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KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH C

Ready, Aim, Fire!

Mayor given authority to cut city's work force

BY GARY STEWART
Editor

The City Board of Commissioners Monday night approved a resolution submitted by the Cost-Efficiency Committee which will allow Mayor John Henry Moss to fire any employees and take any other actions he sees fit to enable the city to operate more efficiently.

The resolution passed by a 4-2 vote with commissioners Norman King and Jim Childers voting against it. Commissioners Humes Houston, who made the motion, Jim Dickey, who seconded it, Curt Gaffney and Corbet Nicholson voted in favor of it.

All of those commissioners except Gaffney serve on the Cost-Efficiency Committee, along with Mayor Moss. Childers and King said they both objected to the motion because they didn't feel the city needed a reduction in the work force and that they knew nothing of the committee's proposal prior to Monday's meeting.

The two also objected, they said, because the committee,

without authorization of the full board, hired a personnel consultant to advise the committee and mayor on which employees they could dismiss without facing possible action by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

They also claimed the Cost-Efficiency Committee had not been approved by the board and that dealing with city personnel is the responsibility of the Personnel Committee, and none other.

Members of the Cost-Efficiency Committee said the consultant—Employers E.O. Services, Inc. of Charlotte and Winston-Salem—was hired on the advice of City Attorney George Thomasson and it was not their intent to take away any of the Personnel Committee's responsibility.

"As chairman of the Personnel Committee, I don't feel we are taking any of the Personnel Committee's responsibility," Houston said. "But because of the technical aspects of the reduction of forces, we felt it was to our advantage to have this ex-

pert knowledge."

"Why are we using these services if they haven't been approved by the board?" King asked. "As a representative of the people of the city, I feel like I have the right to know beforehand."

"I'm not questioning the expertise of these people," Childers said. "But where it's involving personnel, it should fall under the personnel policy and the personnel committee."

Nicholson told Childers he felt like the committee "has the authority" to hire a consultant, and said he felt that was no worse than the personnel committee granting one city employee a \$5,000 a year raise.

"Any time the personnel committee has brought a recommendation to this board, it has been laid out in detail," Childers said. "This recommendation is not laid out except in giving the mayor authority to hire and fire anyone he wants to. This board should be shown what reductions are going to be made."

King said Mayor Moss circulated a memo several months

ago ordering a "freeze" on hiring because of the economy, but King claimed since that time Moss has hired three employees.

Moss said his memo ordered a freeze on the hiring of permanent employees. He claimed two of the three persons hired since were "seasonal employees" and the third was a woman who had recently been laid off and was promised the "first vacancy" after she appealed her layoff to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

As for the naming of the committee without board approval, Moss said he usually brings the appointment of committees before the board as a matter of courtesy, but as chief executive officer of the city, he has complete authority to appoint committees without the board's approval.

Most of the authority given Moss in the resolution, the Mayor said, is already his by virtue of his office. "But it has

always been my intent to share it with other elected officials," he said.

City Attorney George Thomasson said he recommended the city hire a consultant because of the enormous amount of equal employment guidelines. Asked if the mayor or a committee can legally hire someone without the full board's approval, he said "legally, they probably can, but as matter of courtesy they probably should bring it before the entire board."

Mayor Moss, when asked the hourly rate of the equal employment consultants and how much they had worked thus far, said he did not know either, but would check and notify the **Herald**. At presstime Wednesday, the paper had not been notified.

However, one city employee, who asked not to be identified, said the talk around town was that the rate is \$75 per hour, plus expenses, and that the city had already been billed for \$4,500.

The city budgeted \$12,500 for professional services. According to one commissioner, \$24,000 has already been spent but that item has never been amended.

Moss said he plans two meetings of the Cost-Efficiency Committee this week, and he will seek the advice of the committee as well as the personnel consultants in carrying out the duties of reducing the work force.

Moss said the committee was appointed in December and has been meeting since January. "We've been studying where cuts can be made and have been monitoring the effects of the economy on the city. This is not a spur of the moment thing. This is an ongoing problem on the national and state level and now it has come down to Kings Mountain."

Commissioners Houston and Dickey are co-chairmen of the committee.

"There's a lot of work involved in this," Moss went on. "We'll review all departments."

Good Deal!

Company sells property for \$28,900, Buys it back for \$13,002

The Kings Mountain Board of Commissioners Monday night unanimously approved the sale of a piece of Community Development property located at the corner of Railroad Avenue and West Gold Street to Plonk Brothers Department Store.

The property, known as parcel 3-5, is a store building previously owned by Plonk Brothers, which most recently housed Wright's Barber Shop and the Kings Mountain Mirror.

Plonk, the only bidder, paid \$13,002—two dollars over the minimum fair market value—and agreed to bring the building up to City Codes standards within six months of delivery of deed.

Plonk Brothers sold the property to the Kings Mountain Redevelopment Commission in 1974 for \$28,900. The city acquired it in 1979 when the Redevelopment Commission was phased out and all of its property and debts were taken over by the city.

Gene White, Community Development Director and former Director of the Redevelopment Commission, said the city no longer had any use for the property and it was expensive to maintain. He said the original intent was to acquire the property so West Gold Street could be widened. However, since that time the city has decided to re-align Gold Street, using the old Roller Mill property instead.

At the February board meeting, White suggested

that the city either demolish the structure or sell it with the stipulation that the buyer bring it to codes standards.

That recommendation was approved. White said a certified appraiser valued the property at \$13,000 and the City Codes Director inspected the building and made a list of improvements that must be made by the buyer.

Commissioner Jim Childers told White Monday night that it was his understanding that the market value had been lowered by \$6,000 to cover what it would have cost the city to tear the building down.

Childers said he felt like, if the building was not demolished, the minimum market value should have been \$6,000 more, or \$19,000.

"When we depended on the appraiser to give a fair market value, we were talking about a clear lot," Childers told White. "At that time, you said the building wasn't worth saving."

"I'm not a certified appraiser," White said, "but in this case I think the city made as good a deal as is appropriate at this time. It's strictly a matter of opinion."

White said he made every effort to recruit as many bids as possible. The property was advertised several times in the **Herald**, White sent letters to all realtors in town and said he also made telephone contacts.



Photo by Gary Stewart

REPAIRING ROAD - City workers are pictured above here repairing a pavement on Fulton Street Tuesday. A resident of the street appeared before the City Board Monday night at an assessment hearing and claimed the pavement had grass growing in it and was

sinking where it had recently been dug up for a sewage line repair. Public Works Superintendent Ted Huffman said that was the only complaint from 25 residents in the area and sent his crew out early Tuesday morning to correct the problem.

Hee Haw Show For Cancer Fund Drive, Black American Cancer Screen Saturday

The Hee Haw Gang of Cleveland County will present a Junior Hee Haw Show Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Brown Auditorium on the campus of Shelby High School.

All proceeds will go to the American Cancer Society's fund drive, which is in progress through August 31. Tickets are \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for students.

The gang will imitate country music stars such as Charlie Pride, Johnny Cash and Lulu of

Hee Haw fame. A special treat will be an appearance by the Oak Ridge Girls.

A Black American Health **CORRECTION**

The Kings Mountain Herald inadvertently printed the name of Caveny Fabrics in the Cleveland County delinquent tax listings printed in last weeks edition.

Caveny Fabrics has paid their taxes and we apologize for this error.

Screening will be held Saturday from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Cleveland County Health Department.

Purpose of the screening is to screen for cancer, high blood pressure and glaucoma, and to educate citizens on the seven warning signals of cancer.

A number of doctors, nurses, dentists and others have volunteered their services.

The screening is free and available to citizens ages 25 and over.

Funeral Services Held For Wayne Wells, 88

Wayne Wells, 88, a resident of Route 4, Wells Road, Kings Mountain, died Wednesday night at Kings Mountain Hospital.

A native of Cleveland County, he was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Wells. He was a veteran of World War I, a retired farmer, and was the oldest member of Dixon Presbyterian Church.

Surviving are his wife, Leona McDaniel Wells; a son, Richard

Carveth Wells of Kings Mountain; two brothers, Hunter Wells of Kings Mountain and Harley Wells of Washington, D.C.; one sister, Mrs. Bryte W. Frances of Blacksburg, S.C.; three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Services were conducted Saturday at 3 p.m. at Dixon Presbyterian Church by the Rev. Graham Wood and the Rev. Oscar Stalcup Jr. Burial was in Wellsland Cemetery.



WAYNE WELLS

Assessments Approved

The City Board of Commissioners Monday night approved assessments rolls for improvements of three streets in the Ashbrook Park sub-division.

Citizens of Fulton Street, Brice Street and Sterling Drive were assessed for recent paving improvements on their streets.

During a public hearing, J.F. Chaffee of 315 Fulton Drive, said he was unhappy with the work. He said there was grass growing in the street and that the road had collapsed where the city had repaired a sewer line.

"How can you assess something that is falling apart?" he asked.

Thomas Limbaugh, who lives at the corner of Sterling Drive and Waco Road, said he confirmed Chaffee's statement, and added that there was grass growing in the pavement at the entrance to Ashbrook Park.

Ted Huffman, Public Works Superintendent, said he had driven the roads prior to the meeting and had not seen any grass growing in the pavements, but promised the men he would re-check the streets Tuesday morning. City crews were repairing the street in front of Chaffee's home Tuesday morning.

Five residents of Fulton Street Extension were assessed \$1,090.05, or \$2.15 per foot; eight residents of Brice Street were assessed \$1,916.32, or \$2.03 per foot; and 12 residents of Sterling Drive were assessed \$4,058.00, or \$2.00 per foot.

In other action Monday, the board:

*Amended the Community Development Block Grant budget for 1978 to include \$67,600 in increased revenues. Community Development Direc-

tor Gene White said the increase was due to revenues received from rental and sale of properties.

*Approved passing a 5.49 cents per M.C.F. decrease in the cost of natural gas onto city customers.

*Authorized Mayor John Henry Moss to negotiate Recreation Department concession contracts specificatins with interested parties.

*Received a request from Crossroads Music Park for water and sewer services for a proposed 160 town houses. The request was forwarded to the Water and Sewer Committee for review and recommendation.

*Held a 35-minute executive session at the request of Commissioner Jim Childers. Mayor Moss said a "personnel matter was discussed and is continuing to be reviewed."