

Funding For Simms School Comes From A Variety Of Sources

Council

FROM PAGE 9

1965 following racial integration.

In addition to the city's pledge, funding for the project includes a \$1.5 million capital campaign from the Boys and Girls Club, \$500,000 from ARC, a \$700,000 community development block grant and \$800,000 in historical tax credits.

School Presents Budget

In other business Tuesday night, Harrisonburg school officials present-

ed their proposed 2003-04 budget to council. The \$39.2 million spending plan calls for a 9.19 percent increase over this year's budget.

Much of that growth, however, comes from a \$1.2 million federal technology grant, for which the city's school system is acting as fiscal agent for a 20-district consortium. The grant counts as part of the school board's budget, but no city funds will have to be spent because of it.

The increase without the grant, therefore, is really 5.7 percent, Schools

Superintendent Donald Ford said.

The school board has had to grapple with significant increases in several departments, Ford noted.

The cost for textbooks alone, he said, will jump \$53,000, while bus transportation will increase almost \$78,000. Maintenance and operations costs will go up \$77,000 and health insurance will rise a whopping \$437,000.

The city's contribution to the school budget would stand at \$20.3 million, a 6.3 percent increase, if council accepts the proposed spending plan as is.

Council members will delve into its details after they review the city's spending plan, due out next month.

Ford pleaded with council to leave the budget intact.

"It really is necessary to request funds that increase year after year," he said. "It's very, very difficult to maintain the quality programs and services that the children deserve and the community demands."

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