

Shallotte Voters Defeat Beer, Wine Issues

BY SUSAN USHER

True to earlier predictions, Shallotte voters quietly defeated three proposals to expand the sale of beer and wine by a ratio of more than two to one Tuesday.

Long Beach residents, on the other hand, readily approved the idea of a non-partisan municipal primary election by a vote of 373 for to 155 against. That means the filing period for candidates will open August 16. About one-third of the town's ap-

proximate 1,600 registered voters cast ballots, including one serviceman by absentee vote.

Of Shallotte's estimated 334 registered voters, 127, or 38 percent, cast votes in the alcoholic beverage control referendum, Brunswick County Board of Elections Chairman Ori Gore said Tuesday night.

Nearly double the votes were cast Tuesday than in the town's last ABC referendum, held Jan. 6, 1976, but the outcome was markedly similar.

That year 68 of the town's 300-plus voters similarly defeated all beer and wine issues on the ballot 2 to 1.

Of the 127 voting Tuesday, 61 percent or 77 people voted against the sale of unfortified wines for off-premises consumption. Unfortified wines are those with an alcohol content of 6 to 17 percent and include standard table varieties such as chablis and burgundy.

A slightly lesser margin, 57 percent, objected to the sale of unfortified wines for on-premises consumption, as with a meal in a restaurant.

Fifty-six percent of the voters, or 71, opposed the sale of beer and other malt beverages for consumption on the premises of Class A restaurants, hotels and motels.

A summary of the Shallotte results is as follows: Malt beverages, 47 for, 71 against; on-premises sale of unfortified wines, 41 for; 72 against; off-premises sale of unfortified wines, 39

for; 77 against.

Beer and malt beverages will continue to be sold in stores for off-premises consumption. Fortified wines and wines produced in North Carolina are available through the Shallotte ABC Store and through area merchants. Ocean Isle Beach, Sunset Beach and Calabash are the nearest communities to Shallotte where unfortified wines are sold.

The towns of Long Beach and

Shallotte will share the \$1,200 to \$1,500 tab for the dual election Tuesday, Gore said. Long Beach will pay any extra expenses associated with absentee voting. Shallotte did not allow absentee voting because of the extra expense involved. The Board of Elections had to meet once to approve the absentee ballot requested at Long Beach and then had to meet again 5 p.m. Tuesday to count the ballot.

"It was a yes," Gore said.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

HORG & SONS BOOK BINDERY
12/31/99
SPRINGPORT MI 49284

Volume

North Carolina, Thursday, May 16, 1985

25c Per Copy

26 Pages

Budget Proposal Would Give All County Employees Pay Increase

BY SUSAN USHER

All county employees would receive a pay increase during the coming year under a budget proposal agreed upon by county commissioners Tuesday during their second in a series of budget meetings.

A proposed budget must be available for public inspection by June 1 and a public hearing to follow. The actual county budget must be adopted before July 1, when the next business year begins.

Commissioners couldn't settle on whether to give all employees the same amount of money or to award raises for reasons of merit only as they hashed out their first policy decision relating to the 1985-86 preliminary budget. They compromised on a combination of the two after hours of discussion spread over several meetings.

They propose to give each employee covered under the county pay plan \$200, at an estimated cost of \$52,000.

Salaries cost the county about \$4.3 million annually. Finance Director Wallace Harding indicated. Commissioners propose to set aside two-thirds of 5 percent of that figure, or \$145,000, for merit raises that would include automatic step increases for certain employees.

Those who have been employed at the same grade and Step 1 of the county's pay classification plan for 12 months will automatically advance to Step 2, for a pay increase of about 5 percent.

Employees who have been employed in the same position for two years will be automatically advanced to Step 3, regardless of whether they were at Step 1 or Step 2 previously.

Beyond those automatic steps, employees would be eligible for merit pay increases based on outstanding work performance.

County Manager Billy Carter said these automatic pay increases will affect most county employees since the majority are at either Step 1 or Step 2.

Meanwhile the county is proceeding with plans to restudy the entire classification plan. The study was completed in 1979, implemented in 1980 and needs review, Carter said. Staff members called Tuesday morning to solicit proposals for state and private consultants. Any



BRUNSWICK COUNTY MANAGER BILLY CARTER makes a point during commissioners' first budget workshop Monday night as Finance Director Wallace

Harding looks on. Commissioners plan to meet several times weekly to prepare a preliminary budget by June 1 for public inspection and a hearing.

revamping of the plan recommended could be implemented at mid-year, with study results expected in the fall.

This study is one of three put on hold last year partly because of extra expenses incurred during Hurricane Diana and partly because of a change in finance officers. The county also plans to conduct a study of indirect

costs and another on user fees, which would look at the county's experience with existing user fees as well as the potential for other user fees.

Commissioner Herman Love had proposed giving all employees a raise of the same amount, saying the move would help lift the county's lowest salary levels to a more acceptable level.

When across-the-board raises are given based on a percentage of salary, he said, "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" because the gap between their salaries widens.

"Regardless of the job they're in, any employee is entitled to a living for his family if he's doing a good day's work," said Love. "I'm not saying pay everyone the same, but that the lowest is too low."

Commissioner Frankie Rabon also objected to an all-merit plan, proposing a combination so that "everybody will get a little something."

Chairman Chris Chappell, on the other hand, viewed a merit plan with automatic step increases for employees at Step 1 and 2 as "the most economical and feasible" way to handle raises next year.

Chappell, Poole and County Manager Carter noted that merit increases motivate employees to perform at higher levels and reward extra work. Poole said a merit plan also forces supervisors to examine the work of employees under their responsibility more closely.

But, warned Love, "You will never get the level of employee you want unless you offer them enough money."

By hiring workers at too-low salary levels, he continued, the county ends up with lower-quality workers not suited for promotion.

Adopting an approach to salaries was the first of several broad decisions the board plans to make before delving into specific parts of the budget.

On Monday, commissioners heard a report on the county's financial position, while on Tuesday they began an overview of department-by-department budget requests in all areas except salaries and personnel. Requested new positions will be taken up separately.

Given the objectives commissioners hope to accomplish with the 1985-86 budget, County Manager Billy Carter projected "possibly a five cent tax increase" Monday. However, if all requests were met, he added, the increase would be closer to 15 cents to 20 cents on the rate.

(See BUDGET, Page 2-A)



BRUNSWICK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS and social services board members met jointly Monday in private to discuss the handling of a legal matter. From the far left are Linda Green, clerk to the social services board; Mary Easley, attorney to the social services board; Bobby Brown, social services board member; David Clegg, county attorney; Billy Carter, county manager; Jim Poole, commission vice-chairman;

Chris Chappell, commission chairman; Herman Love, commission; Grace Beasley, commissioner; Regina White, clerk to the commissioners; Frankie Rabon, a member of both boards; Edna Crouch, social services board member; Barry Frink, social services vice-chairman; and at center foreground, Betty Varnam, social services chairman.

Board Wants To Settle With Orrock

BY SUSAN USHER

A former Brunswick County Social Services director says he is disappointed in a decision by the social services board Monday not to rehire him.

The Brunswick County Board of Social Services rejected a state recommendation to rehire former director Jamie Orrock Monday night, instead directing its attorney to pursue "further settlement."

Contacted Tuesday at home, Orrock said he was "somewhat disappointed" with the board's decision.

"I had hoped it could end and everything get back to as near normal as possible for me and the employees," he said. "My taking action in the first place was for the purpose of obtaining reinstatement and just compensation. Nothing has happened since then to change that position."

But, he added, it would be "premature" to discuss a settlement when he has not heard the terms of

the offer or discussed them with Fairley.

Member Louis "Bobby" Brown motioned that the board reject the recommendation to rehire Orrock issued by the State Personnel Commission last month. His motion directed board attorney, Mary Easley to contact Orrock's attorney, William Fairley, "for further settlement."

Commissioner Frankie Rabon, who cast the one dissenting vote Monday, said the board would consider a possible cash settlement of an unstated amount on condition that Orrock agree not to pursue further legal action against the board.

"We'd have to be cleared of any further action down the road," he said.

County commissioners met with the social services for the first half-hour of a 1½-hour closed door session called to discuss "personnel and pending litigation."

Rabon said the commissioners had left it to the social services board to

decide whether to rehire Orrock or not.

Orrock was fired by the board Nov. 30, 1983, after another former DSS employee accused him of sexual harassment.

He appealed that dismissal. In October 1984 Commission hearing officer Barbara Coward recommended Orrock be reinstated with back pay, an opinion upheld in April by the Commission. However, that recommendation is not binding.

Chairman Betty Varnam, Vice Chairman Barry Frink and member Edna Crouch voted in favor of Brown's motion.

The social services board had originally asked to discuss the Orrock case and that of another former DSS employee, Alinda Meares. But on advice of their attorney, David Clegg, commissioners asked that communication relating to the Meares case be kept between the two attorneys because of their "adversary party" status.

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Shallotte Hears Some Good News About U.S. Highway 17

BY SUSAN USHER

Motorists traveling through Shallotte should have a smoother ride come early June and may be able to bypass downtown traffic entirely four years from now, State Board of Transportation member Tommy Pollard of Jacksonville announced Tuesday.

At an afternoon news conference at Bolivia, Pollard said he had been able to move construction of a proposed Shallotte bypass ahead in the state's Transportation Improvement Plan by another six months. That means it should be completed sometime in fiscal year 1988.

"It will probably be completed a little prior to the Bolivia bypass," he predicted.

In addition to smoothing the surface of U.S. 17 through town, he said the left turn lane through Shallotte will be extended southward "sometime this summer."

Pollard said the Martin administration, Transportation Secretary James Harrington and the transportation department are "vitaly interested" in Brunswick County because of its population explosion and rapid economic growth.

"We plan to give you a lot of attention in Brunswick County," he added,

through the efforts of a Republican transportation task force and other citizens.

While disappointed the bypass couldn't be moved even farther ahead, Shallotte Mayor Beamon Hewett was pleased with Pollard's announcement.

"If they'll do it by the time the Bell Swamp to Supply section is done," he said, "maybe we can hold out until then."

"But I can tell you right now, if we grow in the next two years like we've grown over the last two years, instead of 15,000 cars a day it will be 25,000 to 30,000. We will have a bottle

neck."

He noted that under this schedule the bypass would be completed within Gov. Jim Martin's term of office, as Martin had proposed as a candidate.

Pollard said that six months was the most the bypass could be speeded up.

"Twenty-five percent of the right-of-way has been purchased. It will take another 12 months to purchase the remainder and 12 months to construct it. There's no way to move it up any quicker than that."

Construction of the Bolivia bypass is part of the 13.5-mile Bell Swamp to

Supply four-laning project on which construction is slated to begin in fiscal year 1987 and paving in 1988.

The 4.2-mile Shallotte bypass is part of the longer 17.1-mile Supply to the South Carolina line four-laning project. Under the transportation plan adopted in December 1984, construction was to begin in 1988.

A thin layer of asphalt, called a "skin patch," will be applied within the next several weeks as a temporary remedy for rough grooves created along a three-fourths mile section of U.S. 17 when Department of Transportation crews ground the roadway in March. The patch will be

in place before the summer tourist season begins.

"This is not a permanent answer," Pollard said of the patch, "but it will make the road ride a lot better."

After the end of the tourist season, the roadway will be completely resurfaced with funds included in the 1985-86 proposed budget.

The "skin patch" will be applied by DOT workers in-house as "an accommodation," Pollard said, rather than creating further delays by letting the project for bid.

"It needed immediate correction," he added.

(See HIGHWAY, Page 2-A)