

# Council: Resident questions mayor's request

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back to this council and see if we can't do something about our employees in the coming year.

"I'm out around this city a lot. I have never had one yet to complain to me about not getting a raise. You know what they tell me? 'Keep me in a job.'"

Goings said he would review the budget to see how to add raises. But Goings has to consider how the city would pay for the raises that would become a permanent payroll increase for the city and its

workforce of more than 700 employees.

The raise is being considered for this fiscal year.

"I certainly think, Grant, it would be great if you could come back in some way and help these people out in this coming year," Rose said. "I'm not going to say it's going to happen every year. We don't know what's going to happen."

During a public comment period, one resident, Robert James, accused Rose of suggesting the raise because he's seeking re-election to office in 2012.

"I make decisions based on what's best for the people of this city," Rose said after the meeting. "I don't figure any decision based on my re-election campaign. Why can't we give our employees a raise? We've been fighting this for three and half years."

The city council also took a step in support of the Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf by passing a resolution asking state leaders to keep the school open. The resolution was signed by each council member in response to the General

Assembly's direction to the N.C. Department of Public Instruction to recommend closing one of three residential schools in the state to save \$5 million.

The schools include ENCSD, the North Carolina School for the Deaf in Morganton and the Governor Morehead School for the Blind in Raleigh.

"It's our determination and our city council that we keep that school open," Rose said. "There's a lot of groups coming together in our city now, including the chamber and other groups, and we're working

hard to keep that school open. The city council and myself and most of the business people in the city want to keep that school open and we're going to do everything we can to do that."

After the mayor signed the resolution of support, Carter Bearden, ENCSD interim director, took a few minutes to thank city leaders for their support and the support the school has had since it opened in the 1960s.

"While our students come from 53 counties in the eastern part of North

Carolina, for many Wilson is considered home," Bearden said. "It's a city they come to on Sunday afternoon and remain until Friday. ENCSD and Wilson are places where they can learn all that is necessary to become productive citizens."

"Through it all from that first day in 1964 until now you have shown love and acceptance, understanding and support. For all these things and so much more, ENCSD is eternally grateful."

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## Retailers Weight In on Coupon Etiquette

By Jill Cataldo

Last week, I shared feedback from readers who had strong opinions on shoppers who buy in bulk. "Shelf-sweepers" came in for a lot of criticism from fellow shoppers who feel that it's only fair to leave product on the shelf so other bargain hunters have a chance to save. But what do stores think of these high-volume customers? Here's an email from a retailer who offers some great insights:

### Question:

"Thank you so much for your article about coupon etiquette. I am a customer-service manager at a local grocery store and I agree with your advice to buy as much of a sale item as you feel you will use. If items are on clearance, by all means, buy us out!

"The tricky part is when stores put limits on purchases of sale items. Let's say we have a limit on two cases of canned vegetables and a customer comes to the register with four. If I enforce our limit, the two extra cases go back onto the shelf, and I'm left hoping that somebody else will come

along and purchase them. There's no guarantee they will sell. However, if I don't enforce the limit, I sell those two cases.

"Let's not kid ourselves. In the grocery business, as in all businesses, the bottom line is the bottom line. In terms of coupons, it's important to remember that every customer has the right to purchase as many items as his or her budget will allow. Other shoppers may consider it rude when a couponer clears a shelf in order to stock up on an item, but at the end of the day, buying in large quantities will never bother store management. Thank you again for your article. It was very thought-provoking."

### Answer:

I received several other emails from stores echoing this sentiment. Shoppers who buy more are keeping their stores in business. They're choosing to spend their dollars at one store over another. In areas where several supermarkets compete, every sale counts. Supermarkets operate on a very thin profit margin, so it's understandable that a store wouldn't

want to lose a guaranteed sale from a shopper purchasing large quantities of an item.

Another common theme in emails from retailers is their willingness to special-order items in the quantities a shopper needs.

### Question:

"If you know you want to buy 20, 30 or 100 bottles of salad dressing, I'm more than happy to sell them to you, but I encourage shoppers to come to the service counter and place an order for them if they want that many at once. When your order comes in, you can get exactly what you want, and then the shelf isn't completely wiped out if it's a popular sale item."

Of course, it's never possible to discuss a semi-controversial topic without hearing some unusual stories, too. Here's an email from a store that favors full shelves over sold-out products.

### Question:

"I work at a supermarket and part of my job is to keep the shelves 'faced.' This is when we line products along the front side of the shelf so they are even and look good. But when the extreme couponers come and purchase a lot of these items, there can be a hole in the shelf that doesn't look nice. My manager got in trouble when corporate visited and we had some empty spaces because we were sold out of things. He told us that we can't let these couponers buy too many products at once anymore because empty shelves equal demerit points for the appearance of our store."

### Answer:

I have to wonder what this store values more: picture-perfect aisles or profit?

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