

New Investigator, Chairman Tapped By Social Services

BY SUSAN USHER

On Monday, Brunswick County's social services department got a new fraud investigator and its governing board a new chairman.

John Wayne Campbell, former chief of police for the Town of Shallotte, began work Monday as a fraud investigator trainee, filling a position that has been vacant for some time.

Later that day, county commissioner Frankie Rabon assumed the chairmanship of the Brunswick County Board of Social Services.

Outgoing chairman Betty Varnam nominated him. Edna Crouch of Oak Island was elected vice-chairman.

The fraud investigator's job called for a combination of law enforcement and social work experience. But out of nearly 50 applicants, Supervisor Lilli Barnes said at an earlier meeting, none met all qualifications.

Commissioners rejected a proposal to increase the salary to entice more qualified candidates. Instead, a candidate qualified in the law enforcement area was hired. During a six-month trainee period he is to gain the social work experience needed.

The fraud investigator looks for instances in which agency clients have given false information, failed to report income or other data that affects benefit or otherwise obtained benefits for which they didn't qualify.

If the client doesn't work out and meet a repayment plan, the department prosecutes.

The position salary is too low, Ms. Barnes said, for the amount of work and the long hours required.

Campbell was fired from the Shallotte post in April after he secretly taped a conversation with the



WAYNE CAMPBELL
...fraud investigator

mayor. He had been with the department since August 1983 and has about 20 years of law enforcement experience. He lives in Shallotte.

His hiring by DSS had prompted at least one call from another applicant who thought he or she was more qualified for the job, social services board members learned Monday.

Discussion of the filling of that position led to further questions about hiring procedures in general.

Board members specifically questioned the relationship of the department to the county personnel office as well as internal handling of applications.

While several persons might be involved in the screening of a candidate and the director makes the final decision to hire, board members agreed with Rabon that only one per-

son should handle applications and that they should be treated identically.

"I think one person should be responsible for it in this agency," said Rabon. "We need a policy to follow every time."

Interjected Clerical Supervisor Linda Green, "That's our problem—we don't have one."

Applications for the fraud investigator's job had been picked up from the personnel office by one DSS supervisor, Evelyn Johnson; forwarded to Greenville by another, Ms. Green; and returned to yet a third person, the supervisor for the available position, Supervisor Lilli Barnes.

"It gets kind of discouraging," said Rabon, to hear complaints in the county from individuals who claim to have applied for jobs in the agency, but whose applications allegedly were never considered. He said he wanted to be able to answer their questions.

Finance Post

A job that doesn't exist yet also prompted some discussion Monday.

Rabon asked for an executive session to discuss a proposed assistant finance officer who would handle the DSS finances, but board attorney Mary Easley said she couldn't find justification for the request.

However, the board did meet behind closed doors for nearly two hours on another personnel matter with County Finance Officer Wallace Harding, Mrs. Easley and Ted Bowen, from the N.C. Department of Human Resources regional personnel office in Greenville.

Later, Rabon and member Bobby Brown said Bowen discussed the va-

cant director's post.

Brown said Bowen said the county could go ahead and fill the position, despite a pending lawsuit by Jamie Orrock to regain it. Rabon said Bowen didn't "tie himself down as to whether the department could hire a director."

The matter is expected to come up again at the board's July 22 meeting.

Meanwhile, Betty Varnam, former chairman of the social services board, will continue as acting director, Rabon said, "at least for a while."

Bowen is to meet with Harding to polish the job description for the finance position and discuss it further.

The social services board has said several times it would like to have some supervision of the person handling its accounts and records, while the county at one time proposed placing the person directly under Harding's supervision.

Rabon said he doesn't think county commissioners will object to the new proposal, which would have the finance assistant reporting to both the social services director and to Harding. Under this arrangement the state would subsidize a large portion of the salary, Bowen indicated.

At the board's July 22 meeting, members will consider adopting departmental procedures for handling applications and hiring.

Also, the personnel office will be asked to send copies to each board member of its policies and procedures used in screening applicants for social services positions.

County Manager Billy Carter said Tuesday that the personnel office receives applications for all county

agencies and departments, including health and social services.

"We do send all the applications over to the department unless we're told differently," he said.

Applicants for one job won't be considered for any other jobs unless they ask to be, he added, and they are not automatically told why they are not selected for a particular job.

As a general practice, notices are sent to applicants that a job has been filled. If they want to then discuss the merits of their application, Carter said, the county is glad to oblige.

Unless other arrangements are made, the social services department screens and interviews its own candidates for a job, with the director making the final decision.

That decision is subject to informal review by Carter to see if falls within the county's affirmative action guidelines. The plan attempts to insure that employees are not hired for reasons other than merit, while also meeting an affirmative action goal of

having an employee profile that follows the breakdown of the local workforce. In 1983, for instance, the county was exceeding its goals for hiring both minority and female employees and was one percent below goal on minority males.

"Anybody that hires anyone," said Carter, "fills out an affirmative action form. It lists all the applicants and gives the reason for hiring the person and the reasons the others were eliminated."

Applicants for jobs in the social services department frequently must also meet minimum state qualifications, which means their applications must be screened by the Department of Human Resources regional personnel office in Greenville. Some candidates must also take merit examinations and get on a state list. Top candidates from across the state on the list who are interested in working in a county where an opening in their area exists must be interviewed.

DSS Chore Services Halved

Notices began going out Tuesday to about 45 elderly county residents who in 10 days will no longer be eligible for chore services through the Brunswick County Department of Social Services.

Only about 30 people will continue on the program, said Social Work Supervisor Evelyn Johnson.

Social services board members and county commissioners say the cutback was necessary because the state and federal governments didn't provide enough money to continue the program at its existing level. It would have taken about \$55,000 in

local funds to fill the gap. In setting the county budget last month, commissioners decided not to pick up the shortfall.

The chore program provides services such as housecleaning, meal preparation, shopping and laundry. The program was costing about \$11,000 per month with its existing caseload of clients.

Those clients who are cut off will be advised of local agencies that provide chore service and will also be directed to the county's new senior citizens office, Chairman Frankie Rabon said.

Two Injured In Accidents

Two people were seriously injured last week in accidents on Brunswick County's highways during the extended Fourth of July holiday weekend, the State Highway Patrol reported.

Overall, it was a relatively quiet Fourth of July for Brunswick County except for the two accidents, said Highway Patrol Spokeswoman Ruby Oakley.

In one accident, a Southport boy was seriously injured Saturday afternoon after the car he was riding in crossed the center line and struck a pickup truck on N.C. 87 near Boiling Spring Lakes.

Reginald Davis, 14, of Southport, was taken to Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport with serious injuries following the 4:20 p.m. collision about five miles west of Boiling Spring Lakes, State Trooper J.V. Dove reported.

According to Dove's report, Davis was a passenger in a 1981 Pontiac driven by Mashona Davis, 16, of Southport. Ms. Davis' car crossed the center line on a straight stretch of highway and struck a 1979 pickup truck driven by John F. Ballard, 46, of Leland.

Both Ms. Davis and Ballard received minor injuries and were taken to Doshier Memorial in Southport.

Trooper Dove charged Ms. Davis with driving on the wrong side of the road in the accident.

In another accident last Friday evening, three Camp Lejeune Marines received injuries after the 1982 Subaru they were in ran off the road and overturned on U.S. 17 one mile northwest of Belville, Dove reported.

Dan Daley, 20, of Camp Lejeune was seriously injured in the accident and taken to New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington. Also receiving minor injuries were Michael Ray Seawood, 21, the driver of the car, Darick Hayes, 21, and Timothy Shaw, 18, all from Camp Lejeune.

According to Dove's report, Seawood was driving on a straight stretch of highway when he ran off the road on the left, came back onto the highway, ran off the right side and overturned.

Seawood stated another car ran him off the road. No charges were filed in the 3:30 p.m. accident.

Damage was estimated at \$1,200.

Bus Driver Training Begins

Classroom training for high school students or adults interested in qualifying as school bus drivers will be held Thursday and Friday, July 11 and 12, at West Brunswick High School.

Class starts at 8 a.m. both days, said Vicki Jenrette, driver education representative.

Enrollees must have valid North Carolina driver's licenses.



Donates To Fire Department

Marshall Ouzts of Shallotte Point presents Joyce Land of the Shallotte Point Volunteer Fire Department with a check for \$500. Mr. and Mrs. Ouzts of Lumberton became the department's largest supporter with the recent donation, Ms. Land said, that will be used to repair a fire truck.

Patrols Double For Busy Night Shift

Increased county funding has enabled the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department to increase its patrols within the county, primarily for the busy 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. shift.

Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis reported the stepped-up patrols took effect last Wednesday, July 3, when three additional deputies were added to the night shift.

"We now have six deputies available during that shift rather than the three we previously had," Davis said.

Under the reorganized shift, two deputies are stationed on patrol south of Shallotte; a sergeant is stationed from Shallotte to Bolivia; two deputies are stationed north of Bolivia and a desk sergeant is stationed at the department to provide jail protection and handle incoming calls.

In the past, three deputies had to cover the entire county during the evening shift, Davis said.

"We're trying to give the people as much patrol coverage as possible," Davis said. "To me, that was necessary."

Of the eight additional positions allotted to the department by the county commissioners last week, all but two positions have been filled, each with certified officers, Davis said. One of those positions was filled by former Long Beach Police Chief James B. Sloop, who announced his retirement from the Long Beach police force effective June 30. Sloop was the town's police chief for ten years.

Sheriff Davis said Sloop has been

assigned to the Long Beach-Southport area, to provide transportation to and from the Brunswick County Jail and to patrol the area.

Four additional dispatchers were also added to the staff and are now in training, Davis said. Two veteran dispatchers will be promoted, one to the office and another to the detective division, he added.

"I think the change made a big difference over the holidays," Davis said. "If anything, we were busier than when we had three on patrol."

"I like it," added Deputy Liston Hawes. "I've been out there several nights and I think it's working fine."

County Proposes To Close Up New Water Plant On Its Own

BY SUSAN USHER

It would be cheaper for the county to shut down and maintain its own dormant water treatment plant for a year than to pay a contractor \$131,000 to do it, the county's water policy committee decided Monday night.

The committee's recommendation will go to the full Brunswick County Board of Commissioners for approval at its July 22 meeting.

Water System Director Kenneth Hewett said he could put together a "package" with his own staff for maintaining and servicing both the King's Bluff raw water pumping station and the new treatment plant at Malmo that will be completed by October, at least a year before any water transmission lines will be ready for connection.

In other action, the committee also recommended approval of two change orders totaling \$11,250, including \$2,290 to repaint a lime green lime silo to match the rest of treatment plant, which is in concrete, beige and off-white. One change order of \$8,993 was requested by Crowder Construction Co., to cover steps to a loading hatch, a sheet metal divider, the silo painting and three other items. The other, for \$2,262, was for Watson Electrical Construction Co.

At Monday's meeting, Chappell Noble of Koonce, Noble and Associates, the engineering firm for the project, said that, to date, only about \$40,000 or one percent of the contingency fund had been required in building the 24 mgd capacity plant.

He also said no major change orders are anticipated before work is completed in late September or early October.

"I can't conceive of any over \$10,000," he added.

But shutting down the plant for up to 12 months will cost the county additional money.

After a one-month test of its operation this fall, the plant at Malmo in the northwestern section of the county must be shut down because the transmission lines it will feed won't be in the ground for at least another year.

The county expects to advertise for bids by fall for the northernmost segment of a pipeline that will eventually run from Malmo to Shallotte and also along N.C. 87 to tie in to the existing treatment plant outside Southport on N.C. 211.

Construction should be completed in the fall, about the same time distribution lines for the Leland Sanitary District are operational. The district has signed an agreement to buy treated water from the county.

A change of route for the county line caused much of the delay, necessitating additional engineering and survey work and acquisition of land. Instead of following a proposed "industrial corridor" along the Brunswick and Cape Fear rivers, the line will follow U.S. 17 for much of its distance.

For \$131,000 from the county, said engineering associate Steven Searce, Crowder Construction Co., a

contractor on the plant's construction, has offered to delay start-up of the plant about six months, until April 1986; to clean up after testing, to maintain the plant, and to extend equipment warranties an additional year from start up. The figure included \$2,664 per month for servicing of the plant.

Under that proposal, the county would still have had to place maintenance and security personnel at the plant.

At that price, County Engineer Dan Shields said he couldn't recommend hiring Crowder.

For only cleaning up the plant after the test run, Crowder proposed a fee of \$30,000. The county thought it could drain the lines and clean out the plant for less money than that also.

Instead, the committee proposes the county clean up the plant to the construction contractors' specifications, encouraging an inspection.

All maintenance and routine service would be completely documented, both on forms and through photographs, Shields and Hewett suggested, to protect warranty coverage and the county's liability.

Ocean Isle To Pay 9.5% Interest

BY SUSAN USHER

A syndicate of eight buyers offered the only bid, at 9.52 percent net interest, for \$2.6 million in sanitary sewer bonds sold last Tuesday for the Town of Ocean Isle Beach.

"We felt it was a real good sale," said John Burns, assistant director in charge of sales for the Local Government Commission in Raleigh. "These bankers came through. We were very pleased. It went better than expected."

Mayor LaDane Bullington also said she was pleased with the results of

the town's first bond sale.

In planning for the project, she said, the town had budgeted interest at a rate of 10 percent.

Joining together to make the bid were Wachovia Bank & Trust, First Charlotte, Interstate Securities, Merrill Lynch, Carolina Securities, UCB, J. Lee Peller & Co., and McDaniel Lewis & Co., Burns said.

Ocean Isle Beach will hold a second sale in the near future, offering another \$500,000 in sewer bonds, for a total of \$3.1 million in bond issues for the \$5 million to \$6 million project.

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