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Commissioners hike taxes for Fiscal Year '84

By JANE WILLIAMS

After a lengthy discussion among the members of the Perquimans County Commissioners and many spectators in attendance for the public hearing for the county's budget for Fiscal Year 1984-85 a tax rate was set for the county at 63-cents per \$100.00.

The tax rate which has been set at \$1.20 for the past two years is changing this year due to property re-evaluations done earlier to bring county property up to current market value.

The tax rate, which was earlier proposed at 60-cents for the upcoming fiscal year, was raised after being questioned by Commissioner Elect, Thomas Nixon.

Nixon's questions concerning the tax rate were directed at the School Bond Referendum, which was passed in the May 8th Primary. He questioned the county's ability to pay for the school if a tax levy was not implemented for school capitol outlay.

Commissioner Charles Ward told Nixon that the county already had a surplus of \$800,000.00 and asked him why the

county should continue to raise taxes while they accumulate a surplus each year.

Commissioner Lester Simpson asked Ward "what was so bad about increasing each year? It helps saving quite a bit."

Nixon told the Commissioners that if they didn't levy a tax this year, then they would "wind up robbing Peter to pay Paul."

Nixon continued to question the judgement of the Commissioners on the tax issue stating that "When you boys came in here this thing wasn't in a mess, so don't go out and leave one. If you raise taxes a little bit this year, then next year the increase won't be so frightening."

Ward stated that taxes were levied at 95 per-cent collection, and that the county usually collected 98 and one-half percent. He told the group that that already accounted for a cushion that amounted to enough to make the payment on the school bonds.

It was also pointed out that the school system's share of the one-half cent state sales tax had already been promised by the Board of Education to go towards the bond payment.

After further discussion Joe Nowell, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, called for a motion. The motion was made by Simpson to set the rate at 63-cents. The motion carried.

The additional 3-cents will provide approximately \$70,500.00 additional income for the county.

In other action the Commissioners:

- Heard a request from the State Department of Transportation for a public meeting on secondary roads improvements for June 28 at 2:00 p.m.

With all members in agreement the meeting was set. A map will be placed in the Courthouse on June 14 for public inspection.

- Voted to sent a letter of support to State Senators and members of the House of Representatives for an Assistant County Forest Ranger for Perquimans County.

- Selected Milton Knight to fill the expired term of Jan Spruill on the board of the Albemarle Commission.

- Ammended the current budget for Federal Revenue Sharing in the amount of \$19,536 to cover payments to Medicaid in the amount of \$14,575 and two payments to the Sanitary Land-fill at \$4,961.



Downtown revitalization has been discussed by many area merchants, as an idea to enhance the town, as well as to attract additional business.

These drawings are the work of Howard Capps of Elizabeth City, who was commissioned by the Town of Hertford in the

late 70's to suggest facade improvements for the town's main street. The top two series of drawings depict the

town much as it is seen today, while the bottom two drawings show what Church Street could look like with a face-lift.

'Main Street' revitalization discussed

By JANE WILLIAMS

Approximately 25 area business people congregated at Gabby's Restaurant for a luncheon last week to meet with a representative from the North Carolina Department of Commerce for a discussion on revitalizing the downtown district in Hertford.

The Luncheon was sponsored by the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

Opie Jordan, Director of Business Development, and former director of the Main Street Program, told the group that upon her arrival in Hertford her first impression was that "You have a heck of a resource here that you're not utilizing."

Jordan's work with the Department of Commerce has included projects in Tarboro, Salisbury, Shelby, New Bern, Washington, Statesville,

Morganton, Clinton, Wilson and Rocky Mount.

Jordan told the group that there were "some fantastic buildings in Hertford," but added that there was work that needed to be done.

"It won't take a lot to spruce your downtown up, but somebody has to take the first step," Jordan said.

Jordan presented a slide presentation of before and after

shots taken of businesses in downtown districts in the other areas that she has worked in. She emphasized that most of the projects did not require a great deal of money, and that the newly created facades greatly improved the appeal of the town's 'Main Street'.

Jordan also told the group that the backs of the stores shouldn't be neglected, discussing ideas that could be implemented to make the back of buildings attractive to consumers.

Jordan reminded the group that they already had possession of drawings for guidelines for suggested facade improvements. The drawings were done in the late 70's by Howard T. Capps, Landscape Architect, Planning Consultant, for the town.

She posed several questions to the group to entice them to look for answers and research needs that the business community has.

She told the group that statistics had proven that people are looking for nostalgia in towns, and that Hertford would make a wonderful, quaint little village.

Although there was little discussion during the luncheon and slide presentation on other revitalization projects, many of those in attendance seemed amiable to the idea of improvements along the main street area of town.

Jordan told the group that they weren't in the position yet to begin a campaign to attract commercial development, because they would have to improve the resources that were already available before other groups would be interested in locating in the area.

Library blends reading and heritage

By JANE WILLIAMS

Children across the state will be able to learn a little more about their North Carolina heritage through the summer reading programs available at the library.

"North Carolina Celebrates: 1584 - 1984" is the theme for the fifth annual summer reading program designed to coincide with the beginning of America's 400th anniversary observance.

The program, which is sponsored by the North Carolina State Library, has been endorsed by Governor James B. Hunt and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Craig Phillips, and will be co-sponsored by Deneen Graham, "Miss North Carolina 1984".

The program is designed to introduce children to books, and to stimulate reading through the use of films, puppets, crafts, contests, field trips, etc.

The program is flexibly designed so that local librarians are able to structure activities to suit their communities.

Terry Bosley, local librarian, has recently announced numerous activities that will be taking place each Friday, from June 29 through August 10, during the summer reading program.

The first program is geared to expose the children to North Carolina crafts. Outside exhibits will be set up showing woodworking, pottery making, bread-making, soap making,

basket weaving, along with a punch-tin demonstration, a taxidermist display of North Carolina animals and a display of shells collected by a deep-sea diver.

Children will also be exposed to the North Carolina art of quilt-making, when they draw their favorite book characters on muslin squares for a quilt to be sewn together for display at the library.

"The Harbor Lights," an area square dancing team will be on hand on July 27 to teach the children how to square dance and clog, and also on the 27th children will hear North Carolina ghost stories and the story of Blackbeard.

Also scheduled for July is a filmstrip on North Carolina Indians, and Billi Whitehurst of the Museum of the Albemarle will talk with the children about Indians that used to inhabit this area.

There will also be a display of drawings by Joan Mansfield depicting an early form of Indian baseball.

Other programs will include puppet shows, dramatic plays by the children, activities to take home and a birthday celebration for the 400th.

Registration for the summer reading program will begin the last week of June for grades one through seven. The programs are open to all ages. For more information call the library at 426-5319.

Council urges water usage cut-back

By RUTH MENGEL

Citing problems that exist with the town's number two water pump, Hertford Town Council members went on record Monday night asking town residents to cut back unnecessary usage of water until the pump could be placed back into service.

John Wills, a representative of Layne-Atlantic out of Norfolk, Va., reported to the Council that a study of the well indicated problems with a heavy accumulation of iron that has caused corrosion within the pump's casing, along with approximately 30 feet of sand that has sifted into the well.

Tony Winslow, Hertford Water Plant Operator, concurred with Wills' findings.

Wills told the Council that it would take approximately three weeks to correct the problem.

The well has been in operation for the town for about 22 years with no repairs to date.

The Council discussed two major options that could eliminate the problem at this time. The well can be rehabilitated by removing the sand, or a new well could be constructed to replace the current well on the same site, or at a site approved by the state.

A decision was tabled, pending studies by Payne-Atlantic.

In other action the Council:

- Heard a report from the local ABC Board indicating that May sales showed an increase in revenue.

- Heard a report from Hertford Police Chief, Marshall Merritt, concerning the new child restraint laws that will become effective July 1, 1984.

- Planned a budget meeting for Fiscal Year 1984-85 for June 19, 1984 at 7:00 p.m.

- Set June 26, 1984 as the date for a Public Hearing on the new budget for the town.

Winfall applies for CDBG funds

By JANE WILLIAMS

The Town of Winfall is among 15 communities throughout the state that have applied for funds in the second cycle of the 1984 Community Development Block Grant competition.

The funds are geared for economic development and the applications total \$5.2 million from the seven municipalities and eight counties that have applied for funding.

Winfall has applied for \$225,000.00, which if approved, will in all probability create 20 full time jobs at Ward & Nixon, Inc. (the cotton gin) in Winfall.

The money will be loaned to Ward & Nixon by the town to build a storage warehouse for cotton for export purposes.

Currently the company must process the cotton and ship it out for storage until ready for export.

Charles Ward, of Ward & Nixon, stated that currently the employees work three months out of the year, but this will increase them to full-time employees.

Money obtained through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for loans to businesses is repaid to the town at a lower interest rate than available through commercial loan agencies, and then the town can use the money for other economic development purposes.

Throughout the state, proposed activities range from water system improvements to accommodate an expanding industry in Jamesville to assistance for enlarging a manufacturing firm in Cabarrus County. All projects must primarily benefit low and moderate income individuals.

According to Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) Secretary James A. Summers, the funding requests represent local initiatives to combat unemployment and enhance economic recovery. "Despite the news of an upswing in the national economy, officials in these cities and counties have realized that local actions are necessary to stimulate economic activity in their communities."

"The task now facing NRCD is to review the applications very thoroughly based on the established scoring system to ensure that the limited CDBG funds will have the maximum impact across the state," he said.

Designed to create or retain jobs, all proposed projects are rated according to community needs, project design, benefit to low and moderate income individuals, other funds to be used in conjunction with CDBG dollars, and the project's consistency with state policies and programs.