

Board Hears Supervisors, Evaluates Clerk, Attorney

BY SUSAN USHER

Meeting past midnight Monday, Brunswick County commissioners listened to several supervisors unhappy about not getting merit raises, and awarded merit increases to two other employees.

County Attorney David Clegg received the largest increase in pay, an 18 percent jump from \$33,000 to \$39,000. The increase brought his salary into line with other members of the administrative team. County Manager Billy Carter earns \$41,000 and Finance Director Wallace Harding earns \$38,000.

Chairman Chris Chappell said Clegg's more than usual increase was based on outstanding ratings received on several areas of his evaluation.

Regina White, clerk to the board,

received an "above average" rating from the board—the highest on a three-part scale—and a three percent pay increase. She was previously earning between \$18,500 and \$19,000.

Carter asked that his six-month evaluation be held after the proposed 1985-86 budget is ready.

Clegg and White are not covered by the county's pay plan, but report directly to the board of commissioners. Both were evaluated individually by the board in a closed-door session Monday night.

Commissioners first went behind closed doors at about 8:30 to discuss "client-attorney" matters. They came out shortly before 11 p.m. and then returned to executive session to discuss personnel matters. The meeting ended at 12:25 a.m.

Commissioners heard briefly from

Parks and Recreation Director Bob Jones, Housekeeping Supervisor Ellouise Russ, Landfill Director Major White, Data Processing Manager Regina McKeithan, and Register of Deeds Robert Robinson. All but Robinson were there to ask why they had not received merit raises. Robinson said he asked why his employees had not qualified for merit raises, that he was satisfied with his unchanged salary level.

The previous board of commissioners had set aside 2½ percent of the 1984-85 salary budget for awarding merit increases of various sums to recognize outstanding work.

County Manager Billy Carter said employees were evaluated on their performance over the past six months. Department heads recommended which of their employees should

received the bonus, while Carter evaluated the department heads.

He said about an equal number of other department heads who did not get merit increases had taken their concerns to him, while the others appealed directly to the board. Both procedures are within the supervisors' rights.

To qualify for merit employees had to have been employed in the same job title (grade) for the past 12 months. This meant that employees who were reclassified in new positions at the start of the fiscal year in July 1984 were not eligible, Carter said.

While several department heads questioned the fairness of their evaluations, Carter said the evaluations he made were just that.

"I am a very objective person," he said. "I think things that continue to

show up in evaluations should be discussed. It reflects that particular individual did not improve in what he was expected to do."

If someone does not get a merit increase, he added, that does not mean they are not doing a good job, but that there are areas of improvement to be made.

Also, he added, "some people don't want to work within an organizational structure, but rather a political structure. But you've got to have an organizational structure."

Carter defended implementation of a merit pay system in Brunswick County, saying the method encourages employees to improve their performance.

If an employee has worked at the same job 15 or 20 years, he or she often puts forth no special effort,

while an energetic and newer employee may. Lack of recognition of that extra effort through a means such as merit raises could be discouraging, he said, while merit encourages the older employee to challenge themselves and perform at a higher level of achievement.

"It takes time, but it will work," he said.

Where merit doesn't work, Carter added, "is when politics enters into it" and salary decisions are based on factors other than actual performance.

In other business the board adopted a resolution proposed by Commissioner Herman Love objecting to the proposed cost assignment to utility customers of costs related to construction of power and generating facilities. Love's resolution said utility rate increases should reflect only the cost of providing service to customers in the area.

Commissioners To Set Road Priorities

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County will present its priorities for road construction and maintenance to the state in a slightly different fashion this year at a May 23 meeting in Jacksonville.

Commissioners plan to establish those priorities in funding at their May 20 meeting.

The county should stress not only the area's extremely rapid growth, but its increasing importance to state tourism as well, County Planner John Harvey suggested Monday night.

In 1984, for instance, a state study shows that Brunswick County ranked 12th among the 100 counties in the amount of dollars spent on tourism. The \$98 million figure reflected a 181 percent increase over 1983.

In past years, Harvey has presented the request at the annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) meeting for southeastern local officials after being introduced by one or more elected officials.

But, he said, with greater interest by this board and the prior board in transportation issues, it seemed time to change.

Harvey said he thought a presentation by elected officials would have a greater impact.

"I feel the way it has been done in the past—though I'm not objecting—has been too much John Harvey and not enough board."

Commissioners will map their priorities at the May 20 board meeting and Vice Chairman Jim Poole volunteered to attend the DOT meeting.

The plan will address items such as the Shallotte bypass and ranking of

segments of the remaining U.S. 17 four-laning project, a proposed welcome center for the bypass, replacement of the Sunset Beach Bridge, secondary road concerns, with a strong emphasis on the need for a countywide long range thoroughfare plan that includes both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

Harvey said he thought agreement had been reached that the state would work on such a thoroughfare plan, but that he had since learned of some potentially troubling delays.

"We consider the timing of the thoroughfare plan important to the updating of the county land use plan and those of a number of municipalities," he noted.

Diana Recalled

County Manager Billy Carter returned from the 7th annual National Hurricane Conference impressed, he said, by attendance at the event and the accuracy of the information shared there.

Held May 1-3 in New Orleans, its 35 sessions were dominated by discussion of Hurricane Diana.

Carter, Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan, Planner Von Singleton and officials from Southport and Long Beach divided up attendance so as to cover as many meetings as possible and also brought back a tape library for reference purposes.

Carter said he was impressed with

three major points:

•Diana's lesson that, despite modern technological advances, "nature still takes its own course" and a hurricane's behavior can't be predicted, even though new models will help;

•That, despite expansive publicity, a survey showed that a large number of people were unaware of evacuation orders during the hurricane and that many others delayed evacuating until ordered to do so; and

•That public officials must make decisions with adequate lead time to allow coastal evacuation across areas of heavy inland flooding. "Hesitancy in making decisions can be detrimental to our citizens' safety," he said.

Convenience Station

After receiving no bids for the job, commissioners agreed Monday for county workers to build a convenience station in the Holden Beach area rather than advertise a second time for bids.

Under this arrangement recommended by the Solid Waste Committee, the county can begin using a portion of the station while construction continues. Only concrete work will be contracted for the station, which will house two or more 40-yard garbage containers in a location off Open Road. The containers can hold a wider variety of materials than green boxes and a much larger volume.

The project, the first of several proposed stations, has taken approximately a year to get off the ground. Commissioners did not want to delay construction further.

Green Boxes

In another trash-related matter, the board denied requests from two businesses to locate green boxes on their property. They followed the recommendation of Chairman Chris Chappell, who said putting boxes on business property could lead to large numbers of similar requests and also in the boxes ultimately being used only for waste generated by the businesses themselves, not the community.

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Old County Records Mount Up Quickly

It's not a tangle of red tape, but the next thing to it.

Stacked in a single pile, the old records scheduled for disposal by the Brunswick County Finance Department would stand 1½ times the height of the 120-foot-tall Bolivia Fire Tower.

Placed end to end, they would stretch more than half the length of a football field.

"They're taking up valuable space," Finance Director Wallace Harding said Monday after obtaining permission from the county commissioners to destroy the files.

The 188.08 feet or 2,257 inches of outdated paper will be buried with due ceremony at the Brunswick County Landfill. State law requires the burial be witnessed, Harding said.

Landfill Director Major White said that on the appointed day, the landfill crew would dig into the bottom of an existing pile of garbage and dump the records at the bottom, covering them with garbage and then closing the hole.

"We put it where we can cover it immediately," he said.

While White recalls disposing of some food stamp records about two years ago, he said this is the first time he can recall disposing of finance office records.

Among the earliest files scheduled for destruction are canceled checks from the health department and debt service bank statements dating from 1969. The most recent are purchase orders (blue copies only) dating from 1984.

As called for by the state, Harding's staff measured each record to be disposed of, listing the type of record, size and date for items ranging from cash register receipts to time cards and W-2 forms. The thinnest file listed measured one-half inch, while the thickest, 1980 computer printouts, measured 14.5 feet.

The Brunswick County Board of Social Services heard a similar request to destroy dated files from its staff earlier this month, but took no action. In what may become a flurry of spring cleaning, other departments are expected to make similar requests for records disposal.

Harding said the N.C. Division of Archives and History recently conducted a workshop for the county on what records it could legally dispose of and how it could be done.

Storage space is at a premium for most departments at the complex, and even purging of old records isn't expected to relieve the need, several department heads indicated Monday night.

Sign Up Now For Driver's Education

June 7 is the last day to register for a summer driver education course offered at West Brunswick High School.

The classes are open to anyone between the ages of 14½ and 18. Class size is limited to the first 35 students to register.

Students will meet each weekday from June 17 through July 3 from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in Room 123 at the school.

Interested youths are asked to contact guidance counselors Bertha Bell or Julie Harris at 754-4338. They will need the student's name, phone number and date of birth.

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