

BALLARD

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Suber spoke briefly.

Mayor Neisler gave each speaker five minutes for their presentations, allowing several speakers to go over time.

Campbell said he approved of the budget proposals presented by Interim Manager Maxine Parsons.

Ballew questioned recommendations by Utility Director Jimmy Maney on restructuring of his department and not figured in the proposed budget. "I liked what I heard about the savings in his department," she said.

Neisler said the decision to scrap the idea was a management decision.

Tesenair complained about raw sewage on Cherokee Street and said the city was aware of the problem and had done nothing about it.

City engineer Tom Howard said Tesenair's complaint was the first he had heard about the problem, and said he would look into it. Tesenair contended that city fathers knew about the problem. He said that both former commissioner Al Moretz and Commissioner Norma Bridges had walked the area with him.

Neisler reminded that the public hearing focused on the budget. Tesenair commended the board for making tough calls and hard decisions.

City Hall receptionist Betty Cash Mitchell voiced concerns of employees about low morale and rumors of hit lists. She said the city has valuable employees who are not "a dime a dozen" and that cuts in departments make heavier work loads for employees. She asked the board to reconsider previous votes on eliminating cost of living raises and merit raises in the 1994-95 budget and reconsidering their vote on raising property taxes four cents and water and sewer rates.

Mitchell said she appreciated the

city's fringe benefits and said she realized that paying a part of dependent insurance coverage is not the norm for other employers in the area.

Sanders said he opposed the tax increase because of the additional burden to people on fixed incomes.

"Cut the fat," he said, noting that city employees who make \$200 a week need the pay increases, not the people at the top of the ladder.

Joy suggested that the city finance officer show fund balances in a separate bank account but Parsons said that it isn't practical to have two bank accounts.

Joy said that Council should show some accountability. "We ask for answers and we don't get them."

Joy congratulated Council for an overall attempt to correct the financial situation, referring to charts on low fund balances over several years. He suggested that the city spend \$13,000 for an efficiency expert instead of a pay plan.

"I've been told employees take advantage of the city, build up comp time and abuse vacation."

"Are you running a give-away program or a business?" he asked.

Childers said he is tired of hearing Kings Mountain compared with other cities in regard to utility rates.

"We're interested in what affects us."

He commended Council for tough decisions reflected in the proposed budget.

Maner asked that the city reinstate the city engineering department and suggested the city could get the money from the sale of two dump trucks which he said are used very little. He said the sale of the trucks would pay the engineer's salary.

Maner, who acknowledged that he lives outside the city but is an in-town insurance salesman, also suggested that industry bear the brunt of the increased water rates.

Maner suggested the city annex areas now getting utilities and not paying taxes. He said that Upper Cleveland County is coming into the immediate area with water Kings Mountain can provide.



SERVICE AWARD - Sherry Yates received her 20-year service award from Anvil Knitwear at the annual banquet. Not pictured is Wayne Drum.

MAYOR

From Page 1-A

needed, and denying our employees even a merit raise and it's all unnecessary," said Neisler.

The mayor said that citizens have been grossly misinformed about the state of the city's finances, concurring with Wood's projection that the city is in good financial shape.

"Do you think Mr. Wood's projections are a true picture of the city's finances," asked Councilman Jim Guyton of Parsons.

"I can't refute his figures because this is the first time I've seen them," said Parsons.

"We budgeted very close last year and he may be using anticipated figures."

Parsons said Wood requested under the Public Information Act copies of all statements and receipts since March, along with budget projections and minutes of meetings and the spring budget retreat. Parsons said she complied with the requests. Wood picked up the materials Memorial Day weekend.

Charlie Ballard questioned Wood's memo. "It's up to Council to fix the money problems if there are such. Mr. Wood is no longer employed by the city."

But Neisler said that Wood wrote his letter as a concerned taxpayer of the city. Wood owns a home in

Kings Mountain but has moved his wife and son to Cleveland, Tennessee where he took the new job of city manager.

"I have a problem with Maxine working on another budget," said Councilman Phil Hager, responding to Councilman Rick Murphrey's suggestion that Parsons take Wood's recommendations and work with auditor Darrell Keller to fine tune the budget.

"Maxine will go through it from A to Z and improve on it. We all want to do what's right," Murphrey said.

Murphrey said the Local Government Commission looked at the auditor's figures and concluded that Kings Mountain has a problem.

"When we don't pay our bills on time there is a problem whether we admit it or not," said Murphrey.

"The proposed budget isn't worth the paper it's written on," said Hager.

Former city finance officer Jeff Rosencrans, who resigned in March after he was passed over by Council for the position of interim manager, was in the audience along with numerous present city employees when Wood's letter was read.

"I have some copies of a memo from George Wood," said Neisler before he started reading the text.

Spectators jumped from their seats and ran to the podium. Then it was deadly quiet as the Mayor read page by page Wood's graphic summary.

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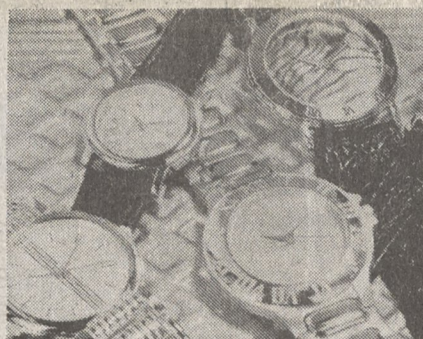
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CLEVELAND MALL

McRAE

From Page 1-A

ents or any other member of the family. I work very hard to communicate with people that each child deserves the same respect as any other member of the school community, and included in that is that they should be given awards that they are eligible for."

McRae said he has asked for "further clarification" from the Middle School to be sure that the school has "appropriately addressed" the Bolins' concerns. "If we haven't, we need to move forward to do that."

McRae said he presented five awards at the Middle School ceremony and that it was his understanding that "they were for highest academic achievement in five subjects. Some of the teams didn't give their awards just on the highest grades. I heard a few teachers say that the awards they were present-

ing were for outstanding achievement.

"But, especially in the case of school awards it ought to be clear to the people who give out those awards exactly what the criteria is," he said. "Everybody should be basing it on the same criteria. You can't get into the business of giving out awards on achievement that's coming down to two students and some teachers basing it on one criteria and others on something else. If it's for grades, it's easy to figure. If based on other criteria, that's a different situation. If that's not spelled out where they can understand it, we sure need to handle that."

McRae said because Goforth gave Crissy her awards later, he assumes that the principal determined that she deserved them.

"If she earned them I would have preferred they be given out when the others were," he said. "If mistakes were made, it is regrettable and we will try to do a better job."

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