

Commissioners fund new building at WPCC

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JONAS RIDGE — The Burke County Board of Commissioners, in a 4-1 vote, agreed Tuesday to fund the new Western Piedmont Community College continuing education building.

Officials with the college told commissioners Aug. 8 that the newest building will not open without more money from the county.

Commissioner Maynard Taylor voted against the measure.

The county came up with the money for the college from leftover funds it received for sewer improvements. Of the \$200,000 the county received in an agreement with the town of Connelly Springs on sewer costs, \$125,000 will be used to pay for sewer improvements.

The remaining \$75,000 was obtained in return for future reductions in sewer fees to



the town. That money will be used for the WPCC building and cars for the Burke County Sheriff's Office.

Taking the \$75,000 from the Connelly Springs agreement and paying off a portion of the county sewer debt, frees up money from the county budget to pay for the building and cars, County Manager Ron George said.

Of the \$75,000, the college will get \$55,000 and the Sheriff's Office will receive \$20,000.

George told commissioners that the money would allow the college to open the building and get it through the first semester of school.

In order to reach the agreement, which the college and county tentatively came to on Thursday, the college had to make some concessions.

College officials said the college gave up two months of the funding and it will use existing maintenance workers from the main campus for the first year for any work done at the building.

But giving the money to the college meant giving less to the Sheriff's Office.

Instead of the \$90,000 the county was hoping to give toward the purchase of new Sheriff's Office cars, now the office will only be able to get \$70,000 for new cars.

Sheriff John T. McDevitt said that amount will only pay for five used cars

See WPCC / Page 12A

WPCC

Continued from Page One

from the North Carolina Highway Patrol. Most of those cars have 80,000 miles on them when the Highway Patrol gets rid of them, so in less than a year, those cars will have more than 100,000 miles on them.

McDevitt said that within two years, all of the vehicles he

has in his fleet will have more than 100,000 miles on them.

"We're to the catastrophic point," McDevitt said.

Commission Chairman Tom Johnson told McDevitt it is his intention to get the Sheriff's Office on a rotating cycle of buying cars.