

Shallotte Board Adopts \$1.2 Million Budget

BY DOUG RUTTER
Shallotte Aldermen adopted a \$1.2 million budget last Wednesday featuring increases in water and sewer charges but no change in the tax rate.

Town officials have kept the tax rate at 47 cents per \$100 of property, meaning the owner of a \$50,000 home will pay \$235 in taxes.

The new budget calls for an increase in water and sewer rates starting July 1. Monthly bills will jump at least 25 cents for water and 50 cents for sewer—raising minimum monthly bills to \$9.27 for water and \$7.50 for sewer.

Based on the 47-cent tax rate, a tax valuation of \$71.5 million and a 95 percent collection rate, town officials expect to collect \$319,230 in

taxes next year.

Other revenues expected in the coming fiscal year include \$125,000 in sales tax, \$65,000 in utility franchise tax, \$41,000 in Powell Bill and \$18,000 from the ABC store.

Major expenses in the general fund include \$238,967 for the police department, \$133,703 for the street department, \$116,109 for administration, \$102,000 for sanitation and \$49,793 for the fire department.

In the water and sewer fund, town officials expect to collect \$320,000 in utility charges and \$47,000 in connect fees.

Water and sewer fund expenses anticipated in the budget include \$97,600 to the Brunswick County Water System, \$97,027 in salaries

and \$65,000 each for maintenance and capital improvements.

Permit Granted

In another matter last week, aldermen granted a conditional use permit that will allow Brierwood Golf Club to build a new clubhouse across the street from the present facility.

The town board annexed the site of the proposed clubhouse near the intersection of Brierwood Road and Country Club Drive earlier this year and zoned the land R-15 residential.

To accommodate plans for the new clubhouse, aldermen amended the zoning ordinance last month to allow golf, tennis or swimming clubs in R-15 districts, but only with a conditional use permit from the board.

Nobody spoke during a public hearing last week on the permit. In granting the conditional use, aldermen followed the recommendation of the town planning board.

Other Business

In other business last week, aldermen:

- Met in executive session for 55 minutes to discuss a personnel mat-

Taxi Service Coming To Shallotte?

Shallotte residents tired of dealing with Main Street traffic may soon be able to scoot around town in a taxi cab.

J.M. Warren, who has been running a taxi service at Yaupon Beach for the last 14 years, is interested in expanding his business into Shallotte.

Warren has asked the town board for a "certificate of public convenience and necessity," which he needs before he can operate in town.

If the town board grants a certificate, it wouldn't be the first time a taxi service has operated in Shallotte.

Town officials say a taxi service that operated several years ago didn't last long, mainly because the need wasn't great enough at that time.

Aldermen can't issue Warren a certificate until after a public hearing, which is required by the town code. A hearing has been scheduled Wednesday, July 3, at 7:30 p.m. in town hall.

If a certificate is granted, Warren would have to begin operating within 60 days. A certificate could not

be issued for more than one year at a time.

In considering the certificate, the code says aldermen should consider the financial responsibility of the applicant and the chance that the service would be permanent, responsible and satisfactory.

Town officials also should consider the experience of the applicant, condition of the vehicles, schedule of rates to be charged and whether or not the safe use of the streets by motorists and pedestrians would be preserved.

Under the ordinance, the town board would have the right to revoke the certificate at any time if the taxi cabs aren't serving the public adequately and efficiently.

The certificate also could be revoked if the business owner fails to keep the cabs in good repair, pay town taxes and license fees, report accidents or carry liability insurance and bond as required by state law.

If drivers violate traffic or safety ordinances or state laws relating to the safe operation of taxi cabs, the certificate could be revoked.

Planning Board Asked To Review Sign Rules

Shallotte Aldermen have asked the planning board to review the town sign ordinance following a request last week for a variance.

Mike Underwood of Han-Dee Hugo's convenience store asked the town board for a variance from the sign ordinance at last Wednesday's town meeting.

Underwood wants to put up a second sign next to the store located at the intersection of N.C. 130 West and U.S. 17 bypass.

Shallotte's sign ordinance allows only one permanent, free-standing sign in Highway Business districts.

Underwood said the existing sign faces N.C. 130, and motorists traveling on the bypass can't see it clearly. He wants to put up a second lighted sign that faces the bypass.

He said trees and shrubs obstruct the view of motorists traveling south on the bypass, and northbound drivers can't see the business until it's too late to turn.

"We need exposure...just to let people know we're open for business," Underwood said. "We feel that we're missing revenue, and when we miss revenue the town misses revenue."

Building Inspector Albert Hughes said the situation at Han-Dee Hugo's is common at corner lots, where a sign is easily visible from one street but not the other.

Town Attorney Mark Lewis said aldermen could amend a section of the sign ordinance to allow two signs at corner lots.

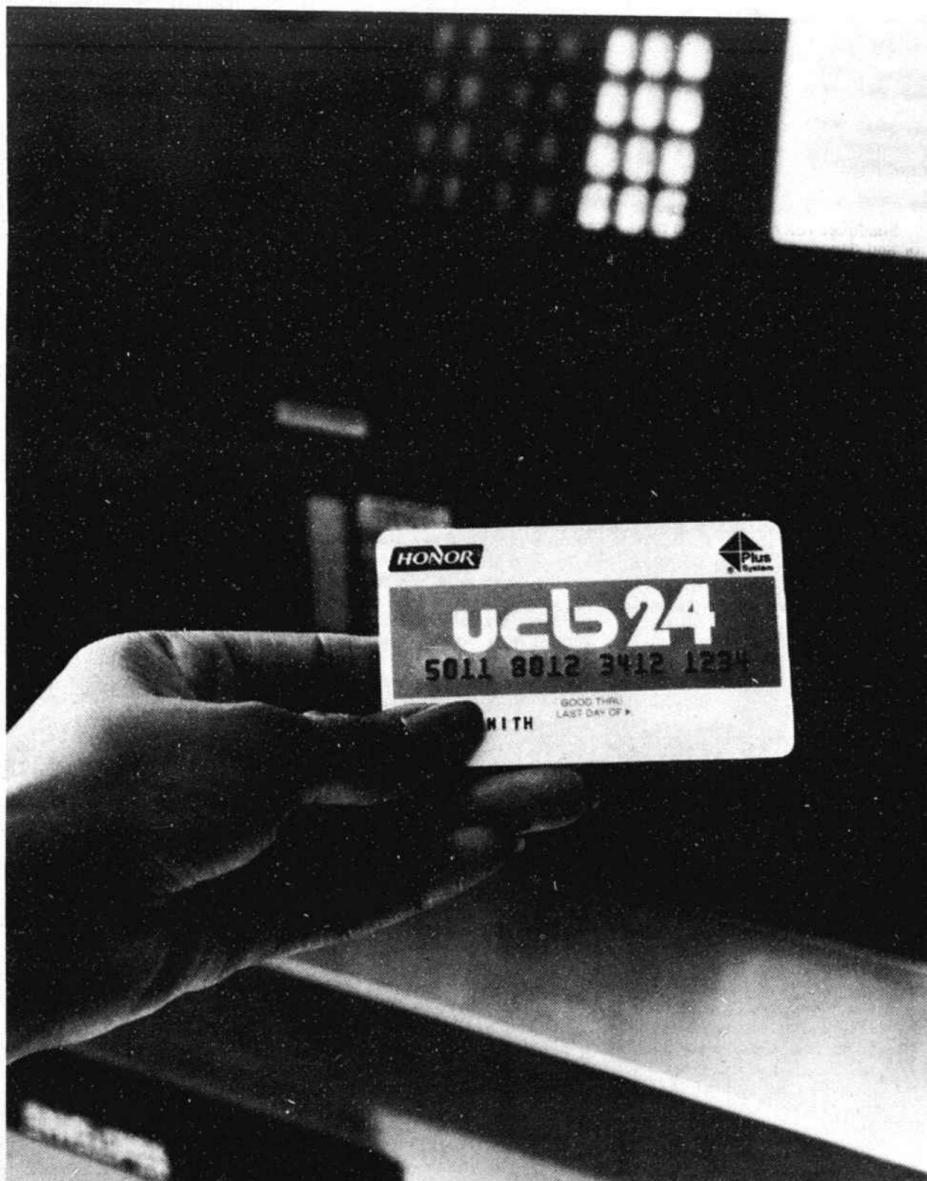
In referring the matter to the planning board, aldermen indicated that they would rather amend the sign ordinance than grant a variance, or special exception to the ordinance.

Aldermen referred several other items to the planning board last week, including two requests for annexation.

Brierwood Golf Club has asked the town board to annex 1.46 acres where the tennis courts are located, and Charles Allen has requested annexation of a vacant lot he owns in Brierwood Estates.

The golf course developers also have asked the town to zone a piece of land that is already inside the town limits. The Brierwood golf cart shed sits on the property.

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