

Writing Assignment 6: Budget Story

-The Rutherford City Council voted to approve a \$5 million tax increase in order to fund a teacher pay raise.

-Starting July 1 local homeowners can expect to pay about an additional \$42 per month to increase local school tax rates from \$20 million to \$25 million.

-City Council President, Kathleen Sewell, who voted in favor, said the increase would be manageable for most homeowners. She also said, "No one likes to raise taxes and no one likes to see good teachers leave Rutherford."

-Superintendent of Rutherford City Schools, Mary Alacorn, said the district has lost teachers to neighboring towns because their average salaries are \$8-\$11 thousand higher than Rutherford's current \$42 thousand per year.

-A group called Rutherford Citizens Against New Taxes (RCANT) had representatives at the meeting. Several had signs reading "No more taxes" and "Tapped out already". Leader of RCANT, Mike Haralson, disapproved of the tax increase and said "I support the teachers, but this is not the way to go."

-Alex Shelley, who runs a diner in town, was also against the tax. He said that although he has teachers in his family, paying any extra tax will make it harder for him to stay in Rutherford.

-The tax ultimately passed 3-2 with Kathleen Sewell, Bert Peters, and John Arrington in favor. Betty Johnson and Kevin Anderson were opposed.