

Long Beach Election Draws Many Complaints

BY DOUG RUTTER

The Brunswick County Board of Elections may have cause to crank up the voting machines at Long Beach again after 76 residents filed complaints concerning last week's municipal election.

According to Lynda Britt, supervisor, the number and nature of the complaints has prompted the board to schedule a 10 a.m. hearing on Nov. 19 at the Long Beach Recreation Center.

Ms. Britt said the three-member board will either take action at that meeting or wait a "reasonable time" and review a transcript of the hearing before making a decision.

She said, "The board wants to move along as quickly as possible. They are hoping to resolve this situation before the 1988 election year gets too far underway."

Ms. Britt said that 30 complaints had been turned into the election office by last Friday and that an additional 46 were delivered to board of elections member Ori Gore before the deadline of 6 p.m. Saturday.

She said the complaints all point to a "short period of time" when election officials ran out of ballots, violating state law which requires polls to be open 13 hours.

According to Johnnie McLean of the North Carolina Board of Elections, for a new election to be called, affidavits would be required from individuals who did not vote indicating

"that person would have voted and for that specific candidate."

Furthermore the affidavits would have to give evidence that the outcome of the election might have been different.

Among those who reportedly filed complaints is Mike Oxford, who lost the mayoral election to incumbent John W. Vereen III by only six votes.

Other candidates filing complaints included Kevin Bell, who was the leading vote-getter among commissioner candidates with 622, Ben Thomas, who lost a seat on the board of commissioners by only 28 votes, and Doris Werner, who was eliminated from the mayoral election in the Oct. 6 primary but staged a write-in campaign for commissioner which earned her just 37 votes.

Ms. Britt said election officials are supposed to have ballots for 100 percent of the registered voters in the town at each poll location.

She explained, "We simply ran out because we did not get enough there to begin with."

Ms. Britt added that if another election is mandated, it will take at least another 60 days to prepare.

Under these circumstances, she explained, the current board would probably serve until mayor and commissioner seats are filled.

"I would think they would continue to serve," she said. "I don't know any other possibility."



HANDS FILL THE AIR as citizens express their support of re-establishing the Cawcaw Drainage District at a public hearing Friday that drew a full house at the Calabash Fire Station.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

Citizens Support Drainage District

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Pete Sperry, president of the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association, said his organization spends up to \$40,000 per year to maintain the ditches in its subdivision.

He said, however, that the subdivision was facing a serious problem within the next couple of years if nothing is done to improve storm-water runoff in the Cawcaw system.

Lynn Petch, owner of Farwinds Stables at Thomasboro, described the runoff problem at her business by saying her family is "thinking of taking up water sports."

"Without a doubt, we are living on a land mine," she said, referring to drainage problems that now occur even after relatively small rainfalls.

Jackie Thomas of Hickman's Crossroads said, "You need a diver's suit to find my house."

Early in the hearing, Carolina Shores Manager Robert Noe raised the question of whether or not commissioners had in fact assumed the obligation for maintenance of the drainage system.

Noe apparently was referring to a letter dated February 8, 1977, from

then County Attorney John R. Hughes to the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, which stated "it is the intention of record of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners to continuously and perpetually inspect and maintain the structural measures of the improvements of the Cawcaw drainage project . . ."

Chappell said Friday that the county has been doing cost studies concerning maintenance of the district and has even done some work "to relieve pressure . . . and hit the high points."

But Chappell said County Attorney David Clegg has found nothing in the minutes of past county commission meetings saying that commissioners assumed responsibility for maintaining the district.

After the hearing, Clegg explained, "I think the bottom line on what the commissioners attempted to do in 1976 was they evidenced their intent to accept responsibility for the district, contingent upon the district being dissolved."

"That never occurred, because a drainage district created by general statute, can only be dissolved by

general statute, and the proper procedure to have gone through at that point would have been a local act of the legislature," Clegg said.

During the hearing, Gallo told the gathering that the Cawcaw district is the only inactive drainage district in the state.

Federal funds are not available for maintenance, he said. However, Gallo added, other counties, such as Duplin, take maintenance monies from the county's general fund.

Other districts are maintained through assessments within the respective districts, he said.

James Bellamy said after the hearing that he was pleased with the public's response in favor of reactivating the district and with the commissioners' promise to act quickly.

"I think it's a positive step, but it's only a step," Bellamy said. "If they'll (commissioners) do that and then support the drainage district, we can get it going."

"There are several ways it can be done, but we can't wait right on and on to do it," he said. "We've got to get something going now."

Gowan Found Not Guilty

BY RAHN ADAMS

The first of eight suspects to be tried from a September undercover drug operation was found not guilty last week in Brunswick County Superior Court.

According to the clerk of court's office, a Brunswick County jury returned its not guilty verdict Nov. 3, after hearing testimony in the case of Donald Wade "Red" Gowan.

Judge Samuel T. Currin heard the case.

Gowan was represented by Shallotte attorney Mark Lewis.

Gowan, 33, of Route 1, Bolivia, was indicted Sept. 8 by a Brunswick County grand jury on one count of conspiracy to sell and deliver marijuana.

Following his arrest Sept. 8, he was released from the Brunswick County Jail under a \$10,000 bond.

The undercover operation, which was called "Operation Nova," was conducted from May to August by the Long Beach Police Department, Brunswick County Sheriff's Department Narcotics Squad and the SBI.

According to Brunswick County Det. Sgt. David Crocker, the operation concentrated on persons believed to be street dealers.

Gowan was one of three suspects who were identified as employees of the construction company that built the new steam co-generation plant at Southport.

The other seven suspects who were indicted with Gowan in September await trial on marijuana and/or cocaine charges.

All seven cases were continued last week until the Nov. 16 term of Superior Court.

Near Normal Temperatures And Rainfall Are Expected

Temperatures and rainfall in the Shallotte area are expected to be near normal over the next few days, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Canady said the area can expect average temperatures to range from the upper 40s at night to the upper 60s during the day.

Rainfall should be around one-half inch, he said.

For the period of Nov. 3 through

Nov. 9, Canady recorded an average daily high temperature of 75 degrees and an average nightly low temperature of 49 degrees.

The average daily temperature for the period was 62 degrees, which was three degrees above normal.

The maximum high temperature was 80 degrees on Nov. 4 and Nov. 5, while the minimum low temperature was 30 degrees on Nov. 7.

Canady measured .44 of an inch of rain during the period.

'Law Enforcement Journal' Ad Sales Said Authentic

A sales representative canvassing area businesses for ads to appear in "Law Enforcement Journal" is legitimate, according to Shallotte Police Chief Don Stovall.

The solicitor is Lee Hamm, he said. Proceeds from the fund-raising project will go to the Brunswick County Law Enforcement Association. Its membership includes deputies, police officers, wildlife and marine fisheries enforcement officers and highway patrol officers working in Brunswick County. The organization sponsors membership fellowship ac-

tivities as well as firearms safety classes for the public.

The latest issue of "Law Enforcement Journal" features information and photographs of area law enforcement offices and personnel, as well as safety-related articles and local advertising.

Copies are distributed free through the offices of advertisers and through local law enforcement agencies.

Stovall said anyone with questions regarding the project could call him or Jerry Dove, president of the county association.

Water Projects Get State Approval

BY RAHN ADAMS

With project bid openings scheduled for Thursday (Nov. 12), consulting engineer Alan Lewis told members of the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board Monday that the county's water projects for Special Assessment Districts 1 and 2 have received approval from two of three state agencies.

Approval from the third agency is expected this week, Lewis said.

UOB members Robert Nubel, William English, Morris Crouch and Edward Gore were present at Monday night's meeting in Bolivia.

Lewis said both water projects have been approved by the N.C. Division of Health Services and the Land Quality Division of the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development.

The state Department of Transportation, however, has given only verbal approval to S.A.D. 2 and is still reviewing S.A.D. 1, he said.

S.A.D. 1 is located in the Holden Beach area, while S.A.D. 2 is in the Brick Landing Plantation and Bent Tree Plantation area.

Lewis said DOT's concerns involve the water lines crossing Milliken Road in S.A.D. 1 and Avenue Road in S.A.D. 2.

He said DOT was specifically concerned about Avenue Road (S.R. 1155) since it is scheduled to be repaved by Dec. 15.

As a result, the UOB Monday voted to authorize Water Systems Director Kenneth Hewett to go ahead and run a water line across Avenue Road before DOT begins re-paving work, to save on future costs that would be

incurred in patching a newly resurfaced roadway.

Contractors' bids on both water projects will be opened Thursday (Nov. 12).

According to Hewett, construction is expected to begin by the first of the year, depending on the availability of materials.

In another matter concerning the county's special assessment districts, the UOB voted to recommend the addition of two streets to S.A.D. 6, which now covers the Water Wonderland and Whispering Heights subdivisions off N.C. 904.

The proposed additions include the street in Marlee Acres subdivision next to Water Wonderland and the street in Breeze Woods subdivision off Seaside Road.

Lewis also presented the UOB with an estimated project schedule for S.A.D. 3, which is located off N.C. 904-N.C. 179.

According to his target schedule, Lewis said construction should begin in late January, with completion of the total project in late April.

He said his firm has completed the design survey and almost 95 percent of the design drawings.

Also, UOB Attorney Mike Ramos

said notices have been mailed to property owners in S.A.D. 4, looking toward a Dec. 2 public hearing on a preliminary resolution for the district.

In other business Monday, the UOB:

- Heard a presentation from Hewett indicating that the county will need additional capacity to supply water to Shallotte and areas south of Shallotte by 1990, due to continuing development in those areas;

- Heard a report from Nubel on a study he did concerning estimated savings the county could expect if it discontinues operation of its old water plant on N.C. 211;

- Accepted as information a report prepared by UOB Administrator John Harvey on sanitary sewer systems for the county;

- Met in a 30-minute executive session at the request of Ramos to discuss "contractual matters," and following the closed-door session, voted to recommend that Lewis and Associates provide inspection services for water line construction on Sabbath Home Road; that the county planning department produce maps for public hearings in the future; and that an outstanding invoice from Lewis and Associates be paid with appropriate credits to the county for work done on S.A.D.s 1 and 2.

Calabash

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pleted as soon as possible.

Audit Reviewed

In other business, Johnny Britt of S. Preston Douglas & Associates of Whiteville presented council members with copies of an annual financial audit report.

According to Britt, the town was "in good shape" financially as of June 30, 1987.

Although the audit reported that the town's expenditures exceeded revenues by \$11,177, Britt said it was nothing major because the town had a balance of \$94,338 when the 1986-87 fiscal year began.

The audit reported property valuation in Calabash at more than \$16 million and that ad valorem tax collections approached \$25,000. This represented about 91 percent of the taxes due, and according to Britt, was a great improvement over last year.

The town brought in revenues of \$82,361, which was \$13,824 more than budgeted.

Calabash's expenditures, which were budgeted at \$143,829, only reached \$93,539. Major savings were in the areas of transportation, \$18,000, and public buildings, \$23,000.

Britt concluded, "We've seen much improvement over the past years. We are seeing a lot more participation from the town board and the clerk following up on things she's supposed to do. We're real pleased overall."

Other Business

In other business Monday, council:

- Approved a five-year contract with Little River Trash Service Manager Bill Jordan and authorized Simmons to sign the contract.

The new contract includes terms for rate increases as residential and commercial pickup continue to expand.

- Authorized Simmons and Town Clerk Janet Thomas to sign a land use plan contract with Talbert, Cox & Associates of Wilmington. The town hired the firm last month for a fee of \$10,000 which it received through a state grant.

- Released \$24.51 to the Region O Council of Governments for economic and community development.

- Released Ms. Thomas to contact the N.C. Department of Transportation about painting solid yellow lines on Thomasboro Road near the subdivisions of Village Green and Hunter's Trace.

Breakfast Will Benefit Squad

A benefit breakfast for the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad will be served Saturday, Nov. 21, from 6 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Sizzling Sirloin Steakhouse in Shallotte.

The menu will consist of biscuits, sausage, eggs, grits, coffee or milk. The charge is \$2 per person, said squad spokesman Alex Mearns.

Correction

A story in the Nov. 5 edition of The Brunswick Beacon concerning the Brunswick Community College campus fund drive incorrectly reported some information about nursing scholarship donations.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph C. White gave a \$500 scholarship in remembrance of their son, Steven. An anonymous nursing scholarship of \$100 was given in the memory of Ray L. White.

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