

PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

Lawsuit impacts Hertford budget

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Hertford residents will face a higher tax rate, and higher water and sewer rates, but the cost for electricity is expected to remain the same based on the proposed 08-09 budget presented to town council Monday night.

The results of a court case settled Monday afternoon, however, may cause the proposed budget figures to increase even more.

"This budget is a continuation of the board's commitment to maintaining the municipal core services that the citizens and businesses enjoy as well as continuing the commitment to building and maintaining the infrastructure to allow for long-term growth," said Town Manager John Christensen in his budget message.

Christensen presented proposed budget figures based on a tax rate of 35 cents per \$100 valuation, up 8 cents from the revenue neutral tax rate of 27 cents from the town's recent revaluation. While the proposed tax rate is down 14 cents from last year's rate, the recent revaluation of town property effectively increases the taxpayer's tax rate by eight cents per \$100 valuation.

Hertford's property increased during the revaluation from \$82,994,642 to \$148,599,754, or 79 percent.

Water rates are proposed to increase to \$21.05 basic charge plus \$4.75 per 1,000 gallons. Sewer rates are proposed to cost \$28.35 for the basic charge and \$7.90 per 1,000 gallons used.

Christensen indicated the average customer in town uses 5,000 gallons per month. Under the proposed rates, which increased back in March, customers who use 5,000 gallons per month would see their water and sewer bills increase from \$68 to \$112.55 per month, an increase of \$44.55.

Electric rates for town customers are expected to remain steady for now. Steadily rising fuel costs, however, may increase the town's wholesale power

CONTINUED on page 11

CHURNING butter



CINDY WAGONER OF EURE demonstrated the art of churning butter Saturday at the Newbold—White House. Kim and Mason Smith of Elizabeth City, along with sons Wilson, 6 and Wesley, 2 helped churn the warm cream into rich butter. After the churning was complete, they strained the butterfat through cheesecloth before forming the butter ready for refrigeration. The liquid squeezed from the butter fat created buttermilk, delicious for drinking and baking. Colonial interpreter Ken Riese led the group on a tour of the Colonial Kitchen Gardens as well.

Perquimans Weekly photo by CATHY WILSON

Winfall tax rate rises

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Taxpayers in Winfall will enjoy a 4 cents reduction in ad valorem taxes next year.

Members of Winfall Town Council approved their 2008-09 budget Monday night based on a tax rate of 41 cents, down from last year's 45 cents tax rate. In fact, Winfall has kept its tax rate at 45 cents for the past 12 years, according to Sharon Gordon, town clerk.

Even with a lower tax rate, the town expects to receive over \$50,000 more in property taxes thanks to the county's recent revaluation. The new tax rate, however, is expected to bring \$6,200 less in vehicle tax revenue into town coffers.

There is no hike in water or sewer rates for the next fiscal year since the town upped those costs May 1. The price of water rose May 1 from \$6 per 1,000 gallons of water over 2,000 gallons to \$8 per 1,000 gallons of water over 2,000 gallons. Sewer costs also increased from \$5 per 1,000 gallons to \$8 per 1,000 gallons, Gordon said.

Because of the increase in water and sewer prices already in place, water receipts for the next fiscal year are expected to increase by \$30,000, giving the town's water budget a reserve fund of approximately \$28,725.

The town's sewer fund is expected to reflect about \$41,500 increase in sewer revenues, giving that fund approximately \$8,375 in reserves.

The budget includes a 4 1/2 percent increase in pay for town employees, as well as a second full-time police officer for the Winfall Police Department.

Stolen vehicle wrecked

A 200 Ford Explorer was apparently stolen from Miller & Meads Mobile Home Park sometime last Monday night and later wrecked on Wynn Fork Road.

According to Hertford Interim Police Chief Brian Riddick, Louis T. Perry of Savannah Ga. was visiting friends at Meads when his vehicle was stolen sometime after 8 p.m. He awoke the next morning around 6 a.m. and discovered it missing.

When he reported the vehicle stolen Tuesday morning, Perry discovered that his Explorer had been wrecked on Wynn Ford Road a couple hours earlier.

Hertford Officer Erik Priebe responded to an accident around 4 a.m. involving the Explorer. The vehicle, traveling eastbound, crossed over the westbound lane, struck a ditch and overturned. Police said no driver was at the scene when they arrived.

The recovered stolen vehicle was a total loss, police said.

Safety issue holds up day care permit

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The folks at Faith Assembly of God Church want to help the community by offering cheaper daycare services to children while their parents work.

County commissioners want to make sure those children are safe and healthy while at the center before the county allows the center to operate in an agricultural area where crops are occasionally sprayed with chemicals approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The church applied for a conditional use permit to allow them to open Faith Builders Daycare in the former parsonage building adjacent to the church located on property at 1551 Ocean Highway just south of Weight Station Road.

Members of the county's planning board on May 13 unanimously recommended county commissioners approve the request provided the church plant a

tall buffer and thick hedge around the site to minimize exposure of the center's outside play area to the crop-dusting activities over nearby fields.

Even with the landscaping conditions recommended by the planning board, county commissioners still voiced concerns about the chemical spraying done on the agriculture fields and postponed action on the church's request until the county planner researched applicable laws on distance required between the spraying and the center. Commissioners tabled the church's request until next month.

Commissioners are concerned that aerial spraying of chemicals on the fields might affect the children. "I'm concerned that the hedge would hold the chemical," noted Commissioner Shirley Wiggins.

Commissioner Tammy Miller-White wanted language added to the permit that would address a safe environment for the children while being fair for

the adjacent farmers.

The church's seven and a half acre property actually straddles two different zoning districts. The church itself is located in a commercial highway district while the proposed day care center is located in a rural agriculture district. A child day care center is allowed in a rural agriculture zone with an approved conditional use permit.

The church property, which includes both the church building and the former parsonage where the daycare center would be located, is bordered by farmland on two sides. Approximately four acres of land owned by the church lies behind the building that would house the daycare center.

A public hearing on the conditional use permit request was held June 2 during which no one spoke in opposition.

Plans call for the center to house 41 children from infant to 5 years old with the fees lower than the

usual rate of daycare in the area, he said.

The center has already been approved by the state, Harden said, and they are waiting for the green light from the county commissioners to open the center.

The church plans to plant seven foot tall hedges every five feet around the building in an effort to keep any chemicals from blowing over onto the area where the children might be playing, he told commissioners.

Harden pointed out that other daycare centers in the area already operate close to fields that are sprayed by crop-dusting. One operates on New Hope Road while the other center operates in neighboring Pasquotank County.

According to state law, no pesticide shall be deposited by aircraft within 300 feet of schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, or any building (other than a residence) which is used for business or social activities if either the premises or the building is occupied.

Festival date change

The 27th annual Indian Summer Festival will move from the traditional second Saturday this year, to the first Saturday, Sept. 6.

Festival organizers said the always-popular Perquimans County High School Marching Pirates, Albemarle Chorale, Uphill and Atlantic Fleet Jazz Ensemble have committed to entertain in downtown Hertford on that day. Others are being sought to fill the playbill.

Back this year will be the car show at Missing Mill Park and the tractor

pull on Clarke Street.

For the younger set, there will be children's rides, sand art, pony rides and games. Committee members said high gas surcharges added by vendors to regular service prices has made finding attractions difficult.

Vendor information and applications are being accepted. Information can be found on the Historic Hertford, Inc. website at historichertfordinc.org or by leaving a message at 426-1425.

Sponsorships are also being accepted.

Hardee's returns to town

Officials with Boddie-Neel confirmed this week that Hardee's will open in the former Popeye's building this fall.

Larry Williamson, senior director of human resources, said the company is looking forward to being part of the Hertford community.

"We are a family-oriented business and we look forward

to partnering with the community," he said.

The company will remodel the current Popeye's building to create a full-service Hardee's with an opening date set for early fall or late September.

The restaurant originally opened as a Hardee's before selling out to Popeye's and operating as Fat Milton's.

Photo galleries

Log onto dailyadvance.com to see photo galleries from Perquimans, including Hertford's 250th anniversary celebration, and PQ baseball and PQ softball, a compilation of photographs taken around the county of youth competition this summer. These galleries will continue to be updated as the seasons progress. Look for PQ graduation coming soon.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 88 Low: 67
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 89 Low: 71
MOSTLY SUNNY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 92 Low: 74
ISOLATED T'STORMS

