

TWO ALDERMEN OBJECT

Shallotte Board Adopts Budget On 3-1 Vote

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shallotte Aldermen adopted a \$1.3 million budget Tuesday night, but two of the five town board members aren't happy with the spending plan that takes effect Thursday.

Roney Cheers cast the only vote against the budget, which was supported by David Gause, Wilton Harrelson and Morris Hall. Paul Wayne Reeves, who was absent Tuesday, said in a written statement he also opposed the budget.

Among other things, Cheers and Reeves objected to across-the-board salary increases for town employees. The town's 19 workers will receive a total of \$23,918 in pay raises this year.

Cheers said he would like more control over salary increases instead of accepting requests from department heads. "I appreciate the job that's being done...It's just the manner with which the board has approached the raise requests each time."

While Cheers and Reeves opposed the raises, most board members agreed the employees deserved the salary increases. They will not result in any change in the tax rate.

For the fifth straight year, Shallotte property owners will be taxed 47 cents per \$100 of valuation. The owner of a \$100,000 home or business will pay \$470 in taxes.

The only change from the original

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—Roney Cheers, Shallotte Alderman

budget proposal was the deletion of funds for a computer for the fire department. Aldermen voted 4-0 Tuesday to reject the firefighters' request.

The \$715,335 general fund includes \$269,819 for police, \$134,302 for streets, \$123,412 for administration and \$46,000 for sanitation.

Anticipated revenues include \$268,234 in property tax, \$117,000 in sales tax, \$67,300 in utility franchise tax, \$53,700 in motor vehicle tax and \$38,000 in Powell Bill money.

Budgeted revenues in the \$563,475 water and sewer fund include \$202,000 in water charges and \$145,800 in sewer charges.

Starting July 1, water rates will increase 20 cents to \$2.84 per 1,000 gallons. Water customers who use no more than 3,000 gallons per

month will pay \$10.02, up from \$9.42 last year. No change was made in sewer rates.

Town Clerk Mary Etta Hewett said the 20-cent increase is needed because of the county's 10-cent rate hike. Also, the town added another 10 cents in an effort to make the water fund more self-sufficient.

Reeves, who has missed several recent meetings due to health problems, would have voted against the budget if he had attended Tuesday, according to a five-page statement presented to the board last week.

In his statement, Reeves objected to proposed budget because of employee pay raises, higher water rates and reduced services to merchants.

"I just think it's time we, the board and mayor, really got to work on a real budget that reflects fairly on employees, but more important better serves the taxpayer and our

merchants," Reeves wrote.

Reeves said giving town employees a 5-percent pay raise, or more in some cases, is "excessive" with the present condition of the economy. "Not to say our employees may not be worthy, but the taxpayer deserves to be strongly considered," he wrote.

Reeves also indicated concerns with cutting the amount of town-funded trash pickup for merchants and the increasing cost of providing services.

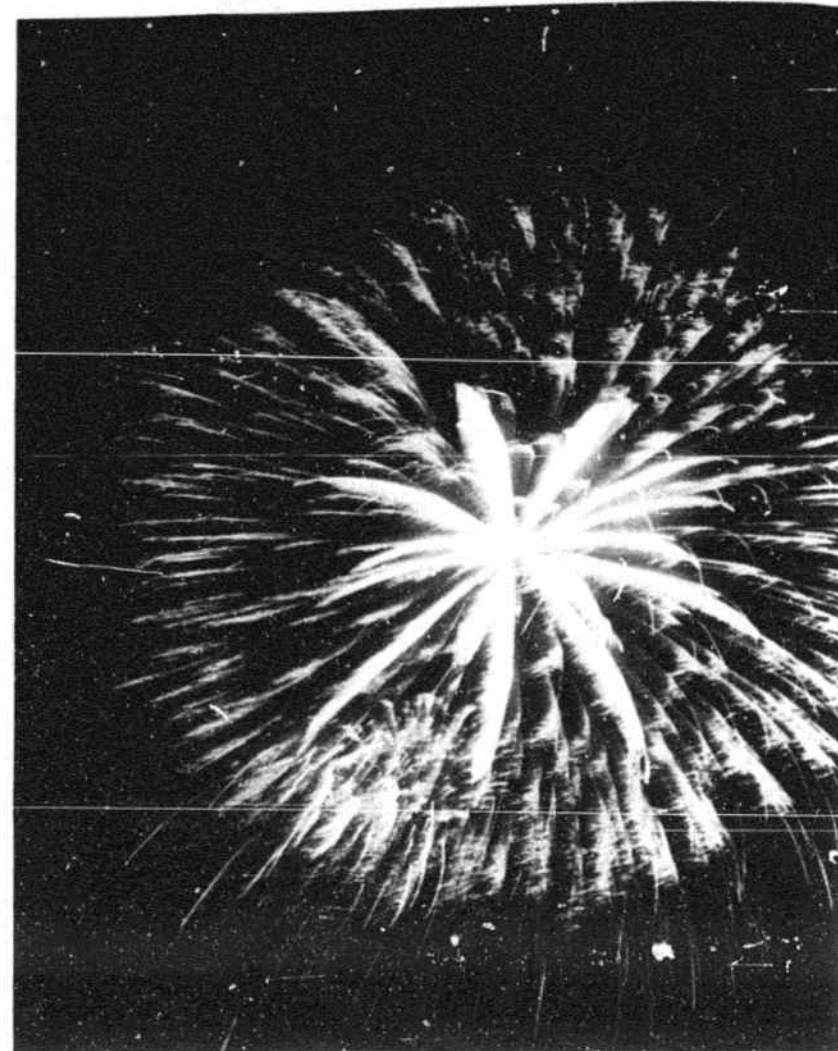
In particular, Reeves opposed spending \$269,819 for the police department. He said the town could save money if it didn't allow officers to drive patrol cars home.

Reeves said the town needs to build its reserve funds to strengthen its borrowing power so the town can meet future needs such as sewer expansion and deal with emergencies such as hurricanes.

This was the second straight year that Shallotte officials adopted a budget that wasn't fully supported by Cheers and Reeves.

Last year, Reeves voted against the budget because he was unhappy with employee pay raises. He also proposed revising the employee retirement plan to save the town money, but that idea was rejected.

Cheers also opposed salary increases last year, and his proposal to shave one penny off the tax rate died when nobody seconded his motion.



BEACON FILE PHOTO

Bursting In Air

Brunswick County residents and visitors have two Fourth of July fireworks displays to choose from this holiday weekend. Campground By The Sea at Holden Beach will sponsor its annual show Sunday starting at 9 p.m. On Monday night, fireworks will light up the sky over Southport at the close of the N.C. Fourth of July Festival. For the festival schedule, see Page 4-B.

Area Squads Report Activities During May

Tri-Beach Volunteer Fire Department responded to five rescue calls with two water rescue boats patrolling the waterway, surf and inlet during Memorial Day weekend, according to the squad's monthly report.

Other May calls included three structure fires, three woods fires, eight vehicle accidents and two hazardous materials calls.

The squad is asking for donations of good household or commercial merchandise for its fundraising auction to be held this fall. Those interested should call John Stover at 842-8662. Arrangements can be made for pick-up of donations. No clothes will be accepted.

The squad's tip for the month: "There are three things that are the cause of most fires—men, women

and children. Practice fire safety!"

COASTLINE VRS

Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad reported 13 cardiac calls, four vehicle accidents, 13 transports, 14 standby for fires, no search-and-rescues and 48 other types of calls during May.

The squad needs volunteers, according to spokesman Alicia Bates Potluff. "If you are medically inclined, can serve daytime or evening duty, and are willing to complete an emergency medical technician course within one year of joining the squad, give us a call at 842-7770 or 842-2266," she said.

"We also offer cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid courses. Everyone should learn CPR. It can save lives."

Coastline offers this tip: "In order

for us to serve you better, please keep your medication listed with accurate dosage in a zipper bag along with your medicine. We will need this information as well as your medication in the event that you should need to be transported to the

Job Creation Tax Credit Available

Due to enabling legislation recently enacted by the N.C. General Assembly, Brunswick County manufacturers are now eligible for a "Job Creation Tax Credit."

Manufacturers can qualify for a tax credit of \$2,800 for each new manufacturing job created above threshold of nine during a four-year period. The credit is retroactive to Jan. 1, 1993.

"Manufacturing employers who

hospital."

For the upcoming July 4 holiday, the squads remind visitors and residents to practice prevention when going to the beach by wearing life jackets, watching for rip currents and always checking beach safety rules.

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