

Final '81-82 Town budget still in workshop

The Town Board looked at and tentatively rejected two more budget plans drawn up by Town Manager Earnest Hudgins at the agenda meeting Monday night.

The first budget, balanced at 73 cents per \$100, involved relying on sale of seven acres of Town-owned land, or on a possible one percent raise in sales tax in the county. A proposal to allow a one percent tax increase without a referendum will be voted on by the state legislature in two or three weeks, according to Hudgins, and by County Commissioners by September at the earliest.

This budget plan allowed for training of police, fire and other town personnel, purchase of equipment and turn-out suits for the fire department and for a full-time recreation director.

It also included the 30-hour position for the director of the Senior Citizen's Center and left police and fire department personnel the same as last year.

The second budget was balanced at 81 cents per \$100 with no sale of the seven acres of town property or reliance on a one percent sales tax increase.

This budget allowed for no training of personnel, cutting town recreation to a part-time program and slightly lowering the contingency fund.

Some members of the Board asked Hudgins to draw up another budget at 78 cents, to be presented to the Board after the Town Council meeting June 8. A.E. Tyson suggested cutting the

recreation program by another \$5,000 and considering variable raises for town employees, from no raise to a seven percent raise.

Ruth Brandon's suggestions included

cutting the recreation program to a six-month program, cutting the Senior Citizen's director to 20 hours a week, cutting the fire department turn-out gear and equipment by one half, and

using the same system of variable raises as Mr. Tyson proposed.

By making these and other cuts, Hudgins says he can balance a budget at 78 cents, but that, "we cannot give

the people the services they say they want on a 78 cent budget.

"What it comes down to is whether or not people want it (services) bad enough to pay more taxes."

Department heads discuss what budget figures may mean

Department heads discussed what budget proposals may mean to their departments and the community.

Fire Department

If the fire department's request for equipment and turn-out suits is halved, Fire Chief Gary Bartlett said, the department will not be able to purchase air pacs, the breathing equipment that allows firemen to enter smoke-filled buildings. The department now has nine air pacs, "a very inadequate number in case of a motel or school or nursing home fire," Bartlett said. "It also minimizes protection for a one-dwelling fire, to have only nine men able to go in."

Equipment money would have to go instead toward turn-out gear (the rubber suits the firemen wear) and toward radios that alert volunteers to a fire. The monitors currently in use were purchased in 1966, Bartlett said, have

had many repairs and recently, there has been trouble with firemen receiving fire calls.

Police Department

The police department will probably lose a dispatcher. Police Chief Slagle said losing a dispatcher "is like losing an officer. We'll have to pull in an officer off the road, so in effect we're losing another officer."

Another item the police department stands to lose is training. The state requires an officer to receive about 250 hours of training in order to be certified, and he or she must accomplish this in the first year of employment. If Black Mountain has no funds for training, the department will have to employ already trained officers, a difficulty, Slagle said, on the town's low pay scale. A trained officer "would have to take a sub-

stantial pay cut to work here," he said. For officers on the force who have completed their basic training, further training is still important, Slagle said.

"To maintain a professional police department, a man can't be too trained," he explained. "An officer has to make a decision in a split second that a lawyer and a judge can mull over through the courts for years."

He believes that the department will be required to go to radar school in the next year and felt that defensive driving school was also necessary. While the training is free, transportation and lodging must be paid for.

Recreation

The Recreation Department could be cut to a six-month program next year. Director Alice Schweitzer said, "By cutting the program to six months, it

means there is no continuity in the program, no way to make plans for six months ahead."

About 250 children and an undetermined number of adults participated in the program last year, many of them from families who could not afford to drive to Asheville for recreation.

Mrs. Schweitzer said, "I do not believe a recreation program can grow and develop on a part-time basis. A program needs at least a year to get on its feet."

Lakeview Senior Citizen's Center

When Lakeview Center was renovated about four years ago, the Town agreed that for a 10-year period, 4,000 square feet of the Center would be used for senior citizens' activities and that the Town would provide supervision eight hours a day, five days a week by a

program director. Under those stipulations, the Town received a federal grant to aid in renovation.

The director's position may be cut to 20 hours a week in the new budget. Volunteers would have to be found to take over the other 20 hours a week that the center is open.

Director Laine Calloway said, "The program has grown so much now that we have Title V senior citizens who require supervision. The Title V employees will lose their jobs." Two Title V employees work downstairs and another upstairs in the Nutrition Program.

Many of the senior citizens who come to the center all day have come to depend on it, Calloway said. "It's their life," she said, "It really is."

Revitalization of downtown is possible for Black Mountain

In April, the Town Board gave approval to Community Development Administrator Kathy Wacaster to research the concept of downtown revitalization and determine how Black Mountain could benefit from such a program. Over the past two months in a joint effort with the town manager, E.E. Hudgins, Ms. Wacaster has gathered information and is ready to review with the Board the potential Black Mountain has for such a program.

"I have worked with the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development-Division of Community Assistance and the North Carolina Downtown Development Association to gain information on downtown problems, revitalization programs throughout North Carolina, and how Black Mountain could organize such a program. It is amazing how many resources are available to local communities at no cost on the economic restructuring and beautification of downtowns," stated Ms. Wacaster.

In North Carolina, she said, combining the efforts of local governments with the local business sector has proven to be a particularly effective method of arresting downtown decline. Joint public-private efforts can include a wide variety of improvements such as rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of old or historic buildings, sidewalks and street improvements, and construction of parking facilities.

Results of such revitalization programs can be seen in nearby communities such as Hendersonville, Asheville, Hickory, and cities such as Rockingham, N.C., Wilmington, N.C., Washington, N.C. and Shelby.

Ms. Wacaster and Mr. Hudgins have toured several areas in North Carolina currently involved in downtown revitalization. Ms. Wacaster will visit Wilmington this weekend to study the program there and to attend a one-day intensive training conference on organizing a downtown revitalization program.

Ms. Wacaster will bring back with her a report to present to the Board at Monday night's meeting. Also Mr. Jim Norton of Charlotte, vice-president of the N.C. Department of Downtown Development, will speak to the Board.

"We all know Black Mountain is a town with potential," Ms. Wacaster said. "This project calls on the people of town to organize and take a positive action to build even stronger its economic stability, beauty and pride it has carried for years."

"Downtown changes do not occur rapidly. They are part of long-term processes formed by decisions of the private market and local government. The viability of a downtown program is highly dependent on local individuals and their ability to gather community support for downtown."

BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

Dedicated to the growing Swannanoa Valley

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Second class postage paid at Black Mountain, NC 28711 **25¢**

Owen students receive treasured trash

by Cynthia Reimer

Prominent people all over the United States received some mighty strange mail from students in Mrs. Jean McNeill's English classes in April, and the students got some interesting replies.

"To celebrate National Letter Week, our 10th grade English class is enlivening the traditional letter writing unit," the students wrote, requesting the recipient to mail the class an item or two from his or her wastebasket.

"What is trash to a person of your prominence is a treasure to us," the letters said.

Mrs. McNeill got the idea for the project from "The English Journal," she said.

Some of the prominent people were most cooperative.

From the trash can of Black Mountain

Mayor Tom Sobol, the class received correspondence from the State of North Carolina and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

North Carolina House Representative Marie Colton sent two framed photos of street litter which, "I was reluctantly going to discard."

Debbie Severs, newscaster for WLOS P.M. Magazine, sent a page of a script and a memo.

Robert Swain, a painter, sent a plastic bag full of plastic cups containing dried paints in rainbow colors, writing that it was representative of the trash on his studio floor.

Monty Dupuy, a television weather forecaster, sent weather forecasts, a South Carolina weather map, a bunny napkin and a letter saying, "Since I grew up and went to elementary and high school in Black Mountain your area has special meaning for me."

Some students received replies—but no trash.

"Dear Ms. Rauchenberger," wrote artist Robert Rauschenberg's secretary, "Unfortunately, Mr. Rauschenberg's trash is unavailable at the moment as he is out of town and not making any."

The Rev. Robert L. Gray wrote, "Dear Matthew, I don't have any junk."

Some of the 56 students, who wrote two letters each, were disappointed, receiving no replies at all. Alan Alda, Lucille Ball, George Burns, Kenny Rogers, Hugh Hefner, Dinah Shore and others failed to reply.

The two classes are currently busy writing thank you notes to cooperating trash-senders. To those who did not reply, students are sending such phrases as, "ex-fan of yours."

The trash and correspondence make an entertaining exhibit in Mrs. McNeill's classroom, on display until the end of the school year.



Business at the soda fountain at the Rexall Drug Store was booming in the late 1940s. The store is now owned by Steve Roberts.

Town Council

Revised privilege tax on Monday agenda

Items on the agenda for the June 8 Town Council meeting include rescinding a privilege tax ordinance passed last month. The Board will vote whether or not to accept a new ordinance that would maintain a \$10 minimum charge and cut most other charges 50 percent

from the rescinded schedule.

Businesses located outside Black Mountain, doing business in Black Mountain, will be charged a privilege tax, also.

A copy of the proposed schedule is posted at Town Hall.

Also on Monday's agenda are a presentation by Kathy Wacaster on revitalization of downtown Black Mountain, a request for annexation of property owned by Red Nichols and a report on the progress of drilling of the test wells.

Black Mountain man aboard the Nimitz

James Mike Owens, son of Mr. and Mrs. James L. Owens of Black Mountain, was stationed aboard the aircraft carrier Nimitz when it was struck by a jet attempting to land on board on May 26. Owens received only minor injuries in the disaster which killed 14 people and injured 48.

After minor repairs, the Nimitz left Norfolk, Va., last Saturday, and the airman second class was scheduled to be aboard.

Weather review

May 25—high 81, low 47 degrees.
 May 26—high 74, low 52 degrees.
 May 27—high 66, low 57 degrees; 1.75 inches precipitation.
 May 28—high 63, low 57 degrees; .10 inches precipitation.
 May 29—high 76, low 56 degrees.
 May 30—high 85, low 48 degrees.
 May 31—high 84, low 57 degrees; 1.80 inches precipitation.
 June 1—high 76, low 59 degrees; .02 inches precipitation.



Trash from television weatherman and Black Mountain native Monty Dupuy.

The pool is open

by Alice Schweitzer

The Black Mountain pool opened Tuesday. Charges are the same as last year: 75 cents and \$1.25 daily, \$40 single pass and \$75 family pass. Lessons this year will be \$10. This charge is for the use of the pool and life guards.

Red Cross sanctioned classes are for those children who have attended school. Other children, including parents and tots, will be scheduled for classes if there is enough interest shown.

Pool hours are as follows: Tuesday and Thursday—11-11:45 a.m. lap swim, 12-8:30 p.m. open swim, 8:30-10' lap swim; Wednesday—11-11:45 a.m. senior citizen, 12-6 p.m. open swim; Friday—11-11:45 a.m. lap swim, 12-6 p.m. open swim; Saturday—12-6 p.m. open swim; and Sunday—1-6 p.m. open swim. Morning lap swims cost 50 cents and are not covered by the passes.

Tennis lessons for beginners will begin June 9th. Charges this year are \$10. Call the recreation office to preregister.