

**Another First for City of
Kings Mountain Citizens!!
Newest Tax Increases!!
Major City Tax Increases
Because Leaders weren't
Paying Attention!!!**

**County Citizens are Next in
2025budget!!! Do Elected
Leaders Schedule Big Tax
Increases in non-election
years??? Report, analysis
and conclusions by Robert A**

Editor's Note: The last remaining newspaper in Cleveland County broke this story. The Kings Mountain Herald's writer Loretta Cozert's front page article in the June 14, 2023 edition of the KMH, titled **City Council approves \$65,079,820 budget** told the story, although you have to do a little reading between the lines a bit to figure out what is really going on in City and County Government. Especially in regard to budgets and tax increases. It is recommended that all readers pick up a Kings Mountain Herald and read the whole article. We are only going to hit the "high spots" in this article. Also note that the KMH also reported that the annual July 4th Celebration in Kings Mountain will be held July 1st this year. The Celebration includes a reenactment of the

Battle of Kings Mountain, the turning point in the War for American Independence, as well as a fine fireworks display. Many of us folks in this area, including Robert A had ancestors that fought and died in that historic battle that set the stage for the freedoms that we have today. We all should remember and honor our heritage and pay attention to our leaders of today to make sure that they keep America safe, strong and free. For ourselves and OUR posterity. That's how it works folks. We ALL have to do our part by either serving in office or at least keeping ourselves knowledgeable of the candidates and vote accordingly. Times today are "pivotal," in so many ways. We ALL have to stand up for what is right and not be deceived by what is wrong.

The facts of the matter go like this:

The Kings Mountain City Council met June 8, 2023 and voted 5-1 to adopt a new budget of \$65,079,820. This was an increase of \$11,174,987 (20.4%) over last year's budget. Folks, anytime you have such a large budget increase you should smell a rat somewhere.

There is more:

The adopted budget also included:

- A 5-cent property tax increase. From 43 cents per \$100 valuation to 48 cents (up 11.64%)
- A 10% increase in water and sewer.
- A solid waste fee increases of \$2.49 (per month probably)
- A stormwater fee increases of \$1.50 (per month probably)

The KMH article did not include the fact that the Cleveland County Commissioners are, as we speak, doing a property

revaluation coming out in 2025 (After the 2024 Commissioner Elections). Since property taxes (your tax bills) are based on Property Values times the tax RATE, you Kings Mountain folks will be hit with big tax bill increases this year and another big tax bill increase when the County revaluation kicks in in 2025. While all of us County folks will only be hit with big tax bills after the 2024 Elections for County Commissioners. That's Cleveland County Politics folks!

The KMH article also had some juicy nuggets about how the large KM budget, services and tax increases came about. And MORE! Continue reading folks! This could be YOU!!

First of all, Kings Mountain has a new City Manager. Just like Cleveland County has a new County Manager. Which provides an excellent opportunity to blame any problems on the old City and County Managers. The new City Manager also wants to get out from behind any "8-Balls" left over for him to resolve. The left-over City Council can claim the old City Manager didn't inform them of the severity of the various problems. Same with the Cleveland County Commissioners.

The well-seasoned KM Mayor Scott Neisler suggested that the City could take a million dollars from the City's Economic Development Fund and not repave as many streets this year and hold off awhile on buying a new Fire Truck. And get by without raising the City tax rate a nickel as the new City Manager recommended.

For most places taking money from the Economic Development Fund is a bad idea. Everybody wants economic development. The more the better. Fortunately, Kings Mountain finds itself in a place and time where their economy is already booming by leaps and bounds. The economic development from Charlotte heading South on I-85 has already reached Kings Mountain. The I-85 Economic Development heading North from Greenville and Spartanburg, SC is closing in on Kings Mountain. The progress on the 74-Bypass around Shelby will also tremendously affect

the economy in Kings Mounty in a positive way. About the only thing that will cause the City of Kings Mountain to cool off economically is a brand-new large tax increase like the one the KM City Council just passed. Especially since the Cleveland County led property revaluation will add another big hit to all the people and businesses in all of Cleveland County that pay property tax. Neisler's experience probably told him that the 2025 County Revaluation would increase revenues tremendously in 2025, so it would be prudent politically to leave the KM Tax rate at 43 cents and blame the tax bill increases in 2025 on the County and not the KM City Council. And the extra tax revenue collected because of the county revaluation would soon be available to meet the new KM budget requirements. With or without a Casino. Perhaps the KM City Council should have listened closer to what KM Mayor Scott Neisler had to say.

Kings Mountain Mayor Pro Tem Annie Thombs, according to the KMH article, had a different and opposite opinion than Neisler's. According to Thombs ***"We have neglected maintenance. We have neglected our rolling stock. We have neglected things that should have been addressed, had we known that they needed to be addressed. I see this budget as, in Mr. Green used Words, as being very 'pivotal,'"*** she continued."

Mayor Pro Tem Thombs statement that ***"We have neglected things that should have been addressed, had we known that they needed to be addressed,"*** is telling. Especially the ***"HAD WE KNOWN"*** part. And, this is critical since this thought has cropped up so often in the various boards, councils and commissioners around Cleveland County. It seems that the ***"Powers that be"*** are on ALL of our boards, councils and commissioners and are centered in tight little groups that refuse to share the whole story with the others on those boards, councils and Commissioners. And; all those on those boards, councils and commissioners refuse to share the whole story with the citizens and taxpayers of Cleveland County. It

seems the ones that pay all the bills are always purposely kept in the dark about the full details of every project. It is certainly kept in the dark about who will benefit the most financially from those many projects. Is this what Mayor Pro Tem Thombs was talking about when she said **"had we known?"**

Mayor Pro Tem Thombs also was quoted in the KMH as saying other things that are telling about the Boards, Councils and Commissioners in Cleveland County.

"Number one, we need to set a different standard. And we can't continue like we have been going and expect a different outcome." This is totally obvious for all the various Boards, Councils and Commissioners in Cleveland County and needs no further discussion,

(Thombs continues) "And I just would encourage us, like the mayor said, regardless of how we vote, regardless of the outcome, **we have to support whatever the majority has done**. I just ask that each one of us just look at this, have the courage to be responsible, and do what we need to do and do, and support the city manager," she explained. "Because we said together we needed a change. We said together we needed to go in a different direction. And the city manager told us when he came on board, after he had been here about three weeks and began to assess things, 'You all are going to have to make some hard decisions.' And so, he kept his word."

"We have to support whatever the majority has done" is a notion that is always voiced by those who are in the majority at the time, but do not understand how government in the USA is supposed to work in our Democratic-Republic form of government under the US Constitution. A form of government that is based on "checks and balances" NOT TRUST that every majority vote was the correct vote that will continue until the end of time. Such a notion as this is deceptive and misguided in so many ways.

First, this vote was only for a one-year budget. The majority has spoken and by that majority vote this will be the way the City of Kings Mountain will operate financially for only one year at the most. Until the next year's budget rolls around. Also, should something unforeseen come up in the meantime, an emergency or something similar, a new vote might be necessary to fit the changed circumstance. No council member would ever want to be held to their support of that first vote when new circumstances dictate a different direction. Although some majority voter might be reluctant to change direction because some person that voted against that original direction might say "I told you so!"

Second, that majority vote might just be wrong. Those that voted against that original direction may end up discovering new evidence or circumstances that was not available or "KNOWN" (as in "had we known" previously noted) when that first vote was taken.

Third, as the present Cleveland County School Board "Majority" (Robert Queen, Joel Shores, Ron Humphries, Greg Taylor, Rodney Fitch and Walter Scott Spurling) have just proven, sometimes majority votes are made for the wrong, vindictive, punitive and even illegal reasons. And we seem to be stuck with them until the 2024 Elections. Or laws are passed to remove them from office.

The KMH reported the vote as proposed by the KM City Manager passed 5 to 1, with Councilman Jimmy West voting against. Councilman Mike Butler was not in attendance.

Readers are advised to read the entire article and others in the Kings Mountain Herald. Folks, NOW what is happening around you. And to you.