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Average homeowner may see \$95 tax increase for schools

By Christina Lopes Reporter

MILFORD—Caroline County's average homeowner may see real estate taxes increase by \$95 to pay for the expansion and renovation of Caroline High School and Madison Elementary School.

That was the estimate given to the Caroline County Board of Supervisors during a Nov. 14 meeting. The board heard a report on the bond from Courtney Rogers,

a senior vice president for Dav- enport & Company LLC, a finan- cial advisor to the county. Rogers spoke with the board about the tax rate as it applies to the financing of the \$26.3 million school bond referendum. The bond referendum passed Nov. 5 and with 81 percent of voters saying yes.

The tax rate may increase by 7 to 9 cents per \$100 in property valuation to pay back the loan. Close to \$4 million is earmarked for the

elementary school and \$21 million would go to the high school. The remaining balance is for the cost of issuing bonds.

Rogers gave the board some options concerning borrowing the money. The county has the option of borrowing the entire amount at one time, or over a period of time. According to Rogers, it is common for localities in Virginia to work out repaying the debt for school projects over 20 years.

Rogers informed the board that an estimated 8.6 cent increase to the tax rate will happen if the mon- ey is borrowed at 5.5 percent over 20 years. The rate would increase 7.6 cents at 4 percent.

To start construction in the summer of 2014, the county has the option to start borrowing the amounts needed early in the year. The first payment would be in the fiscal year 2015.

One option Rogers outlined for

the board was to procure the bonds through a bank. A positive for this option is that it would not require a bond rating. Also, the issuance costs are low. However, due to the size it may require more than one issuance. In addition, the county would not have the guarantee of a fixed rate for the entire 20-year period.

Another option was to go through Virginia Public School

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Delinquent sewer bills forgiven by county

By Christina Lopes Reporter

MILFORD—The Caroline County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to forgive all but three months of outstanding charges for county sewer services in Dawn during a meeting on Nov. 14.

The resolution passed during the meeting by a 5-1 vote. Supervisor Calvin Taylor voted against the motion.

The issue of the resolution stems from use of the Dawn Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System in the Dawn area of Caroline County. Many of the customers of this system have been unable to pay their monthly service bills.

The result of the customers' inability to pay is the accumulation of very large balances for both service charges as well as penalties.

According to County Administrator Charles Culley, who ran down a detailed memo during the meeting, the total amount of delinquent bills adds up to \$28,119. The amount of penalty charges incurred has reached \$47,000.

It is not very likely that the county would be able to collect the outstanding sewer charges. Board members indicated an intent to offer the Dawn system's most delinquent customers a fresh start. The county will waive all but three months of past-due fees and penalties for the worst cases in Dawn.

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Judge Farmer fondly remembered



Photo by Dawn Hawn

Virginia State Police and Caroline County Sheriff officers carry the casket of retired judge J. Peyton Farmer from the funeral service at Bowling Green Baptist Church last Sunday.

BOWLING GREEN—J. Peyton Farmer, a retired judge in the 15th judicial circuit court, died unexpectedly on Nov. 13 and his funeral was on Nov. 17.

Farmer, 80, and his wife, Jean, had been married for 54 years. He also leaves behind four children and five grandchildren.

The Rev. Greg Webber, pastor of Bowling Green Baptist Church, gave a eulogy during Farmer's funeral. In attendance were family, friends, court staff from the 15th circuit, Caroline Court, Caroline County Sheriff's Office, and Virginia State Police. Law enforcement officers served as pall bearers.

"His career spread in presence of witness on earth and now in heaven," Webber said. Judge Farmer was known for his fairness, kindness, integrity, gentleness, and wisdom.

"Peyton lived a life well-lived," Webber said. "He was a Virginia gentleman and it is a vanishing breed."

Farmer was a lover of sports. He watched some sports and there were some in which he saw in him-

self a fair amount of talent and those were football, baseball, tennis and golf. He loved watching the Washington Redskins football team, Richmond Spiders and New York Yankees.

"Peyton had one of those spin serves in tennis that was impossible to return," said Webber. "Another sport he enjoyed was ping pong. He was his own legendary 'East Coast Ping Pong Champ,' according to his family."

One of Farmer's favorite holidays was Christmas. He always prepared his signature steamed shrimp and created within his home a warm hospitality for his friends and family. He often said to friends and family members around him: "Ain't we living."

Sheriff Tony Lipka wrote in a press release, "Judge Farmer was at home and during the late morning, the Bowling Green Rescue Squad responded to his home and transported him to Mary Washington Hospital. Judge Farmer passed away at approximately 2:30 p.m. (from natural causes) and he was surrounded by

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School uniform still issue to parents

By Christina Lopes Reporter

MILFORD—The Caroline County School Board conducted a uniform forum at the new Bowling Green Elementary School on Nov. 19 to discuss the possible implementation of uniforms within the school system next year.

An estimated 40 to 50 parents and members of the community attended the meeting in the school library to voice their questions and concerns, and to learn more about the possible wardrobe changes facing Caroline schools.

After the students who agreed to model the uniform prototypes were shown, the forum opened up to public comments. Many of the parents seemed displeased with the idea of uniforms, regardless of the reasoning behind them. Some parents shook their heads and mumbled under their breath. Others were outspoken against the idea.

There were strong opinions on both side of the argument, with some parents adamantly stating that a dress code will not help students if they feel it is a punishment, and it will not have the desired effect of eliminating inappropriate clothing. There were frowns and arm crossings, as well as smiles and nods of approval.

One parent voiced her concern over enforcement issues and asked school officials how they planned to enforce a uniform policy when they were having trouble enforcing the current dress code. Officials responded, "Uniforms are easier to enforce than a dress code" due to how narrow the parameters are.

Another parent, who was not

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Farm Bureau helps students learn about agriculture

Virginia Farm-to-School Week comes to classrooms

MILFORD—Caroline County Farm Bureau recently took on a project to educate elementary school students about agriculture in their community.

Caroline Farm Bureau's board of directors and insurance agents developed posters profiling local farmers and their operations and displayed them at Bowling Green Elementary School as part of the fifth annual Virginia Farm to School Week, which took place Nov. 11-15.

Each poster featured facts about a different Caroline farm and its products.

Caroline Farm Bureau, with assistance from Virginia's Agriculture in the Classroom program, also distributed agriculture information and classroom activity materials. Staff and volunteers also were at the school all week to answer questions about agriculture and to read the book *Who Grew My Soup?* to the stu-



Beekeeper Jeff Sili shows students honey from a bee hive during Farm to School Week.

dents.

As part of the event, Maxie Broadus, a Caroline County farmer, showed his combine and he explained how it is used to harvest grain, such as corn and soybeans.

Jeff Sili, a member of the Caroline County Board of Supervisors, is a beekeeper and he took fresh honey to the school and asked the children how many bees it takes to make one pound of honey. The an-

swer is 5,000 bees.

Sili also talked to the children about what would happen if there were no bees, no apples or other good things to eat. He explained what bees eat to make honey. He described the importance of the "queen" bee and how the "sister" bees take care of all the eggs.

Other agricultural participants were English Acres Farm (focusing on crops) and A Farm Next Door (focusing on farm animals).

According to the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, Caroline has over 200 farms, and the average farm is nearly 250 acres. The estimated market value of the land and buildings on

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