

Walkertown council approves 2005-06 budget, rejects vote on mixed-drink sales

By Wesley Young
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WALKERTOWN

The Walkertown Town Council passed the town budget for 2005-06 last week, but rejected allowing residents to vote on mixed-drink sales in restaurants.

The budget, which goes into effect July 1, maintains the property-tax rate at 20 cents for every \$100 of valuation. That tax rate will bring in nearly \$630,000 toward the budget of \$1.2 million. Other revenue sources include sales-tax revenue, franchise taxes and fees and state money for road construction and other needs.

The council did not allocate any money for Sheriff Bill Schatzman's plan to have small towns help pay for additional deputies for patrols.

Schatzman had asked the town to help pay for five positions - four deputies and a detective - for work in Walkertown, but the council never warmed to the idea.

During the public hearing on the budget, Chief Wesley Hutchins of the Walkertown Fire Department thanked the council for its support. The fire department gets six cents of the 20 cent tax rate.

The issue that drew most people to the meeting was a request for mixed-drink sales.

Council Member Horace Warner made the motion on the issue in last Thursday's meeting, asking the council not to hold a public vote.

The council unanimously approved his motion.

Several people spoke about the issue during a public hearing.

"I don't feel that this would in any way enhance the quality of life for anyone in Walkertown," Marilyn Martin, a resident, said. Paula Davis, another resident, asked the council to "keep Walkertown as pure, as clean and wholesome as long as we can."

Council Member Dot Duggins said that the issue was on the council's agenda because the town had received a request from the El Maguey Mexican restaurant for mixed-drink sales, so that the restaurant could serve margaritas.

When the issue came up in February, Duggins and Council Member Wallace Larrimore said they favored putting mixed-drink sales to voters.

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