



JAMIE ORROCK

State Says Orrock Deserves DSS Job Back

BY SUSAN USHER

The State Personnel Commission has upheld a hearing officer's recommendation that former Brunswick County Social Services Director Jamie Orrock get his old job back.

Orrock was dismissed by the social services board on Nov. 30, 1983, on a charge of conduct unbecoming a public officer. A former DSS employee had brought charges to the board that she was sexually harassed by Orrock while in the agency's employ.

Orrock's attorney, William Fairley of Southport, said he received notification of the commission's decision in Tuesday's mail.

"It affirmed the hearing officer's decision and recommended he be

reinstated," said Fairley.

Signed by Richard V. Lee, director of state personnel, the recommendation accepts the findings of fact and conclusions of a proposed decision presented last October by hearing officer Barbara Coward.

She had said Orrock should be reinstated because the agency failed to show he had sexually harassed the former employee.

Review of the case by the commission was delayed from Feb. 5 to allow Mary Easley, the social services board's new attorney, to file exceptions to Coward's findings.

Both Easley and Fairley presented oral arguments before the commission at its April 6 meeting.

Fairley and his client are waiting to see what action, if any, the

Brunswick County Board of Social Services takes. The State Personnel Commission's recommendation is advisory only, which means the board does not have to follow it.

"If they will give him his job back, we'd be tickled to death. We wouldn't have to do anything," Fairley said. "We hope we will be told something pretty quickly."

Orrock was working at the Carolina Power & Light Co. plant at Southport Tuesday afternoon and could not be reached for comment.

DSS Attorney Mary Easley had not returned a call from The Beacon at presstime.

If the social services board doesn't offer Orrock his previous job, he has two options: drop the matter or file suit in either federal or state court,

Fairley indicated, "either of which would be fairly expensive propositions."

Along with reinstatement, Coward recommended the agency give Orrock back pay and accumulated vacation and sick leave. She added that he should also submit an itemized list of attorney's fees incurred during the appeals process.

The social services board has been interviewing candidates for the director's post, vacant since Orrock's dismissal on Nov. 30, 1983.

Chairman Betty Varnam, the current acting director, said Tuesday the board had been awaiting results of the commission's review before proceeding.

The commission hears grievances of employees covered under the State

Personnel Act. Its recommendations, except in specific circumstances prescribed by law, are not binding.

Former DSS employee Donna Hinson Rivenbark of Sunset Harbor testified at an August 28-29 hearing at Bolivia that Orrock had allegedly repeatedly "leered" at her, was "overly complimentary" of her appearance, touched her on one occasion "in an offensive manner," and suggested on one occasion use of the agency van "for other purposes," to mean sexual contact.

Rather than mistreating the van driver as alleged, Hearing Officer Coward concluded, Orrock actually "was more lenient" toward her in an effort to work with Rivenbark

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Boards Plan Joint Effort To Get BTC Building Funds

BY SUSAN USHER

County commissioners and Brunswick Technical College trustees say they want to work together to secure funds for development of the college's permanent campus at Supply.

At a joint meeting last Wednesday, members of the two boards indicated a willingness to not only develop a financial plan together, but to carry it out. The meeting was the first of its kind for the two boards.

"We want to bounce the ball to you, but..." said Chris Chappell, chairman of the commissioners, suggesting the board didn't want the college to submit a funding request and not be heard from again.

Leo Johnson, chairman of the trustees' finance committee, assured Chappell, "I feel a spirit of cooperation is there (on the college board) and will improve."

Johnson's committee is to meet with county officials to develop a plan they think will "fly."

Action during the trustees' business meeting afterward indicated the college was encouraged by the exchange with the commissioners.

The college's preliminary budget included a request for \$800,000 from

the county for the building program, but that line will be left blank to be filled in by the finance committee—hopefully with a larger figure—after working with the county on a long-range plan.

"They emphasized they didn't want us to just give them a budget and back off, but that they wanted us to work with them," Trustee Lewis Stanley reminded the board as he made the suggestion.

Earlier, college spokesmen's remarks stressed that BTC is at a turning point, rapidly outpacing available space.

"We're at the point in our growth where there seems to be no end to the number of students coming in," Jesse Clemmons, dean of instruction, said. "We could add five new programs if we had the space and the budget."

As it is, he pointed out, staff juggles sites, hours and space to schedule approximately 540 day and night students and 1,500 to 2,000 extension students.

"We need help," Johnson told the commissioners. "Whether we go to a bond referendum or the county commissioners fund it or whatever, we need the money from whatever sources are available for an ongoing



WILLIAM STANLEY (right), chairman of the Brunswick Technical College Board of Trustees, drives home a point in conversation with Chris Chappell, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners.

"Sometimes I feel like the master of a three-ring circus—because that's what we're operating here."
—Joseph Carter, BTC President, on the need for a single campus.

building program."

An anonymous donor will match money from all sources other than the county or state. So far \$21,000 in donations have been matched.

Fair Share

While the county has given its fair share toward BTC's operating costs—about 10 percent of the operating budget each year, President Joseph Carter said, by state standards county support of the building program has lagged. Over the past three years the county has appropriated \$136,000 in capital outlay funds compared to \$976,000 appropriated by the state.

"We're not fussing," he added. "We just feel we have reached the point where we need some help."

In addition to its request for \$208,000 of its operating budget from the county, the college's most immediate needs are \$198,000 to purchase 132 acres for future growth. The purchase qualifies for matching funds from the state. A five-year op-

tion to buy the land at \$1,500 an acre expires in November. Carter said it is some of the best land available in the county for construction purposes.

But also pressing is the need for more permanent space. The college is trying to accumulate the funds needed for a second building, which would house the nursing education, general education and cosmetology programs.

"We begin our reaccreditation study in the fall," noted President Carter. "We would much rather go into reaccreditation with something going up."

1984 Options

Last year, commissioners considered several funding alternatives for the college's building program and acted on none: 1) making a large general fund contribution, which would mean an increase in county property taxes; 2) establishing a capital reserve fund for the college, which would delay construction; and

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Commission Says Isn't Sidestepping Menhaden Issue

BY SUSAN USHER

Menhaden wasn't on the agenda, but as expected the bony fish was the main topic of discussion at a Marine Fisheries Commission hearing in Wilmington Monday night on proposed changes in state fishing regulations.

Concerned that none of the propos-

ed changes concerned the menhaden industry, about 60 area fishermen attended the session Monday night. They repeated a message delivered a month ago at a public meeting also held at the New Hanover County Courthouse: the need to join other South Atlantic states in regulating the menhaden industry before the

menhaden disappears from over-fishing.

Fishermen like Dale McDowell of the Brunswick County Fishing Club weren't satisfied with news that information on the fishery would be studied before the Commission adopts regulations, if any.

"We don't want another study," he

told the Commission. "We want action."

In his opening and closing remarks, Chairman John D. Costlow said the Commission is taking steps to adopt appropriate menhaden regulations and is moving quickly, though it might not appear so to fishermen.

"I am well aware there is a great deal of feeling about the issue and that there is some feeling we have done nothing about it," he said. "But contrary to what you may have heard or been led to believe, we are not attempting to sandbag, stonewall, avoid our duty or anything else."

Rather, he continued, the commission is trying to take an objective and "intelligent" approach in dealing with the issue.

"We are not going to be pressured into doing something on a half-baked basis just to say we're doing something about an issue you see as important and we do too," he continued.

"I want to make clear we are doing something and have done something."

Recommendations by the commission's commercial management sub-

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DOT Officials Make No Promises On Tour

BY SUSAN USHER

State transportation officials visiting Brunswick County last week made no promises regarding a Shalotte bypass or other local road improvements.

However, Shalotte Mayor Beamon Hewett left a brief meeting with the visitors satisfied with what he had heard.

"It's close. I can feel it," he said. "We've got it on the move. We're going to see some results."

State Secretary of Transportation Jim Harrington told town officials and Brunswick County Republican Party leaders that Gov. Jim Martin had instructed his department to "honor local priorities" in establishing funding for completion of U.S. 17 to the South Carolina line.

"It is important," he added, "that there be a consensus in the local community. When there's that much competition, if its controversial it's easier to skip it and go on to something else."

Both Hewett and Brunswick County Republican Party Chairman John Dozier assured Harrington that county residents and local political leaders agree the bypass is the county's greatest need.

"All you have to do is go sit up on 17 and you'll decide Shalotte should be done first," added Dozier. "I don't

think anyone in the county will disagree with that."

Dozier and the Republican Party's transportation chairman, Malcolm Grissett, were escorting Harrington, Transportation Commissioner Tommy Pollard of Jacksonville, State Highway Administrator George Wells, Deputy Assistant Secretary Jerry Hardesty, District Engineer T.E. Funderburk and other DOT officials on a tour of DOT facilities in the county. They met with local officials in Shalotte and Southport and met with Brunswick County Planner John Harvey and Planning Board Chairman Ed Gore to discuss plans for a countywide thoroughfare plan that included incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

In the meeting at Shalotte, Mayor Hewett reminded Harrington the county has proposed to Pollard breaking the Shalotte bypass out of the state transportation improvement plan, then returning to the priorities as listed in the plan.

Harrington also said when the state has to set priorities between projects of equal status, "the local preference expressed politically will naturally get first preference among equals because there is never enough money to do them all."

Harrington said the priority list meant little from one year to the next

—a statement that didn't surprise most of those at the meeting. The Shalotte bypass has moved up and down, off and on the priority list several times over the past 10 years.

"Except for projects already under construction, it's almost a zero-base start every year," he said.

Putting the bypass ahead of other U.S. 17 projects shouldn't cause any delays, Harrington acknowledged, because the DOT staff has done some preliminary work on the bypass segment as well as the four-laning to the north, but not to the south of Shalotte.

"If you go ahead with the bypass," suggested Hewett, "then we (Shalotte) would be relieved of that traffic by the time you turned it loose on us (from U.S. 17 north)."

Downtown 17

Shalotte officials didn't get good news Thursday regarding the unfinished resurfacing of U.S. 17 through downtown Shalotte.

"It's awful. I wish you had waited," Hewett told local and state DOT officials.

"Don't get me wrong—we appreciate what you're doing."

The top layer of U.S. 17 through Shalotte was ground off last month a distance of three-fourths of a mile and may not be replaced until fall, leaving a very bumpy ride for local

motorists and an estimated 150,000 travelers in the meantime.

If the work isn't completed until fall rather than before the summer season, Hewett said, "We're going to take a lot of cussing between now and then. We already have."

District 1 Engineer T.E. Funderburk said he had funds left over in a contract for grinding and Shalotte's street needed grinding and resurfacing. The money for the resurfacing, however, is proposed for the 1985-86 budget, and won't be available before July 1.

Funderburk was instructed to see if the money for the resurfacing could be found in his budget for the remainder of the year.

The state delegation also had ideas for where the money could come from for another project Shalotte officials have been pushing for about six months—extending the U.S. 17 turn lane 1,500 feet to Coastal Plaza shopping center at the south end of town and reducing the speed limit from 55 mph to 35 mph by the entrance to the shopping plaza.

State Highway Administrator George Wells said the extension sounded like a good "small, urban project."

Funderburk said design and cost estimates were being completed now and that no additional right-of-way would be required for the project.



SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION Jim Harrington made no promises Thursday, when he met with local political figures at the DOT facility in Shalotte to discuss local road needs.