

## **Talk is of town safety: Sheriff requests money for deputies**

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JOURNAL REPORTER

Thursday, May 5, 2005

### WALKERTOWN

The Walkertown Town Council recently considered requests for more law enforcement and better enforcement of town codes.

Sheriff William Schatzman of Forsyth County asked the council to provide \$99,000 to hire four deputies and one detective to patrol Walkertown. After the initial hiring and purchase of equipment, it would cost the town about \$55,000 a year to pay for the deputies.

Schatzman asked the county last week for 79 additional officers, but several county commissioners have questioned his proposal. The sheriff has turned to Walkertown and the other incorporated places without their own police departments to help his office.

The town will hold a public hearing on May 26 on the sheriff's proposal.

Council Member Dot Duggins said that Walkertown is the only Forsyth community that is not paying for a deputy to patrol the town. "We are already taxed to provide protection," Duggins said. "We need to come down on our county commissioners to use our tax money for protection."

Council member Horace Warner said that law enforcement is a county responsibility. But Council Member Sarah Welch said that more protection is needed.

"People are not getting any response to things that are happening in the daytime," Welch said.

Schatzman told the council during a recent budget meeting that his office handled 157 felony cases during a one-year period.

Council members and some residents at the meeting agreed that Walkertown needs more code enforcement to improve the town's appearance. But the council split on whether hiring an intern during the summer could be one part of the solution.

Mayor Doc Davis broke a 2-2 tie, voting with Warner and Welch to reject hiring an intern. Duggins and Council Member Wallace Larrimore voted in favor of hiring a summer intern.

Duggins said that an intern could help staff town hall and work on zoning and code-enforcement issues. But Warner said that the town doesn't have enough needs for an intern to tackle.

Larrimore said that an intern could bring his knowledge to the town's operations.

Peggy Leight, a member of the Walkertown Planning Board and its former chairman, said she had a long list of things that an intern could help the town tackle, such as development guidelines, sidewalk and curbing regulations, land-use planning, a zoning map and garbage pickups.

Former Mayor Enos Jumper said that although the town needs code enforcement, it also needs someone with more experience to do the job.

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