

Three positions cut from 2005-06 budget

Washington City Council took numerous measures to reduce expenses and increase revenues in order to avoid a property tax increase with the 2005-06 City budget.

Council concurred with the recommendation of the City Manager to use the City's Reduction In Force Policy to eliminate positions as a means to reduce expenses. Three positions were cut — the Communications Director, the Codes and Inspections Administrator, and the Assistant Fire Marshal. Louis Martin was serving as Codes and Inspections Administrator and Carolyn Stroud as Communications Director at the time the positions were eliminated. The Assistant Fire Marshal position was vacant.

The functions of Inspections and EMS Billing are now under the supervision of the Fire Chief, although for now these offices remain at the Municipal Building.

Some of the mass communications services are now being handled by independent contractors.

The new budget increases the City's contribution to employee 401(k) accounts to \$35 per pay period. The budget also implements Phase II of the Pay and Classification Plan to bring the base salaries of all employees to within one step of recommended pay grade. Merit pay, job maturity raises and probationary raises are included in the 2005-06 budget, but there is no cost-of-living raise for all employees.

Six new firefighter-EMT positions have been added to the Fire-Rescue-EMS Department so that the City can respond with sufficient personnel and equipment to the growing numbers of calls for service. The budget also funds construction of a

second fire station on the west side of the City (see story, page 4).

Although there is no tax increase, the new budget does increase other fees and charges effective July 1. Water rates are up by 11%, and sewer rates and stormwater service charges are up 5%. A 4.2% increase in electric rates went into effect in May as a result of rising fuel costs for power plants.

Other fee increases include an additional \$10 for city residents to participate in recreation programs; rental fees at the Civic Center, Aquatic and Fitness Center, athletic fields and Havens Garden picnic shelter; and EMS charges. Hours for the Aquatic Center hours also have been reduced, including closing on Sunday.

Brooks appointed to City Council

Richard Brooks has been appointed to Washington City Council to fill the unexpired term of Mickey Gahagan, who resigned to accept appointment as Mayor. Brooks previously served as a member of City Council as well as on the City's Planning Board and Board of Adjustment.

City to start observing Veterans Day holiday

City Council has added Veterans Day as a new City holiday to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. The holiday will be observed annually on November 11.

Recreation centers named to honor 2 City employees

Public Works employees commended

Wellness In The Works

Health assessments available to employees

The Wellness Committee is visiting all City departments to provide basic health assessments to employees. An EMT from the Fire-Rescue-EMS Department is accompanying committee members to measure blood pressure. Employees also can have their body mass index calibrated, receive information on the deadly skin cancer melanoma, and learn how to earn prizes through Blue Cross/Blue Shield's Blue Points program. Employees participating in the health assessment program receive an appreciation gift.

Employee blood drive produces 45 units

More than 60 City employees participated either by giving blood or assisting with registration and the canteen at the annual City of Washington Employee Red Cross Blood Drive on May 13. Forty-five units of blood were collected. All participants received a commemorative t-shirt. The blood drive is coordinated each year by *Wellness in the Works*.

Lunchtime yoga class offered to City employees

In July, City employees have been invited to participate in yoga classes at the Moore Aquatic & Fitness Center during the lunch hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. Instructor Kelli Miller said, "The stretching, toning and relaxation will make you focused for your day." Bring comfortable clothing to change into. There is no charge to City employees for these yoga sessions.

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Rec centers named for Andrews, Harwell

Two Washington recreation facilities have been named to recognize two City employees for the advancement of local recreation programs. Seventh Street Recreation Center has been renamed the Bobby Andrews Recreation Center in honor of Andrews' long-time work with local youth athletic programs. Andrews is Athletic Programs Supervisor with the Parks and Recreation Department. The Senior Resources Center is now called the Grace Martin Harwell Senior Resources Center in memory of the City's first Recreation Director.

United Way contributors thanked with a picnic lunch

Approximately 80 employees attended a picnic on May 26 at Havens Gardens to recognize contributors to the 2005 United Way Campaign. Phil Harris, Beaufort County United Way Director, provided the grill and flipped hamburgers and hot dogs. Forty door prizes were distributed. The United Way Campaign Committee, which was host for the picnic, extends thanks to all City employees who contributed to the campaign, which provides financial support to many local non-profit organizations serving the well-being of Beaufort County citizens. Committee members are Brenda Ruffin, Hope Woolard, Gloria Moore, Sharon Probert, Alston Tankard, Charles Garris, Gil Davis, Jasper Hardison, Matthew Bailey, David Gibbs and Susan Hodges.

City employees raise \$4,460 for Relay for Life

The City of Washington Employee Relay for Life team raised \$4,460 for the American Cancer Society this past spring. Fundraising included food sales on Friday night at the event. The team raised \$521 that evening from sales of funnel cake (a sell-out) and 80-90 barbecue sandwiches featuring Clarence Gray's special barbecue.

Winner of the drawing for a free massage from Little Kneads was Charlie Lamancusa. Hope Woolard & Lalla Sidbury also won coupons for \$10 off the cost of a massage.

About Your Benefits

City health insurance costs increase by 6.6%

The City will continue health insurance coverage with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC Blue Options Plan in 2005-2006. Premiums have increased by 6.6% for employee and dependent coverage. New rates for employees who pay for dependent coverage are:

Child(ren)	\$123.45 / pay period,
Spouse	\$188.59 / pay period,
Family	\$294.91 / pay period.

There is no change in costs or benefits for both the dental plan (CIGNA) and VSP vision coverage.

The Blue Options health plan carries a \$500 deductible, which starts over on July 1. New health insurance cards, which will not list employee social security numbers, have been mailed to employees' homes.

Obesity assessment now covered under health plan

The health plan now covers obesity assessments. The plan will pay for four office visits for assessment of obesity and treatment of related conditions.

Deductibles, co-pays required for some testing

Please note that the following diagnostic procedures are subject to deductible and coinsurance regardless of place of service: CT, MRI, MRA and PET.

Don't forget to apply for vision reimbursement

Did you purchase glasses and/or contact lenses between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2005? If so, don't forget to apply for the \$100 reimbursement through Blue Cross Blue Shield, if you haven't done so already. You will need a receipt of your purchase. Human Resources will be glad to help you. Call ext. 305 for more information.

Supplemental plans pay wellness benefits

AFLAC and Colonial customers, don't forget to apply for any wellness benefits that may be offered with your policy.

Employee News

Personal

♦ **Lee Dawson** (Fire-Rescue-EMS) spent the weekend of May 14-15 in Myrtle Beach during Bike Week. ♦ Seth Everett, son of **Carolynne Everett** (Senior Programs-Parks and Recreation) graduated from Appalachian State University on May 8 with a bachelor of science degree in computer science. He holds a programming position with the Lowe's Corporation in North Wilkesboro. ♦ **Carol Newman** (Brown Library) became a new grandmother on April 24 at 8:07 a.m. when Allison Paige Schafer came into the world at 9 pounds and 20 1/2 inches. The proud parents live in Rock Hill, SC. ♦ Emmanuel Moore, son of **Troy Moore** (Public Works-Water Resources) and nephew of **Gloria Moore** (Brown Library), graduated May 27 from Southside High School, where he earned numerous honors for his athletic skills. He was the defensive player of the game for the 2004 State Championship; 2005 Gatorade Defensive Player of the Year; and a member of the 1A All-State Team for the East Division, the Four Rivers All Academic team, the Washington Daily News All Area team, the East-West All Star High School Football team, and Southside's Anchor Bowl championship team. He is recipient of Southside's 2004 Most Valuable Player Football Scholarship to Chowan College. Emmanuel also was the boys' high jump state champion for track and field events. ♦ **Rachael Rucienski** (Police-Administration) welcomed her first grandchild, William Reece Dansey, born April 6 to daughter Megan & Trey Dansey. Reece weighed 7 1/2 lbs. & measured 20 1/2 in. Rachel's son Jason has accepted a position with the Dept. of Immigration in Charlotte. ♦ Hilliary Stringer, daughter of Cindy and **Joe Stringer** (Police Chief), has been selected as a member of the 2005-06 Junior Varsity Cheerleading Squad at Washington High School. ♦ **Louis Williams** (Public Works-General Services) was named the 2004 Volunteer of the Year at the Tyrrell Prison Work Farm.

In Sympathy

♦ City of Washington employees mourn the loss of **Seth Paul** (Police-Telecommunications), who passed away on July 3 while at the beach. ♦ Condolences are extended to **Mark Wesley** (Public Works-Water Resources) whose mother passed away this past spring.

Career

New Hires

April. ♦ **Lloyd Whitehurst**, Facilities Attendant-Part-time (Parks & Recreation).

May. ♦ **Tim Griffith**, Sanitation Worker (Public Works-Sanitation) ♦ **Dale Gibbs**, Visitor Center Attendant-Part-time (Tourism) ♦ **Greysen Ingalls**, Laborer-Temporary (Parks & Recreation-Maintenance) ♦ **Joshua Woolard**, Laborer-Temporary (Parks & Recreation-Maintenance) ♦ **Allison Oliver**, Lifeguard-Part-time (Parks & Recreation-Aquatics) ♦ **Elizabeth Lekson**, Lifeguard-part-time (Parks & Recreation-Aquatics).

June. ♦ **Ashley Clark**, Summer Programs Assistant-Temporary (Parks & Recreation-Summer Programs) ♦ **Rashaad Moore**, Labor-Temporary (Parks & Recreation-Maintenance) ♦ **Brian Wood**, Airport Operations Supervisor-Temporary (Airport) ♦ **Elmo Carawan**, Airport Operations Technician-Temporary (Airport) ♦ **Stephanie Stancil**, Lifeguard (Parks & Recreation-Aquatics) ♦ **Jonathan Harris**, Lifeguard (Parks & Recreation-Aquatics) ♦ **Susan Scherer**, Dock Attendant (Parks & Recreation-Docks) ♦ **Desmetress Howard**, Utilities Communication Technician (Electric-Load Management) ♦ **Steven Hilsinger**, Police Officer (Police) ♦ **Frank Dermercurio**, Electric Line Worker III (First Class Electric Line Worker) (Electric-Transmission & Distribution).

July. ♦ **Raymond Midgett**, Information Technology Coordinator (Finance-Information Systems) ♦ Thomas Everett, Police Officer (Police) ♦ Roy Alons, Police Officer (Police).

Retirements

♦ **Garleen Woolard** (Information Systems-Finance) with 30 years service on April 30. ♦ **Earl Parker** (Transmission & Distribution-Electric) with 24 years service on March 31.

Achievements

♦ **Crystal Barton** (Police-Records) graduated on May 13 from Beaufort County Community College with an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice. ♦ The following staff of Fire-Rescue-EMS have received their Driver Operator Aerial Certification: **Amber Carter**, **Alan McCutcheon**, **Jeremy Wetherington**, **Harold Johnson** and **Josh Ingram**. ♦ **Otis Harrell** and **Amber Carter** (Fire-Rescue-EMS) have received Fire Inspector Level I Certification ♦ **Jasper Hardison** (Fire-Rescue-EMS) attended the NC Fire Prevention School. ♦ **Gerald Seighman** (Fire-Rescue-EMS) attended the Advanced Investigative Approaches Seminar. ♦ The following employees of the Electric Department's Transmission & Distribution Division have received ElectricCities Lineman Career Development Certificates and NC Department of Labor Journeyman Certificates: Level I — **Keith Alligood**, **Curtis Lee Hardee**, **Jimmie Moore**; Level II — **Kenny McConville**, **Scott Owens**, **Tracy Elks**.



Jamie Vega-Gomez, William Rayburn and Glen Whitehead of Public Works' Drainage Division

Public Works employees commended for role in recovering stolen property

Jamie Vega-Gomez, Glen Whitehead and William Rayburn, employees of the Public Works Department's Drainage Division, were recognized by Washington City Council for their role in recovering property stolen from Washington residences during February 2005.

On April 5, the employees were cleaning out a drainage ditch off of Havens Street when they discovered several pieces of jewelry. They immediately turned the items over to their supervisor, Bill Hayes, who turned them in to the Washington Police Department.

Police officers recognized the jewelry as items that had been reported stolen during a series of recent burglaries. Some of the items belonged to Wanda Parker, who requested that the employees be recognized publicly for their good deed.

At the July City Council meeting, Mayor Mickey Gahagan said, "On behalf of Mrs. Parker, as well as myself, City Council and the residents of the City of Washington, we thank you for the honesty and character shown in this event and for setting an example for others to follow."

City Holidays

Labor Day. Monday, Sept. 5

Veterans Day. Friday, Nov. 11

Maximize your 401k

The limit for 401k contributions is now \$14,000. If you are 50 or older or will turn 50 in 2005, you can contribute an additional \$4,000 in catch up contributions. Contact Prudential at 1-866-624-0151 if you would like to continue to contribute the maximum, or change your deferral amount.

Land selected for location of westside fire station

The City has selected two acres of land behind the former Miller Harness Building next to the Industrial Park as the location of an auxiliary fire station to serve the rapidly growing west side of Washington.

Having staff and equipment stationed there will reduce response time to fires in this area. Response times of five minutes or less are crucial to protecting lives and property and keeping fire insurance rates down. High insurance costs would make the Washington area, including the industrial park, less attractive for economic development.

Fire-Rescue-EMS is now accepting proposals for engineering and architectural design services for the station and expects to proceed with design work by the fall.

Recreation cost-sharing challenges to continue

Washington area residents look to the City to provide parks and recreation programs, since Beaufort County does not provide these services. However, for years the City has wrestled with the issue of equitable funding of recreation services for the community.

The City partners with numerous independent athletic leagues to provide quality competitive sports programs. The leagues pay for program expenses like equipment, officials' salaries and uniforms. Participation fees paid to the City help pay the public's cost of preparing and keeping up fields and buildings, utilities, and insurance.

However, revenue from participation fees — even with the recent increase in fees for City resident participation — and Beaufort County's annual contribution do not cover all of the City's costs of providing recreation services. To reduce costs, the City will be limiting participation in sports programs. Fewer participants will result in fewer teams and fewer games for which the City must provide facility upkeep and staffing. This will continue to be an issue for future City budgets. City elected officials also have pledged to work with County elected officials to resolve the funding inequities.

Fire-Rescue-EMS staff obtain Level III certification

Six members of the City of Washington's Fire-Rescue-EMS Department have become the first fire service professionals in North Carolina to be granted Fire Officer III certification, the highest level available in North Carolina, by the NC Department of Insurance.

Those receiving certification at a ceremony in Greensboro on April 12 were Scottie Taylor, Robbie Rose, Gerald Seighman, Jimmy Davis, Mark Yates, and Jasper Hardison. They joined four members of the City of Greensboro Fire Department in being the only 10 certified Level III fire officers in North Carolina.

Washington Fire-Rescue-EMS is also the first fire department in the state whose command staff has received Fire Officer Certification at all three levels.

Washington's FREMS Department has helped the State of North Carolina develop and implement three levels of a Fire Officer Certification program by participating in pilot programs for levels I, II and III. The department has been recognized by the NC Department of Insurance, which administers the certification program, for its "dedication and commitment to the development and implementation of a successful Fire Officer program for the fire service of the great state of North Carolina."

Happy Birthday

Eric Whitaker	Jun. 5	Lacey McMasters	Jul. 17
Noah Clark	Jun. 5	Troy Moore	Jul. 17
Elizabeth Pruden	Jun. 6	Johnathan Hardin	Jul. 17
Tony Hoell	Jun. 6	Greg Gaskins	Jul. 18
Matthew Shetrone	Jun. 7	Wes Martin	Jul. 22
Kristi Hardison	Jun. 8	Debra Hicks	Jul. 23
Kimberly Hensley	Jun. 8	Gil Davis	Jul. 26
John Tyndall	Jun. 9	Alan Brooks	Jul. 28
Forrest Warren	Jun. 12	Steven Merrill	Jul. 30
Heidi Smith	Jun. 14	Robert Lowe	Aug. 2
Steve Szabo	Jun. 15	Joe Stringer	Aug. 2
Willie Blount	Jun. 19	Brenda Curtis	Aug. 4
Shane Lewis	Jun. 23	Bill Hayes	Aug. 5
Keith Alligood	Jun. 24	William Rayburn	Aug. 7
Otis Harrell	Jun. 25	William Galloway	Aug. 9
Tom Amick	Jun. 27	Harold Johnson	Aug. 9
Angela Flowers	Jun. 28	Scott Owens	Aug. 9
Cornelius Clark	Jun. 28	Robbie Rose	Aug. 9
Laura Strickland	Jun. 28	Carroll Whitehurst	Aug. 11
Adam Waters	Jun. 29	Wanda Corey	Aug. 13
William Little	Jun. 29	Julie Hicks	Aug. 15
Dave Smith	Jul. 1	Ben Sheppard	Aug. 17
Bill Wynne	Jul. 5	Bill Wynne Jr.	Aug. 18
David Gibbs	Jul. 6	Cameron Lawrence	Aug. 20
Kelly King	Jul. 7	Jonathan Kuhn	Aug. 21
Scott Pake	Jul. 7	Carol Newman	Aug. 21
Charles Edwards	Jul. 9	Blair Stowe	Aug. 22
Stephanie Godley	Jul. 9	Tobby Wainwright	Aug. 25
Ron Black	Jul. 10	Cleo Guion	Aug. 26
Dennis Rascoe	Jul. 11	Marcia Hamilton	Aug. 26
Rose Ann Fennell	Jul. 12	Jerry Davis	Aug. 28
Travis Boyd	Jul. 12	Chris Lee	Aug. 29
Eddie Bryant	Jul. 16	Ken Berry	Aug. 30
Tim Rice	Jul. 16		

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City Times

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