

Duplin Times

PROGRESS SENTINEL

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Board Transfers Education Money

The transfer of \$100,000 from capital outlay to the school current-expense budget was authorized by the Duplin County Board of Commissioners Thursday.

The fund transfer will be contingent upon transfer of the old Kenansville Elementary School property to the county from the school system, according to the motion made by Commissioner W.J. Costin and approved by a three-to-one vote. Commissioners Costin, Allen Nethercutt, Calvin Turner and Franklin Williams approved. Commissioner D.J. Fussell opposed.

Fussell said transferring money from capital outlay to current expense funds helped the state and harmed the county, as the county's basic responsibility is buildings and the state's is teacher salaries, books and supplies.

Nethercutt said, "Although we're voting to allow the transfer, we're digging a deeper hole because next year they'll have to come back and ask for an additional \$100,000 in capital outlay funds."

In its request to the commissioners, the board of education had asked for a transfer of \$158,896.

When the fund transfer becomes effective, the school system will have a current-expense budget of \$1,696,750 for 1980-81. The capital outlay fund will be reduced to \$245,000. Victor Tucker, school system accountant, also reported the school system has \$145,000 in unspent current expense funds it can

add to the next year's current-expense budget.

The school board's original request of \$2,024,232 for current expenses for the 1980-81 budget year was cut to \$1,555,000 by the county commission when the commissioners set the county ad valorem tax rate and budget.

County Manager Ralph

Cottle said the school board probably would ignore the commissioners' request to hold salary increases to the 7 percent of other county employees and eliminate the \$4,000 supplement to the state-paid salary of the superintendent. He said the school system did not have to follow the commission's recommendation.

Magnolia Mayor Says Rural Areas Favored

An accusation that Duplin County's government does nothing for the towns despite their tax input came from Magnolia's acting mayor in Rose Hill last Tuesday night.

Melvin Pope spoke at the monthly meeting of Duplin county town mayors and administrators. The county commissioners and manager were invited, but only one commissioner, W.J. Costin of Warsaw attended.

"Everything is set up for the rural area and not the towns," Pope said. "For instance, towns have to maintain virtually two fire departments because they have to keep one truck in

town when they send a truck out to fight a rural fire."

He said 33 percent of the county's population lived in towns and 85 percent of the local sales tax money was generated by businesses in towns.

Tom Phillips, Wallace town administrator, agreed and added that most fires occurred in rural areas.

Each town fire department serves a four-mile area around the towns. State law requires a town fire department to keep part of its equipment inside the town when the department responds to a rural call.

"People who live in town

are triple-taxed," Pope said. "They have to pay town taxes, county taxes and garbage pick-up fees where people in the country pay no garbage fees."

Pope also emphasized that towns pay for recreation facilities which are used by rural residents. He said he felt the county should help fund the facilities used by rural people as well as townspeople.

"You raised the county tax two cents. You could have raised it one more penny, which would have raised \$58,000, which you could have distributed to the towns on a per capita basis," Pope

said, speaking to the commissioner present.

Wallace Mayor Melvin Cording said, "If it weren't for our pride and good sense, we'd tear up our city charters and become wards of the county."

The possibility of combining of functions would be discussed.

Costin agreed some combining of functions would be practical and said he would talk with other commissioners in an attempt to form a committee of commissioners, mayors and some town and county workers to improve the overall situation.



MISS LIBERTY CROWNED - Miss Liberty 1980 is pictured above as she received her trophy and crown from last year's queen. Pictured above, on the left, is Miss Liberty 1979 Sherri Mincey, and on the right, Miss Liberty 1980 Merry Freeman.

School Districts Ratified

Duplin County Board of Education members will be elected by districts and for 4-year terms, according to a local bill ratified by the recently ended General Assembly's mini-session.

In the past, school board members have been elected on an at-large basis and for six-year terms.

Another change will be the expiration date of the terms. In the past, terms have expired on the first Tuesday in April. They now will expire at the first December meeting, along with terms of other elected county officials.

Newly elected board member Joe Swinson will be sworn into office at the first meeting in April 1981, and will be the last school board member to take office on the old date. His term, however, will continue for six years, as the new law becomes effective January 1st, 1981. Swinson will represent District 2, which includes Calypso, Wolfscrape, Blisson, Albertson and Smith townships, when the district system becomes effective.

The terms of E.L. Boyette and Graham Phillips will expire at the first meeting in December 1982. Boyette will represent District 3, which includes Limestone and Cypress Creek. Phillips will represent District 4, including Island Creek and Rockfish townships.

Two board members now live in Warsaw. The terms of Pat Broadrick and Jimmy Strickland will expire in 1984. District 1 will include Warsaw and Faison townships and District 5 will include Rose Hill, Magnolia and Kenansville townships.

Budget Hearing

Kenansville Tax Rate 65¢

By Emily Killete

The Kenansville Fire Department released the town of Kenansville from the contract requiring expansion of the fire station in return for town office space, during a public hearing on the town budget June 23rd.

Fire Chief Lauren Sharpe read a resolution which released the town from its contract with the fire department. The 15-year contract had been drawn up eight years ago calling for expansion of the fire department during the second and third five-year periods of the agreement. During the first five years, the town hall was allowed to headquarter its business and offices in the fire station. The town was required to pay for the renovation of the building into office spaces during the first five years, and set up a capital reserve fund for the replacement of fire trucks.

The town is in the eighth year of the contract, and estimates for the expansion of the building would add 2 1/2

cents to the 1980-81 budget. An additional 2 1/2 cents will be needed for the final expansion of the building. Both expansions are estimated to cost a total of \$80,000. At the May meeting of the town commissioners, the expansion of the meeting room and the truck space, the final two phases, were discussed in one project. The fire department would be borrowing money for the expansion of the fire station from Farmer's Home Administration with five percent interest, and the town would be paying off the loan. According to Sharpe, no lower interest rates could be obtained by the town, and in October the FmHA interest rate will rise two percent.

The resolution allowed the town one year rent free if the town hall continued to remain at the fire station. Beginning in July 1981, if the town wished to remain, rent would be paid. Sharpe said the fire department wanted to cooperate with the Board, and because the cost

of building would add to the tax rate the fire department was releasing the town from the contract. The fire department belongs to everyone, Sharpe said, and many undue criticisms and rumors have been raised by the town citizens over the tax increase of 2 1/2 cents to meet the contract. He added, the fire station would be jointly shared by the town and the fire department, even though the building is deeded to the fire department.

The funds needed for the expansion of the meeting room are included in the 1980 tax rate, Mayor Doug Judge stated during the public hearing. A show of hands revealed no public opposition to fulfilling the contract with the fire department. However, there was much opposition shown by the 58 persons attending the hearing to cutting one member of the police department. Over 20 voted to maintain a third policeman and increase taxes to 74 cents to pay the salary. About 10 voted against the tax increase.

"I think the number one concern of most of the people here is police protection," Joe Quinn, Kenansville merchant, said. "If it takes a

little more money, then I think most of us will go along with it."

Even with three policemen, Mayor Judge said the town does not have fulltime protection. The schedule of the police department does not provide full night protection.

After adjourning the public hearing in the courthouse and returning to the town hall, Commissioner Cordell Johnson made a motion the tax rate be set at 74 cents and the third policeman be retained. The motion was seconded by Commissioner William Fennell, but was not approved by the board in a two to three vote.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Earl Hatcher to adopt the 1980-81 budget as presented to the public, setting the tax rate at 65 cents. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Betty Long and approved in a three to two vote. Voting against the second motion were Commissioners Johnson and Fennell. The third vote, for a majority, was cast by Commissioner Jimmy Johnson. The approved budget totals \$331,756.

Duplin Today And Pink Hill Review Merge

Sale of The Pink Hill Review was made public Friday in an announcement made jointly by Gordon Lewis, partner in The Pink Hill Review, and Ike F. Riddick, president of Duplin Publishing Company, Inc., which has purchased The Pink Hill Review.

The sale was effective this week. Duplin Today, published weekly in Kenansville, was started in January, 1979.

The Pink Hill Review and Duplin Today will be combined into one edition published on Thursday each week. Lynda W. Stroud will continue as correspondent in the Pink Hill area.

Lewis said, "The Pink Hill area will be better served by the combination of the two newspapers." He added, "The people in southern Lenoir County have been very good to me and the Pink Hill Review in years past. I hope the people will treat the new owners equally as well."

Commenting on the change of ownership, Riddick said, "Under the leadership of Gordon Lewis, The Pink Hill Review has rendered an outstanding service to southern Lenoir County and to its people. It is our purpose to continue to provide the people with an excellent newspaper."

Citizens Participate In Local Recreation

By Emily Killete

Duplin recreation departments are forming in most county towns, and each program works differently to provide the local citizens with organized sports and activities.

Kenansville developed a recreation program around a volunteer organization, a 15-member recreation commission. And, working with the recreation commission are volunteers who help the program by operating the concession stand, said Willard Mitchell, a member of the commission.

The recreation budget for the town of Kenansville in 1980-81 is \$41,275, but none of the money will come from town taxes. The budget is composed of funds from grants, recreation fees, park rental fees and concession sales. The sales from the concession stand will generate about \$6,000 and Mitchell said the stand will bring in about \$300 a week during the softball and baseball season.

The Kenansville recreation activities are located at the park, according to Mitchell. Six leagues play on the ball field, and 465 people are participating in the softball and baseball leagues. Each team pays an entry fee, Mitchell said, which covers the costs of the game. The adult softball entry fee per team is \$250. Youth softball and baseball entry fees are \$5 per individual.

"Adult softball supports itself, but Little League and Dixie Youth fees do not pay for their programs," Mitchell said. "But, the money made on concessions during the LL and DY games is enough supplement to make the programs self-supporting."

Mitchell added that the recreation department makes most of its money on softball tournaments which the commission tries to schedule every three weeks. Money made during the ball season is used to complete and repair the park, he said.

"After the park is finished, there will be money available for other programs. We discussed the possibility of having winter programs such as basketball, and programs for the senior citizens, but we do not have a facility for those programs right now," Mitchell said.

The recreation commission is presently considering the construction of a second ball field at the park, Mitchell said. With the number of ballteams using the field, scheduling the games on one field is difficult, he added.

The new field would not include lights.

In other county towns, the recreation departments receive tax money from the town, and a full-time recreation director is employed. Warsaw and Faison are two towns with directors. Warsaw holds softball and baseball leagues similar to Kenansville's program, but charges a lower entry fee per team, \$129 for the men's teams and \$90 for the ladies' teams. However, Warsaw uses no lights, all their games are played before dark, and Kenansville plays at night. According to Recreation Director Neale Turlington, fees charged by the Warsaw Recreation Department are set at a minimum to cover the basic costs of the program. For softball, Turlington said, the fees cover the cost of the umpires. In Faison, Recreation Director Charles King said softball fees per men's team are \$100 and \$1 per member from outside the city limits. Women's teams pay \$75 each and \$1 per member outside the city limits. King added, One dollar is added to all fees paid by recreation participants from outside the Faison city limits.

"We are going to start charging for programs we were not charging for last fall," King said. "The entry fee will be what it takes to cover the cost of the pro-

gram."

Both Warsaw and Faison plan to run self-supporting recreation programs, with the activities paying for the supplies used in the program. However, utilities will be paid for from the recreation budget, the directors said. The cost of utilities is budgeted at \$3,500 in Warsaw and \$2,500 in Faison.

Faison and Warsaw both hold winter programs such as basketball, volleyball and special classes. Faison has a program for the senior citizens taught through James Sprunt Technical College, King said. The senior citizen programs include ceramics and oil painting.

The concession stand at the Faison recreation center is operated two nights a week by the Faison Women's Club, King said. The Faison Recreation Commission plans to operate the stand when the Women's Club does not, he added. The Women's Club uses the proceeds to restore the old Faison depot located at the recreation center, and returns 25% of the profits to the recreation department, King said.

An average of 2,000 people a month participate in the Faison recreation program, 4,083 people each month in Warsaw, and 463 participate during the summer in the Kenansville recreation program.

Wallace Expects

6 Cent Tax Hike

The Wallace town board expected to set a tax rate of 65 cents per \$100 assessed valuation during a special meeting Monday. The present rate is 59 cents.

The board met Thursday night with the expectation of approving its 1980-81 budget and setting the tax rate. However, as the proposed budget was being reviewed, a \$67,500 error in printing was discovered. Total expenditures of approximately \$1,508,000 are called for in the budget. The total will not be changed by the adjustments necessary to bring the utility fund into balance. This required transferring of some reserve funds to balance the water department utilities budget fund.

"It is just a matter of moving some figures around," Mayor Melvin Cording said. "The tax rate will remain as we expected,

at 65 cents."

The budget will call for a 10 percent increase in water sewer user fees. The tax hike and water and sewer fee increases will bring in a total of \$59,000, Cording said.

A six percent salary increase for town employees is provided in the new budget. The new budget also eliminates the equivalent of five town positions. Library hours will be reduced as one employee will be eliminated.

The budget meeting was attended by 25 persons who protested lack of recreational facilities. They also wanted less budget emphasis on police.

Charlie Toal said he thought the police budget should be cut in favor of recreation. Last year the police budget was \$242,000, about one-third of the total for the town of 3,200 population.



ROTARIAN OF THE YEAR - John Weatherly left, was presented the Rotarian of the Year Award by John A. Johnson on behalf of the Warsaw-Kenansville Rotary Club. Weatherly

was selected by his fellow Rotarians for his outstanding service to the Rotary Club and what it stands for. Weatherly is the past president of the local club.