Public Hearing
1997-98 Proposed Budget
June 16, 1997
6:30 p.m.

The Elkton Town Council held a Public Hearing on June 16, 1997 at 6:30 p.m. in the council chambers. Mayor Charles E. Dean presided over the hearing. The roll call was as follows:

PRESENT

F. A. Bennett
M. L. Dearing
A. D. Dixon
W. E. Printz
R. L. Snow

ABSENT

D. H. Dail

Gerald Monger, Town Manager/Superintendent, Dale Davenport, Attorney, Warren Pence, Chief of Police, Kenny Flick, Director of Public Works, Theodore Pence, Director of Parks and Recreation and Nancy Sours, Treasurer/Clerk were also present.

Mayor Dean stated that the purpose of the public hearing was to hear comments on the 1997-98 Proposed Budget.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Bill Holt

Mr. Bill Holt of 508 4th Street stated that he has been a resident of Elkton for the past twenty four years. Mr. Holt stated that he has complained over the years regarding the problem of sand in the water. He stated that he has taken action on his own to correct the problem such as installing home sand filters. He noted that replacing the filters in the home filtration system are very expensive. He feels that this is a widespread problem for town residents. Mr. Holt expressed concern over the impact this will have on the plumbing system within the homes. He questioned why a water filtration system had not been purchased since it was approved in the current year's budget.

Hazel Crider

Mrs. Crider of 114 Hillside Avenue stated that as a taxpayer of the Town of Elkton, she feels that some of the donations should be stopped. She pointed out that some organizations have fund-raising events. Mrs. Crider said that instead of weaning down the donations, they should just be stopped. She said that the taxpayers' dollars should be spent for repairs and upkeep of the town. She stated that the citizens could not afford a utility or tax increase. She asked that council gives this careful consideration before making a decision.

Mildred Shifflett

Mrs. Shifflett stated that she agreed with Mr. Holt on the water situation and Mrs. Crider regarding the donations. She stated that organizations should conduct their own fund-raising events in order to receive money. She feels that funds should be used to repair and maintain the operations of the town.

Bob Hammer

Mr. Hammer stated that after reviewing the budget, he feels there is some creative accounting. Mr. Hammer feels that it is impossible for the citizens to understand it and perhaps this is done to conceal information. He asked why the format was changed from last year.

Bobbie Rae Monger

Mrs. Monger of Route 4, Elkton asked that council budget funds to place gravel in the parking lot in Stonewall Memorial Park. She asked that this be done a soon as possible to accommodate the large crowd expected for the softball tournament. Mrs. Monger stated that the Recreation Commission requests that the profits received from concessions be used in recreation capital projects.

Debbie Gooden

Mrs. Gooden stated that she was speaking as a board member of EDRC, Manager of Rockingham Heritage Bank and as a taxpayer. She stated her support of the funding request of EDRC. She stated that EDRC had a positive effect on Rockingham Heritage Bank and many other businesses locating to Elkton. She pointed out the effects new businesses have on the tax base. Mrs. Gooden read a letter from Mr. Jack Stevens, President of Rockingham Heritage Bank. Mrs. Gooden stated that Mr. Stevens' letter supported the funding of EDRC and attributed the opening of the Elkton Branch to EDRC.

Charles Herring

Mr. Herring of Sweetgum stated his concern over services being cut to make donations. He feels town's needs must come before donations. He expressed concern on the new phone system which directs unanswered calls to the police department.

Richard Armstrong

Mr. Armstrong of Maple Leaf Lane stated that he has been a resident of Elkton for eight years. He pointed out that donations could not be made on a small population of 2,000. Mr. Armstrong feels that the majority of residents are opposed to donations. He stated that taxes are paid for the improvement of the town. He asked that council study the budget before making a decision.

Dr. Larry Bompiani

Dr. Bompiani spoke in support of EDRC. He stated that he favored Elkton as a business location after talking with Marsha Deavers. Dr. Bompiani stated that a progressive front is needed in order to attract businesses and growth. He feels that each business contributes a large part to the tax base.

Lucky Sigafoose

Mr. Sigafoose of 112 Rockingham Street expressed concern over the increase of the garbage budget. He feels this could create an increase in residential refuse charges.

Robert & Elizabeth Wahl

Councilman Dearing read a letter from Robert and Elizabeth Wahl of 106 Maple Leaf Lane stating their opposition to the town donating funds to EDRC and the Historical Society.

Kathy Billhimer

Mrs. Billhimer spoke on behalf of the Historical Society. She stated that the Historical Society was formed to oversee the renovation of the Miller Kite House, which is owned by the town. She stated that total cost to date is approximately $160,000.00, of which the town has donated only 30% of that amount. She stated that the Miller Kite House is an asset to the community. Mrs. Billhimer stated that once completed the house can be used for a meeting place and accommodate many events. She stated that the Rockingham Historical Society has committed to donating many landmarks and civil war souvenirs to Miller Kite House. She stated that the Historical Society has conducted many fund raisers over the past twelve years.

Mr. Monger stated that if no donations were made there would be a $27,000.00 surplus. He stated that this was arrived at by borrowing from repo for the capital projects and repaying that amount over the next three years. He stated that the current budget does not propose any tax increases. Mr. Monger stated that the budget is the same format used for eighteen years. He stated that the 96-97 Budget did not reflect accurate cost in electric, water, sewer and other departments. Mr. Monger explained the increase in the garbage budget is due to wages being allocated. He stated that no rate increase is planned on residential refuse.

As there were no further comments, the Public Hearing adjourned.

MAYOR: Charles E. Dean
Charles E. Dean, Mayor

RECORDER: _____
Nancy A. Sours, Clerk