

# Ocean Isle Budget Keeps 29 Cent Tax Rate Intact

BY TERRY POPE

Ocean Isle Beach commissioners adopted a 1985-86 tentative budget Tuesday with plans to keep the town's tax rate at 29 cents per \$100 valuation, the same as last year.

The budget presented by Town Clerk Alberta Tatum lists estimated revenues for the year at \$2,010,428.48. Of those revenues, \$273,105.56 would be collected in ad valorem taxes for property within the town that has a current value exceeding \$95 million.

Commissioners will meet again Tuesday, May 21 at 4 p.m. at the town hall and will also hold a work session on the budget June 11 at the town hall at 4 p.m. At Tuesday's meeting, a public hearing on revenue sharing funds totaling \$4,286 was held, but no public comments were made. The town appropriated the entire amount to the police department.

Impact fees from the town's sewer system would add \$50,000 in revenues to the 1985-86 budget while \$415,566 is anticipated in state Clean Water Bond Grant funds. Other revenues anticipated are as follows: accommodation tax funds, \$165,000; assessment roll, collected fiscal year 1984-85, \$458,823.80; assessment roll revenues, \$456,305.20; building permits and contractors licenses, \$18,000; franchise tax and intangibles tax, \$28,300; and sales tax refund, \$28,844.

Revenues would also be received from ABC board funds, Powell Bill street funds, a \$10,000 land use plan

grant from the Coastal Area Management Act and other sources.

The town's largest expenditure for the fiscal year will be the proposed sewer system, for which \$1,526,194 has been budgeted for fiscal year 1985-86. Other expenditures are as follows: administration, \$55,045; building inspection, \$27,215.75; park management, \$5,000; Brunswick County planner, \$2,880; unemployment tax, \$1,484.65; local government retirement, \$11,500; erosion project, \$10,000 and contingency, \$12,481.84.

The town's water management fund will include \$251,243.09 in anticipated revenues, \$140,537.35 in operation expenses and \$28,560 in administrative expenses. Revenues include \$20,000 for tap-on fees, \$192,837 for water bills and \$33,815.74 from reserve funds.

Several town employees will also be awarded pay raises under the new budget. Town Clerk Tatum's salary will increase from \$17,096.62 per year to \$20,800. Building inspector T. Druied Roberson's salary will also increase from \$18,000 to \$21,500 per year.

Police Chief Jerry Gurganus will receive a pay increase from \$17,613.75 to \$18,494 per year. Officers James Stewart, Tommy Allen and William Lewis will also receive raises, each from \$13,230 to \$13,892 per year.

In other business Tuesday, the board agreed to appropriate \$1,200 to

have the engine overhauled in a police department patrol car. Funds for the work are available in the 1985-86 budget, Ms. Tatum said.

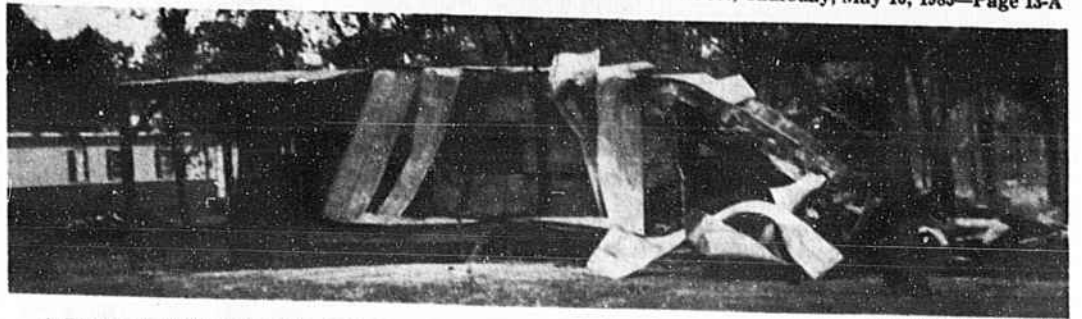
Roberson, the town's building inspector, was also authorized Tuesday to apply for a probationary mechanical inspector's license from the state for which fees will be \$25 per inspection. The board will decide at its meeting Tuesday the fees for plumbing inspections that must begin June 1.

Roberson has proposed setting a \$25 minimum, or \$3 per fixture for plumbing fees, but some board members think the figure is too high. All plumbing work for new construction must be inspected prior to tapping on to the town sewer system.

Roberson also reported Tuesday the town issued 31 building permits in April, collecting \$16,750 in fees for a construction value of \$1,055,500.

The board also agreed Tuesday to investigate what needs to be done to prevent dune destruction along the east end. Board member Debbie Fox read a letter to the board Tuesday signed by several residents of Second Street and Fayetteville Street.

Residents are asking the board to prevent the use of dunes in their neighborhood as public accessways, either by barricades or installing no parking signs. Police Chief Gurganus also reported Tuesday that Third Street leading to the inlet on the east end needs to be barricaded to prevent vehicles from driving on the strand.



A PREDAWN ELECTRICAL FIRE last Wednesday destroyed this Brooks Drive mobile home owned by the C.A. Stokes of Monroe. STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

# Fires Destroy Mobile Home, Several Acres

Two fires destroyed a mobile home and several acres of woodland last week near Seaside, before the area could receive a much needed period of rainfall, according to Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan.

Firemen responded to a 3:20 a.m. blaze early Wednesday morning that destroyed a mobile home in Seaside owned by C.A. Stokes of Monroe. The summer residence was unoccupied at the time of the fire, Logan said.

The blaze was apparently caused by an electrical shortage, he added. No estimate was available on the amount of damages, but the mobile home was a total loss. Sunset Beach Volunteer fire fighters battled the fire for two hours.

Wednesday evening, fire fighters were called back to a wooded area near Seaside to battle a fire that ap-

parently started along the edge of a clearing where debris had once been dumped.

"It could have been a lot worse than it was," Logan said. The N.C. Forest Service spotter plane was called in to help pinpoint the location of the flames, he added.

Assistant Forest Ranger Philip Inman said Tuesday the county has been degraded to a level two readiness for forest fires as a result of the weekend rains. When Wednesday's woodland fire broke out, the county was under a level three readiness and the men were getting ready to go home for the day.

Units from Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle and Calabash volunteer fire departments battled the blaze before bringing it under control. Nearby residents said the debris has remained in the clearing for some time, but

the fire Wednesday started near the edge of the clearing and not near the pile of debris.

Logan said Friday that arson is suspected in the fire, but no one has been charged.

Weekend rains have helped reduce the area's potential for forest fires, but the county's water table remains low, Inman said. Another dry spell could create the same dangerous conditions as before, he noted.

Logan said he is also investigating a series of small brush fires that have apparently been set in the Marlee Acres subdivision near Seaside.

In the past month, 15 to 16 small brush fires have been set along the roadway, mostly in the afternoons, he said. Sunset Beach volunteer fire fighters have responded to each blaze.



FIREFIGHTERS Keith Logan, Al Nord and Steve Mann hose down a debris fire Wednesday afternoon in a wooded area near Brooks Drive in the Seaside area. STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Volunteers from Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach and Calabash fire departments brought the blaze of unknown origin under control.

# Council Gives Approval For West End 'Planned' Project

BY TERRY POPE

Ocean Isle Beach commissioners reviewed and approved a set of plans Tuesday that will allow a 192-unit planned development to be constructed on the beach's west end.

In giving approval to DeCarol Williamson for the two Ocean Isle Resort subdivisions, the board commented the developer on the project that will consist of twelve 16-unit buildings and 384 parking spaces.

Commissioners followed in the footsteps of the town planning and zoning board, which earlier approved the project by an unanimous vote, Mayor LaDane Bullington said.

Williamson addressed the town Tuesday with maps for the planned development prepared by Edward Stone Jr. Planning Corporation of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. The council approved two subdivisions for the site at an earlier meeting, but those plans will be replaced with the development approved Tuesday, Ms. Bullington said.

"It will be a well-balanced, planned-out community with the family atmosphere intact," Williamson told the council Tuesday. "Really, what we've done is designed something

with less density than what it was originally subdivided for."

Some areas of the project will consist of more density than others while there will be "a lot of green areas and open areas," Williamson added. The project calls for an average of 14 units per acre, or 28 to 30 bedrooms per acre.

"That is actually less density than you have in the R-1 areas," Williamson said. "If you're counting bedrooms."

The two subdivisions approved Tuesday are part of a long-term planned development for the west end that will eliminate cluster housing, or unplanned projects, Ms. Bullington said. Plans also call for later adding twin towers to the development.

Williamson told the board that Edward Stone has a fine reputation for creating carefully planned projects that benefit the communities.

"One of the first things he told us was, if he wasn't free to plan something that would protect their reputation as well as ours," Williamson said, "then they didn't want the project."

Mayor Bullington said the com-

pany sent the plans to an engineer to calculate the storm water runoff impact on the area. The storm water issue is one that is now before the state, but "in this project, they did calculate that," Ms. Bullington said.

### Sewer Decisions

Mayor Bullington will attend a planning session in Raleigh Friday with the town's sewer system engineers to prepare for a meeting with bond rating agencies in New York City. Bonds are scheduled to be sold July 2 to help finance the town's sewer system.

Commissioners gave Ms. Bullington authority Tuesday to sell the bonds to the bank offering the highest interest rate in case the bonds need to be sold prior to July 2.

Town officials will meet with Moody's and Standard and Poor's bond rating agencies in New York City next month in hopes of retaining an excellent bond rating.

At a special meeting of the council last Monday, the town approved low bids for the \$4.3 million sewer system and also established tap-on fees for the system.

R.H. Moore Company Inc. of Murrell's Inlet, S.C. was awarded the sanitary sewers and force mains section of the project at \$1,795,649.50 following the recommendation of engineers Henry Von Oesen and Associates. The town followed the recommendation of the engineer on all low bids which were opened April 22.

Dellinger Inc. of Monroe was awarded the contract for the low bid on the submersible precast concrete pump station at \$692,500.

Crowder Construction Company Inc. of Charlotte was awarded the contract for the wastewater treatment facility and main lift station with a low bid of \$1.6 million.

Cape Fear Electric Inc. of Wilmington was awarded the contract for the electrical portion of the project with a low bid of \$205,900. The total cost of the project is \$4,294,049.50.

Commissioners also established tap-on fees to the system as follows: residential, single units, \$900; duplex, with single sewer tap for both units, \$1,200; duplex with two sewer taps, one for each unit, \$1,800.

For motels, hotels, condominiums or apartment units, a \$2,000 tap-on fee, or \$100 per unit, whichever is greater, will be charged.

For commercial units, \$900 will be charged for nominal water users such as professional offices or retail businesses. For intense water users, such as restaurants or laundromats, \$1,800 will be charged.

A second notice will also be mailed to property owners offering a \$100 discount on their total tap-on costs for paying the fees prior to the due date in July. This offer will extend to owners of non-commercial property only to provide the town with upfront cash to help in installation of sewer system lateral lines.

# Plant Locates At Point

BY SUSAN USHER

A window blind manufacturing company plans to begin production around June 1 in the former Milliken Pump Co. building at Shallotte Point.

The location makes the third production site for Vista Manufacturing Co. of Jacksonville and Sarasota, Fla., said Jay Whitman, plant manager.

Vista, formed in 1980, is the fourth largest contract manufacturer of Graber blinds.

The company will make vertical blinds at the Brunswick County plant, which Whitman said will employ about 20 persons when in full production.

He said the work force would be hired locally. Vista is setting up equipment and making sure it is operable before hiring its crew.

From its Shallotte Point location, Vista plans to distribute products to an area ranging from Charleston, S.C., to the Virginia/North Carolina line and west, Whitman said.

The Shallotte Point plant will include an inventory of Vista products made elsewhere for regional distribution. Vista manufactures vertical blinds and Graber "fashion plates" or accordion-pleated polyester fabric mini-blinds at the Sarasota plant. It's Tampa warehouse maintains an inventory of

Graber hardware and rods and the company also distributes Levolor blinds, products that will eventually be included in the local inventory.

Vista's Jacksonville plant is to be replaced with a new, larger facility now under construction, Whitman said.

Vista leased the Shallotte Point building from Alton Milliken in January, Resources Development Commission Director Michael deSherbinin said. The facility contains about 5,000 square feet production area, plus about 1,000 square feet office space.

"Truthfully, there's not a lot of commercial buildings available in this area," said Vista Vice President Jim Singer. "I'm real happy we found this place. Extremely happy."

Vista had looked at several sites between Myrtle Beach, S.C., and Wilmington—the mid-point area of its proposed wholesale distribution area, including Whiteville and Myrtle Beach, but settled on the Milliken building.

"The people in the area have been very nice and real cooperative," he said. "Mr. de Sherbinin has given us a tremendous amount of help. We're really glad we ran into him."

The Milliken building was once used to manufacture water pumps, but has been vacant for several years.

# Bill Would Let HCA Assume Obligation

A bill that is currently being considered by a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives would only allow hospital management firms to assume Hill-Burton grants, rather than "require" the companies to assume the obligations, said Brunswick Hospital Administrator Charles Sons.

Brunswick Hospital authority members voted April 24 to allow Hospital Corporation of America, the firm now leasing the hospital, to assume the Hill-Burton grant if the bill is passed and if HCA officials were willing to do so. It was incorrectly stated in the May 2 issue of The Brunswick Beacon that the authority's vote would "make HCA responsible" for the obligation.

Up until 1977, Hill-Burton grants were awarded to help construct hospitals provided the funds were repaid by providing a certain amount of indigent care for those who can't afford to pay.

The Brunswick Hospital, which received a \$1 million Hill-Burton grant in 1977, is still obligated to repay the grant. When the authority leased the facility to HCA last year, it was the first hospital the company had obtained through a lease agreement for which a Hill-Burton obligation still existed, Sons said.

It was also incorrectly stated in the May 2 issue that the authority's lease agreement obligated HCA to finance close to \$3.9 million in improvements to the Brunswick Hospital. Instead,

the lease called for close to \$1.4 million in improvements, but HCA officials elected to exceed that amount, up to \$3.9 million in improvements to the facility, Sons said.

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