

**OBITUARY**

**Clyde Carlton Lane**

HERTFORD - Clyde Carlton Lane, 86, of Hertford, passed away Thursday, May 14, 2020 in Edenton House.

Mr. Lane was born in Perquimans County on January 18, 1934, and was the son of the late John Martin and Martha Ann Alexander "Annie" Lane. A machinist, he retired from NASA, LANGLEY, VA. He was a member of Hertford Baptist Church, and also enjoyed membership in the Perquimans Masonic Lodge #106 and the William P. Stallings Post 126 of the American Legion. A veteran, he had served in the US Army.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Lois Jean Butt Lane; sisters, Alma Hurdle (Robert), Julia Weston (Blake), Thelma Smith (Harry), and infant Ida Mae Lane; brothers, Winford "Buck" Lane (Madeline), Calvin Lane, and infant William Lane; and by a brother-in-law, Frank Gibson.

Surviving are his sister, Selma Gibson of Daytona Beach, FL; a brother, Preston Lane and wife, Kay, of Hampton, VA; a sister-in-law, Clara Lane of Amelia Island, FL; and many nieces and nephews. Also surviving are Lois Jean's children, Rhonda Lane Gregory and husband, Danny, of Hertford, Tammy Lane Lassiter and husband, Sammy, of Aulander, and Joseph Richard Lane and wife, Gail, of Manns Harbor, and their families.

A private service was held Tuesday in the Miller & Van Essendelft Funeral Chapel, 1125 Harvey Court Road, Hertford, and was conducted by the Rev. Don Carter. A private burial followed in the Lane Family Cemetery.

Online condolences may be made to the family by visiting [www.millerfhc.com](http://www.millerfhc.com).

**OBITUARY POLICY**

For information on submitting obituaries or death notices Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 252-329-9505 or email [obits@apgenc.com](mailto:obits@apgenc.com) and specify that you are interested in obituary information for The Perquimans Weekly. On weekends and holidays, email [obits@apgenc.com](mailto:obits@apgenc.com). We do not accept notices by fax.

Obituaries must be received, processed and approved by noon on Tuesday to appear in print in the Thursday edition.

Death notices are \$25 and can include the name and age of the decedent; funeral and visitation or viewing information; and the name of the funeral home.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT LOG**

Perquimans Sheriff's Office is seeking information about the driver who fled the scene of a hit-and-run accident.

On Saturday, May 9 at around 12:19 p.m. Communications received a 911 call about a vehicle accident on Snug Harbor Road, according to the sheriff's department. The caller said that the other vehicle had fled the scene and was driving a white Ford truck that was heading towards Hwy. 17.

Trooper W. Copeland, North Carolina Highway Patrol, was in the area and responded to the call while deputies were enroute. Copeland met the suspect vehicle with the victim just behind, and turned around to stop the vehicle.

Copeland caught up with the vehicle and discovered that the suspect had been consuming alcohol. Deputies then discovered two firearms in the truck and one of the firearms was stolen out of Pasquotank County.

The victim told communications that they would wait for law enforcement at the Bethel Fire Department in a black Honda Accord. When Deputies arrived there the victim was no longer at the Fire Department, and the phone number for the victim was

no longer in service.

If anyone has information or knows the victim of the hit-and-run, please contact the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office at (252) 426-5615.

Perquimans Sheriff's arrests between May 1 and May 6:

■ Joshua Copeland of Holiday Island Road, Hertford, was arrested May 1 and charged with second-degree trespassing. Bond was set at \$200 unsecured.

■ Cedric Cunningham of Belvidere Road, Hertford, was arrested May 1 and charged with possession of a stolen firearm. Bond was set at \$2,500 secured.

■ Khalil Mabine of West Grubb Street, Hertford, was arrested May 1 and charged with possession of a stolen firearm. Bond was set at \$2,500 secured.

■ Sean Revels of Discovery Street, Hertford, was arrested May 2 and charged with simple assault and second-degree trespassing. Bond was set at \$200 unsecured.

■ Kevin Corbin of Hampton, Virginia, was arrested May 5 and charged with obtaining property by false pretenses. Bond was set at \$1,000 unsecured.

**BUDGET**

Continued from A1

reassuring answers that should give our readers insight into how Town Council is preparing a budget.

For example, Hodges said, "My personal philosophy with regard to taxes is we need to try to stay even or below the surrounding towns in the region to continue to attract new residents and businesses."

**Perquimans Weekly: Has council gotten closer to closing the \$2.6 million gap?** Yes. The Governing Body portion of the budget alone has been reduced by nearly \$300,000, although our budget is likely to go back up somewhat to cover a few priority capital outlay items.

Town Manager Pam Hurdle recommended shelving most of the capital outlay and capital improvement requests across all the rest of the departments, and with those changes we're getting closer. Council is meeting this week to make the final revenue and expenditure adjustments.

**Does a property tax/utility rate increase look likely? If so, how much?** Balancing a budget is both art and science. The science part is easy - you just add up the numbers and if they don't work you make adjustments until they do. The art part is figuring out how to increase revenues without unduly burdening one group of citizens over another, and how to cut costs without preventing a department from doing its job.

What I can tell you as a matter of fact is our current funding model, wherein we supplement our general fund by charging high electric rates while making no reinvestment in our water and sewer infrastructure, is completely unsustainable.

We must change course or risk becoming insolvent as a government or suffering a critical infrastructure failure with no ability to fix it.

In deliberating this change we are considering every available option, not

just in the way of increasing taxes and utility rates, but also in renegotiating agreements with Perquimans County and the Town of Winfall and reexamining whether we can continue to provide all of our current services moving forward.

My personal philosophy with regard to taxes is we need to try to stay even or below the surrounding towns in the region to continue to attract new residents and businesses.

Our problems are not just a function of past poor decisions or an increasing poverty rate, but also a declining population of residents and businesses who form the tax base we need to keep rates affordable.

The challenge here is figuring out how to continue to invest in quality of life improvements like parks and other activities for our young people, as well as in development activities that will bring jobs to the Town and more money to our residents' wallets.

If we're to achieve this goal more grant funding and potentially more low interest, low payment loans will have to be part of the equation.

**Utilities Rates:**

All that said, utility rate increases are what keep me up at night. We are already near the ceiling of what many of our most at-risk residents can afford to pay, and yet we're struggling to even cover the costs of doing business in our water and sewer departments.

Although our residents often refer to their high "light bills", the reality is a huge part of their monthly bill (particularly for our senior citizens) goes to loan payments in the water and sewer departments.

I've spent literally hundreds of hours studying the problem, including building computer models to assess the impact of various rate increases on our residents' budgets, and there is no realistic scenario in which we don't have to raise rates in the water and sewer departments.

Last Tuesday night Council received a presentation from the North

Carolina Rural Water Association which came to the same conclusion: if we don't significantly increase revenue in the water and sewer departments we will likely be unable to operate our system at all within just a few years.

So the question is not if we have to raise rates, but how we do so in such a way as to reduce the impact on our most vulnerable citizens to the maximum extent possible. To do this we need to make some combination of the following adjustments:

■ Reduce our reliance on utilities to offset budget deficits in the general fund. (The general fund is what pays for Council, Town Administration, Streets, Police, and Fire, amongst others.) The only way to achieve this is through a combination of tax increases and spending cuts.

■ Implement a graduated rate schedule by class of user for electric, water, and sewer services. In the electric department we're actually losing money on what's called peak demand charges, which is an elevated rate businesses pay for heavy electricity usage during peak load times. In the water and sewer departments we're charging our residents the same base fee and rate as our institutional users consuming 10x the amount of water per month, which means our residents are paying 2.5x the price per gallon as our heavy users. Complicating matters is the fact that the Town is our own customer in some of these cases (like when the water and sewer departments buy the electricity needed to operate the plants) so increasing rates in one department can actually reduce revenue in another. All this is in addition to the affordability problem for many of our residents; every increase will inevitably reduce the number of customers who can afford to pay their bill, which in turn blunts the impact of a rate increase.

All of this complexity is why I'm spending so many hours constructing and tuning computer models - we can't cut these departments because they desperately need to increase expenditures to stay functional for years to come, so all we can do is figure out ways to reduce the impact to our residents as much as possible.

■ We absolutely must chase more grant funding for everything from parks to commercial development to infrastructure upgrades to police and fire department equipment upgrades. Until we grow our population and businesses there is simply no other way to continue to improve our Town.

**There was talk of adjusting council salaries - does council/mayor pay stay the same? Yes.**

**Will Historic Hertford Inc., receive any money?** That's a hot button issue for the Board to decide at a future date. I think what's important to all of us is that HHI acknowledge its critical role in the aforementioned grant funding solicitation process.

HHI is the designated 501(c)(3) (i.e., nonprofit) for the Town's Main Street program, which should be a major funding conduit for economic improvement activities in the Town. Again, I reference the previous comments on needing jobs and businesses to help our residents and Government pay the bills.

However we've seen a diminishing benefit from this arrangement over time which we can ill afford if we're to turn the Town around.

Any funding we provide HHI needs to be with an expected return on investment (ROI) in terms of real dollars, not just in special events like the Grand Illumination or plays at the Carolina Moon theater.

These latter items are certainly important and valued by our residents, but the bottom line is we need more from the Main Street part of HHI.

**ROUND-UP**

Continued from A1

in town. Perquimans County boasts a population of around 13,000 souls with around 2,000 people living in Hertford, so it makes good sense to reach out to people places like Albemarle Plantation, Bethel, New Hope, Winfall and Woodville.

Though like the newspaper, Hertford Rotary touches all corners of the county, Kretzer and Boyer too have expressed plans to better connect the club's membership.

Through our conversation, we noted that there are a lot of impressive people living in Perquimans County ranging from a longtime retired congressman to a top television producer known worldwide for Forensic Files. Hertford's Mayor Earnell Brown has an impressive resume as does Joseph Hoffer, a county commissioner.

Hertford residents - mark your calendars for June 20 when there will be a scheduled power outage starting at 11 p.m. Sunday night. According to the town's Public Works Department, pow-

er will be down between four and six hours so that Dominion Power can perform preventive maintenance to its substation that provides power to the town.

In other matters, my daughter and I toured Hertford's waterfront via kayak on a sunny day. Showed her a lot of amazing homes on Front Street's back porch. If plans to develop the waterfront ever come to fruition, town will be transformed in such a way that will pave the way toward economic development.

**Cow got loose in the**

New Hope neck of the woods for a short time last week. Rather it be a cow than a beagle who is enduring quarantine.

Obtained a bunch of tax documents, information that is public record, which shows how much some folks owe in back property taxes, fines and fees. How does one go 10 years without paying property taxes?

Interesting reading, particularly as these property records provide some context about those folks who are raising the banner against gentrification in Hertford.

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