

The News-Journal

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RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

Wednesday, June 5, 1991

Petition to remove Sheriff Norton goes to court today

Alex Norton's trial has started. Superior Court Judge Donald W. Stephens rejected a motion to dismiss a petition to remove Norton from his position as sheriff on grounds it is unconstitutional.

District Attorney Jean Powell and County Attorney Duncan McFadyen challenged Norton

a month ago when they filed a petition to remove him from office.

Norton was called as the first witness this morning to testify on the matter of Lillie Ann Locklear. Locklear, a drug felon and jail cook, was seen with a handgun by Det. Danny Wilson.

The petition accuses Norton of failing to charge

Locklear with felony possession of a firearm.

The petition also includes claims the sheriff:

- ordered a deputy to falsify records,
- failed to pursue criminals who shot up a nightclub as he watched,
- failed to separate two youthful offenders from adults in the jail; a 17-year old male was

allegedly raped by an older inmate.

Powell would not bring the petition to Superior Court without McFadyen's signature, according to County Commissioner L. E. McLaughlin. However, such a move on McFadyen's part required authorization by the commissioners, which he received May 6.



Summer fun
Ronald Flippin discovers the joy of blowing bubbles during Raeford Play

School's field day activities. Watching to learn the technique are LaRue McBryde (left) and Cody Warner. Instructor for the session is Linda Scott

Cousins will stay closed

Judge's order valid until July

The controversial Antioch night club, shut down a week and a half ago, is a public nuisance, Superior Court Judge Donald W. Stephens ruled Monday.

Stephens first shut down the club when Assistant District Attorney Rick Jackson won a temporary restraining order against club owner Elisha Dial May 24.

Stephens boosted that order to a temporary injunction Monday afternoon. A jury may decide on July 8 whether Cousins should stay closed forever.

Neighbors and lawmen testified they saw frequent fights, drug dealing and drunken behavior among the club's patrons. Dial himself reported several times people had shot at him or his club.

"Based on your testimony alone," Stephens told Dial Monday, "there's no question in my mind that you gather together a large crowd, some of whom are unruly...and you keep them together until two-thirty or three o'clock and then you turn them loose on the public."

"You have created or have allowed to exist a public nuisance," Stephens said.

Neighbors of the club complained repeatedly to Sheriff Alex Norton and District Attorney Jean Powell about Saturday night violence, vandalism and noise caused by club patrons. Cousins was only open Saturday nights.

According to witnesses, Cousins' patrons were so wild Dial armed himself each Saturday with a .38 caliber pistol and a .12 gauge pump shotgun.

"In today's age, no one should have to run an entertainment facility when they have to wear a .38 caliber pistol on their side and carry a slide action shotgun and then blame the sheriff," Stephens told Dial.

"I will not agree to allow you to run your club like this."

"I'm not trying to close you down, that goes against my grain," he added. "But this can't continue." Dial had called Cousins his only source of income.

Upon hearing the judge's ruling, Dial asked if he could reopen Cousins as a cafe or restaurant. He said he had been adding on a cafe to the buildings when the club was padlocked on Stephens' orders.

"I've had enough," Dial said.

He further said he had four years left on his lease of the property.

Stephens asked the district attorney's office to work out "a reasonable arrangement" with Dial to continue running the club.

Club neighbors were glad of Stephens' decision, but were wary of reopening the club.

"If it opens back up it'll be the same thing over and over," said neighbor Mike Chavis.

"I hope they don't open it again."

Chavis said neighbors ought to be involved in deciding how Cousins might open again.

"We ought to have some say so as to when it opens and closes," he said.

Dial's case

"People come, we play music and they dance and drink beer and (See COUSINS, page 3)

Dire budget predictions coming true

Any way you figure it, for Hoke County taxpayers it's going to be a bleak year.

If passed, the budget presented to the Hoke County Commissioners Monday for consideration would—at the very least—require *what amounts to* a 13 cents per hundred dollar valuation tax rate increase. That would make the tax rate 19 percent higher than last year.

But there's still an unknown: the County doesn't know how deep school cuts from the state will be. If the cuts materialize as currently proposed, Hoke County taxpayers would see an overall tax increase of 23.6 cents or 34.2 percent.

Actually, it's not quite that simple. The tax rate increase proposed by County Manager Barry Reed is four cents; another 10.6 cents may be levied if the school cuts are forthcoming. But tax bills will have another section this year for the first time, that breaks out the bill for solid waste disposal. County residents (not including residents of Raeford) will pay \$69 per year for waste collection and disposal. The solid waste fees bring the effective increase to the higher level. So, while the tax rate will go from 69 cents per hundred to 73 cents, the effective increase is much higher.

Despite the hefty increase, Reed characterized the plan as a "lean budget but with a big revenue bite." He said it will essentially maintain services at an existing level.

Included in the budget are 13 new positions; 22 had been requested by department heads. Of the 13, 11 would go to the Department of Social Services and one each to the sheriff's office and inspections department.

Reed told commissioners the 11 DSS positions would be needed beginning the first of the year to staff a new mandatory program designed to encourage welfare recipients to work, to help with child support enforcement, and to generally help ease the workload on caseworkers partly as the result of a court mandate.

In the Sheriff's Department, Reed is proposing the addition of one deputy to assist in court administration, serving papers and to fill in as needed.

The Inspections Department position is proposed to help with the workload expected by county zoning.

Reed also proposed a four percent cost of living increase to county workers. He told commissioners workers are being lost to neighboring counties because the pay is better. He said because other counties are holding the line on pay raises, now would be a good time for Hoke to catch up.

Commissioners will begin work sessions on the \$10.2 million budget Monday night. They scheduled a public hearing on it for June 17 at 7 p.m.

Extended phone service

In other business, the commissioners were told it will be very

difficult to arrange local phone service to Raeford from all parts of Hoke County.

Gene Clemmons, director of the Telecommunications Division of the N.C. Public Staff, says that's because there are seven exchanges in Hoke County, and each would have to be run through the process separately.

"I don't want to get your hopes too high," he said.

He said an extended area service proposal goes to the State Utilities Commission. The commission must be convinced through public petitions, letters, etc. that there is "broad-based support" for the service.

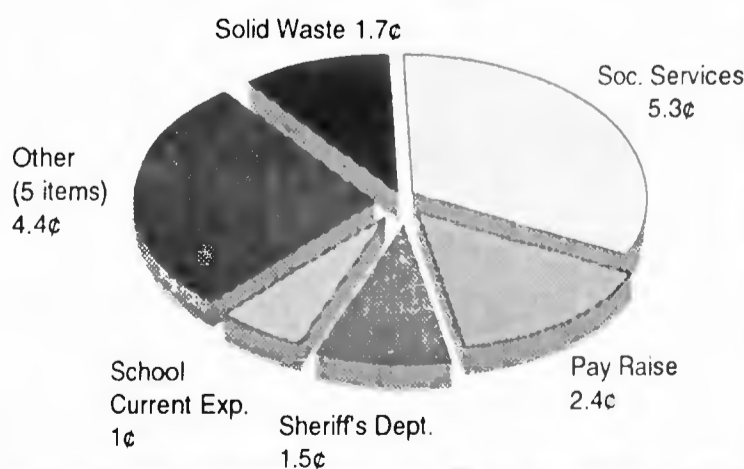
Then, he said, a cost study would have to be done, and possibly a poll conducted. The procedure is the same for each exchange involved.

Clemmons said the 875 exchange covers 80 percent of Hoke County phone users. Because there aren't many customers reflected in the remaining 20 percent, the proposal might be unfeasible.

There are a few other options, he said, but they aren't very attractive either:

How it's broken down

16.3 ¢ worth of increased expenditures



(See BUDGET, page 4)

Deputy arrested for DWI

Hoke Sheriff's Sgt. Joshua Brown was arrested early Sunday for driving drunk.

Highway Patrol Trooper Brent White charged Brown, 41, of Raeford with driving while impaired after pulling him over at 1:30 a.m. not far from his home.

According to court records, Brown registered a .21 percent blood alcohol level when tested by Trooper Jeff Borroughs on a breathalyzer. That is over twice the legal limit of .10 percent.

Brown's court date is July 13.

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The weather for the past week feels like August rather than the last week of May and the first week of June. The 90-degree temperatures during the day have caused most air conditioning units to run continuously. It has also been hot at night with the low readings being in the 70s. We have had rain and thunderstorms, but it didn't cool off afterwards. The humidity has been high and this makes it feel hotter than the readings on the thermometer. I was told Monday that hail fell in the eastern part of the county on Sunday.

The forecast calls for the temperatures to fall for the remainder of the week. The highs on Wednesday and Thursday will be around 80 and Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the mid 80s. The lows at night will be in the 50s for the fourth day. There could be a chance of rain on Saturday.

In the many years that I have been associated with this paper, every once in a while an editorial will cause people to either call me or come by the office and talk to me. This has happened again last week on the editorial entitled "Taxpayers have had enough." As I informed the people who called or talked to me, I did not write this article. It was written by Ken MacDonald, editor of the paper.

I commented to Ken that it was an excellent editorial and I told him of the numbers of people who had talked to me about the editorial.

When you read an article about the tax rate of the county increasing property taxes 30%, then people become interested in where their money is being spent. I believe that the County Board of Commissioners should go over every item in the budget and trim the fat on unnecessary items before increasing the

(See AROUND, page 8)