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Kings Mountain Herald

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Kings Mountain, NC 28086 • 50¢

Budget hearing brings surprises

Ballard to board: Quit fighting

Mayor pro tem Rick Murphrey joined citizens speaking at a public hearing calling for an audit of the city's books by an outside auditor.

Murphrey attempted to make the motion at Tuesday's City Council meeting but Attorney Mickey Corry said action could not be taken during a public hearing.

Gary Joy and Claudio Suber suggested that an audit would settle the matter of the city's finances. Suber said the audit should be the priority on the city's agenda.

Charlie Ballard gave the city some advice. "Quit fighting. When you make a decision stick with it, the majority rules."

"Go behind closed doors and

trash out these issues," he said. "Are we taking George Wood's word that what he's said in his memorandum about the finances is correct?" asked Joy.

Agreeing with Ballard, he said the Council could "hash out these problems out of the public eye."

"It's up to Council to make the decisions and fix the problems, not the former city manager," said Ballard.

Prior to the reading of Wood's memorandum, Betty Mitchell, Floyd Sanders, Ballard, Jim Childers, Sam Tesenair, Joy, Clavon Kelly, Bobby Maner, Lou Ballew, Rev. M. L. Campbell and

See Ballard, 3-A



Charlie Ballard, above, speaks at public hearing on the city's budget.

Mayor calls for Parsons' resignation

By ELIZABETH STEWART
of The Herald staff

Mayor Scott Neisler publicly called for Interim City Manager Maxine Parsons' resignation Tuesday night, staggering a City Council working for three months to tackle money woes which the mayor has maintained all along that did not exist.

The mayor dropped the bombshell after reading a 13-page memorandum from former City Manager George Wood detailing allegations of numerous discrepancies in the proposed 1994-95 budget Parsons has prepared.

"A resignation is in order," said the mayor.

Neisler said after the lengthy meeting, which at times erupted in loud applause and foot stomping from 25 city employees and about 80 other people, that Parsons, the former Assistant Finance Officer before she was promoted in March on a 4-3 vote, should not be offered the Finance Officer position when a new

Ex-City Manager responds/11-A

Jim Guyton: It's nitpicking/5-A

Jim Childers: It's Council's job/11-A

manager is hired.

"I don't like what I had to do tonight," said Neisler. "But how could I keep from speaking up?"

Neisler said the city has only 16 days under law to formally adopt a budget.

"We're looking at raising property taxes four cents, upping water/sewer rates 8 percent across the board, eliminating the engineering department which is badly

See Mayor, 3-A

Little Theatre drive hits \$120,000

Kings Mountain Little Theatre has announced that fundraising efforts have now eclipsed the \$120,000 mark in pledges toward its fund drive to renovate the old Dixie Theatre on Railroad Avenue in downtown Kings Mountain.

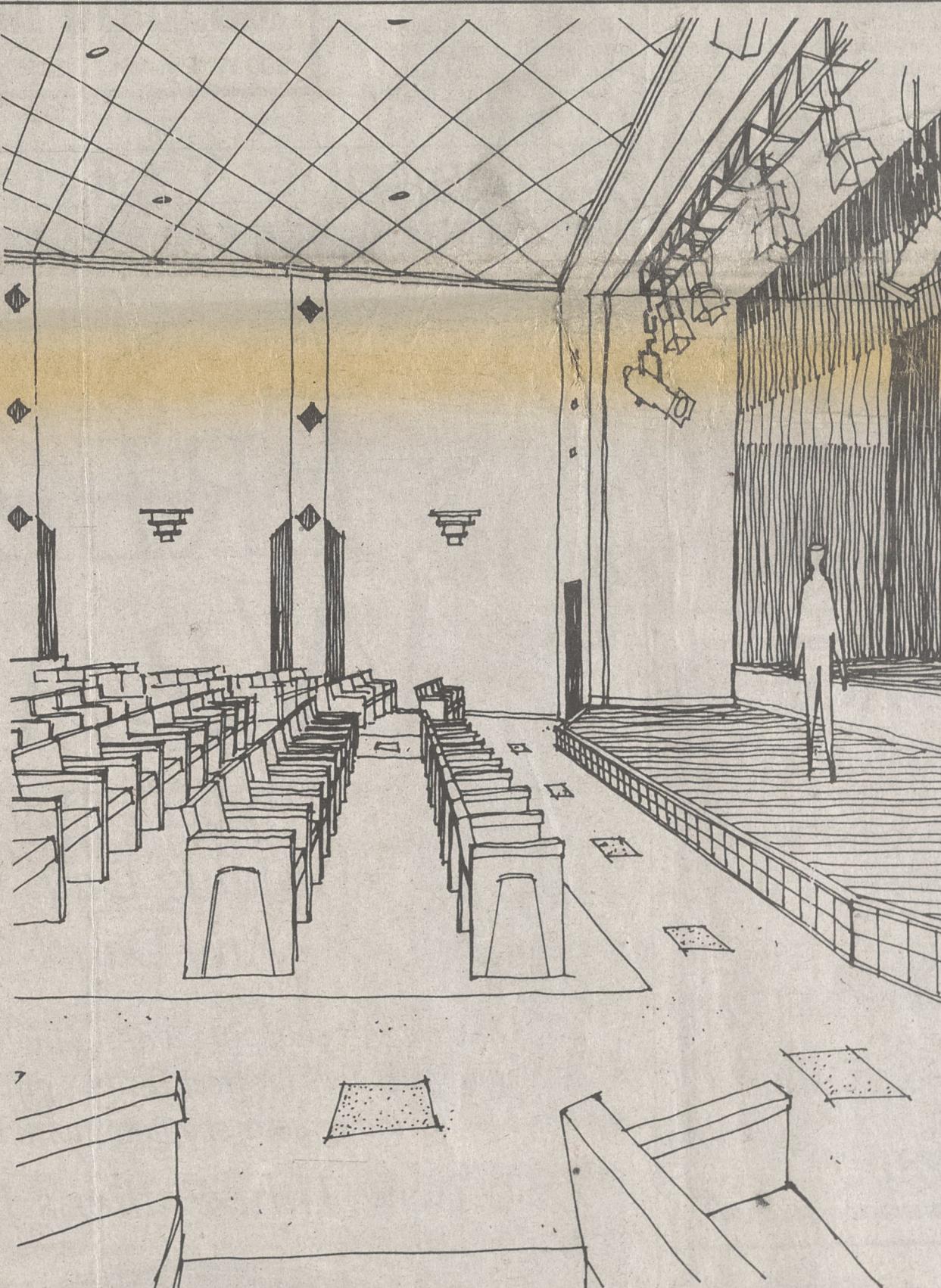
Dr. Scott Mayse, co-chairman of the fundraising effort, notes that approximately one-third of the prospects for the drive have been contacted and that response from the community has been very gratifying. With about two-thirds of the prospects yet to be heard from, including a number of industries and other businesses, hopes remain high that the campaign goal of \$300,000 can be reached.

Plans call for a full renovation of the facade and the interior of the old Dixie Theatre. When completed the theatre will offer a spacious lobby and approximately 200 comfortable seats for local audiences. Each member of the audience is expected to have an excellent view of activity on the modern elevated stage.

In addition to rehearsals and performances by the Kings Mountain Little Theatre, the theatre will be available for use by the general public for meetings and for smaller concerts and recitals. The activities at the theatre will be one positive step toward the revitalization of the downtown area, Mayse said.

Kings Mountain Little Theatre has served the citizens of Kings Mountain since 1941 and has involved numerous local people in its productions and audiences. For the past several years the group has presented four plays annually. The proposed renovation would give the organization its first permanent home.

The volunteer workers in the fundraising campaign will be completing their work in the very near future. Anyone in the community not yet contacted wishing to donate to the renovation effort may send their donation to the Kings Mountain Little Theatre, P.O. Box 1022, Kings Mountain, NC 28086. Kings Mountain Little Theatre is a tax exempt non profit organization and donations are tax deductible.



Sketch of inside of proposed Kings Mountain Little Theatre.

School awards draw protest

By GARY STEWART
Editor of the Herald

Kings Mountain Middle School seventh grader Christina "Crissy" Bolin says if anyone asks her what she learned in school this year, she can tell them "not to trust anyone."

Crissy and her parents, Melany and Danny Bolin, claim that the Straight A student was due numerous awards on Awards Day but was passed over because Mrs. Bolin is often outspoken critic of issues facing Kings Mountain District Schools. Crissy and Mrs. Bolin voiced their concerns at Monday night's meeting of the Board of Education.

Mrs. Bolin said Crissy was given only one award on Awards Day even though she qualified - and was later given - eight. KMMS Principal John Goforth, who was not present at the Board meeting, said Tuesday the matter was a "oversight" by Crissy's "team" teachers.

Crissy says she was hurt because she did not receive the awards "in front of my friends and teachers" and that she was disappointed in her school because "all of my teachers know highest academic means highest average."

Crissy's family claimed that Crissy had the highest "team" average in two subjects and should have been presented awards for that, and that she also had the highest overall average of all seventh graders in another subject and should have received an award for that. She also received numerous other awards for "team" achievement - but Mrs. Bolin said only one was presented during Awards Day ceremonies attended by over 900 students, teachers and parents.

Mrs. Bolin, who says she has volunteered in the school system for nine years, claims Crissy was overlooked for the awards and they were presented to students with lower grade averages because Mrs. Bolin often speaks out on school issues, most recently about the Family Life curriculum.

"I will always be vocal. It's my responsibility to be involved," she said. "I do my homework and I do not try to harm anyone. This is a Public School System and I have a right to be involved. It has never bothered me that someone likes me or does not like me, but I never imagined that anyone would deliberately hurt my children."

Mrs. Bolin said Crissy was also not included in the Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP). She said school officials told her Crissy's name "didn't come out of the computer" and Supt. Bob McRae said during the School Board meeting that Crissy did not qualify for the program, but on Tuesday Mrs. Bolin produced

McRae: It was frustrating

Kings Mountain School Superintendent Bob McRae said it was "quite frustrating" listening to the comments of Melany Bolin at Monday's School Board meeting when she criticized Kings Mountain Middle School for overlooking her daughter Crissy's academic achievement.

After about 30 minutes of Mrs. Bolin's remarks about the incident involving Awards Day at Kings Mountain Middle School, she switched her remarks to a luncheon meeting of school employees last week and made reference to a statement she alleged was made by KMMS Principal John Goforth. McRae suggested that if she was going to mention names of school employees that the matter should be discussed in executive session.

When McRae remarked that the School Board needed the advice of its attorney, who was not present, Mrs. Bolin concluded her remarks and said she and her husband, Danny, would come to a later meeting with their attorney.

McRae told the Herald Tuesday that the School Board has a policy that requires five days advance notice by anyone wishing to be placed on the agenda. He said although Mrs. Bolin requested a spot on the agenda in that time period, he asked her three times what the topic of her remarks would be and she would not tell him.

"We don't want to know every single detail, but at least the topic," he said. "The Board feels like they should have had that courtesy. I believe one of the primary requirements for the five day advance requirement is to give the system a chance to do some preliminary work and have some answers available. If we had been privy to that information, we would have had representatives of the school there and would have had the opportunity to check with legal advisors to know whether or not it should be held in executive session."

Although Mrs. Bolin did not give the board the topic of her presentation, she said she made McRae aware of the Awards Day situation a week earlier.

"I don't think it's appropriate to hear complaints about employees in open session, but I would be more comfortable in having the attorney rule on that," McRae said. "The bottom line is, however, that regardless of any of that, I certainly hope and do not believe that anyone in this system would purposely discriminate against a student because they might have had a disagreement with that student's par-

See McRae, 3-A

Alternate school funds sought

The Kings Mountain School Board Monday night approved a request for a \$570,000 grant that would fund an alternative school for problem students in grades 6-12 in the Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County School Systems.

Dr. Bob McRae said funds are being made available because of the recent Special Crime Session of the General Assembly. McRae said the three county systems feel they have a great chance of being awarded funds if they make a joint request.

McRae said the systems should hear from their request by July 1

and, if it is approved the alternative school could begin as early as October "or at the very latest at the beginning of the second semester."

McRae said if a central location cannot be found for the school, Kings Mountain would offer to house it at the Central Office. KMDS is scheduled to move its Central Office to the renovated Central School late this summer.

"When General Assembly funds first became available, we applied but did not receive a grant," McRae told the Board. "We feel there is

See School, 14-A

Superintendent's contract extended

Kings Mountain School Superintendent Bob McRae had his contract extended to 1998 after an evaluation in executive session at Monday night's Board meeting.

McRae was given high grades by the four members present. Billy Howze was excused earlier in the meeting due to an emergency.

Chairman Shearra Miller said the board feels that McRae "demonstrates exemplary performance in the areas of policy and

board goals, board community and personnel relationships, educational programs and budget.

"We find his strengths to be his vision and foresight and planning for the future of the school system, and the leadership that he provides to the staff."

"We encourage his continued efforts to improve communication with parents and the community, and to investigate areas in which employee morale might be improved."

See Awards, 2-A