

# Tap-On Rate Goes Up, But 'Discount' Available

BY SUSAN USHER

The cost of connecting to the county water system is going up—but those who live or do business along existing lines have four months in which to tap on at a discount rate.

Last Wednesday night, Brunswick County Commissioners approved an increase in water connection fees, effective immediately, to \$400 for a standard, three-quarter inch residential tap.

However, as an incentive to encourage property owners to hook on, they also approved a discount rate of \$275 good for the next four months along all existing lines where water is available.

As new water lines are run, residents will also be offered a four-month discount rate period.

After that they will have to pay the full price.

For one-inch taps the new fee is \$500, or \$350 discounted.

Connections to larger lines will be charged at cost plus 10 percent plus \$100, to reflect the additional cost of materials.

Water system-related decisions figured prominently in Wednesday's meeting.

Commissioners Grace Beasley, Benny Ludlum and Jim Poole met behind closed doors for approximately 1½ hours to discuss attorney-client matters and property acquisition at the request of the county attorney, and a personnel matter at the request

of the county manager. Two commissioners were absent—Frankie Rabon and Chris Chappell.

On returning to open session the board awarded general and electrical contracts for a new pumping station in Shallotte to the low bidders, subject to land acquisition, as follows: Ziegler Construction Co., Sumter, S.C., general, \$117,830; and Ashley Electric Inc., Whiteville, electrical, \$17,560.

In related business, commissioners also adopted two other recommendations from the Utility Operations Board (UOB) and delayed action on a third.

They approved a UOB policy that when a development is across the highway from a water trunk line and the developer plans to install a water system and dedicate it to the county, the county will bear the cost of a tap boring under the right-of-way for projects that require a line six inches or larger in diameter.

They also agreed that the county would bear the cost of obtaining and installing water pressure reducing valves where needed on existing lines. On new installations, the cost is included in the connection fee.

At the request of Commissioner Benny Ludlum, the board delayed approval of a policy adopted by the utilities board that calls for use of a front-foot assessment throughout the first of seven proposed special water districts. The first district includes

several subdivisions just north of the Holden Beach Causeway.

Ludlum specifically questioned use of a front-foot assessment along one unsubdivided tract with 1,500 feet road frontage. The Utility Operations Board had decided it would be fair to assess the tract on its front footage (not taking into account its depth) because the property owner would receive the same benefit as someone with a series of lots along the road, indicated UOB member Ed Gore.

Noted UOB spokesman Bill English, "There will be exceptions we have to address, but I think that is what you appointed the UOB to address—to try to find a fair way."

"We expect to hear from those who do object. We will address exceptions, but you have to stop somewhere."

While the board prefers front-foot assessments where feasible, the type of assessments used will vary from area to area as needed because of geographic configurations and land ownership patterns, he said.

Commissioners also, on a motion by Commissioner Ludlum, accepted dedication of the water distribution system for Oak Brook Phase II at Brick Landing, subject to later review and approval of the Utility Operations Board.

At their last meeting, the utilities board had delayed action on a policy proposed by Water System Director Kenneth Hewett that would provide

for accepting water distribution projects before they are completed, saying it needed "fine tuning" before presentation to the commissioners.

Wednesday, however, commissioners were told the delay had created a hardship for developers of Oak Brook Phase II at Brick Landing, where completion of roads has been delayed by wet weather. Several homes have been bought and owners could move in if water were available.

According to Hewett, all that remains is for a "minor" setting of valves when the final grade is completed and streets are paved.

Almost A Holiday  
The birthday of the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. is almost a holiday for Brunswick County employees, but not quite.

On Commissioner Benny Ludlum's amendment of a motion by Chairman Grace Beasley, the date will become a holiday for county employees whenever it becomes a holiday for state employees.

Until then, said Ludlum, it would create confusion at the complex to have state offices open the third Monday in January and county offices closed. The state legislature will consider the holiday in its current session.

Jesse Bryant of the Cedar Grove Branch of the NAACP expressed disgust at the amendment, asking if it didn't kill the holiday. He asked

Ludlum, "Who worded that for you—Jesse Helms or Glenn Miller?"

Other Business  
In other business, commissioners: Agreed to pay Touche Ross & Co. \$32,500 for the 1986-87, and not a proposed increase of \$8,000 recommended by County Manager Billy Carter to cover 40 percent of a \$20,163 overrun. The overrun was created in part by a request for a more thorough audit because of a transition in finance directors.

Allocated an additional \$26,883 to provide an additional 9,000 congregate meals for senior citizens (see related story this issue).

Heard from Chairman Ed Gore of the planning board's decision to hire Edward Stone Jr. & Associates Inc. of Wilmington as consultants on the CAMA land use plan update.

Told E. E. "Red" Medlin funds for a community building in Northwest Township would be considered at budget time, not before. Meanwhile, at Commissioner Jim Poole's suggestion, the county will check on whether there is site work that can be done now.

Awarded the contract for developing new landfill holes to W.E. Benton & Sons of Shallotte at 40¢ per cubic yard. The company was the lowest of five bidders, two of whom withdrew bids.

Transferred \$1,828 in vending machine revenues to the Larry Bell Fund. Named after the late acting

social services director, the local public assistance fund is used by the social services and health departments to meet families' emergency needs for items such as medicine.

Approved the state budget for the health department, with minor revisions.

Adopted an ordinance for the 1985 issuance of \$10,000 of Phase II water bonds, since the auditors did not find the ordinance in the board's minutes.

Authorized the landfill department to advertise for bids to purchase a roll-off truck.

Heard from County Planner II Don Eggert on revised or streamlined federal flood insurance regulations the county must adopt by April 1. Commissioners will consider a revised ordinance at their next meeting.

Executed an agreement with the Southport Rescue Squad to distribute 15 child safety seats in cooperation with the county health department.

Agreed to check with the N.C. Department of Transportation county maintenance office on condition of two roads, S.R. 1461 and Goodman Road on the scraping schedule and beaver dams that are causing septic tank problems for one resident on Goodman Branch.

Learned from Blue Cross & Blue Shield agent David Fridgen that the county came out nearly \$125,000 ahead in its employee health insurance program despite several large claims during the quarter.

## Files Never Close On Unsolved Murders

(Continued From Page 1-A)

those of other unsolved murders, said Perry, because the investigation has continued although the murder occurred almost 10 years ago.

"Even now if someone calls and says they can remember seeing something suspicious the day Smith was killed, we investigate. And each time we investigate we record every statement and what we found from investigating it," said Perry.

According to SBI Special Operations Division Agent Bill Corley, only two unsolved murders in Brunswick County were under investigation by the SBI in 1986.

These are two of the 500 unsolved murders that occurred across the state in that year alone.

"Compared to other counties across the state that is not really a high figure," said Corley.

But Perry said any unsolved murders are too many. He added that many sleepless nights have occurred for not only the families of those murdered, but also the detectives investigating the crime.

"I have awakened at night and thought about something someone told me that day concerning the murder," said Perry. "If you're doing your job these murders stay with you until they are solved."

## Calabash Board Seeks Act To Allow Early Assessment

BY ETTA SMITH

Calabash commissioners are asking Rep. E. David "Butch" Redwine to introduce legislation that will enable the town to assess residents for a proposed water system before its completion.

Following a lengthy executive session last Friday the town council approved a resolution that asks Redwine to sponsor a bill in the General Assembly. The bill would authorize the town to levy front-footage assessments, to be paid within a year after the assessment roll is completed.

They also voted to hold a public hearing during their March 9 meeting to present the resolution to community residents and receive their comments on the proposed

system. The hearing is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. at the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department on Persimmon Street.

Redwine introduced a similar bill that was adopted by the General Assembly in 1984 and allowed the town of Ocean Isle Beach to assess residents for a proposed sewer system now nearing completion.

If the special bill for Calabash is approved, council members plan to levy assessments to finance a

minimum of 75 percent of the system's construction cost.

Town Clerk Janet Thomas said the town has about \$40,000 in reserve funds budgeted for the system construction. Consulting Engineers Jerry Lewis and Associates have estimated that construction of the system will cost about \$160,000.

In other business, the board unanimously voted to send Brunswick County Commissioners a letter in favor of their efforts to establish a county-wide zoning ordinance.

## Convalescent Center Volunteers Honored

Ninety-four Ocean Trail Convalescent Center volunteers were honored for their contributions to the center at a banquet Feb. 11.

Volunteer Activity Director Cathy Holth presented each with a certificate of appreciation at the event.

A featured decoration at the event was photographs of volunteers during visits throughout the past year.

Linda Spann, with the center's dietary department, supervised the food planning.

The center is located in Southport.

## Normal Weather Expected

Near-normal temperatures and precipitation are in the forecast for the next few days.

That will mean temperatures ranging from the upper 30s at night into the upper 50s during the daytime, Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday, with about a half-inch of rainfall.

For the period Feb. 17-23, he

recorded a maximum high temperature of 62 degrees on the 23rd and a minimum low of 27 degrees on the 19th. An average daily high of 51 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 33 degrees for a daily average temperature of 42 degrees, which Canady said was about five degrees below normal.

He recorded 1.13 inches of rain.

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STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

## Going, Going, Gone!

Silver-tongued auctioneer Joey Formyduval (left) "sold" the bikini bottoms displayed by Chamber President Alan Holden for 36,000 chips Friday at the close of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce "Casino Night," while shampoo went for 17,000 chips. Attended by 225 guests, the game night netted \$3,400 for the chamber's office renovation project. "It went really well. Everyone had a good time," said chamber member Annette Odom, who helped plan the event. "We're planning on doing it again, probably in the fall."

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