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Merger on hold

Hospital awaits county approval

A decision by the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners on a lease proposal by Charlotte Mecklenburg Hospital Authority and Kings Mountain Hospital is expected at the 7 p.m. meeting May 2.

The Kings Mountain Hospital Board of Trustees voted unanimously recently to approve the merger which includes \$2 million from CMHA to run the hospital and establishes a governing board in Charlotte and an advisory board in Kings Mountain to replace the current board of trustees.

The local board asked for a letter of endorsement from commissioners Tuesday night but the commissioners put off the decision, asking for additional information from City Manager Lane Alexander and County Attorney Julian Wray.

The county board must approve any change in a lease agreement.

Dr. T. R. Harris, a medical doctor who was appearing before the commission on another agenda item, suggested that the board look at the "entire medical needs of the county, not one group" and Commissioner Jim Crawley and Chairman Cecil Dickson called for public hearings but Commissioner Ralph Gilbert opposed.

"We will have groups vying for individual proposals and we need to review all the materials and act on it," said Gilbert.

Dickson distributed to the commissioners a copy of a news story in The Charlotte Observer and the headline, "Piedmont Medical Fights Back on Takeover Move by Hospital."

Wanda Crotts, secretary to the country manager, said that the commission is asking for input from different entities and asking the manager and attorney to review the materials and make some recommendations.

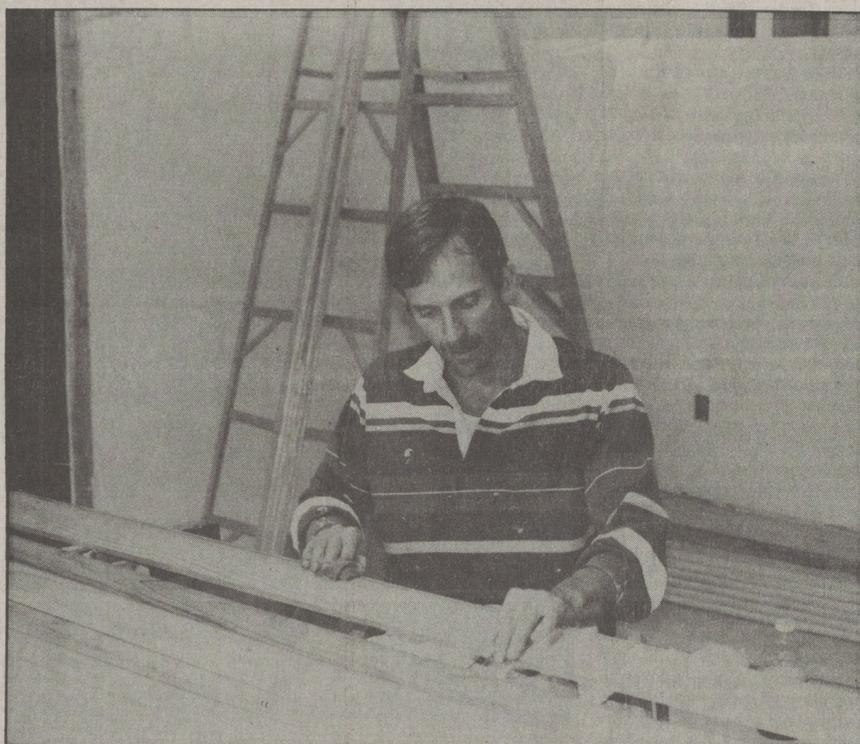
J. C. Bridges, chairman of the KMH board of trustees, said there has outwardly been no opposition to the merger but he said CMHA will not submit a finalized proposal until the county approves the lease in principle, either verbally or by a letter.

KMH Administrator Hank Neal said she has received numerous calls from local citizens applauding the decision by the local hospital board to approve the preliminary lease proposal by CMHA.

But last week Dickson, who sits on both hospital boards, questioned an advisory board replacing the board of trustees and said a local person should serve on the Charlotte Authority and a member of the county commission should serve on the local advisory board.

Discussion of a merger between the Shelby and Kings Mountain. See Merger, 10-A

Kings Mountain People



Chuck Hoyle works on new home near David Baptist Church.

CHUCK'S SECOND CHANCE

Disabling plane crash just made Hoyle enjoy life sitting down

By ELIZABETH STEWART of The Herald Staff

Chuck Hoyle, 42, counts on his faith to see him through the hard times.

God gave the Kings Mountain man a second chance at life after a near-fatal plane crash grounded him seven years ago.

Hoyle credits his close-knit family and friends for their inspiration to fight for the disabled.

And his sense of humor keeps him humble, he says.

The former USAF pilot and flight instructor gave up his flying career in 1988 but he moves faster in a wheelchair than many people move on two legs.

And the injury didn't keep him out of a plane.

"As soon as I was strong enough I got back on a plane," said Chuck, reliving the painful experiences that paralyzed him from the waist down as he helped his wife stain walls in the new home they are building on Hoyle's Road in the David Baptist Church Community.

Chuck enrolled in law school after six months in a VA Hospital and over a year of recuperation, working days as a real estate salesman to pay for night school. He graduated third in his class last May at Lincoln Law School in Sacramento and passed the California State Bar, only to return to his hometown in August to practice and find that the school he attended is not accredited by the American Bar Association or the North Carolina Committee of Bar Examiners.

Currently, Chuck drives himself to Charlotte five days a week to work as a paralegal for Todd, Hefferon & Hefferon, writing briefs and doing research for the

prominent Mecklenburg County law firm. He plays on a basketball team and he and his wife are active in the new Cleveland Community Church organized at Number 3 School. He plays drums in the music ministry and helps out in all areas of the church.

Chuck swims three mornings a week at Neisler Natatorium with the early morning crowd, including J. E. and Glee E. Bridges and Grady Howard. He says he finds swimming great therapy for his back and "lots of fun."

"God gave me a six feet tall wife to make up for my shortness," laughed Chuck, who actually is five feet eight inches tall.

"She does my leg work and we fell in love sitting down."

June 27, 1988 was a day that Joseph Charles Hoyle will never forget. The flight instructor for Cameron Park's Mr. Aircraft had run three miles that morning before he climbed aboard 23 Tango Whiskey with a student pilot. It was a good day to be in the air.

Something happened to the single engine plane, it lost power, the pilot's harness belt jammed and Hoyle was trapped inside the plane for five or six hours before rescue teams arrived about 1/2 mile from the Van Vieck airstrip east of Loon Lake.

The plane crashed, glazed some rocks, nosed over a ledge of rocks and then traveled down into the brush. When friends of the pair noticed Hoyle's plane was overdue they flew to the area and spotted the downed plane. They walked to the crash site and found the young student wandering around in a daze. The Jaws of Life were used to extricate the pilot from the wreckage.

A Kings Mountain native, Chuck entered the USAF Academy after graduation from Kings Mountain High School in 1970. He graduated from the Academy in 1974 and then spent six years in the USAF, stationed in Colorado, Mississippi and Texas and was honorably discharged in California as a Captain. A pilot, he logged 3,000 hours of flying time.

See Hoyle, 10-A

Closed session planned on bills

City Manager Chuck Nance said City Council will probably discuss alternative proposals to settling with underbilled utility customers during a closed session of City Council Tuesday.

Nance made the remarks Tuesday during an update of the negotiations with several customers overbilled and underbilled electric utilities before the city utilities committee.

Nance said he has purposely not tried to collect from all those underbilled until negotiations between a lawyer for at least one industry complete deliberations.

"We need to be fair to all," he said.

Nance said that City Attorney Mickey Corry will give a report from those meetings.

In a related matter, Nance said that computer consultants are giving rate codes and other information to the Charlotte auditors who will audit the city's utility accounts. He said the auditing process should begin in earnest by the end of May.

Nance said that two industries have complained to the city about being charged late fees and want the 15th of the month deadline for payment of utility bills to be extended. Nance said the reason the companies give is that bills must go to their headquarters offices in other locations and they don't receive them in time to get them to those locations and back to Kings Mountain.

Councilman Phil Hager suggested that the bills go directly from City Hall to the corporate headquarters of the two companies and that the billing clerks look at the postmarks on the envelopes that are sent back with the checks before assessing a late fee.

Finance Director Maxine Parsons said if an extended late date is imposed it would be unfair to all other customers not to make it effective across-the-boards.

Gene Thompson, representing Woodbridge Golf Links, asked the board to come to an agreement on cost of raw water which Woodbridge has been buying at annual costs of from \$4500 to \$2000 in recent years due to a loss of the original contract.

Thompson asked the board to reevaluate the Woodbridge Golf annual fee for raw water.

Councilman Jim Guyton, who chairs the utility committee, said Woodbridge Golf Links had a contract with the city to pay \$4500 annually for raw water and that someone cut the price to \$2,000.

Water Supt. Walter Ollis said the price was cut because he had only a copy of the 1986 agreement and he said the rate was based on dry and wet years.

Guyton said he thought \$2,000 was a low price for water in a dry season and \$4500 was a little steep in a wet season.

See Utilities, 10-A

Can city take on new gas customers?

Can Kings Mountain afford to sell natural gas to new industries at the risk of penalizing its existing customers?

That was the question that Spectrum Engineer Hubert Johnson posted to Utility Director Jimmy Maney during the city utility committee meeting Tuesday night.

Maney suggested that the committee hold a work session with representatives of all industries is town in the next 30 days to break down the customer class and determine exactly how much industry is projected to use this winter.

"We'll put everything on the table" said Maney.

Chairman Jim Guyton agreed and asked City Manager Chuck Nance to call a meeting.

The question came up during a discussion of a new industry's request for city gas. Sara Lee Intimates is building a plant near the new Firestone Plant and will need gas by mid-summer which will require the building of two regulator stations by Kings Mountain on both sides of I-85 and a loop on Canterbury Road to serve at least two existing plants which are increasing their gas loads.

Finance Director Maxine Parsons reminded the group that the gas budget is 12-15 percent under the anticipated revenue. She said the new line will cost about \$60,000 but Maney said the costs will be covered in refunds and that a prior agreement with the Firestone Plant will bring in \$20,000 to help pay for it.

Water/Sewer Director Walt Ollis said that officials of Sara Lee plant had made no direct contact with city officials until this week about gas and had provided him with drawings of the new building this week. Ollis, Maney and Interim Planning Director Jeff Putnam scheduled meetings with company officials this week.

But the problem, according to Maney, is that if Kings Mountain doesn't get more gas to sell the revenues can't go up. The gas supply is low.

By next winter Maney projected that Anvil Knitwear could be the biggest user of gas, passing Spectrum, because of double loads at the Anvil plant. Customers from the Margrace area just went on the system.

"We can nominate what we project to use on a monthly basis with our supplier but then the consumption is locked in and we could lose big bucks," said Maney.

"But we're taking local customer's gas and selling outside the city limits," said Guyton.

"We don't want to be calling our longtime customers and telling

See Gas, 10-A

KM teacher Norma Cissell dies

Her friends at Kings Mountain High School have fond memories of Vocational Education teacher Norma Cissell, 45, who died Monday of cancer.

English teacher Nelson Connor said Cissell was very popular with her students because "she went to great lengths to give them individual attention and beyond the call of duty as a teacher."

Connor said Cissell placed students in jobs in the community and then checked on them to see if they were performing and related well to the youngsters.

"We will certainly miss her at Kings Mountain High School," said Connor.

Connor and his wife, Hallie, spoke with Cissell by phone from her hospital bed at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville, Tn. Saturday.

"She was very upbeat and had a good attitude about the radiation treatments which she had started taking but were taking their toll," said Connor.

Cissell slipped into a coma and died Monday. She was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor five weeks ago and underwent surgery at a Charlotte Hospital.

School's Personnel Director Ronnie Wilson said that Cissell would be missed in the classroom and also by her co-workers.



Rick Kirkpatrick, Spectrum's Safety and Environmental Affairs Manager, Plant Engineer Hubert Johnson, Plant Manager John Hill and Spectrum President Doug Blanchard, left to right, receive a plaque from N. C. Commissioner of Labor Harry Payne after the Kings Mountain plant attained one million employee hours without a disabling injury from September 28, 1993 until March 2, 1995.

Spectrum receives state safety award

One million hours without a lost time accident is an enviable record for an industry and Kings Mountain's Spectrum Dyed Yarns, Inc. received the top award Tuesday from the North Carolina Department of Labor.

Commissioner of Labor Harry Payne Jr., making the presentation to Company President Doug Blanchard and Plant Manager John Hill, said that the certificate of special recognition is won only by a few.

"It's a significant accomplishment," said Payne.

"Your excellence in safety should inspire others."

Payne said he talked to men and women injured in plant accidents every day and he found it an in-

See Spectrum, 10-A