

County to Consider Supplying Water To Boiling Spring Lakes Residents

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County officials will consider a request to take over the water system now operated by the Boiling Spring Lakes Water Corporation.

Matters involving the county's expanding water system dominated Monday night's 4 1/4-hour Brunswick County Commissioners meeting in Bolivia.

The full board was present for the meeting which included a 2 1/4-hour executive session—the second closed-door session held by commissioners this year.

Monday's meeting had been rescheduled from March 7 due to the commissioners' trip to Washington, D.C. for a national legislative conference.

Request For Water

During the public comments period of the meeting, Earl Tharp of the Boiling Spring Lakes Water Corporation asked commissioners to indicate whether or not the county would accept dedication of the corporation's water system.

The water system, which is located within the Town of Boiling Spring Lakes, is owned and used by 34 residents, Tharp said. Due to the high cost of operation and maintenance, the corporation contacted the county several months ago about taking over the system.

Tharp informed commissioners that the corporation is in the process of bringing the system up to county specifications. But before spending \$10,000 for the needed improvements, the corporation wanted an assurance that the county would accept the system, he said.

Utility Operations Board Director John Harvey said the UOB suggested that the county proceed with discussions concerning take-over of the system. However, the UOB asked that the Town of Boiling Spring Lakes be represented in any negotiations, Harvey added.

Emphasizing that the system is not owned by the town, Tharp pointed out that Boiling Spring Lakes officials last November adopted a resolution which supported the corporation's efforts to obtain water service from the county.

On a motion by Commissioner Frankie Rabon, the county board voted unanimously to instruct County Attorney David Clegg to review the matter and make a recommendation for final consideration at the board's April 4 meeting.

Positions Approved

In other action Monday, commissioners unanimously approved a \$140,301 budget amendment for five new positions and new equipment for the county water system. The money will come from the county's unappropriated fund balance.

Water System Director Kenneth Hewett said the new positions would include an operator, two maintenance mechanics and two maintenance mechanic assistants. Salaries and benefits for the five positions comprised \$21,376 of the budget amendment.

The remaining \$118,925 will be used to fill equipment needs throughout the department, Hewett said, including five vehicles and various other equipment.

Accident Reports Absent This Week

Even N.C. Highway Patrol secretaries need some time off from work now and then, and this week it was Ruby Oakley's turn to take a vacation.

As a result, the weekly roundup of Brunswick County traffic accidents does not appear in this week's edition of The Brunswick Beacon because information on local wrecks was unavailable prior to press time from the Wilmington Highway Patrol office.

According to a Highway Patrol telecommunicator, no one was filling in this week for Ms. Oakley, who serves as The Beacon's media contact at the Wilmington office.

Hewett noted that current water department employees would get first consideration for the five new positions, if they are qualified for the jobs.

Complaint Surfaces

However, earlier in Monday's meeting, a water department employee appeared before commissioners to register a complaint related to seven new positions approved last month.

Percy Hewett, a black man who said he has been training as an operator for the past eight months, told the board that he had a grievance which was "on behalf of every black that works at the water plant." He did not identify his concerns Monday, but said he had already discussed them with Kenneth Hewett.

Commission Chairman Grace Beasley advised Percy Hewett to discuss the complaint with Clegg and County Manager John T. Smith, in accordance with the county's personnel policy. The employee met with Clegg for about 30 minutes during the commissioners' meeting. After the

private conference, Hewett declined to identify the nature of his grievance.

However, Smith said Tuesday that some water department employees apparently were "upset about some promotions" that resulted from the seven new positions approved last month. Kenneth Hewett was unavailable for comment Tuesday.

Said Smith Tuesday, "I'm just going to talk with the management of the water department and with the people who have a complaint, and treat it as a grievance." He added that if the employees are dissatisfied with any decision he makes, they can then appeal it to the commissioners.

Other Business

In other matters Monday commissioners:

- Adopted a \$147,292 capital projects ordinance for construction of water transmission lines in Special Assessment District (SAD) 3 located in the Seaside area, and approved a UOB recommendation to give contractors notice to proceed effective March 15;

- Rejected a UOB recommendation by voting unanimously not to apply for a \$93,000 N.C. Clean Water Revolving Loan, after Commissioner Benny Ludlum stated that the county should "forget this trying to borrow money when we don't need it;"

- Approved tax releases and refunds for the month of February, as recommended by Tax Administrator Boyd Williamson;

- Referred an unspecified complaint from Charles Tew to the Brunswick County Airport Commission concerning the airport commission's contract with its fixed-base operator;

- Took no action after hearing a request from Leland area resident Preston Dale concerning the need for a stray dog ordinance in the county, but referred the matter to Health Director Michael Barrett-Rhodes for further consideration;

- Approved the health board's request for two new positions including a temporary maternity care coordinator and reclassification of a sanitarian specialist Gary McDonald

to an environmental health supervisor;

- Granted a request from Public Housing Director Perita Price to advance Vonnie Grissett 40 hours of sick leave;

- Approved budget amendments involving a \$7,555 increase in the Community Based Alternatives (CBA) Grant for in-school suspension, a \$500 increase in the CBA Grant for Cape Fear Substance Abuse, a \$1,787 increase for CP&L energy assistance funds, a \$9,208 decrease for low-income energy assistance and crisis intervention funds due to a 16 percent federal cut, a \$5,187 increase in Jordan Adams funds for the Health Department, and inclusion of a \$1,927 Governor's Highway Safety Program grant to the Health Department for infant car seats;

- Adopted separate resolutions to urge local legislators to support N.C. Senate Bill 109, which is an act to permit pensioned firemen and rescue workers to perform volunteer duties, and to proclaim March as "Food Bank of the Lower Cape Fear Month

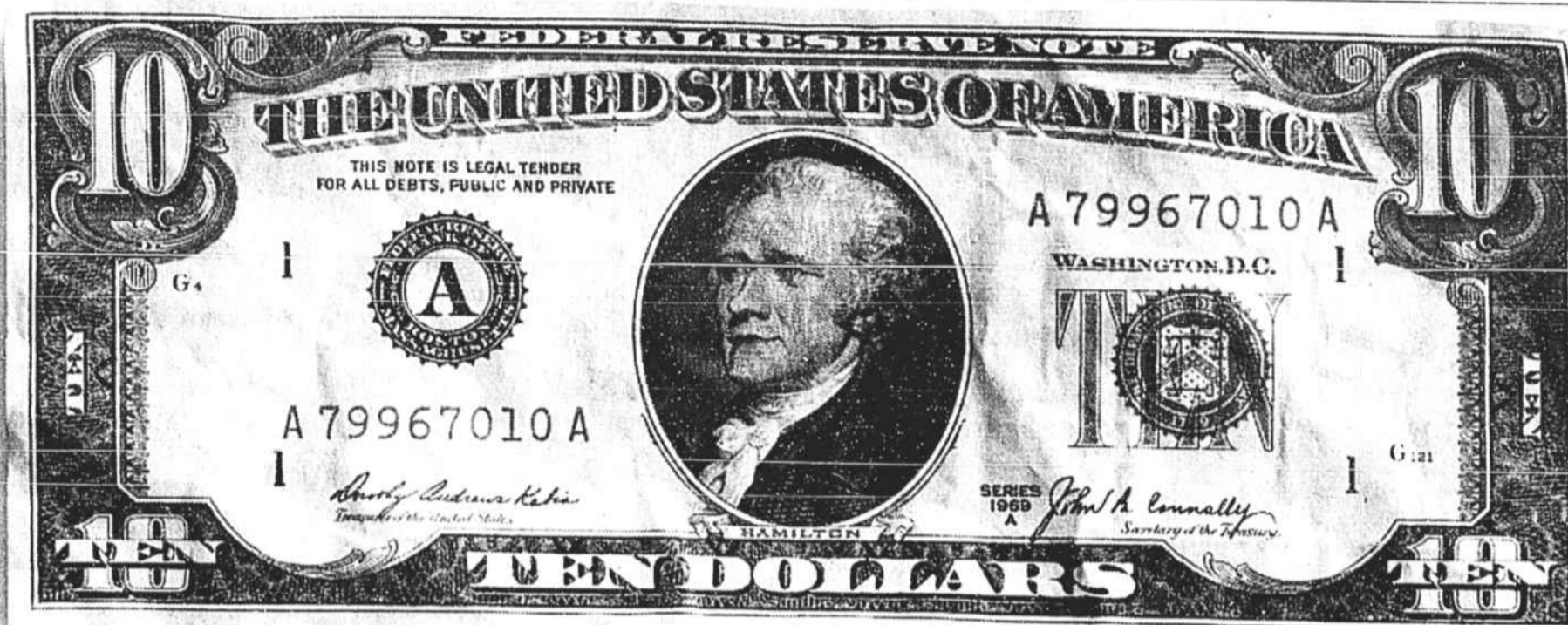
in Brunswick County;"

- Designated the Brunswick County Community Drug Task Force as the focal agency in the "Challenge '88" drug awareness program;

- Reappointed Van Clark and J.W. Robinson to the Resources Development Commission, and appointed Nelson Adams to the RDC seat formerly held by Walter Johnson, whose term on the board recently expired;

- Took no action following a 2 1/4-hour executive session requested by Clegg to discuss possible litigation, personnel, attorney-client matters and individual contracts;

- Canceled the county commission's March 21 regular meeting, and recessed until Friday, March 18, at 5 p.m., when commissioners will interview at least six applicants for director of the Solid Waste Department. Commissioners also will meet March 18 at 8 p.m. in joint session with the county Parks and Recreation Department advisory committee and department officials.



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