

Fireworks Fly at County Hearing--But Supervisors still Pass \$5 Million Budget

Last Thursday night, the Fireworks really flew high wide and handsome at the Public Hearing on the Proposed '67 Allegany County Budget with over 100 irate Taxpayers attending the meeting held at the County Court House in Belmont.

Flashbulbs popped, charges flew, questions were asked — and left unanswered, Departmental Heads were blasted — and asked point-blank how much money they were being paid and what justified their requests for pay boosts ranging in some cases from \$1,000 to \$4,500 in the Welfare Department, and despite the protests, requests and suggestions — the budget was passed anyway!

The stormy session developed from Departmental requests for \$5,334,435.20 in the Oct. 27th tentative budget when it was first presented. Many pay raises were requested for Departmental Heads which were way out of line with the present economy advocated by Government Authorities on a 3.2% yearly increase. The list was topped by a request for a pay boost of \$4,500 annually for Ray Shear, head of the Welfare Department.

In addition to large, out of proportion pay raises, the Welfare Department also requested \$1,200,000.00 for Medical aid for the ensuing year.

This item alone brought a blast from Alton G. Marshall, Executive Officer to the Governor, in the form of a tiffily worded letter to Manley C. Ackerman, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

The State Official charged that the increase of \$1,030,750 (as submitted in the original tentative budget) is not entirely due to the initiation of the medical assistance program.

Marshall especially questioned a projected increase of \$47,000 which can not be identified by anyone including the county welfare commissioner, he wrote.

Other items also under question were: The projected increase in the number of recipients of medical assistance, from 1,000 in 1966 to 4,500 in 1967; and the services of public health nurses at a gross cost of \$35,000.

Mr. Marshall stated that "after taking all facets in consideration, we have concluded the increased cost of public assistance and care in Allegany County for 1967 will rise by \$543,840 of which \$360,856 is properly chargeable to medical assistance program with federal reimbursement of 50%, and state of 25%.

As a result of the State charges that the Budget was "unrealistic", Supervisors were notified that after due consultation with Welfare Commissioner Shear, and Board Chairman Benson Smith, the welfare appropriation was being changed from \$1,200,000 to \$900,000 — a reduction of \$300,000 in the proposed budget.

Thus, this is where the tentative amended budget stood at last Thursday's meeting and public hearing, with the total amount listed at \$4,959,474.22. (This included a few partial cuts in requested salary increases and a few other minor slashes).

The public hearing got under way with around 100 Taxpayers filling the back of the room and lining up along both of the side walls, with most of them having to remain standing for the 3 hour and 40 minute session which proved to be one of the longest and most vocal public hearings since the attempted introduction of a County Sales Tax in 1962.

Mayor Robert Gardner from Wellsville started the "ball rolling" with his opening remarks saying: "I wish to go on record as being strongly opposed to the proposed County Budget for 1967".

Mayor Gardner then continued: "The information — or lack of information, furnished by the Board of Supervisors regarding the highway budget and the public welfare

budget prior to adoption of the tentative budget seems very inadequate to enable our town representatives to intelligently, and honestly, accept a tax burden of this magnitude".

The Mayor then referred to the above letter from Alton Marshall, executive assistant to the Governor, and continued: "The proposal to increase Mr. Shear's salary as welfare commissioner this year seems to indicate your approval of an administration which has cost the taxpayers of Allegany County thousands of dollars over the past several years and has been under severe criticism by the State Department of Social Welfare for several years".

Later on in the evening, Mayor Gardner again had the floor and stated: "It appears as if large cuts in expenditures should be made in the two regions where most of the money is to be spent — namely, in the Highway Department and Welfare Department.

He also questioned the feasibility of granting Ray Shear the \$2,500 annual pay raise that was approved by the Supervisors, as well as the \$2,500 raise given the County Attorney, which placed his annual salary at \$9,000.

Mr. Gardner also suggested that the maintenance program in the Highway Department be continued as planned but to cut down and curtail some of the planned new construction work for this year at least until the Welfare Department could be stabilized.

Mrs. Anthony Toporas, wife of the Supervisor from the Town of Alma, questioned the salary allocation for personnel in the welfare department who are not presently employed and suggested that this money should be put in a contingency fund to be used for other needs in the county if the added personnel are not secured during the year.

Another Taxpayer from Wellsville, whom we were unable to identify, repeatedly questioned Benson Smith, Chairman of the Board to determine the justification of such large pay raises for a few of the Departmental Heads — only to get the well known "run-around" in response to his question.

Board Chairman Benson Smith of Cuba, spoke up in defense of the salary hikes telling of the many hours put in at night meetings of the various committees as well as the long hours of preparation necessary to carry out the affairs of the county. However, later on he admitted that these members received allowances for their mileage as well as per diem and other compensation.

Supervisor James Young Jr., of the Town of West Almond (total population of 293 at the 1960 census), also rushed to the defense of the budget committee both in the pay raise area but also in the highway department. (This is the same Supervisor that was so much in favor of the County Sales Tax back in 1962, and who even seconded the proposal.)

Mrs. Robert Lewis from Alfred Station then asked Chairman Smith if there had been any talk of trying to pass a County Sales Tax, and he admitted that it had been considered. In an answer to her question of "when", he made the rather trite statement: "When the People are ready for it".

It was rather apparent to most of the spectators as the evening wore along that the minds of the "Wheels" were already made up and that the results of this public hearing was just a mere formality, something that had to be endured and placed on record — but not necessarily be given due and extensive consideration.

In other action, the Board passed a resolution to include an allocation in the tentative budget for the establishment of the Mental Health Board after Officers of this Association made an impassioned plea for it to be included in the budget.

The Budget hearing was then declared closed and it was announced that further action on the Budget would be taken when the Board re-convened on Monday.

Supervisors Pass Record Budget With Two Dissenting Votes
When the Supervisors Meeting was resumed Monday, the opinion of the spectators at the Budget Hearing Thursday night proved to be well founded as there were no further cuts made, and with the additions for the Mental Health Program, the Budget was pegged just short of the \$5 Million mark — at \$4,999,474.22.

When the Budget was finally approved, the roll call showed that two Supervisors, Richard Embser of Wellsville, and Anthony Toporas, Town of Alma, voiced their disapproval of the budget by voting no.

There were also four votes cast against the salary increases as proposed, with Supervisor Mina Guilford of Friendship, Supervisor Harold MacMichael of Almond, and Embser and Toporas saying No again.

This is the first time in the memory of many county residents that there has been more than one No vote cast against a proposed County Budget — and judging from the spiralling expenditures — its about high time that many more Supervisors add their voice to the No Chorus!

Car Owners Should Check Their Registrations

New York State owners of motor vehicles whose registrations expire at the end of this month, but who have not received their official invitations to renew from the Department of Motor Vehicles by mail, are urged to go at once to their nearest motor vehicle office and fill out a paper application.

Roughly 966,000 registrations expire on November 30 and the renewal applications were mailed from Albany during the third and fourth weeks of October. Hence, they should already be in the hands of the registrants whose correct addresses are on file with the Department.

If they are not, however, Commissioner William S. Hulst recommends that the owners wait no longer, but go as soon as possible to the issuing office nearest their homes and obtain a paper application, fill it out and submit that together with the renewal stub form this year's registration and the proper fee.

The same holds true if the punch card application they did receive applies to a car which they formerly owned and not to their present vehicle. They should submit the wrong punch card also so that the Department may correct its records. If only the address is wrong, the original punch card may be corrected and used.

The Commissioner also reminded owners of 1961 model vehicles that if their registration expires this month they must have the cars inspected before the renewal of the registration can be made.



David Rossman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Orval Rossman of R.D. 3, Wellsville, is recovering from injuries received while serving with the Peace Corps in Ecuador. He is a patient in Room 435, U.S. Public Service Hospital, 31st Street and Wyman Park Drive, Baltimore, Md.

Mrs. Glenn Covell, a medical patient in the St. James Mercy Hospital, has returned to her home on E. Greenwood Street.

Guy Donaldson has been discharged from the Bethesda Hospital.

Edward Sackett was admitted to the Jones Memorial Hospital Monday for observation and medical treatment.

Mrs. W. F. O'Connell was admitted to the Jones Memorial Hospital Friday as a medical patient.

Mrs. Paul Westbrook has been admitted to the Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville.

News Briefs Of Local Servicemen

Carl Wittie has been advanced to Second Class Petty Officer. He is on the USS Yosemite at the Naval Yard, Boston, Mass. He and his buddy, Byron Hansen spent the week-end at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wittie.

Pvt. E. I. James Fox, of Ft. Dix, New Jersey, spent the week-end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Merle Fox.

Garth Hulin who was stationed in Labrador, was discharged from the U. S. Armed Forces, November 2nd. He and his wife and two children are residing in Andover.

Grange News

The next Grange meeting has been moved from Wednesday to Tuesday evening, November 22nd.

The Booster Night and Thanks giving programs will be combined so — COME & BOOST YOUR GRANGE, and bring your guests, and their families to an open meeting. Each family will bring sandwiches or cookies for refreshments.

On Friday evening, November 18th the Andover Grange will host the Young Patrons of Allegany County at their regular monthly meeting.

We appreciate Mr. Allen's recent comment on our new sign — ANDOVER GRANGE NO. 1098. We like it too!

PTA News

The Parent-Teacher Association announces Open House and Book Fair at Andover Central School to night (Thursday, Nov 17th). Rooms will be open from 7 to 8 p. m., and the teachers will be in the rooms to visit. There will be no business meeting.

The public is invited and those interested are urged to join at this time.

We also ask members to support the Budget Committee with their current project.

Rod & Gun Club To Hold Election Of Officers

The regular monthly meeting and Election of Officers of the Andover Rod & Gun Club will be held Friday evening, November 18th at 8 p. m.

An Oyster Supper will follow the meeting. The Public is invited.

Local Firemen To Make House-To-House Canvass

The Andover Firemen will make a house-to-house Canvass Friday evening and Saturday afternoon.

Library News

The Librarian and Trustees of the Andover Free Library announce the gift of an oil painting by the American artist, William M. Harnett. This excellent copy of the well known painting "Music and Literature" was given in memory of Frank, Etta and John Burrows by their friends:

Mrs. Guy Wellman, Friendship
Mrs. B. J. Rice, Friendship
Mrs. M. C. Mason, Friendship
Mr. and Mrs. B. T. Haskins, Wellsville
Miss Bertha K. Haskins, Wellsville

Miss Olive Place, Englewood, N. J.
Mr. Raymond Smith, Englewood, N. J.

The painting is hung in the redecorated meeting room on the lower floor of the library. It is hoped that in the near future we will be able to comfortably furnish this room.

Thanksgiving Services At Presbyterian Church

The Annual Community Thanksgiving Service will be held in the Presbyterian Church on Wednesday evening, November 23rd at 7:30 p. m.

News That's Print To Fit

Boy what a week this has been! Before we even had last week's paper all printed we were notified of the County Budget Hearing Thursday night and promised to attend, bringing any businessmen from Andover along that could be rounded up.

And do you know what? After contacting six local businessmen — we wound up driving over to Belmont thru that torrential down pour alone. It seems that we were the only one that could break previous commitments in the interests of "Public Service".

Oh well, that's life we suppose — almost everyone is against Tax Increases — but very few people want to take the time and trouble to do something about it.

Let's hope that our efforts weren't in vain and that local residents will support us in the fight to prevent a County Sales Tax in addition to all the other Taxes we have to pay.

Masonic Notice

The Stated Communication of Andover Lodge No. 558 F. & A. M. will be held Monday evening at eight o'clock, November 21. All Master Masons welcome. Refreshments.