

Commissioners Approve Jail Plans, Smith's Plan To Rearrange Offices

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County Commissioners took steps Monday night to ease overcrowding at the county government center. They approved plans for an addition to the county jail as well as the county manager's proposal to move eight offices out of the Bolivia complex.

That action was taken during Monday's four-hour regular board meeting, attended by all five commissioners. The meeting included a one-hour, 45-minute executive session requested by Commissioner Grace Beasley to discuss "industrial location and expansion, and personnel."

Commission Chairman Frankie Rabon said no action was taken during the closed-door meeting. However, the board's final action before adjournment was to allocate \$300,000 from the county's operating reserve fund for the Brunswick County Economic Development Corporation.

When contacted immediately after the meeting, none of the commissioners would comment on how the \$300,000 would be spent by the economic development organization. It was announced Tuesday that the corporation will use the money to purchase an industrial site in Leland Industrial Park (see related story).

Representatives of the Raleigh engineering and architectural firm,

Peirson and Whitman Inc., presented plans for the jail expansion, which will add 30 beds to the overcrowded 44-bed facility. Estimated cost of the addition is \$385,000. Construction bids are expected to be received late next month.

Peirson and Whitman Executive Vice President Douglas D. Vaughn told commissioners that the plans have been approved by the N.C. Division of Facility Services. The plans call for the addition of 10 individual cells and a dormitory area containing 20 beds.

Sheriff John Carr Davis said the plans were "acceptable to me, and the big thing is, they're acceptable to the state."

Moves Approved

Without a vote, the board consented to County Manager John Smith's plan to relieve overcrowding elsewhere at the county complex by moving eight offices into two facilities near Bolivia and Supply.

The county manager said the moves would be made "as soon as possible." But he emphasized that the departments "aren't all going to be moving tomorrow" and that the changes would be made gradually as new office space is prepared.

Smith's proposal was presented to the commissioners in a memorandum they received on Aug. 7. No objections to it were expressed

by the board Monday.

All but one of the office relocations are expected to be temporary, lasting no more than two years until a proposed new Social Services Building is constructed and the county-owned former Bolivia Plaza Shopping Center in Bolivia is renovated.

The two vacant facilities that will be utilized in the upcoming moves are the old Agricultural Extension/Brunswick Community College building on U.S. 17 near Supply and the old Alternative School on Old Piney Grove Road near Bolivia.

According to Smith's plan, the Supply building will house the Brunswick County Emergency Management office and eventually a 911 emergency telephone system; the N.C. Employment Security Commission; and the N.C. Department of Revenue.

Offices that eventually will move to the old Alternative School are the Volunteer and Information Center, School Bus Traffic Safety, Parks and Recreation and Aging. A new department, Clean County, also will be housed in the school building.

Road Funds Outlined

Also at Monday's meeting, N.C. Department of Transportation District Engineer Jim Cook brought commissioners up to date on changes in the county's secondary

roads construction program for the coming year.

Cook noted that his office originally estimated that Brunswick County would receive an extra \$757,613 for secondary roads if the General Assembly passed a Highway Revenue Bill this year. After the bill's passage, however, Brunswick County's additional portion was \$419,798.

Approved by commissioners, his recommendations were to use the additional allocation and reserve funds to pave the following roads: one mile of Tar Landing Road, estimated cost \$90,000; 0.30 of a mile of Zion Hill Road, \$30,000; 0.80 of a mile of Roark's Landing Road, \$80,000; 1.10 miles of Maultsby Road, \$110,000;

Also, 0.90 of a mile of Live Oak Circle (includes state roads 1214, 1215 and 1216), \$81,798; 0.31 of a mile of Cedar Lane (includes state roads 1262, 1263 and 1264), \$30,000; 0.33 of a mile of Summer Place Drive, \$30,000; and 0.15 of a mile of Boonesboro Road, \$14,000.

Appointments Made

In other action, commissioners made appointments to four county boards and one regional board. Appointments to three of the five boards were contested. Commissioners deviated from their usual practice of simply rubber-stamping individual commissioners' nominations to fill board seats for their

own districts.

On split votes, the commission appointed Elon King of Ash and Rudolph Simmons of Varnamtown to District 1 and District 2 seats, respectively, on the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board. Appointed to three-year terms, they replace Ed Gore of Sunset Beach and Alfonza Roach of Supply.

Nominated by District 3 Commissioner Gene Pinkerton, King and Simmons received additional support from Rabon and Ms. Beasley. District 1 Commissioner Kelly Holden and District 2 Commissioner Benny Ludlum nominated Gore and Cletis Clemmons of Supply, respectively, and voted for both.

The other two split votes were divided along the same lines. Gary Shoemaker of Long Beach was appointed to a three-year term on the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority, replacing Lynn Grissett of Cedar Grove. Holden and Ludlum voted for Grissett, who was nominated by Ludlum.

Also, Dural Guyton of Leland was reappointed to the Brunswick County Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Board. Holden and Ludlum supported Bookie Taylor of Seaside.

Commissioners unanimously reappointed Thomas Dixie of Leland and Michael Schaub of Winnabow to three-year terms on the Brun-

wick County Planning Board. They unanimously appointed Dr. William Phillips of Southport to the Brunswick County Board of Health to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Marilyn Boehm of Holden Beach, who recently resigned. Her term was to end in December.

Other Business

In other matters at Monday's meeting, commissioners:

- Were introduced to W.D. Sudduth, the new area director of Southeastern Mental Health.
- Voted to recommend to DOT the addition of Shingletree Acres Road to the state secondary road system.
- Approved a county health board recommendation to raise the costs of two types of tuberculosis chest X-rays from \$19 to \$23.72, and from \$24 to \$28.71, as a result of increased costs to the health department.
- Agreed to collect taxes for the Town of Varnamtown at a 1.5 percent collection fee.
- Set a public hearing for Tuesday, Sept. 5, at 5:30 p.m., in commissioners chambers on "verifiable goals for minority businesses," in relation to awarding construction bids next month on the jail addition.
- Due to the Labor Day holiday, commissioners will hold their next regular meeting on Sept. 5 at 6:30 p.m., in Bolivia.

16-Year-Old Girl Is Raped By Two Men Near Southport

No arrests were reported as of Monday in connection with the rape of a 16-year-old Southport girl early Saturday in the Southport area.

According to reports on file at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, the sexual assault occurred Saturday around 12:30 a.m. on Bethel Church Road off N.C. 87.

The suspects are two unidentified white men believed to be a father and son. Det. Larry Joyner said the victim did not know the two men.

One was described as being about 40 years of age and having short blondish-brown hair with traces of gray on the sides. He had a brown mustache and week-old beard. The other man appeared to be about 20 years old, with shoulder-length, blondish-brown hair and blond highlights.

The girl told officers that a friend dropped her off at home Friday around 11:30 p.m., after the two left

a local party together. The victim, however, started walking back toward the site of the party and accepted a ride from the two suspects near the intersection of N.C. 87 and N.C. 211.

After taking the Dasher Cut-Off Road off N.C. 211, they turned onto Bethel Church Road and pulled off the road. The suspects' vehicle was a tan, mid-sized car.

Threatening to kill the girl if she resisted, the older man ordered her out of the car and told her to take off her pants. According to the report, the other suspect then reportedly said, "Don't hurt her, Dad."

After both men raped the girl, they left her lying on the ground and drove away from the scene, she said. The victim was able to walk to a friend's residence and call authorities. The incident was reported to the sheriff's department Saturday at 2:34 a.m.

Filing Period To Reopen In Navassa

A special filing period has been set up to allow the Town of Navassa to have a full slate of officers on its November ballot.

William White withdrew as a town council candidate about two weeks ago. That left only one candidate and two council seats up for election this fall.

The Brunswick County Board of Elections voted last Wednesday to set up a two-week filing period for Navassa, Aug. 25 through Sept. 8, said Elections Supervisor Lynda Britt.

The special filing period for Navassa will run the same two weeks as the emergency filing period in Calabash. (See related story this issue.)

Firm Announces Plans To Locate Here

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Rabon told the *Beacon* Tuesday that the county offered Exide Electronics no other inducements. "It's just an opportunity we don't get very often," Rabon said, explaining the board's decision to allocate \$300,000 for the land purchase.

De Sherbinin said the new facility is expected to initially generate an estimated \$450,000 per year in property tax revenues.

During the press conference, Rabon commented, "This is the first time Brunswick County has ever recruited an industry this aggressively." The recruitment effort began in January, officials said.

The company will be the first electronics-based industry in Brun-

wick County and will be among the area's largest employers. Risher said that within the next several years, the firm hopes to employ up to 500 workers. Jobs will include light assembly, testing, maintenance, shipping and administrative positions.

Exide Electronics produces a broad range of products that protect computer and other high-tech equipment from power fluctuations and outages. Risher said the company makes systems that range in price from \$600 to several million dollars.

According to Ward, the company picked Brunswick County over six other North Carolina counties for the new plant. "I think this project clearly shows that teamwork is the

key to economic development," Ward said, referring to cooperative efforts among the county, state and Landmark Corporation, which is developer of the industrial park.

Risher also noted that a building will be constructed near the plant to serve as a training center for employees. The training will be conducted in conjunction with Brunswick Community College, he said.

In a prepared statement, de Sherbinin said, "A number of considerations went into Exide Electronics' decision to locate satellite operations in Brunswick County. This location provided the company with a site suitable for future expansion, accessibility to a work force, appropriate training facilities and proximity to a satisfactory transit system."

Normal Temps, Rain Forecast

Seasonable weather conditions are expected in the Shallotte area over the next several days, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Temperatures through the weekend should average from around 70 at night to the upper 80s during the day. Precipitation is expected to measure about three-quarters of an inch.

For the period of Aug. 15 through 21, the daily average temperature was 79 degrees, which

Canady said was one degree below normal.

The daily average high temperature was 87 degrees, and the nightly average low temperature was 71 degrees.

The maximum high temperature during the period was 90 degrees on Aug. 20. The minimum low temperature was 68 degrees on Aug. 16.

Canady measured 0.49 of an inch of rain during the seven-day period.

Board Asks For Time

(Continued From Page 1-A)

most of them from the western school district served by overcrowded Union Primary and Shallotte Middle schools.

The timetable outlined Monday by the two architects calls for the \$286,000 planning and design phase of the project to be completed by May 1990; the \$19,500 bidding phase by June 1990; the \$5.2 million construction and inspection phases by January 1992.

Slockett explained that no addi-

tional county allocations would be needed this fiscal year, while the school board this year would earmark \$800,000 in half-cent sales tax revenue for the project.

During the 1990-91 fiscal year and the first six months of the 1991-92 fiscal year, the county would make monthly payments of \$152,750, according to the school board's plan. In turn, the schools would allocate sales tax revenue of \$950,000 in 1990-91 and \$1 million in 1991-92.

SBI Task Force Takes On Two Local Murder Cases

BY RAHN ADAMS

An agent from the SBI's Murder Unsolved Task Force (MUST) has trained his magnifying glass on two old Brunswick County murder cases that have confounded county sleuths.

Sheriff John Carr Davis said Monday that SBI agent Tony Cummings began working with local lawmen last week on the 1987 murder of Leland resident Beverly Potter Mintz; and the 1986 murder of Yaupon Beach resident Thomas G. Summer, who was Davis' son-in-law.

Davis said MUST selected the two murders from the county's six unsolved murder cases dating back to 1979. Another agent from the special, eight-member task force is expected to join Cummings in Brunswick County soon, the sheriff said.

"We've always got to be optimistic that everything that can be done will be done," Davis said,

adding that MUST can give the investigations "a different view from what we've given them."

For three days last week, Cummings worked with Capt. Phil Perry on the Mintz case and with Capt. Douglas Padgett on the Summer case.

Early this week, Cummings was involved in the Henry Levi Pigott murder trial in Brunswick County Superior Court. Davis said the agent's involvement in the trial was not related to the unsolved murder cases.

In March, the sheriff said he had requested MUST's assistance three times in the previous two years; however, this is the first time the three-year-old task force has taken on any local cases. MUST agents initially were expected to come here in April but were delayed.

Davis said the Mintz murder probably was the case that prompted him to ask for MUST's help. He added that the main difficulty in all

of the county's unsolved cases has been a lack of witnesses. Except for the Mintz slaying, the other murders happened in relatively secluded areas.

Occurring in February 1987, the 23-year-old Mintz was found stabbed to death at her Village Road residence. There were no signs of forced entry into her home, and neighbors reported seeing nothing unusual around the time of the murder.

Summer, 32, was stabbed to death in December 1986. His body was found in his work van in an isolated area near the Orion Plantation entrance. Authorities suspect the murder was drug related.

Brunswick County's four other unsolved murder cases include:

—The October 1988 shooting deaths of Marion E. Meetze, 48, his wife, Ginger Meetze, 32, and her daughter from a previous marriage, Nichole Annoid, 10, at their partially-burned home on N.C. 87 to-

ward Maco;

—The April 1988 shotgun slaying of 38-year-old Nakina resident James Thomas Smith, whose body was found on the shoulder of N.C. 904 near the Columbus County line;

—The July 1985 shooting death of Matthew D. Spaulding, 51, of Winnabow, who was shot several times in the back when he apparently went to his stable to feed horses;

—The June 1979 shooting death of Benny Eugene Smith, 25, of Tabor City, who died at a Wilmington hospital after he was shot in the head while riding his motorcycle on Pea Landing Road off U.S. 17 near Thomasboro.

Davis said Monday that he applied last week for a Governor's Reward to be offered in the Meetze triple-murder case. If the application is approved, up to \$5,000 would be offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the murders.

Testimony Is Underway In First-Degree Murder Case

BY RAHN ADAMS

The prosecution was still presenting evidence late Tuesday afternoon in the first-degree murder trial of Henry Levi Pigott Jr., the Shallotte area man accused of killing local businessman Darwin Kingsley "King" Freeman.

Testimony began Monday in Brunswick County Superior Court, with Judge Donald W. Stephens presiding. A nine-woman, three-man jury was seated last Thursday after a four-day selection process.

Assistant District Attorney Thomas Hicks is prosecuting the case. Pigott is represented by court-appointed lawyers Steve Yount and Rex Gore.

Pigott, 33, of Airport Road, is charged with first-degree murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, burglary and arson in connection with Freeman's death last September at Anchor Lumber Company on U.S. 17 south of Shallotte.

If convicted, the defendant faces either life in prison or the death penalty on the murder charge. Other possible maximum penalties are life in prison on the burglary and arson charges, and 40-year prison terms on the armed robbery and kidnapping counts.

The body of 74-year-old Freeman was found Sept. 25, 1988, in an efficiency apartment at his business. Bound hand and foot, he died of a single .22-caliber gunshot wound to

the head. Also, the combination apartment and office building was partially burned in an apparent attempt to destroy evidence.

In an opening statement Monday morning, Hicks said the state's evidence would show that Pigott—who was an Anchor Lumber employee at the time of the murder—killed and robbed Freeman late on Sept. 24, 1988, after the victim refused to loan Pigott money.

Yount countered in his opening remarks that evidence also would show that Pigott "was using drugs at the time of the commission of the crime," although the attorney also said, "This is a trial that we're not conceding the first (guilt or innocence) phase."

Testimony from SBI agents Ken Snead and Kelly Moser on Monday indicated that Pigott signed a 13-page confession on Feb. 22, the day after he was arrested. Pigott, who also testified Monday, said he did not remember confessing to the murder because he had been smoking crack cocaine and drinking liquor before his arrest.

Directed to the scene by the defendant, lawmen recovered a .22-caliber semi-automatic rifle that Pigott allegedly disposed of in a creek near the intersection of N.C. 904 and N.C. 905 in Columbus County. Moser and Brunswick County Sheriff's Sgt. Carl Pearson testified.

Moser and Snead also revealed Monday and Tuesday that Pigott was arrested after he met several times at a Shallotte motel with an SBI informant—an individual who was referred to Monday as the "root

woman" or the "voodoo woman." The meetings were tape recorded by the SBI.

The woman, who testified Tuesday, was identified as Lottie Gamble of Fayetteville.

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