

WPCC budget shaped

By JOHN CALLAHAM
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Western Piedmont Community College is looking for a 14.8 percent increase in its locally funded budget for next year, thanks to a decision made Monday by its board of trustees.

During its regular monthly meeting, the board unanimously approved its 1999-2000 fiscal year budget, which will be sent to Burke County Manager Ron George and the county Board of Commissioners for approval.

In submitting the budget, WPCC Finance Committee Chairman Charles Henson said the large increase was due to a number of costs that had been deferred in previous years for repair and maintenance items.

If those items were not in this year's budget, Henson said the increase would only be 2.5 percent over the current fiscal year. "This is an austere budget," Henson said.

The amount of WPCC's proposed budget is \$1,470,488 for 1999-2000, an increase of \$185,288 from the 1998-1999 fiscal year budget of \$1,285,200.

Also, the college is asking the county to pay an additional \$150,000 for two capital outlay budget items. This is the first time in several years that WPCC has asked the county to help pay for capital outlay funds, according to Henson.

Of the requested \$150,000, \$100,000 would go toward building a new 40,000-square-foot maintenance building. The county would also pay \$100,000 over the

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next four fiscal years to help provide the cost of the \$500,000 building, according to the proposal.

In addition, \$50,000 would go to pay for a 1,500-square-foot extension to the college's greenhouse. The county would also pay \$50,000 in the next fiscal year to assist the Western Piedmont Foundation in the completion of the \$150,000 project.

The 1999-2000 budget also contains \$192,200 for repairs to facilities, compared to only \$40,413 in the current fiscal year.

The money would be used to repair a number of items, including \$30,000 for heating and air conditioning in-line circulation pumps, \$45,000 for sidewalks, steps and handrail repairs, and \$20,000 for repairs to the retaining walls at the Phifer Learning Resource Center.

Replacing a number of equipment items would account for \$52,400 in next year's budget, compared to only \$9,018 in the current year's budget.

The money would be used to buy a \$6,500 walk-behind lawn mower, a \$2,500 generator, a \$20,500 Bobcat loader, and a \$23,000 passenger van.

In other business, the trustees voted to promote one of their own to a new position at the college. Jim Burnett, currently the dean of Student Services, will become the new vice president of Academic Affairs at WPCC.

Burnett will split the duties of the office with Richard Greene, the current vice president of Academic Affairs. Greene said he will not be leaving the college. Instead, he will get the new title of executive vice president of Academic Affairs.

The board also looked over a bill introduced in the state legislature that if approved would lead to a new \$4.5 million facility at WPCC for an early child care and development center.

The center has been on the drawing board at the college for more than a year. Such a facility is needed to improve the teaching of

early child care for both high school and college students as well as to give more space for child care in Burke County, according to WPCC President Jim Richardson.

House Bill 161, proposed by Burke County state Reps. Monroe Buchanan and Walter Church, would give the college the funds to build the facility.

Richardson said he plans to travel to Raleigh next week along with representatives from WPCC and Burke County Public Schools to talk to state legislators and Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker about the proposed building.

The board also voted unanimously Monday to honor a valued supporter of the college by renaming the community room at the Phifer Learning Resource Center.

The room will be known as the Graham Hoyle Community Room, to honor the late Graham Hoyle, who was a major booster of WPCC.