

Town decides to hire deputy

Grant will help pay costs; traffic control to be top priority

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WALKERTOWN

The town council recently decided to hire a deputy to enforce traffic laws after it learned that state grant money would offset the cost.

At its meeting last week, the council voted to station a sheriff's deputy in town.

Sgt. Clifton Kilby, a deputy with the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office, told council members that grants from the Governor's Highway Safety Program would offset the cost of providing deputies for Walkertown and other municipalities in the county.

Kilby and other deputies told the council that the town could get a single deputy stationed in town or several, but that the deputy's primary job would be traffic enforcement. Any deputies stationed in Walkertown would respond to a call of a crime in progress.

The council decided to start with a single deputy and see how the program works.

"I feel like this is something we need to look at seriously," Mayor Doc Davis said. "I do think we are short-changing the people if we don't get some form of community policing."

The town has space in the town hall that a deputy can use, although the deputy will spend most of his time in his patrol car.

The program will start this fall. Congress allocates federal money to states for the program in the fiscal years which begins Oct. 1 and runs through Sept. 31, 2007. The town must pay about \$23,000 in the first year, increasing to about \$60,000 in the fourth year.

Each year, the town pays a gradually increasing percentage of personnel, equipment and other costs associated with stationing the deputy in town.

Council Member Brenda Mabe said that the program would become too costly, but joined the other council members in a unanimous vote to participate in the program.

Mabe asked what would happen if the town decided to end the program after four years. The town would not be obligated to continue the program after four years, the deputies said.

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