

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 52, No. 24

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Wednesday, July 3, 1985

25 CENTS

Proposed county budget rejected

Commissioners split vote on FY 85-86 budget

By JANE B. WILLIAMS
Perquimans County Commissioner Wayne Winslow proposed a change in the county's Fiscal Year 1985-'86 budget Monday morning that would potentially cut the county's projected tax levy by two-cents to 66-cents per \$1,000.00 property valuation.

Winslow proposed to the board that the tentative budget be changed, cutting proposed salary increases for county employees by two and one-half percent, a request for additional funds by the Perquimans County Library by 50-percent, and an increase requested by the Perquimans County Parks and Recreation Department by 50-percent. Winslow also advocated dropping \$30,000.00 from

the Perquimans County Board of Education budget.

In a special budget meeting held last week, Winslow had suggested these cuts, but did not present them in the form of a motion. Winslow commented at that meeting that he would like to see the tax levy cut two-cents somewhere, but he didn't know where. Winslow later stated that he didn't make a motion at that meeting because he felt that "there was no support behind it at the time."

After Monday's meeting Winslow stated that he was "very disappointed in the budget meeting" held last Tuesday night, "because no action was taken." He went on to say that "it was hard with so many peo-

ple there asking questions. I wish we could have closed work sessions, but we can't. We could get more done."

Winslow's proposal on Monday came after a meeting on Sunday with Commissioner Thomas Nixon.

Winslow said he was contacted by Nixon and asked if he was serious about getting the two-cents off. After the two met on Sunday, Winslow said that they came up with basically the same thing that he had suggested. Winslow also added that prior to Monday's meeting Nixon went to see County Finance Officer Durwood Reed and Superintendent of Schools Pat Harrell before the idea was presented to the board.

After Winslow presented his motion on Monday it was pointed out by Reed that it takes \$23,900.00 to take one-cent off the tax levy. Reducing the Board of Education's budget would relieve the tax burden by one-cent, but there would have to be a larger cut than salaries, recreation dept. budget and library budget to constitute the other penny.

Members of the board then discussed a 66-cents tax levy for FY 85-86, which began at midnight on July 1, that would take one-half cent off from general assistance, one-cent off the Board of Education budget and the other one-half cent from salary increases, recreation dept. increases and library increases.

Commissioner Lester Simpson said, "I hate to see our employees cut. If this county's got enough money to start new programs, we ought to be able to give our employees a raise. You

haven't cut the Sherriff's Department or the welfare department, but you've cut the two littlest department's we've got."

A motion by Winslow to adopt the budget with a tax levy at 66-

cents was approved by the board, with Commissioners Winslow, Nixon, and William Wray Chappell voting in favor. Commissioner Simpson opposed the motion.

Welly White, chairman of the board, will sign the new budget ordinance after it is completed by Reed later this week by the agreement of the board.

Citizens speak out after commissioner's disclosures

From Staff Reports

"I voted for him the first time, but I couldn't vote for him again." This statement was one of the numerous comments made after reports from local citizens began to circulate that County Commissioner Thomas Nixon took a copy of the county's FY 85-86 Budget when he said, "Boys, give me the budget and a pair of scissors and I'll take it out to (a local eatery) and lay it on the table and those boys will show you how to cut it. That's where it's going to be decided anyway."

(The name of the county establishment, as well as that of the owner are omitted to protect the business' interests.) Wayne Layden, a Beech Springs resident, confirmed reports that Nixon took a copy of the proposed county budget, including a list of county employ-

ees and their salaries, to the establishment where he proceeded to name county employees and disclose their individual salaries.

Layden said, "I heard them talking about the budget. When they mentioned Social Services employees salaries it hit home." Layden's wife, Gail, is employed as a receptionist with the Perquimans County Department of Social Services.

The proprietor of the establishment confirmed Layden's reports during a telephone interview on Monday evening stating, "You can take what he (Layden) said for the truth."

When questioned about the incident Commissioner Nixon's only response was, "I ain't saying yea and I ain't saying nay." Nixon refused further comment.

When asked to comment on Nixon's actions County Commissioner Chairman W.W. White, Jr. stated, "The budget is public record, and I don't control the decisions of other county commissioners or what they decide to do, because they are elected by the people." When asked if he condoned Nixon's behavior White replied "I wouldn't have done it unless I was asked to by the constituents."

A regular patron of the establishment when interviewed said, "I swear I was surprised that he called those names, I thought it was terrible."

This patron, like many of those interviewed, requested anonymity because of their personal and business relationships with Commissioner Nixon.

A poll of other county commissioners found similar responses of concern over Nixon's actions. Commissioner William Wray Chappell stated, "I don't know that he did it, but I've heard it. I don't think it would be proper for anyone to do such a thing."

Commissioner Wayne Winslow said, "I think Mr. Nixon has done some things that I probably would not have han-

dled that way. But, then we all react differently, and who am I to say that he was wrong?"

"The budget was available for anyone who wanted to see it," commented Commissioner Les-



NIXON

ter Simpson. "It was at the courthouse."

A customer who witnessed the discussion said, "I don't think that's the place to carry on about it. I always thought things like that should be confidential. I know that if I worked for the county I wouldn't have liked it."

It should be noted that when the Board of Commissioners discuss personnel and payroll it is done in groups by step increases. Individual employees salaries and other employment information are generally discussed behind the closed doors of an executive session.

Nixon's refusal to comment on the matter left unanswered the question of why he took the proposed budget to a business establishment. Layden also received no comment when he directly questioned Nixon's reasoning behind disclosing the salaries in public.

BOE receives word on salary increases

By SUSAN HARRIS

The salary issue for school board employees has been resolved on the state level, according to Perquimans County Schools Superintendent Pat Harrell.

Recent legislation in the General Assembly granted those certified employees with two or more years of service a 9.6 percent increase for fiscal 85-86.

Beginning salaries will not change, while those certified employees with one to two years of service will receive a 4.8 percent pay raise.

Non-certified personnel are slated for a five percent across-the-board increase plus a 4.8 percent step increase.

Harrell said it appears that the legislature will approve an \$11.4 million appropriation for pilot systems for the career ladder plan. Twelve local teachers participated in a 30-hour state training session required before application to the state for involvement in the program can be made.

Plans are underway for a local training program in teacher-effectiveness in preparation for program implementation.

The board was informed of today's \$23,900 budget cut from the current expense fund by the County Commissioners. Harrell said the board made no decision as to how to rework the budget, awaiting word from the state on their allocation.

The board approved a \$2,298.57 payment to architect Sam Ashford for the costs of specifications and drawings on the construction-renovation project at the high school.

Bids will be received on July 16 at 3 p.m. for the project.

Joan Faye Mansfield was hired as an art teacher for the school system.

Harrell apprised the board of the arrival of two new diesel school buses last week. All new school buses will be diesel, Harrell said.

A request for the release of Robert and Sarah King to the Edenton-Chowan School system was granted.

Child seat belt law enacted

On July 1, a new state law took effect which requires all children in a motor vehicle who are younger than three years of age be secured in an approved safety seat.

Three, four and five-year-olds must at least be wearing seat-belts.

Drivers who break the law are subject to pay a \$25 fine or bear the guilt for having contributed to the death or injury of a child.

Caswell Center's First Setp Project urges you to obey the Child Passenger Restraint Law. Car safety seats for children

do work, according to state Highway Patrol statistics. From 1982 to 1984, 33 children aged three and younger who were not riding in safety seats died from injuries received in motor vehicle crashes.

During the same period, two children riding in safety seats died in accidents.

One child was placed in the seat improperly. The other was involved in an accident judged unsurvivable.

Give your young passengers a fighting chance and don't start the engine until everyone under age six is strapped in.

It's the law.

July Fourth festivities slated for Missing Mill Park

The Perquimans County Jaycees and Jaycee Women have once again begun to set the stage for a fabulous July Fourth Celebration at Missing Mill Park in Hertford.

Plans for the event include activities for the entire family, with a fireworks demonstration over the Perquimans River scheduled to end the evening.

The events will get underway at 3:00 p.m. with games, food and fun. Later in the evening there will be a gospel sing and a community-wide worship service.

Concessions will be available throughout the evening, offering barbecue sandwiches, hamburgers, hotdogs, snacks and soft drinks.

Everyone is invited to come out and share in the festivities to help make the celebration a success.

Tentative Schedule for July 4th

Missing Mill Park
Grubb St., Hertford

3:00 P.M.

Boatrides touring waterfronts
Hertford and Winfall
Dunking Booth
Games for Children
3-legged race, egg toss and more
Bingo for Adults
Concessions
Bar-B-Q, Hamburgers, Hot Dogs

5:30 P.M.

Pie in the face Auction

6:30 P.M.

Gospel Singing

7:30 P.M.

Church Services with Rev. Thomas Biggs
Interlude
Fireworks after dark

SPONSORED BY JAYCEES AND JAYCEE WOMEN