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Davenport passes budget, tax boost

By Tom Collins
of the Times

With no discussion, Davenport's City Council unanimously approved a $45 million budget Wednesday that is expected to increase the tax rate 5.2 percent for the fiscal year beginning April 1.

The new budget calls for no new employees or programs, or improvements in existing services. But the tax rate is expected to increase 56 cents to $10.86 per $1,000 assessed valuation from the current rate of $10.30.

If that estimate holds, taxes on a $55,000 house would increase $31 next fiscal year, which runs from April 1 to March 31.

City officials still are hoping, however, for a larger increase in the city's total assessed valuation than has been predicted. A higher value would result in a lower tax rate to raise the same funds.

The final assessments will be out in July.

Most of the proposed tax rate increase is due to a decrease in revenues from building and development fees, intergovernmental sources and interest on investments — caused mainly by a soft economy, City Administrator Robert Mulready said Wednesday.

But the city also is faced with huge annual increases in health and life insurance premiums for its employees, utility and rental charges and injury claims, which in future years may require additional tax rate increases just to keep up.

In other business Wednesday, the council:

• **Approved an ordinance requiring** financial disclosure statements from all city employees. The statements will be used as guides for contracting with private businesses.

If a city employee, for example, holds a substantial interest in a business, that business will not be employed by the city.

The old ordinance required only department heads and city inspectors to file disclosure statements, and then only if businesses in which they or their immediate families had an interest worked for the city the previous year.

• **Advanced $18,000 to the Davenport** Area Convention & Visitors Bureau to cover the bureau's startup costs. The bureau has been guaranteed 10 percent — or about $25,000 — from the proceeds of a 3 percent hotel-motel tax levied on approximately 1,600 hotel and motel rooms in the city beginning April 1.

It will increase to 4 percent next year and 5 percent in 1983 and successive years.

The so-called pillow tax is to be used to promote recreation and tourism.

• **Agreed to set up** a six-member committee, consisting of two members each from the council, Scott County Board of Supervisors and Davenport Board of Education, to study intergovernmental cooperation. The first item on the agenda will be a joint transportation system.

• **And appointed** Lois Leach, the mother of Rep. James Leach, R-Iowa, to the Davenport Art Gallery Board of Trustees. She also is a member of the Library Board of Trustees.

Davenport bans park parking

By Tom Collins
of the Times

Residents of Davenport's Harrison Manor condominiums must remove their vehicles from VanderVeer Park by Oct. 1 — or face parking fines.

That was the ultimatum issued Wednesday by the City Council, ending the month-long controversy over whether the residents of the complex should be allowed to use the park as a parking lot.

To support the order, City Administrator Robert Mulready is expected to propose an ordinance this summer banning overnight parking in any of the city's parks.

Parking has been a problem for Harrison Manor residents ever since it was converted to condominiums from apartments in 1979 by the W.G.Z. Corp., Davenport. Shortly after that, about 15 residents began parking in VanderVeer Park.

MEMBERS OF the Harrison Manor Homeowners Association claim, however, that they never intended to use the park permanently — just until they find alternative parking.

But that may take more than six months.

Alderman James Reistroffer, whose 7th Ward includes the complex, withdrew a proposed amendment to the measure granting residents of the complex at 2512 Harrison St. an extra two months to find other parking.

His amendment also would have included charging residents $5 a month to park in the VanderVeer conservatory parking lot.

"I thought that might be a good solution to what appears to be a no-win situation," he said. "But I was asked by the homeowners' association to withdraw it, so I did."

AFTER THE council's regular business, Jeff Barth, president of the association, criticized the council for looking for an easy solution to an extremely difficult problem.

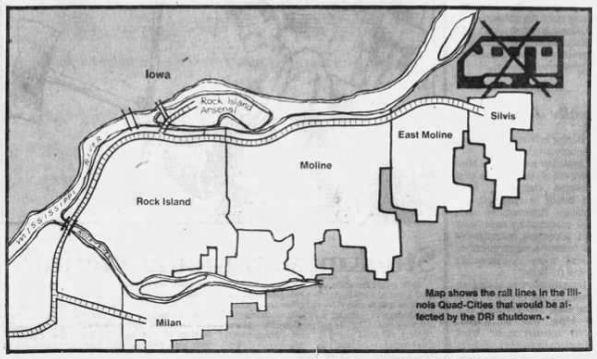
"We have not littered the park. We don't drink beer there after the park closes, nor have we damaged the park," he said. "In my opinion, I think this whole issue has become a political football. And by kicking us out, you're not helping find a solution."

Association members have asked that the council allow parking in the alley behind the complex. But aldermen said they are concerned that if vehicles park on both sides of the alley, emergency vehicles might have trouble getting through.

IN OTHER business, the council renamed Hayes Pool, "Pete Dohse Pool," in honor of the former 1st Ward alderman who died last month at the age of 66.

Dohse served as alderman of the west end ward that includes the pool from 1971 to 1979. He was a Davenport policeman for nearly 23 years, and had run unsuccessfully for Scott County sheriff and supervisor.

The council also approved a request by Alderman Donald Costello, 8th Ward, that the city re-evaluate the inner-city cleanup program.



Doomed rail service

The Davenport, Rock Island and North Western Railway (DRI Line) plans to cease operations on 14 miles of track from Silvis to Milan. The track, owned by the bankrupt Rock Island Lines, provides service to the Rock Island Arsenal and about two dozen businesses. (Times map) Story: Page 1

AEA cuts 40 jobs

Schools' services expected to suffer

By Bill Theobald
of the Times

The board of directors of the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9 voted Wednesday night to eliminate about 40 professional staff positions for the 1981-82 school year because of state and federal funding cuts.

AEA administrator Dr. Clark Stevens said Wednesday the personnel reductions could lower the quality of special education provided in six eastern Iowa counties: Scott, Muscatine, Clinton and Jackson counties, and parts of Cedar and Louisa counties.

The agency provides provides special education, media and other services to a total of 64,000 students in 24 public school districts and 23 private schools.

STEVENS said the students — including those who are physically or mentally disabled, or who have behavior disorders or hearing impairments — will be the ultimate losers.

"The bottom line is that this cannot help but dilute the programs and services we offer to local districts," Stevens said. "And the end result of that, of course, is that the kids performance cannot make the progress we would like it to make."

MISSISSIPPI BEND is one of 15 AEAs in the state. Under the school funding bill expected to be signed by Gov. Robert Ray this week, the state would back an even bigger slice out of the AEA's expected allocation for 1981-82 than that lost by local districts.

Stevens said the special education services and educational services divisions of the Mississippi Bend budget — more than 90 percent of the total — will be allowed no growth next year.

And the media services division will be allowed only a maximum 3 percent budget growth, the same growth rate set for local districts.

WITH A CUT of $340,000 in expected federal and for special education thrown into that formula, Stevens said Mississippi Bend will be working with about $1 million less for 1981-82 than was expected.

And because the AEA's most service and largest budget item is people — more than even in local school districts — there will be massive personnel cuts to meet the budget reductions.

Along with the 40 professional staff positions cut, seven positions that are now vacant will not be filled, Stevens said. Also, 11 or 12 professional staffers will have their contracts reduced.

Referendum group picks name, tactics

By Kris Jensen
of the Times

A committee to promote a $15 million bond issue for Davenport schools chose a name Wednesday night and continued to map strategy for the May 19 referendum.

After several votes, "Forward Davenport Schools" was picked as the name the committee will use in a proposed $9,000 campaign to convince Davenport voters — who twice have rejected referendums — to approve this bond issue.

The $15 million bond issue is part of a $23 million improvement program that would include a $12.65 million for a new high school and a $2.3 million for the remodeling of Central High School.

Other improvements include:

• **A $530,000 addition to Fillmore** Elementary School.

• **A $353,000 addition to Harrison** Elementary School.

• **$200,000 worth of improvements** to bring Taylor School up to fire safety regulations.

• **$700,000 in other remodeling projects.**

• **$1 million for various other projects.**

Superintendent Ted W. Gray reviewed for committee members the proposed improvements, which are part of a 23-page, long-range facility plan.

Gray said the bond issue can be made without raising the tax rate because the district is paying off earlier bonds and because of increased assessed valuation of property in the district.

Gray said the school district can earn $2 million by obtaining the bond money at low interest rates and investing it at higher rates.

Mark Bowden, a local advertiser who is heading up publicity for the committee, proposed spending $9,000 on advertising and other promotions. That compares with $6,120 on one of the earlier bond issues.

Money will be raised through voluntary contributions, Bowden said.

The group also is obtaining voter registration lists to encourage voters to support the referendum.

Committee chairman Ray Judd, a former school board president, said the committee has received many questions about the bond issue. A fact sheet has been prepared, but Judd said that new queries must be answered.

One question — where the new high school will be located — will be addressed by the school board when it meets Monday.

Judd said there also have been questions about maintaining racial balances within the district, particularly with the addition of a third high school. "The board needs to assure the community that, we're not making Central into a ghetto school or ethnic school," Judd said.

School board President Charles H. Wiese said that issue also will be discussed Monday.

Edward L. Schmidt, a school maintenance worker, told fellow committee members the board should hire a local architect and local contractor.

Illinois Quad-Cities

Pair charged in steel theft

Two men were charged Wednesday with theft after some stolen items were sold to a junk dealer, police said.

Cecil R. Ball, 59, of 302 5th Ave., Rock Island, and Harold D. Harp, 48, of 2826 Marquette St., Davenport, were being held Wednesday night in the Rock Island city jail.

Police said some steel was taken in a pickup truck from the old Rock Island Lines depot at 38th Street and 5th Avenue, then sold to a junk dealer. Detective David Lund said a total of 1,700 pounds of the steel was sold.

Bond for Ball was set at $2,000, and $1,065 for Harp.

Police also charged Harp with failure to have a valid driver's license, and Ball with two counts of contempt for failure to pay previous court fines.

Edgar to visit RI drivers' license office

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State James Edgar is scheduled to pay his first official visit to the Quad Cities Friday.

He is expected to tour the drivers' license examining facility at 2818 11th St., Rock Island, between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. and also will hold discussions with political leaders.

Edgar, who was appointed to his position late last year, has been visiting secretary of state facilities throughout Illinois to meet employees and to listen to comments they have about the operation of his office.

Coal Valley leader quits school drive

The Moline school referendum steering committee got a jolt Wednesday night when its Coal Valley coordinator resigned unexpectedly, saying she could no longer support the tax increase efforts.

Cindy Stuart cited personal reasons for the decision but would not elaborate.

School officials said there have been leadership problems in Coal Valley but that support among campaign workers in the village had been strong.

After the resignation, committee volunteers from school, business, ethnic and senior citizen groups continued to plot campaign strategy.

The district is seeking an increase of $4.80 per $1,000 assessed valuation to avert what school officials say will be a $1.4 million deficit next year.

Red Cross to hold fund-raising swims

The third annual Swim-a-Cross to benefit the Quad-Cities Chapter of the American Red Cross is scheduled at seven pools March 27-29.

Swimmers of all ages may pick up pledge envelopes at the chapter office, 400 16th St., Rock Island, or at any of the participating pools.

The schedule will be:

Rock Island High School, 3 to 6 p.m. March 27.

Augustana College, Rock Island, 3 to 9 p.m. March 28, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 29.

United Township High School, East Moline, 9 a.m. to noon March 28 and 29.

Black Hawk College, Moline, 1 to 5 p.m. March 28, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 29.

Davenport West High School, noon to 4 p.m. March 28.

Bettendorf High School, 1 to 3 p.m. March 29.

St. Ambrose College, Davenport, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 28.

The Swim-a-Cross will be part of the 100th birthday observance of the Red Cross.

Environmental agency has loans to spare

By Kathy Best
of the Times

An Illinois agency has $1.5 billion to help cure the environmental ills of small businesses, but there have been few takers so far.

Only 28 businesses have received low-interest loans from the Illinois Environmental Facilities Financing Authority since its small business program began in 1977, and half of those loans were handed out last year.

To drum up interest, executive director Ronald Bean is cross-crossing the state to spread information about the program and find takers for the authority's money.

"Most small businesses don't know what's available. That's why I'm doing this," he said during a stop Wednesday in the Quad-Cities.

Although two large Quad-City companies have tapped the authority's funds, area interest in the small business program has been expressed by only one group.

Bean said Mitchell Disposal Service of East Moline and Recycling Systems & Equipment Inc. of Bettendorf, have requested a $1.8 million loan to start a joint waste transfer company in East Moline.

The firms want to use the money to recycle items such as glass, aluminum and paper. Leftover waste would be compacted and taken to a landfill.

Bean said the project, which has not received final funding approval, would create seven new jobs, cut energy usage by requiring fewer truck trips to dumps and lengthen the life-span of landfills.

Bean said the authority also loans money to companies that must modify their operations to meet environmental standards.

"We're here to help companies meet pollution control requirements," he said, adding that funding is given for construction costs as well as for engineering, architectural, bond issuance and legal fees.

Bean said the interest rate for loans through the authority is now about 10.4 percent for a 20-year period.

He also said red tape at the authority is minimal, adding, "You're looking at half my staff."

The bonds sold by the authority to generate loan money are guaranteed by the federal government and have triple-A ratings, Bean said.

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