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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 Cents

Commissioners must trim county budget

Kids comment on landfill



Students in Joan Hoggard-White's third grade class have been involved in environmental studies with assistance from Juanita Bailey, home economics extension agent, 4-H. The study culminated with a play titled *Be a Sport, Trash Sort*, based on decisions regarding solid waste management pub-

lic officials in Perquimans County must make. The play was presented at PTA last Thursday, and again for Hertford Grammar School second graders on Monday. (Photo by Susan Harris)

\$5.5 million requests outpace revenues

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Perquimans County commissioners will have to use an ax, not a paring knife, to whittle 1993-94 departmental budget requests enough to avoid a sharp tax increase.

Budget requests approach \$5.5 million, far less than the \$4.8 million county manager and finance officer Paul Gregory anticipates the county will collect at the present tax rate. The commissioners must either trim requests by close to \$690,000, or raise ad valorem taxes by 18 cents per \$100 valuation.

Requests from all departments contain a 5 percent raise for county employees. Last year, the commissioners cut salary increases included in budget requests.

The biggest slice of the budget pie, over \$1.4 million, has been requested by the school board. The schools have asked for \$1.1 million in current expense and \$432,500 in capital outlay. While it does not show up directly in the schools' budget, the county will also pay over \$136,000 on the bonds sold to renovate Perquimans High School.

The schools received \$994,790 in current expense and \$73,500 in capital outlay last fiscal year. The additional amounts asked for this year are to cover air conditioning Hertford Grammar School (\$225,000), a 3 percent salary increase (\$10,516), other salary/supplement increases (\$19,073), fringe benefits and miscellaneous (\$13,224), repair and maintenance on buildings and equipment (\$11,500) and plant operations (\$58,190).

When the school board presented their budget to the commissioners, the commissioners requested that the school system provide information on the federal and state portions of their operating budget. Chairman Leo Higgins said he intends to meet with schools finance officer Frances Hammer to go over specifics before the commissioners scrutinize the local request more thoroughly.

The Department of Social Services submitted a budget containing almost \$200,000 in increases. The department has asked for three new employees, step raises for some present employees and new equipment being required by the state.

The social services request tops \$1.4 million. Subtracting a \$700,000 state grant the department expects to receive, the county would have to fund \$741,000 if the budget request is approved as submitted.

The sanitation department could cost the county \$240,000 next year. That cost includes the operation of the convenience centers and transportation to the landfill and recycling facilities, but does not include the cost of operating the landfill itself. Landfill operation is covered by the solid waste management fee charged to all residences. The fee has been \$25 for the past two years, but county officials expect that it will go to \$75 or \$100 this year due to the costs of closing the landfill.

Albemarle District Jail has asked the county for \$197,962, which includes the county's share of a new administrator approved and hired recently by the jail commission.

The tax department wants \$264,705. Although the department request is \$50,000 over last year's budget, there is a \$55,000 carryover in the mapping line item, putting the request for new money at less than the 1992-93 level.

The sheriff's department asked for \$261,495, which includes the cost of a new vehicle and two new deputies. The department will transfer about \$15,000 out of its drug fund to cover the car. The county also

Board hacks its budget

The Perquimans County Commissioners have already pulled out the red ink pens, starting to chisel away at budget requests. In a move meant to show that everyone will have to share the cuts, board vice chairman Mack Nixon recommended a pay cut for commissioners.

Nixon said the per meeting stipend of \$65 received by commissioners should go back to \$50. The decrease takes commissioners' pay down to the amount they received three years ago, and equals that received by the board of education members.

"We've got to start at the top," Nixon said on May 4 at one of the budget workshops.

Heads nodded in agreement around the table as the group put the first red marks on the budget package.

The commissioners also cut back their travel expense budget from \$5,000 to \$4,000.

Board chairman Leo Higgins said the commissioners are meeting once or twice each week for budget workshops until June 3, when a public hearing will be held at 7:30 p.m. The budget will be on the commissioners' agenda at their regularly scheduled June 7 meeting. Higgins said if a final budget is not passed by the commissioners on June 7, the board must either call a special meeting prior to July 1, or approve an interim budget.

All budget workshops are open to the public.

Summit costs were covered by grants

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans 2000 Education Summit held April 30 and May 1 gave parents, educators, government leaders and county residents the opportunity to come together to learn more about education in the next century. And none of the expenses of the two-day event came from county coffers, according to schools superintendent Dr. Randall L. Henion.

Henion said Monday that the schools received a \$10,000 state grant to defray costs of implementing the 2000 plans. The grant was matched by donations from Apricot Inc., Carolina Telephone Company, Centura Banks Inc., Hardees Inc., NationsBank Inc., North Carolina Celebration

Foundation, Wal-Mart Corporation, Weyerhaeuser Corporation and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Inc.

Summit costs included just over \$3,000 for three speakers, \$2,000 for food and about \$5,000 for printing booklets and brochures available during the summit. Henion said the booklets and brochures will continue to be used over the next one to three years or more for promotion and recruitment purposes.

The superintendent said that businesses were contacted about financial support for the program and were aware of what the funds would be used for. He said the approximately \$10,000 left from the grant and donations "will be put to good use."

Henion said he is considering making a video highlighting the school system to use for teacher recruitment and to help the county obtain regional, state and federal funds for school im-

provement and facilities needs.

Although he was disappointed at the attendance at the summit, Henion said he felt it was a positive first step for the Perquimans 2000 program.

"It stimulated thinking" about education and the direction in which Perquimans County must move to become a world class school system, he said Monday. It also gave the entire community an opportunity to meet to discuss issues pertinent to education and to become more involved in the process.

What he'd like to see now are some of the questionnaires in the Perquimans 2000 booklets come back in to his office. Henion said the schools are anxious to receive input from the community.

Students take first state end-of-grade tests

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Perquimans County students in grades 3-8 joined their counterparts across the state this

week in taking North Carolina's new end-of-grade tests.

The new tests are much more challenging than the California Achievement Tests given in the past, according to the State Department of Public Instruction. End-of-grade tests require students to use higher-level thinking skills and to apply what they have learned.

All students in grades 3-8 will be tested in math, reading and social studies. Third-, sixth and eighth graders will also complete a science test.

The tests are composed of two types of questions, multiple choice and open-ended. Open-ended questions require descriptions, analysis, comparison or other written explanation.

Items in the math, science and social studies areas are related to situations and problems encountered in everyday living. For example, students might be asked to determine how long it would take to ride a bike from point A to point B at a certain rate of speed. In addition, the question might require first de-

termining if sufficient information is given to calculate the answer.

Reading items are based on stories, poems, articles and passages appropriate to each grade level. The open-ended question at the end of a passage might require a student to consider and explain the emotions of the writer or a character in the passage.

The tests were signed to ensure that students are taught the higher-level thinking skills essential to school improvement and preparing students to enter the rapidly changing technological world.

According to information prepared by the State Department of Public Instruction, the new tests will answer four important questions for parents:

To what extent has your child learned the basic knowledge and skills for his or her grade level?

Can your child apply what has been learned to solve problems?

Can your child approach

tasks in a variety of ways?

Can your child organize and communicate thoughts by writing them down?

Test preparers warned that students may not perform as well on the test this year because it is very different than previous achievement tests. It is also impossible to cram for the tests. But they added that they believe the tests will be invaluable to the school improvement process.

Initial test results should be available to the school system before the end of the year. Results of the open-ended portions of the test are expected by the time school opens next year. They will be graded by specially trained educators during the summer.

Test scores will become a part of the annual report cards issued by the state to show progress in each school system.

NOTEWORTHY
THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY DEADLINE
NEWS 12:00 Noon
Monday, the following
ADVERTISING 3:00 P.M.
Monday, the following
428-5728