



MADISON COUNTY LIBRARY GENERAL DELIVERY MARSHALL

Ramsey, Beall, Swain And Winner Enter Reelection Bids

Wallin, Buckner File For County Offices

By ROBERT KOENIG

Madison County's incumbent representatives in both the State House and Senate have announced plans to seek re-election. Speaker of the House Liston B. Ramsey and Rep. Charles M. Beall have announced their candidacy, along with State Sens. Robert Swain and Dennis Winner.

In the upcoming local elections, both Madison County Tax Collector Harold Wallin and Register of Deeds Jena Lee Buckner officially entered the race for re-election by filing with the Madison County Board of Elections on Wednesday.

Wallin will be seeking his eighth term as the county tax collector. Buckner has served as register of deeds since 1976 and will be seeking her third term.

In announcing his intention to seek a twelfth term in the State House, Ramsey said, "The well-being of the people of the area I represent has always been of prime consideration to me, and it shall continue to be." In making the announcement, Ramsey also indicated that he would also seek a third term as House Speaker should he win re-election in Nov.

Ramsey, who has served as House Speaker since 1981, is not expected to be opposed in the May primary.

In citing his accomplishments in the General Assembly, Ramsey mentioned new administration and library buildings for Western Carolina University, funds for a test farm in Haywood County, renovation of the Swain County Courthouse, several libraries and the Cherokee Museum.

Ramsey has also been instrumental in obtaining funding for Madison County projects such as the Hot Springs Health program's clinics in Walnut, Laurel and the recently completed facility in Hot Springs. County fire departments in Marshall, Mars Hill, Hot Springs, Laurel and Spring Creek also received \$100,000 in funds in 1983 as a result of Ramsey's work in the General Assembly.

A retired businessman, Ramsey devotes full time to his duties with the legislative branch of government. Prior to becoming Speaker, he served eight years on the Advisory Budget Commission, a 15-member body that helps the Governor draft the State's biennial budget. As Speaker,

he names five members of the Advisory Budget Commission as well as appointing all the standing committees and committee chairmen of the House.

During his legislative career, Ramsey has headed several key committees of the House, including two terms as Chairman of the Finance Committee.

A native of Marshall, Ramsey is a graduate of Mars Hill College and served overseas with the Air Force during World War II. He was a member of the Marshall Board of Aldermen for 12 years.

A Baptist, a Mason and an Elk, Ramsey is a member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as well as a trustee of the Cherokee Historical Association. He and his wife, the former Florence McDevitt, have one daughter, Mrs. Martha Geouge of Asheville.

Beall, who also represents the 52nd House District, was appointed to the House in 1981 by Gov. Jim Hunt. He won election to his first full term in 1982.

The 63-year-old legislator is employed by Champion Paper

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LISTON RAMSEY



CHARLES BEALL



HAROLD WALLIN

Marshall, ESC Reach Repayment Agreement

More than 30 Marshall residents crowded into Town Hall on Monday night for the regularly scheduled meeting of the town's Board of Aldermen. Many had come to hear details of the town's troubled sewer project, but there was no discussion of the project at Monday night's meeting.

Butler-McGill Associates engineer Bill Lapsley, who last week told the board members that the project faced budget problems, attended Monday night's meeting, but did not address the board.

Instead, those attending the meeting learned that Marshall had reached an agreement with the N. C. Employment Security Commission regarding the repayment of a \$37,000 debt owed by the town. Mayor Betty Wild read a letter from ESC officials spelling out terms of the repayment agreement.

According to the terms of the agreement, Marshall will make six monthly payments of \$6,500 to repay the debt. The town will have to pay six percent interest on the debt, but ESC officials have agreed to waive any further penalties against the town.

On a motion presented by Ed Niles and seconded by John Dodson, the repayment schedule was approved.

Marshall will begin a crackdown aimed at getting residents to pay their water and sewer bills this month. In

announcing the crackdown, the board approved a resolution presented by Sammy Lunsford to raise the reconnection charge from the present \$15 to \$25.

Letters will be sent out with water bills informing delinquent water service customers that payment of current charges and ten percent of past due charges must be paid before the tenth day of the month. Wild said the town would proceed to cut off water service to delinquents failing to make payment and service would not be restored until all past due charges are paid in full. "We're definitely going to enforce this. If the water bills aren't paid, we're going to disconnect people," Wild said.

The mayor added that residents unable to make the full payment should contact the town to make arrangements for payment before service is cut off. Wild also added that the entire board will have to decide on adjustments and urged residents seeking adjustments in their bills to bring their requests before the full board.

Randy Graves, operator of the Kountry Kitchen restaurant, brought his own complaint about water and sewer charges before the board. Graves complained that his business was paying sewer charges equal to his water charges since July, while many other Marshall businesses had only begun to

receive the higher bills in Nov. After discussing the problem, the board agreed that Graves should pay the higher charges only since Nov.

The town board also approved rate increases for water service hookup and parking on Monday night. At the suggestion of Sammy Lunsford, the board approved increasing the charge for connections to the town water system outside the town limits from \$150 to \$175. The increased charge more closely reflects the town's costs for hooking up residents and businesses to the town water system.

At the request of the mayor, the board also approved increasing monthly charges at the town's Main Street parking lot from \$6 to \$10. Wild said that Marshall has not been collecting the rental charges for two years and volunteered to collect the rents herself. According to the resolution approved Monday night, the rental charge of \$10 per month is payable by the tenth day of each month. An additional charge of \$1 per day will be charged for late payment.

The aldermen also agreed to a transfer of cable franchise

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No Action On Sewer Project

Marshall town officials met with the engineer for the town's sewer project Friday morning in Town Hall. Mayor Betty Wild and the town aldermen met in a 90-minute closed session without taking any action. Last week, engineer Bill Lapsley told the town officials that problems with blasting rock on Walnut Creek Rd. and resurfacing road damaged by the construction would result in cost overruns of up to 20 percent of the estimated cost of the project.

Mayor Wild opened the Friday meeting by calling for an executive session to discuss the project with Lapsley. The engineer met for more than an hour in closed session with town officials who remained in executive session after the engineer departed. When the mayor and aldermen emerged, Wild announced that no action was decided on in the closed meeting.

When they returned to open session, the board met with Morris Trammell of Wastewater Services, Inc. of Asheville, the town's water system consultant. Trammell had earlier written to the board to inform them of problems with the town's water and waste treatment facility.

Trammell informed the board that the recent freeze had caused an overload at the treatment plant on Blennerhassett Island. He said that the agitator at the plant had sunk to the bottom of the treatment tank and would have to be hauled out and put back in operation.

The shutdown of the agitator posed no immediate health threat, but must be fixed as soon as possible according to Trammell. He added that the shutdown and notified of the shutdown and offered the services of his company, Wastewater Services, Inc., in repairing the treatment station. Alderman Sammy Lunsford said that town employees would work on removing the agitator on Saturday. Lunsford acted on Monday, Lunsford said attempts on Saturday to raise the agitator were unsuccessful. He said the tank would be pumped on Tuesday in an attempt to reach the sunken agitator. Trammell said that there were no problems with the pumping stations during the recent cold weather, but told the board that water from the town's Walnut Creek station was not being chlorinated because parts had been removed from station to repair the Fortner Hollow station. Trammell and the town officials also agreed on an extension of the service contract the town currently has with Wastewater Services, Inc. The old contract expired on Nov. 15. At the request of Mayor Wild, Trammell agreed to remain on the job for another six months at the same price of \$850 a month. Under the agreement, Wastewater Services monitors and maintains the town's water system and provides the town with a monthly status report. The company is not responsible for the cost of major repairs. The town board also discussed an estimate received for overhauling the town's backhoe. Sammy Lunsford presented the board with an estimate received from Jim Calhoun. Mayor Wild asked for two more estimates before a decision be made, but Lunsford was unable to obtain other estimates from Trammell. He added that no action was taken on the matter and the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

French Broad EMC Passes 12% Rate Increase

By ROBERT KOENIG

Most Madison County residents will receive some shocking news in the mail this week when the postman delivers their monthly electric bills. Officials of the French Broad Electric Membership Cooperative have announced that residential service rates will increase about 12 percent this month. The increased rates will be reflected in monthly bills to be delivered this week.

The increased rates are a result of an increase in the wholesale cost for electricity charged by the Carolina Power and Light Co. (CP&L), the supplier for the local utility company. According to Charles Tolley, FBEMC general manager, this latest increase is only the beginning of a series of rate increases Madison County consumers can expect to see in the next five years.

Tolley said in an interview last week that FBEMC is no more happy about the increase than its customers will be. The general manager said the FBEMC will challenge the latest increase in the courts.

In addition to this latest increase, FBEMC is planning another 2.7 percent rate increase in May.

These increases, Tolley said, are the result of a two-part rate increase requested by CP&L, the co-op's supplier. CP&L requested the increases before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Washington, D.C. CP&L requested a two-part increase in their wholesale electric rates totalling 22 percent. The initial phase of the increase, which raised rates 16 percent, took effect in Nov., 1983. The second, six percent increase is scheduled to begin in April.

Rules governing wholesale rate increases allow utility companies to charge the requested increased rates under bond until the FERC can rule on the proposed increase. Tolley said, "We've employed the best law firm and engineers we can afford to appeal the increase in Washington. We feel we can be effective in getting it reduced."

Although FBEMC may succeed in getting a favorable ruling from the regulating commission, it probably won't benefit customers much. Should the FERC deny part of CP&L's increase, FBEMC customers will be entitled to a refund of a portion of bills they will begin paying this month. By the time FERC rules on

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School Board Meets

The Madison County Board of Education held their monthly meeting on Wednesday morning. The school board approved several new substitute personnel and a teacher leave policy at the short public meeting. The board also met in executive session to discuss a disciplinary decision, but to no action at the meeting.

The board approved hiring Betty Jean Payne as an aide at Marshall Primary School. Cathy Gonnell was hired as a bus driver and Tammy

Sprouse was hired as a substitute teacher. Sharon Maynard was selected as a substitute teacher at Hot Springs Elementary upon the recommendation of the school's principal, J. C. Wallin.

The board also hired Boyd Norton to serve as a substitute bus driver upon the recommendation of Debby Baker, food services supervisor.

Superintendent Robert Edwards informed the board that a second trailer has been placed

on the grounds of Marshall Primary School.

The board also approved a bid of \$16,449 submitted by W. A. Arthur Roofing Co. for replacing the roof on Hot Springs Elementary School. The bid is conditional upon the condition of the decking underlying the roof. Should the decking need to be replaced, the bid stipulates a cost of an additional \$6,000.

The board also extended the county-wide band program for another 30 days.

Mars Hill To Purchase Computer

Mars Hill will purchase a computer to handle water and sewer billing in the future. The town's board of aldermen made the decision authorizing the purchase at their Jan. 3 meeting. Mars Hill will begin monthly billing when work on the town sewer project is completed.

The computer is expected to cost about \$8,000 including

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Man Held In Shooting, Assault On Officer

A shooting incident in the California Creek section late Sunday night injured a Madison County resident and sent another resident to jail on charges of assault and firing into an occupied dwelling.

Steve Russell Robinson of California Creek was shot four times with a .22 calibre rifle. Robinson sustained injuries to the head, arm and body and was taken to Memorial Mission Hospital where he was treated and released.

Police have charged Sherdin Garrin of East Fork with assault in connection with the incident. According to Madison County Sheriff E.Y. Ponder, Garrin has also been charged with assault on a police officer for attempting to hit sheriff's deputy Clayton Grindstaff with a vehicle as Grindstaff attempted to arrest the fleeing suspect.

Garrin remained in the

Madison County jail Tuesday morning in lieu of \$50,000 bond. Sheriff Ponder reported that Grindstaff received no injury in the incident.

Sheriff Ponder also reported Monday that he has returned two fugitives from Calif. in the past week. Ponder said he traveled to Los Angeles to escort Paul Gullett back to North Carolina because of parole violation. Gullett has been turned over to the state Department of Corrections.

Also returned after losing an extradition hearing was Edward Jerome Young, formerly of Gastonia. Young was returned to face six charges of receiving stolen property in connection with a series of break-ins. Three others connected with the case have already faced trial and other cases are still pending. Young was returned from Riverside, Calif.

County, Railroad Settle Dispute

Madison County and the Norfolk Southern Railway have reached a partial agreement regarding the railroad's property taxes. Announcement of the agreement was made by county attorney Larry Leake at Monday night's meeting of the county commissioners.

Leake showed the commissioners a check for \$54,776.97 which he said settled the railroad's property taxes for 1980 through 1983 using the railroad's formula for valuing its property. Leake added, however, that the check may not be Norfolk Southern's final payment of the tax bill because litigation of the lengthy case is still pending before the North Carolina

Supreme Court. The payment announced on Monday also does not include penalties or interest that will be determined later. Norfolk Southern, then operating as Southern Railway, challenged the method in which local communities computed their property taxes in 1980. The so-called "4-R" case has been argued in the courts since Southern challenged the Department of Revenue's evaluations. The North Carolina Court of Appeals has since upheld the Department of Revenue's ruling. Norfolk Southern had the tax bill because litigation of the lengthy case is still pending before the North Carolina

Supreme Court. Leake told the commissioners, that according to the latest payment, the railroad's property was taxed at 55 percent of its 1980 evaluation and 90 percent of its 1981 evaluation. The attorney said, "Undoubtedly, we'll get more" when asked if the payment closes the railroad's debt. How much more Madison County could receive will be determined by a Supreme Court ruling in the case.

In other matters considered at Monday's meeting, the commissioners approved a request from Sam Parker, director of the Madison County Housing Authority, that the county apply for a Community Development Block Grant for economic development. The grant will request funding to provide a force main, pumping stations and sewer lines to connect the 40-unit housing project and Madison Manor nursing home with the Mars Hill sewer system. Parker said exact figures on the cost of the project were not yet available, but said the request would "be in the neighborhood of \$100,000." Exact figures will be available before Feb. 1.

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