

Teacher raises marked down

Proposed pay increases cut by more than half

DUANE SHERRILL
Editor Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

There are still raises in the proposed budget for teachers but they won't be what was first hoped for as budgeting concerns has forced school officials to slash the increases by more than half.

Under the present plan, heard by the board of education during

its regular meeting this past week, it was agreed to adjust the request for raises to \$600 per certified employee. Added with a \$600 increase being kicked in by the state, it will figure out to a \$1,200 raise for every teacher. While the raises remain alive, these are significantly less than Director of Schools Patrick Cripps had requested from the county commission a couple of weeks ago.

During his appearance before committee, Cripps, following an endorsement by the board of education, asked the county to contribute \$2,400 for every teacher and \$1,500 for all support personnel. The numbers would have meant teachers could expect a \$3,000 raise when county and state money was combined. Cripps told commissioners that the raises were needed to coun-

teract increases in insurance premiums. He also pointed out DeKalb County is not competitive in its pay rate for teachers.

The original \$3,000 raise request fell on sympathetic ears in committee but commissioners pointed out there is only so much money to go around and that other county officials were asking for increases in various areas.



CRIPPS

Given the budget committee's forewarning the requested money would not be available this year, Cripps returned to the board of education Thursday and the numbers were adjusted. The new plan will be presented to committee this week.

The proposed school budget for the 2018-19 year now sets at \$23,217,059, up \$890,000 from the year before.



Members of the Northside summer school program reenact the angry mob that protested against intergration into their New Orleans school back in the 1960s.

Northside summer students present play

DUANE SHERRILL
Editor Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

School's out for summer ... again. Northside Elementary concluded its summer session Friday afternoon, its students marking the occasion by performing a play of social significance, recalling the early days of the civil rights movement in their rendition of "The Unstoppable Rudy Bridges."

"It's our favorite part of summer school," said Northside Assistant Principal Beth Pafford of the performance. "They have worked on it since the beginning of the session."

Pafford pointed out that the play, directed by Alisha Day and produced by Kristy Lasser, is not so much for entertainment but as an educational tool for the summer school students.

"These are students who might not otherwise be involved in a play," she said of the 58 students who enrolled in summer school at North. The school, during regular session, has over 600 students.

She noted that learning lines, even if they are being read from a script, is educational.

"Drama improves literary skills," Pafford noted.

Continued on 2A



Rudy Bridges played by Alisha Armour speaks with her teacher, played by Mayra Carrillo, during the play The Unstoppable Rudy Bridges.

City hears budget requests

DUANE SHERRILL
Editor Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

Requests for money were the order of the day as the Smithville Board of Mayor and Aldermen began prioritizing municipal expenditures for the coming year, listening to need assessments from its department heads.

"We spend so much time fundraising," revealed Chamber of Commerce Director Suzanne Williams in asking for a slight increase in the city's contribution to the chamber. She wants \$15,000 which is a \$5,000 increase from the city's normal outlay to her department. DeKalb County contributes \$17,500.

Williams, who noted she is on 14 boards and often finds herself having to do fundraisers to make ends meet at the 260-member Chamber, pointed out that other nearby counties fund their chambers of commerce much better, some providing profits from hotel and motel taxes while others use dock fees at their marinas to help.

Williams pointed out that places like Sparta give \$30,000 to its Chamber while Clay County, home of Dale Hollow Lake, gives its Chamber \$140,000.

She noted the lower contribution comes despite the fact DeKalb County had the third largest increase in tourism dollars this past year, with visitors spending \$45 million here.

Along with Williams' request, City Police Chief Mark Collins told the board he would like to have another full-time officer and upgrade the pay scale for officers to keep pace with the sheriff's department, which recently got a pay scale hike. The chief also noted there needs to be plans made to relocate the undersized police headquarters.

Fire Chief Charlie Parker also wants another full-time employee and a raise for himself. The department is made up of volunteers aside from Parker who says he would like to someday see as many as six full-time positions in city department.

First reading of the budget is being planned for Thursday.

Rescue Squad lands truck

DUANE SHERRILL
Editor Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

County commissioner Joe Johnson pulled off the art of the deal this past week, landing his rescue squad a utility vehicle while allowing both the county and city to feel good about themselves.

"I was hoping the city would help," said second-district commissioner Johnson as he sat before the board of mayor and aldermen wanting to talk a deal on buying

one of their old fire department service trucks for the local rescue squad. "The county commission has agreed to pay half, up to \$4,000."

The truck in question was going to be sold online by Smithville Fire Department. The truck would have had to be advertised and something negotiated had a third party wanted to buy it. The truck was purchased 10 years ago by the city at a cost of \$10,000, the price leading city aldermen to wonder how much the truck was actually worth.

Estimates were that it could fetch up to \$8,000 on the open market. Alderman Josh Miller pointed out the rescue squad serves the entire community and the city could still use the truck if it was left in a pinch.

"It's a no-lose situation," Johnson said, noting both city and county could have use of the truck if they needed and that the squad serves the entire community.

After a short discussion, the city board voted to donate its \$4,000 of equity in the truck and accept the \$4,000 from the county.



County Commissioner Joe Johnson talked the city board of mayor and aldermen into donating their part of a utility truck to the rescue squad. The county donated \$4,000 toward the truck.