



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Hovercraft Drew Stares

This extra-long hovercraft, photographed during refueling at Inlet View Marina, drew stares along the Intracoastal Waterway Saturday. A crew

member said the "S.E.V. Hummingbird" out of Wilmington was made in England and designed to ferry 140 passengers.

Commission Rejects Drainage Proposal

The future of the Caw Caw Drainage District is now up the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

County commissioners Monday rejected a proposal that the county assume maintenance of the district's 17 miles of ditches at an estimated cost of \$10,000 per year. However, estimates by County Engineer Dan Shields indicated an initial clean-up would run about \$96,000 for tree snagging, removal of beaver dams and sand bars. A more complete renewal would cost as much as \$211,000.

The ditches were to provide flood control and drainage to about 19,000 acres in the western end of the county. Maintenance was performed only once before the district was purportedly dissolved and its maintenance assumed by the county. Commissioners agree with County Attorney David Clegg's opinion that the district was never legally dissolved and can be reactivated. They also agree that the responsibility for its maintenance shouldn't be the county's.

"The district is getting in bad shape and someone needs to do something about it—but not the county," said Chairman Chris Chappell later. "If we do that, I envision four more drainage districts in the county."

The county will write the Soil Conservation Service, suggesting it petition the Brunswick County Clerk of Superior Court to reconstitute the tax assessment district and appoint a governing board.

Referendum Set

Following a public hearing at which no comments, pro or con, were made, commissioners adopted a resolution setting Nov. 19 as the date for a countywide referendum on the issuance of \$8 million in general obligation bonds for the Brunswick Technical College building program.

Shots Cost More

Commissioners agreed on a 3-2 vote to increase the charge for flu shots from \$3 to \$5, with Commissioners Chris Chappell, James Poole and Frankie Rabon approving the increase. Commissioners Grace Beasley and Herman Love favored a system to allow lower-income senior citizens to obtain the shots at a lower cost.

Health Director Thomas Blum said the program's purpose, targeted at senior citizens and citizens with chronic health problems, is to promote preventive care. Persons of all incomes have equal access. He said he proposed the increase to bring the charge more in line with those charged by private practitioners. The county pays \$2.25 per dose for the vaccine.

The county health board must also approve the fee when it meets Monday, Sept. 23.

Bond Counsel Changed

Commissioners also met behind closed doors for more than an hour to discuss an industrial location and a personnel matter.

They then authorized the New York bond counsel firm of LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby and McRae to handle the proposed issuance of \$16 million in industrial revenue bonds for a pollution abatement project underway since

1983 at Carolina Power & Light Co.'s Brunswick Nuclear Plant. While the firm of Brown, Wood, Ivey, Mitchell & Petty has handled all such bond issuances for the Brunswick County Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority since the authority's establishment in 1979, the authority had requested the change in bond counsel for this project only, since Brown, Wood, et al had issued an opinion that the authority's financing of the CP&L project would be unconstitutional at the state and federal levels. Since then, CP&L has obtained two opinions, one from the firm hired Monday, that the bond issuance would be acceptable.

Other Business

In other business, commissioners: •Approved encroachment agreements and agreements with the N.C. Department of Transportation for water line installations across U.S. 17, N.C. 133, N.C. 87, U.S. 74-76 and S.R. 1426, and also agreements to restore the easement areas once installation is completed.

•Approved tax releases and refunds for August.

•Released \$96,506 in 1975 property taxes as uncollectable back taxes since the statute of limitations expired Sept. 1. Tax Collector said the figure was high partly because the cutoff date for foreclosure actions on back taxes had been 1981.

•Approved bids for an animal control service truck and a landfill department car, with the exception of cruise control for the car. Commissioner James Poole questioned the need for the option, saying he didn't think it would save money on mileage locally. The board also voted to readvertise bids for sheriff's department vehicles since only one bid was received.

•Heard from Finance Director Wallace Harding that the county saved \$415,000 in interest on water bonds as a result of a Sept. 10 advance refunding transaction. "That's 5.8 percent of the outstanding (\$3.2 million) bonds," he added, praising the board's foresight. The county will pay a net interest cost of 8.07 percent, compared to an original cost of 11.7 percent.

The county's 8.78 net interest cost on \$10 million in Series D water bonds also sold on Sept. 10 is the best received on any portion of the \$37 million issue, he said.

Animal Control Worker Airs Complaints

BY SUSAN USHER

In an apparent deviation from normal practice, Brunswick County commissioners heard Monday night in open session from an employee who has filed a grievance with the county.

The board could eventually hear the complaint if it is not resolved at a lower level.

"I wanted you to be aware of this (grievance) because there's absolutely no telling what will happen between now and then," Animal Control Officer Sherry Russ of Supply told commissioners. "I don't know how long it will be before this gets back to you (for a hearing)."

Ms. Russ, who has been employed with animal control for nearly two years, was accompanied by two former animal control employees who agreed with her allegations of improper treatment of employees by their supervisor, rude treatment of the public and inadequate management of the facility itself.

"I'm aware something's wrong—there's a problem there," said Commissioner Herman Love at one point.

Ms. Russ' supervisor—Zelma Babson—against whom most complaints were directed, was not heard by the board Monday, nor were other health agency employees.

"This should go to the health board first," Chairman Chris Chappell advised. "But when elected we said we were going to be an open door board."

"We'll listen, but we won't act until the proper channels have been followed."

Chappell later said he thought Ms. Russ had a "legitimate grievance that needs to be addressed."

Animal control employees are not required to take state competitive service examinations, so their appeal route varies from that of other health agency employees, Carter said.

Ms. Russ has given oral notice of a grievance to her department head and on Monday, wrote a letter to the next official in line, Health Director Thomas Blum, who has five days in which to respond. The next step would take her appeal to Carter, with the commissioners the final authority.

At each step, the party hearing the grievance has five days to respond. If the response is not satisfactory to Ms. Russ or if there is none, she can take the appeal another step.

Ms. Russ told the board she's been "a nervous wreck" recently.

"I know the laws and try to follow it, but it doesn't seem to work out," she said. "If you don't know what will be made of it when you go out on a call, you can't do your job."

Other health employees channel their grievances through their supervisor, the health director, the health board, and ultimately to the State Personnel Commission.

Carter was excused by the board during Ms. Russ' presentation, saying he didn't want to hear anything that might prejudice his hearing of her grievance.

Ms. Russ presented a thick sheaf of papers which she said documented activity at the animal shelter she believes inappropriate.

These range from a claim that dog food was bought in bulk from a personal contact at a higher rate than available through an informal bid process; boarding of stray livestock at one facility only at the owner's specified board rate, though others volunteered space; being told by the supervisor to "shut up" several times in front of clients; and being put in an awkward position with other animal shelter employees from her first day of employment.

"She told me I couldn't trust anything the other employee told me and that he was after her job...It put me in an awkward position from the beginning."

She also asserted that her superiors within the health department showed little interest in hearing complaints about the program, but rather had suggested she be more pa-

tient with her supervisor.

"She's only scratched the surface," said Wynston Hewett of Supply, who worked with animal control about seven years.

Keith Stanley, animal control supervisor from October 1980 to February 1982, added, "She's not storying at all. She's telling the truth. Anything you brought up got swept under the rug."

High Turnover

Late last year, county commissioners requested information from the health department on why turnover in the animal control unit had been high for so many years, a request that was passed along in turn to the animal control supervisor.

The report indicated high turnover resulted in part because of a perpetually heavy workload, too much overtime without compensation and difficulty in putting animals to sleep though forewarned it was part of the job.

"If I was asked that (why) I wouldn't implicate myself, that it was the way I had treated them," suggested Ms. Russ.

Inge Arnold of Bolivia, whose driveway is across N.C. 211 from the entrance road to the shelter, said she has for years collected animals left there.

This has been a favor to the county, she said, but in recent years shelter employees have not picked up animals quickly or shown her the same special considerations as in the past.

One former employee recommended that the entrance road fence be moved back or removed entirely and the money be used to place animal collection boxes by the road to discourage casual "dropping off" of animals.

County Manager Carter confirmed that it is unusual for a personnel matter such as Ms. Russ' to be heard in open session, especially before a grievance has been worked through.

But Chappell said the board heard the matter in open session because, he said, "I felt like she wanted it to be open."

Ms. Russ said she had wanted commissioners to be aware of the grievance, but didn't know the proper channels to use. "I just went along with what they said."

As with other exceptions to the mandate that public business be conducted in public, the state Open Meetings law says a board "may" hear or investigate a complaint, charge or grievance either by or against an officer or employee in closed session rather than open session.

Candidates In No Hurry To File

(Continued From Page 1-A)

In Smithville Township, a third man named "Charles" has filed for the Dasher Hospital Board of Trustees, Charles H. Rogers, Charles B. Johnson and Charles C. Roof have already filed.

James C. (Jim) Brown of Southport has filed for the Ward II seat now held by William A. Thorsen, who is seeking re-election. Edward L. Oliver, incumbent, and Barry J.

Callari have filed for the two Ward I seats and Mayor Norman Holden's bid for re-election is presently unopposed.

Edward Williams, incumbent, and Therman Mosley Sr. have filed for the two commissioner's seats in Navassa, where Mayor Louis "Bobby" Brown is seeking re-election unopposed.

A full slate of candidates is yet to develop at Ocean Isle Beach, where

planning board member and fire chief Terry Barbee has filed for one of two commissioner's seats. Mayor LaDane Bullington is unopposed for re-election.

At Calabash, a council appointee, Suzy Moore, has filed for re-election, as has John H. Johnson.

Lester W. Beal and Elinor F. Handler have filed for mayor at Boiling Spring Lakes, where Eleanor R. Ensminger, Stephen L. Moore, Eric R. (Rick) Eckstein and Herbert C. Buntin have filed for commissioner. At Yaupon Beach, incumbents Robert Brown, E.W. Rees, J.M. Warren and Homer Brewer have filed for re-election.

In Belville, Thomas (Tommy) Butler and Roger Reigle have filed for commissioner and Kenneth D. Messer Sr. for mayor.

In Leland, Leo Nowak has filed for re-election to the Leland Sanitary District, of which he is currently chairman.

No additional candidates had filed at Sunset Beach or Caswell Beach as of Tuesday.

Typical Early Fall Days Ahead

Comfortable fall temperatures are part of the weather outlook over the next few days.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said temperatures should be near normal, ranging from the mid-60s at night into the mid-80s during the day. He expects about a half-inch of rainfall.

During the period Sept. 10-16, the

maximum high was 93 degrees, recorded on the 11th. The minimum nightly low was 46 degrees, recorded on the 14th.

A daily average high of 83 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 61 degrees for an average daily temperature of 72 degrees.

Canady recorded 2.7 inches in his rain gauge at Shallotte Point.

Builders To Air Questions About Septic Tank Permits

Representatives of the Brunswick County Health Department will be guests at the next meeting of the South Brunswick Islands Home Builders Association, said President George Stanford.

The meeting will be held Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 6:30 p.m. at Harbortown Restaurant in Calabash.

Health Director Tom Blum and other staff members will participate in a question and answer session

relating to procedures for obtaining septic tank permits and other roles of the health department as they relate to the construction industry.

Stanford said the meeting is an attempt to establish a better working relationship or "a good dialogue" between builders and the department.

At their last meeting the builders met with employees of the county's new building inspections office.

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