

Columbus County Unit Seeks Fire, Rescue Aid Contract

BY SUSAN USHER

A Columbus County fire and rescue unit wants Brunswick County to reimburse costs it incurs providing first-response service to the northernmost section of the county. Steve W. Camlin, fire chief for Acme-Delco-Riegelwood Fire & Rescue Inc., asked Brunswick County commissioners Monday night for \$2,000 in next year's budget, but he specified that any contribution made "not interfere with funding for any Brunswick County departments." The request will be considered during budget deliberations.

In the Northwest, Sandy Creek, Maco and Hood's Creek areas in 1984, the Columbus County unit answered 18 fire calls with an average of six volunteers, and covered 975 miles answering 24 rescue calls with 152 manhours of service.

The department maintains one fire vehicle for mutual aid calls to Bladen and Brunswick counties, Camlin said. But unlike Bladen, Brunswick County does not contribute to the department's operation.

Camlin said the department has been serving northwestern Brunswick County for the past two decades, but only wants reimbursement for current services.

"We are requesting a contractual agreement for reimbursing our costs until you have adequate coverage and we are no longer needed as first run responders," he said.

Brunswick County has agreed to help establish new fire and rescue departments in Navassa and Northwest in next year's budget.

Commissioners met behind closed doors for nearly two hours to discuss an "attorney-client" matter and one

personnel item, taking no action on either.

RDC Membership

On Commissioner Frankie Rabon's suggestion, the board asked County Attorney David Clegg investigate whether it can expand the Resources Development Commission membership from nine to 11, and if so, what steps it should take. The commission, established by special legislation and a referendum of county voters, is composed of one member from each of six townships and three at-large members. Rabon would like to change that to two members per each of the five electoral districts plus one at-large member to give an odd-numbered membership.

District 4 is currently not represented on the board. Commissioners thought continuing RDC member Ernest McGee was from

District 4, but he isn't. District lines established for election purposes don't coincide with precinct and township lines, something Rabon would also like changed.

"He lives in my township, but not in my district," explained Rabon. "He votes in my precinct."

Other Business

In other business, commissioners:
•Approved partial payment of \$51,375 to Lewis & Associates for design work on segments 2 and 3 of the Phase II water line from the Malmo treatment plant as recommended by Dan Shields, county engineer. Attorney David Clegg reminded commissioners that the board is still in contract negotiations with Lewis. His attorney has not yet returned an amended contractual agreement approved by the board in January that would change the method for computing contract

payments, but doesn't necessarily affect the total payment for work on the project.

•Renewed contracts with Coopers & Lybrand of Charlotte of \$12,000 for a compliance audit and \$26,000 for the standard financial audit for the 1984-85 business year. Commissioners agreed with Finance Director Wallace H. Harding to consider putting the audit contracts out for bid next year. Cooper & Lybrand have had the contract about six years.

•Approved, subject to a vote of the Brunswick County Board of Health, a proposed request from the county health department for state and federal funding of \$283,067, which would constitute about one-third of the department's total budget. The health board rescheduled its April 8 meeting and will review the package on April 22.

•Received a tax collection report indicating collections of \$278,874 in March and year-to-date collections of \$12.03 million.

•Voted to reappoint Laye Gore, Margaret Shelton, Lois Saunders, Ophelia Gore, Alberta McLeod, Jeanette Mintz and to appoint Grace Peoples, Edith Tillman, Kay Batten and either/or Dorothy Hankins or Teddi Neal to two-year terms on the Brunswick County Council on the Status of Women. Commissioner Frankie Rabon asked that Neal be appointed either in addition to Hankins, if the council agrees, or in her place since he knows Neal but not Hankins.

•The board also received budget proposals from the council and from SENClard Community Action, and heard a program report from the Volunteer and Information Center.

•Reviewed two resolutions approved at the last meeting of the board and drafted afterwards by the county attorney. One endorses a bill that would require motorists to pay property taxes on motor vehicles when they renew the vehicle registration. In turn, the Division of Motor Vehicles would accept checks in payment of both registration fees and property taxes. The bill was proposed by the legislature's Property Tax

Study Committee as a fair way of collecting taxes from all motor vehicle owners.

The second one endorses the concept of a unified artificial reef program for the county and pledges the county's support in any way possible and reasonable within the board's authority.

•Adopted a motion by Rabon asking the state to finance highway access from the west end of Oak Island to the mainland, an alternate exit. He stressed the money should come from the state and federal government, not the county. Commissioners went on record supporting this concept during the fall campaign.

•Accepted a petition asking the state to take over maintenance of a road in Hernando's Hideaway.

Commissioners To Join In Budget Preparation

BY SUSAN USHER

Three budgets, three different approaches.

Chris Chappell, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, learned Monday night that the board will develop next year's county budget a little differently than in recent years.

"I've worked through two budgets and we did each of them different," Chappell said at the news from Manager Billy Carter that commis-

sioners would sit through the entire budget development process.

"It will be a different process," said Finance Director Wallace Harding, smiling as he emphasized "different."

"I look forward to it. I look forward to this different experience."

What's different? Traditionally, the commissioners' first view of the budget is their receipt, in about mid-May, of a three-inch-thick volume

bound in blue paperboard that contains revenue projections, requests for money from all departments and agencies that have been reviewed by Carter, Carter's recommendations and background documents.

In what Harding said would provide commissioners an "excellent cram course," board members will sit through the entire process of putting together a preliminary budget.

That includes hearing budget presentations by representatives of each

department and agency seeking funds. Once the preliminary budget is ready, a public hearing will be held and any desired changes made during work sessions before the budget is adopted.

"They'll be hearing and doing things that I would be doing," said Carter.

Earlier, he said, "It's something I've wanted to do. This is basically an entirely new board and there are always questions."

Involving the board in the numerous changes any draft budget goes through will be easier this year, because the computer services department has put all budget information on computer. Board members will be working with continuously revised printouts.

Budget worksessions are expected to begin in mid-May and continue until a final budget is ready for adoption by July 1.

"It will be very educational," Carter told the board. "I hope you enjoy it as much as we do."

Commissioners Juggle Calendars

Brunswick County commissioners set aside the entire month of May for budget deliberations Monday night, sighed in near-unison, and then began juggling calendars to squeeze in a few more meetings during April.

The five board members checked and cross-checked their personal calendars, rolling their eyes and shaking their heads and making wisecracks as they nixed one date after another.

It seemed that either the commissioners already had a meeting of their own planned, or one or more members were scheduled to represent the county at meetings called by other boards or organizations.

But the commissioners did agree on certain dates beyond the already-scheduled reevaluation review and mental health board meetings Tuesday night and a joint meeting with Brunswick Technical College trustees 5 p.m. Wednesday. They will:

•Sit as the Board of Equalization and Review to hear tax appeals Wednesday, May 1, at 7 p.m.

•Meet at 7 p.m. April 30 at the

public assembly building with hunters and other citizens on the question of hunting with weapons from the right-of-way of public roads.

•Meet with Ed Medlin and the Brunswick County Board of Elections Wednesday, April 24, at 7 p.m. to discuss Medlin's proposal that township and precinct lines coincide with electoral district lines.

•Also, the Solid Waste Committee meets Monday, April 29, at 10 a.m.

Break-In Suspect Arrested

A Holden Beach man has been arrested and charged with three counts of breaking and entering and larceny involving property taken from homes in the Holden Beach area, according to Brunswick County Sheriff's Department reports.

Benny Hewett, of Tuscarora Village, was arrested and charged last week with the larcenies following an investigation by Det. David Crocker.

According to Crocker, one item taken in the break-ins was a rod and reel combination that had the owner's initials and drivers license number engraved on it. Detectives

recovered approximately \$1,382 in stolen property from a home near Holden Beach during a search last weekend.

At that time, warrants were filed against Hewett, but the suspect was not placed under arrest until later last week. Other items taken in the break-ins included television sets, a vacuum cleaner, an air compressor and other valuables.

Crocker said community involvement also assisted detectives in solving the case.

Hewett was released from the Brunswick County Jail under \$1,500 bond.

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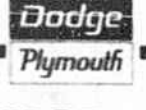
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