandated law enforcement retirement program.

The program will cost the county \$17,592 each year.

The revenue sharing expenditure from last year was \$365,000. This year the county will anticipate \$228,500 in new revenues from the additional half-cent sales tax to replace revenue sharing, Cowan said.

However, the county is losing \$77,013 in revenues from the repeal of the household personal property tax.

"We're losing more than we're getting in," Cowan said in reference to the shortfall in replacement revenues.

Currently, the county has on deposit \$200,000 from the defunct revenue sharing program. This money will be transferred to the general fund and earmarked for the school's current expense which will delete the revenue sharing funds.

Other increases in the budget include a projected 12.8 percent rise, or \$74,029, in the Social Services Assistance budget. The increase

the cost and that \$25,000 is anticipated from the General Assembly to go toward the cost of equipment.

In a joint session between the commissioners and the City Council held later in the day, Commission Chairman Wyatt Upchurch said that since the county budget was being formed he felt they could not discuss the system financially but said he thought it was a positive move.

In addition, the proposed budget includes provisions for a Community Development Block Grant cash match of \$50,000, and a \$100,000 appropriation to construct two solid waste compactor centers.

The centers are part of five-year Solid Waste Collection Program approved, in concept, by commissioners at their May 18 meeting.

County employees will receive a three percent cost-of-living adjustment and a two percent base appropriation for merit pay, if the budget is approved.

The Pratt Building and the Old County buildings received a combined appropriation of \$40,800 for renovations.

The commissioners scheduled a public hearing for the budget on June 15 at 7 p.m. in the Pratt Building.

This year, Cowan presented a new five-year Capital Improvements Program. The program will enable the commissioners to evaluate long-range capital needs as represented by the various departments throughout the county. They will be able to

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Turkey Festival plans get underway

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

The third annual N.C. Turkey Festival plans are underway and promotions for the festival are being carried out with no delay, according to festival promotions chair Kay Thomas.

This year the first day of the festival falls on September 17, the day in 1787 on which the signing of the United States Constitution took place. Thomas said this has inspired the board to adopt a

patriotic theme for this year's festival.

Hodges Associates Inc. have this year embellished the festival's turkey symbol and have named her "America's First Feathered Lady".

"The name of the symbol will put emphasis on North Carolina's 'firsts', Thomas said. "Turkeys are first in agriculture in the state and first choice for the Thanksgiving dinner. And North Carolina is first in turkey production in the country."

Thomas said the festival symbol this year is a more feminine rendering and is reminiscent of Kate Smith, who was known for singing "God Bless America".

The broad-breasted, flag-waving patriotic figure will appear on all of the festival's promotional material including brochures, news releases, posters and T-shirts. The shirts will be blue this year, Thomas said, and will be ready in the next few weeks.

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Local leaders ask DOT to speed up project to widen U.S. Highway 401

by Ron Anderson
Associate Editor

Three community leaders asked the state last week to move a project to widen US Highway 401 into the fast lane.

The leaders, Alice Glisson, president of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce, Terry Houston, past chamber president, and Economic Developer John Howard made their requests during a public meeting held last Wednesday by The North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) at Randolph Technical College in Asheboro.

The hearing was for the department's Division 8, which includes Hoke, Randolph, Chatham, Moore, Montgomery, Scotland, Lee and Richmond counties.

Included on the panel that listened to comments from spokesmen representing communities within the division were Richard K. Pugh, the Division 8 Board of Transportation commissioner who serves as the board's vice chairman and former U.S. Rep. William W. Cobey Jr., who is now deputy secretary of the DOT. The comments will be considered when the DOT decides which highway projects will be included on the department's revised Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The project to four lane US Highway 401 from 71st High School in Cumberland County to the Raeford

Bypass is listed on the TIP for 1987-1995. It is currently in the planning stage and right-of-way acquisitions are scheduled to begin in 1989; the project should be completed by 1995.

However, the three Hoke County leaders who attended the meeting would like to see the project moved up.

Calling the widening project "the lifeline of our future," Howard told the panel that the growth of commerce between Hoke and Cumberland counties depends on keeping the project on schedule or "even bettering it if possible."

Howard pointed out that there is no four-lane highway in Hoke County and presented the panel with copies of a resolution by the county board of commissioners that supports the widening project.

"We must eliminate the dangers that exist for our citizens and those who travel the road," Howard said. "Anything that can be done will be appreciated."

Glisson told the panel that 6,000 vehicles a day use the road between Raeford and Fayetteville. She held up a computer readout listing the 75 accidents that occurred last year on the 10.6 miles of road scheduled to be widened. She said that there were two fatalities on the highway in 1986.

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Highway 401 statistics

Chamber of Commerce President Alice Glisson shows DOT representatives a list of the accidents that occurred on Highway 401 during the last year. Glisson was speaking at a public meeting in Asheboro last Wednesday.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather in Alabama and Mississippi has been hot on May 27 and 28. There hasn't been any rain either. The reason for this weather report is because Mary Alice and I are on our way to Texas to visit my brother, Spec and his wife.

We left Raeford early last Wednesday morning and drove to Tuscaloosa, Ala. by way of Birmingham and Atlanta. The drive to Tuscaloosa by the car speedometer was 549 miles. Of course you gain an hour coming west.

As most of you know, this the city that is home to the University of Alabama. The restaurant where we had dinner had a sign which read, "Home of Crimson Tide." That night while looking and listening to the news, a reporter was telling about the new football stadium being built at Tuscaloosa for the Tide. It will be completed in 1988 and the team will play its

(See AROUND, page 6)