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said. "He whizzed through there, shot through the stop sign at the Courthouse like a rocket, went around the Courthouse Square backwards and went up the Gainesville Highway."

All the while, as Reece drove around the Square backwards, he almost hit Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll head on.

"If I had been two seconds earlier, he would have hit me," Chief Carroll said.

Authorities say Reece then maneuvered his BMW up the Gainesville Highway, heading toward White County.

"(Investigator) Tyler Miller was right on his tail and had him clocked at 107 mph," Sheriff Stephens said. "When they got on the mountain, Investigator Miller asked for permission to pit him. Lt. Deyton told him not on the mountain that it was too great of a risk."

Reece then traversed over Blood Mountain and through Neel's Gap, reportedly taking the horse shoe curve at 95 mph, authorities said.

He made it to White County where he encountered traffic near Testanee Gap Road. He passed a car on the double yellow line, Lt. Deyton said.

"That's where it gets odd," Lt. Deyton said. "He drove so well through all those curves and then when he hits a straight and passes another vehicle, he lost it when he tried to get back in his lane."

Union and White county authorities, the Georgia



James Tyler Casey Reece

State Patrol and ADA Jeremy Clough with the Enotah Circuit District Attorney's Office were there on the scene.

Lt. Deyton said that Reece faces multiple charges in Union County.

Those charges include fleeing/attempt to elude; speeding – 107 mph in a 55 mph zone; aggravated assault for using his vehicle to put other persons in danger; reckless conduct and driving on a suspended driver's license.

In White County, Reece faces charges of possession of methamphetamine and DUI Drugs as well as numerous traffic offenses, authorities



said. "If anyone in Union County witnessed this chase, or was put in danger during this chase, please report this information to the Union County Sheriff's Office," Lt.

Deyton said. "We're continuing to build a case against this individual and we want to make sure all of his victims are identified."



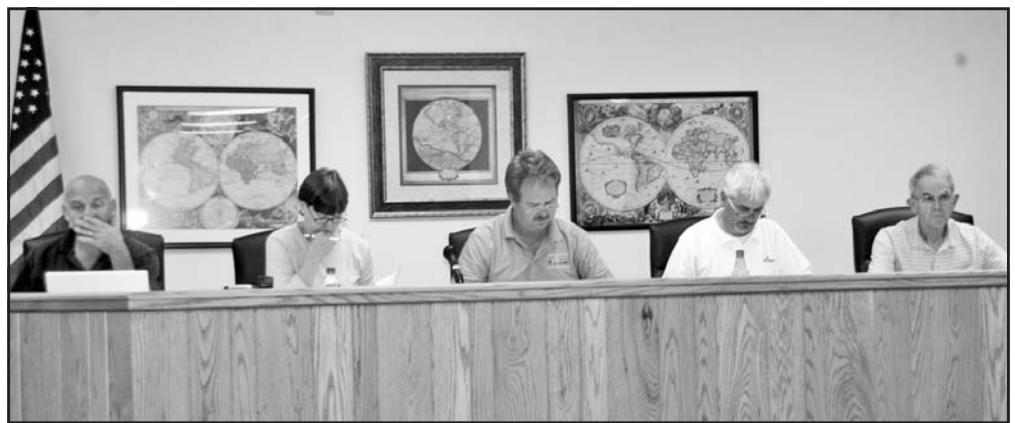
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cal Fair Share obligations and mandated salary requirements have impact the 2012-2013 budget set by the board.

"We're looking to get things balanced," said Superintendent Steppe. "It's easy to expand, but it's really hard to tighten the belt. It's definitely not pleasant."

The County's Tax Digest continues in a downward spiral. The digest brought in less money in 2012 than it did in 2006, County tax records show.

In addition to the Tax Digest woes, the board is faced with state of Georgia Austerity cuts of



Board of Education discusses the 2013 Fiscal Budget last week during a called meeting.

more than \$1.63 million.

On top of that, based on the state's Quality Basic Education formula, Union County must surrender more than \$5.9 million in what is termed the "Local Fair Share" by the state of Georgia.

When all revenues are in and accounted for, the state uses a QBE formula to determine how much the "richer counties" must surrender to offset budget woes for "poorer counties." Once that figure is determined, the first five mills of a county's revenues come off the top to send to less fortunate schools.

The funds lost to Local Fair Share and state Austerity cuts has put the Union County school board in a very vulnerable financial position.

The board would have to increase the millage rate by more than 1 mill to avoid cuts

to personnel. Having gone up on last year's millage rate, the board decided against additional millage rate increases. The board increased the millage rate by more than 1 mill last year and still had to furlough teachers eight days.

To get nearer to closing the gap on the \$1.762 million shortfall, the board voted to not fill eight certified teaching positions, some left open due to retirements. Eleven classified positions – support staff – were eliminated. The school system's substitute teaching budget was slashed in half.

Approximately 90 percent of the school system's budget is attributed to salaries and benefits. In Woody Gap alone, the salaries amount to more than \$1 million. There, the school board eliminated two teaching positions, cut four certified positions, will

not replace the school's counselor and will reorganize the school's cafeteria to cut costs.

As for the personnel cuts, Superintendent Steppe said the cuts were not personnel, just business.

He said that he didn't enjoy cutting teaching positions or staff positions.

"It was just one of the many measures we're having to take to balance the budget," he said.

Superintendent Steppe said tough times are still ahead for the school system given the continued state of the economy.

"There's still some tough decisions that remain," he said.

"This has been coming for a while. But, somewhere, you have to stop the bleeding. You have to stop spending more than you bring in."

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second in sixth grade, fourth in seventh grade and third in eighth grade.

In English Language Arts, third and sixth grades finished first, fourth and fifth grades finished second, seventh graders finished seventh, and eighth graders finished fifth. Despite low finishes, scores for all grade classes were greatly increased over the previous year, state records show.

In math, Union students dominated at the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade levels, finishing first in the region. The seventh grade class finished second in the region, and the eighth grade class finished, well, eighth.

In science, Union third, fourth and fifth graders claimed top spot in the region. Sixth graders finished third and the seventh grade finished eighth, in spite of a three-point gain from a year ago.

In social studies, Union third, fourth, fifth and sixth graders ruled, finishing first in region. The seventh grade finished fourth regionally, and the eighth grade finished second.

Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe was ecstatic over the test scores.

"We know our strengths, and we know our weaknesses," he said. "Fortunately, our strengths are outweighing our weaknesses. We have some amazing students in this school system."

The 2012 CRCT re-

sults show more students are exceeding the standards than last year. Results also showed a one-year improvement in the percentage of students meeting and exceeding on 20 of the 30 content-area tests.

"While I am pleased to see an increase in the majority of the exams, I am concerned about those where we saw decreases or no change at all," Dr. Barge said. "As we begin teaching the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards next school year, we know the curriculum and the tests will be more difficult, so we must continue to

focus on successfully implementing the new standards. We have been offering, and will continue to offer, teachers the necessary professional development to ensure they are equipped to deliver these new, more rigorous standards and to prepare our students for the next step."

At Woody Gap, history students, science students, and American Literature students ended with 100 percent passing on the End Of Course Tests. Woody Gap's U.S. History students passed with 100 exceeds.