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Court votes down 1 percent tax

**By Hank Bond
Of The Mercury Staff**

Just a few minutes after 10 a.m. last Wednesday morning, Nicholas County Judge Executive Hester Smoot called the county's first court session.

It wasn't a regular meeting, as citizens and non-citizens of Nicholas County filled the second floor courtroom in anticipation of a vote by the court on a proposed 1 percent payroll

and occupational tax. Almost from the beginning, many members of the crowd expressed displeasure about the tax, and its potential effect on them.

The first question from the near capacity crowd was directed at Smoot.

"What will the tax be used for?"

The judge explained that the tax collected would go into the general fund for use in funding programs in the county, such as the ambulance

service, moving snow in the winter, and a list of almost all services the county provides.

"Another observer asked Smoot, if the money would go for raises to him, as judge, and to the commissioners."

"My salary is established in the ordinance, and monies from that tax would not go for any raise for me," the judge said.

A worker in the county, but not a resident, asked how the tax, which would be collected from her

paycheck, would benefit her.

Members of the court responded that using the funds to get to work were considered a service provided.

As the questions continued to press the point, members of the court responded that those working in the county, but not living in the county, would receive the same benefits as Nicholas County residents working out of Nicholas County receive when they are taxed in the same manner.

Some concern was expressed that should the court approve the tax, the City of Carlisle would move in the same direction, in an effort to collect the taxes it might need for operation.

After a few minutes, Smoot gave the court for quiet, and told members of the court he would entertain a motion to end consideration of the ordinance.

Although the crowd continued to buzz with discussion, the court voted as a whole to end consideration of the ordinance.

Smoot then asked for a motion to adjourn the public meeting, and for the court to move downtown for its regular meeting.

Even though the public meeting was officially adjourned, the crowd wouldn't leave.

Still more questions filtered from

the floor about the issue, but all-in-all, one final question, brought the crowd to its feet, and heading for the door.

"This vote means you can't vote on the ordinance without another public meeting," came the question.

"That's right," Smoot responded.

And with that, the crowd began to file out of the meeting.

Nicholas County Attorney, Jack Conley, said after the meeting, that in fact the judge was correct.

"In order for the court to consider the ordinance again, it would have to have a first reading, and then hold another public meeting, and then hold the second reading," Conley said as he stood near the doorway.

Although the meeting was officially over, many residents stood near the door, on the steps, and by the lower courtroom door, discussing the ordinance.

About 15 minutes later, Smoot called the regular meeting to order in the lower courtroom, with only two residents in attendance.



"This vote means you can't vote on the ordinance without another public meeting?"

"That's right," Judge Smoot

Services in jeopardy

Moments after a public meeting had filled the second floor courtroom of the Nicholas County Courthouse, a public hearing on a proposed tax, county judge executive Hester Smoot called fiscal court into regular session.

Gene was the throng of people, which had filled the upper level room, but still present the financial problems of Nicholas County, about to be amplified by a cut of nearly \$100,000 in revenue sharing funds.

In January 1987, the federal funds will no longer be available to county and municipal governments, forcing these local agencies to generate revenue from other areas.

Topping the list of cuts Nicholas County can expect to contend with, is the elimination of the ambulance service, from within the county.

Ronald McDonald, who operates the ambulance in Nicholas County, will not have his contract renewed when it expires at 12 midnight, December 31, 1986.

"We simply do not have enough in the budget to renew the service for the next year," Smoot said. "We only have \$10,000 in the budget, and we simply cannot enter into that contract knowing we do not have enough money to pay for the service."

Following more discussion on the logistics of withdrawing from the proposed contract for 1987, Nicholas County Attorney Jack Conley told the court it did not have to take a formal vote to end the contract.

"It's just a matter for the court to renew the contract for the next year," Conley explained.

Several alternatives were discussed concerning possible independent operation of an ambulance service, and the problem with dispatching, faced by the service, but the court was unable to arrive at any alternatives.

Accordingly, unless there is an infusion of funds from other sources, or some rearrangement is made in funding for the ambulance operation, there will be no service available from within the county.

"It's a bad thing to do, to have to pull in the service like this," Smoot told the court. "But, I just can't see any alternatives to doing it."

"It's just something we can't afford to do, now that the other money (revenue sharing) is gone."

"The people let us know how they feel about the tax (upstairs) (the 1 percent payroll and occupational tax), and since there's no money available, and not going to be from the tax (the tax is just going to be some areas that have to be cut back."

Two residents came before the court to ask that the tax issue surface again, that the court give the public a little better notification about the tax, and when the meetings would be held.

Smoot advised those before the court, that fiscal court doesn't run the newspaper, and that the court only delivers the notice to The Mercury as required by law. The Mercury makes the decision on placement of advertisements, and no advertisements are placed on the front page.

A page one story on the potential for the tax appeared in the November 17 edition of Mercury.

Fiscal Court has rescheduled its December 2 meeting to 3 p.m., in the first floor courtroom.

Also during discussion on potential cuts the county may have to make in light of the revenue sharing cuts, several methods of cutting were discussed.

One at the top of the list was a reduction of hours for some county employees to four days a week, with some on a rotating schedule.

The reduction of hours for the county road employees, while an alternative to save money, gave members of the court concern, especially with winter weather not too far away.

"We don't have \$10,000 for overtime if we have had weather with a whole lot of snow, we could have some real problems here," Smoot said.

Several other programs were discussed, including the amount of funding budgeted to each area, however, no specific plans or cuts were made for the next budget at last Wednesday's meeting.

Conley suggested every court member have a copy of the budget for review, with an eye toward revisions and cuts at the December 3 meeting.

The total budget of Nicholas County, from the printed 1986 budget, ending June 30, 1987, totals \$1,317,875. The exact revenue sharing budget totaled \$141,124, with \$1,176,751 left for general government.

Smoot pointed out that nearly every department funded by county government will have to be reviewed for the next budget year.

At the end of the meeting, Smoot told the court, "We'll just have to make the cuts. It's bad to have to pull back on some of these things, but we'll have to do it. We can't go over budget."



High Water

Brandy Fork Creek (left) filled its banks on Kentucky 22 near Clark's Used Cars. The Licking River also flowed over the banks near Blue Licks. The area received a large amount of rainfall last week, and some portions of the state had a large amount of flooding.

—Clark Photo John Deane
—Steve Photo Marvin Longquist

'Tis The Season . . .

Barbara Hopkins, chairman for the 1986 Christmas parade, has announced, as of Monday, at least 17 units will participate in this year's event.

The parade will begin at 4:30 p.m., and is sponsored by the Carlisle-Nicholas County Chamber of Commerce.

The parade will form at Nicholas County High School and travel east on Main Street, left on Broadway and break-up behind the Nicholas County Courthouse.

In addition to WLEX-TV's Brian Collins, as parade grand marshal, other participants include: The Nicholas County High School Band; the color guard from Millersburg Military Institute; and a horse contingent also from MMI.

A float from the local Head Start program has entered this year's parade, along with walking floats from WLEX-TV, a float from Nicholas County Hospital, and the local Bookshoppers.

The woman's club will have members walking, as presents and distributing goodies along the parade route.

Denise of Park 58 of the local Boy Scout Troop has entered a float in this year's parade, while Den Troop will have a marching unit in the parade.

Members of the Lion's Club will be riding in a truck, distributing candy along the parade route. The Carnice Changers will participate, and there will be a float from First National Bank of Carlisle, members of Ginger School of Dance, and of course the most old from home, Santa.

All day, December 6, Christmas music will fill the streets of Carlisle, provided by Kenny Thornburg.

Royalty

One of five candidates will be chosen Snow Queens during the event. The five contestants for queen include: Tammie Anderson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Anderson, a senior; Leslie Thornton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Albert, a senior; and, Annette Hunt, daughter of Elizabeth Hughes and William Hunt, a senior.

Also, Sherie Denise Livingston, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Livingston, a senior; and Rhonda Denise Frye, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Rung, a senior.

Book Fair

The Nicholas County High School Academic Bookshoppers' Club will be sponsoring a Book Fair, along with a bean and chili supper at the Nicholas County Public Library, also on Saturday.

Bazaar

The Nicholas County Health Care Auxiliary will hold its annual Christmas Bazaar Saturday, December 6 at 9 a.m.

Baskets, hand woven and braided rug, decorated hats and baskets, dolls, Christmas arrangements, homemade candy and baked goods, country ham sandwiches and drinks, reasonable gifts of all kinds will be for sale.

All proceeds of the bazaar will go to benefit our local hospital and nursing home.

Kentucky Utilities workers lift Christmas decorations to utility poles in Carlisle, Tuesday afternoon.

Watkins attends meeting

Nicholas Circuit Court Clerk Sally Watkins was among the 263 circuit clerks and deputies from around the state who attended the 1986 Fall Circuit Clerk's Conference in Louisville, November 19-21.

In order to provide continuing professional education and to maintain the technical expertise of Kentucky's circuit court clerk personnel, the conference program concentrated on procedural matters, bookkeeping and updating pertinent to the functions of their office. Workshops were devoted to compliance with recent legislation requiring court centralization of all criminal history data, including statistical information on arrests, convictions, and dispositions.

New and revised court forms were discussed, along with proprietary procedures on alcohol intoxication citations. Problems and remedies with processing of appeals, special judge assignments and preparing for records destruction were among the numerous topics addressed during the conference.

The clerks were also provided an overview of how their office will be affected by implementation of the new juvenile code and juvenile court designated workers, as well as statewide implementation of foster care citizen review boards.

The conference agenda was planned by the Circuit Clerk's Education Committee and conducted by Administrative Office of the Courts Education and Field Services Units.

Sally Watkins

Toys still needed

Toys for the needy are still being collected by Richard Gardner, Mark Hughes and Steve Cartwright.

There are three collection points: Garrett's Furniture, Woody's Auto Repair, and the Nicholas County Fire Department.

All donations will go to the needy, and will be distributed Christmas Eve.

Donations may include new toys, used toys in good condition, food, clothing or monetary contributions to the toy warehouse project.

According to Gardner, the collection for Christmas 1986 has already begun, and the group is in hopes the donations will continue to come in.

Anyone wishing to donate, or in need of assistance during the holiday, should contact Gardner at 289-728 or 289-730 or Hughes at 289-289.

Hoop Begins

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