

# Advisory Board Recommends Pilot Emergency Medical Program

BY RAHN ADAMS

County emergency medical services officials last week agreed that local volunteer rescue squads need paid daytime help to cover the Shallotte area beginning this tourist season. But the decision to hire rescue workers is up to county commissioners, who would authorize the paychecks.

On a motion by Bolivia representative Cecil Robbins, the Brunswick County EMS Advisory Board last Wednesday voted 22-1 to recommend that the county establish a pilot EMS program through the 1990-91 fiscal year and staff it with eight emergency medical technicians.

If approved by commissioners, the pilot program would represent the first paid emergency medical services in the county, which now is served by nine volunteer rescue squads. A 10th squad—Navassa Volunteer Rescue Squad—is inactive.

At-large board member Betty Warren of Ash cast the lone vote against Robbins' motion, saying she felt the panel's proposal should designate a specific rescue squad to house the pilot program. Other members countered that the "open-ended" recommendation should be

flexible so that more than one rescue squad possibly can benefit.

The 34-member advisory board, which was set up last year by commissioners, is composed of representatives from local municipalities, rescue squads, hospitals, educational boards and the general public. The group met for 2 1/2 hours last Wednesday night at Brunswick Community College.

Representatives from Boiling Spring Lakes, Calabash, Caswell Beach, Long Beach, Sandy Creek, Shallotte, Navassa, Varnamtown and Boiling Spring Lakes VRS were absent, as were Commissioner Kelly Holden and at-large member Michael Fullwood.

Although the advisory board did not specify where they felt paid EMS personnel should be stationed, discussion last Wednesday centered on a plea from the Town of Ocean Isle Beach for improved daytime EMS response from Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad.

As she has stated in previous town meetings, Ocean Isle Beach Mayor Betty Williamson explained to the advisory board that a manpower shortage since last fall at Shallotte VRS has forced Calabash Volunteer Emergency Medical Services to answer most daytime calls at Ocean Isle.

"As our beach season approaches, I'm sure you understand our concern that the situation has not improved," Mrs. Williamson said, adding that tourism officials expect this summer to be one of the South Brunswick Islands' largest tourist seasons ever. She also pointed out that Calabash VEMS's regular coverage area already includes Sunset Beach.

Calabash VEMS representative Alan Howarth and Coastline VRS representative Kevin Mulholland both noted that their squads also suffer daytime staffing problems. "There's an influx of people at our beaches, and we're all hurting," said Mulholland, whose squad covers Holden Beach. Howarth added that a large percentage of his agency's calls comes from the growing number of golf courses in the Calabash area.

According to county Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan, eight EMTs working 12-hour shifts Monday through Friday could handle daytime EMS service in southwestern Brunswick County, from Supply to the state line. Statewide, the average pay for EMTs is more than \$14,000 per year, he said. One of the proposed eight EMTs would be a supervisor, whose annual salary would need to be at least \$16,000.

Advisory Board Chairman Doug Ledgett said the committee should not view the pilot program as benefiting only one or two squads, since the program's eventual goal would be to become a countywide system. He also emphasized that a county EMS program would not replace volunteer rescue squads, which would still be needed to provide their usual "rescue" functions—as opposed to ambulance services—and to provide "first-responder" support on emergency medical calls.

In a related matter, board members voted unanimously to propose that the county begin the search for a full-time EMS director but made no specific suggestions about the position's job description or salary. Members indicated that the director's initial task would be to plan a countywide EMS system.

Also, the committee unanimously endorsed a recommendation for the county to authorize the operation of private, non-emergency ambulance services for "arranged transports" in Brunswick County. The board's action followed a presentation from Medic Alert Transport of Bolton. To make transports within the county, ambulance services must obtain franchises from the board of commissioners.

# UOB Supports Unofficial Moratorium On New Taps Southwest Of Shallotte

BY RAHN ADAMS

Although no official action was taken on the proposition, Brunswick County utility officials agreed Monday that they will have to quit recommending additions to the county water system southwest of Shallotte unless a much-talked-about capital improvements project is undertaken.

Requests for county water service in southwestern Brunswick County and the water system's potential inability to meet future peak demands in that area were main topics of discussion at Monday's two-hour meeting of the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board. UOB members D.V. Jones, Robert Nubel, Ernest McGee, Al Morrison and John Jones were present.

The meeting included a 30-minute executive session requested by Chairman D.V. Jones to discuss "attorney-client matters." Jones said no action was taken during the closed-door conference with UOB Attorney Michael Ramos.

The utility board's discussion of recommending a possible moratorium on water taps followed a request from Calabash area resident Raymond Dayka for an update on the status of Special Assessment District 15. Dayka, president of the Bonaparte Retreat II Home Owners Association, and about 30 other residents of Bonaparte Retreat II and neighboring Heritage Haven subdivisions presented petitions for water service two months ago.

In February, the UOB agreed to recommend starting the new SAD 15 project, as long as the board's engineers determined that the subdivisions could be added without overburdening the water system. UOB consult-

*"Some of these short-term (water) needs need to be addressed and need to be presented to the county commissioners again."*

—Jay Houston  
Consulting Engineer

ing engineer Jay Houston reported Monday that the two subdivisions, which include 79 dwellings, would require an estimated 20,000 gallons of water per day.

Houston reiterated the UOB's concerns that the water system cannot supply enough water to meet peak summer demands southwest of Shallotte, as was pointed out in a \$7,500 engineering study that was completed by Houston's engineering firm in the fall of 1988.

In early 1989 and again last October, the UOB recommended that commissioners approve a \$5 million capital improvements project that would solve the water system problem southwest of Shallotte. Commissioners have taken no definite action on the matter, despite pleas from the utility board and Sunset Beach Town Council for the county to implement the project.

The proposed project involves construction of a 2,200-gallon-per-minute booster pump station near the intersection of N.C. 179 and N.C. 904; a one million

gallon elevated storage tank near the intersection of N.C. 904 and Old Georgetown Road; and a 12-inch trunk line on Old Georgetown Road from N.C. 904 to N.C. 179 near Calabash.

In his written report to the utility board, Houston noted Monday that he could not recommend against setting up SAD 15, because the two subdivisions' anticipated usage was relatively low and because the county has not instituted a "moratorium" on water taps southwest of Shallotte.

"Essentially what we're saying is, SAD 15 is in sequence now...and I guess it comes down to a political decision, and that we throw that (decision) back to the county to make," Houston told the board. He later added, "These people like Mr. Dayka are in dire straits, and they need some help...Some of these short-term needs need to be addressed and need to be presented again to the county commissioners."

Responding to a question from Nubel, Houston noted that at least three new golf course projects—which he would not identify—are being planned in the Calabash area. The engineer also pointed out that a golf course's water usage tends to lower the groundwater table in a given area.

County Public Utilities Director Jerry Webb informed the board that commissioners were to meet in recessed session Wednesday (April 11) to discuss funding methods for proposed capital improvements, including water system enhancements.

When Dayka asked if he and his neighbors should put "pressure" on commissioners to approve the capital

improvements project, D.V. Jones responded, "I'd say you've got to talk to them. They're the ones holding the ball; the ball's in their court."

Prior to the UOB's unanimous vote to recommend setting up the new water district, Nubel suggested that the utility board tell commissioners that SAD 15 will be the UOB's last recommended addition to the system southwest of Shallotte until improvements are made. "We've told them there's a (water) shortage," Nubel said, "but we haven't told them that there's a point where we can't make further recommendations" of adding new water customers, including golf courses.

Morrison's motion to recommend initiating SAD 15 came on the heels of Nubel's remark, which elicited no objections from other members. However, Morrison confirmed Tuesday that his motion did not formally propose a moratorium on new water taps southwest of Shallotte, even though members apparently agreed that they could recommend no more additions after SAD 15.

In other action at Monday's meeting, the utility board voted to recommend that commissioners adopt the final assessment roll for SAD 10 (Calabash area), with an assessment rate of \$5.38 per assessable foot. Total cost of the project is \$120,495.

Also, the UOB instructed Webb to contact county and state officials about possible emergency measures to supply county water service to at least five Mt. Misery Road residences whose wells are contaminated by gasoline. Resident Belinda Causey said a state environmental management agency suspects the gasoline is leaking from abandoned gas tanks at an old service station in their neighborhood.

# Calabash Officials Debate Future Of Commercial Trash Pickup

BY DOUG RUTTER

Several Calabash officials have opposing views about who should pay for commercial trash pickup in town—an issue that will probably be settled as commissioners prepare the budget for next fiscal year.

The town currently pays for trash pickup at all residences and businesses within the old town limits, while Carolina Shores residents take their garbage to a community dump.

Commissioner George Taubel questioned the policy of free commercial trash pickup at Tuesday night's regular town meeting, and said he planned to present estimates for sanitation service for the entire town at the April 25 meeting.

Taubel said he thinks the town will have to stop paying for trash pickup at commercial establishments, including restaurants, when the new fiscal year starts July 1. He argued that the town paying for trash pickup at businesses is not fair to residents who pay the same tax

rate but don't get the same benefits.

The commissioner said some businesses pay less than \$200 a year in town taxes but receive more than \$1,000 in free trash service from the town. "It is obscene for the taxes they pay and the services they get," said Taubel.

Commissioner Phyllis Manning, who serves on the town committee reviewing trash service, said 90 percent of the town's sanitation bill is for commercial pickup. She added that Calabash is the only municipality served by Chambers Development Company that pays for all of the commercial trash pickup.

Commissioner Keith Hardee, however, objected to the proposal to do away with free commercial trash pickup. He said he wouldn't vote for it until the town starts receiving tax dollars from Carolina Shores in the middle of next fiscal year.

Supporting Hardee, Mayor Doug Simmons said the town set its tax rate at 24.5 cents per \$100 of valuation so it could afford to pay for

trash pickup for businesses and residents.

He said free commercial trash pickup is justified because businesses pay more taxes than residents. Also, Simmons said he frequently has residential garbage piled in the dumpsters at his business and would have to "guard" them if the town changed its policy.

The town contract with Chambers, which calls for pickup at businesses, doesn't expire until 1992. However, it can be canceled with or without cause if at least 30 days notice is provided.

**Study Continues**  
A brief status report on an ongoing annexation feasibility study for Calabash turned into a lengthy discussion on the lack of water available southwest of Shallotte and alternative means of wastewater disposal.

The cost of extending water service to the two areas being considered for annexation has been estimated at \$127,000, according to

Alan Lewis and Don Covil of the Shallotte engineering firm Houston & Associates.

The town is looking at annexing a residential area east of town and a resort area southwest of town. Providing water to the residential area would cost about \$110,000, while getting water lines to the resort area would cost about \$17,000.

The local engineering firm was hired in December 1988 to complete the engineering portion of the town's annexation feasibility study. Tom Cassell of the state Division of Community Assistance has been looking at which areas qualify for involuntary annexation under state guidelines.

After hearing the cost estimates Tuesday, town officials and the engineers talked at length about the critical need for more water pressure in the Calabash area. They also discussed golf course spray irrigation as a means of sewage disposal.

**No "Horsing" Around**  
Commissioner Taubel said he hopes to block any effort to establish a topless nightclub in Calabash, adding that he's heard rumors of plans for such an establishment.

Taubel plans to work with the town attorney and bring a draft ordinance to the April 25 meeting that would prohibit topless bars in Calabash.

In doing so, Taubel said he hopes to avoid problems experienced by town officials in Atlantic Beach, S.C., who are trying to keep out establishments such as the "Crazy Horse."

"I don't think it's what the people we represent want," said Taubel.

Mayor Doug Simmons agreed, saying, "We need to nip it in the bud."

**Other Business**  
In other business Tuesday, commissioners:

—Referred a petition for contiguous annexation to the town planning and zoning board. Charles E. Kronewetter of Marsh Harbour Yacht Club has requested annexation into the town limits. Building Inspector Edward Schaack said the request was in response to a recent vote by the town board to seek special state legislation to expand the town limits and that he expects more letters of support.

—Met in executive session for 15 minutes to discuss a personnel matter, but took no action. Mayor Simmons said the board is considering changes in the method of compensation for the code enforcement officer.

—Heard a report from Mayor Pro Tem George Anderson concerning the town taking over maintenance of streets and ditches in Carolina Shores. Anderson said the streets are in "generally good repair" but some need improvements and some don't meet state standards. Roads that don't meet state standards would not be eligible for state Powell Bill money. He also noted that a beaver dam in one of the ditches off Persimmon Road will have to be taken care of before the town assumes maintenance.

—Set a special meeting for Friday, April 20, at 10 a.m. in town hall. Commissioners will meet with the planning and zoning board to discuss changes in the town ex-

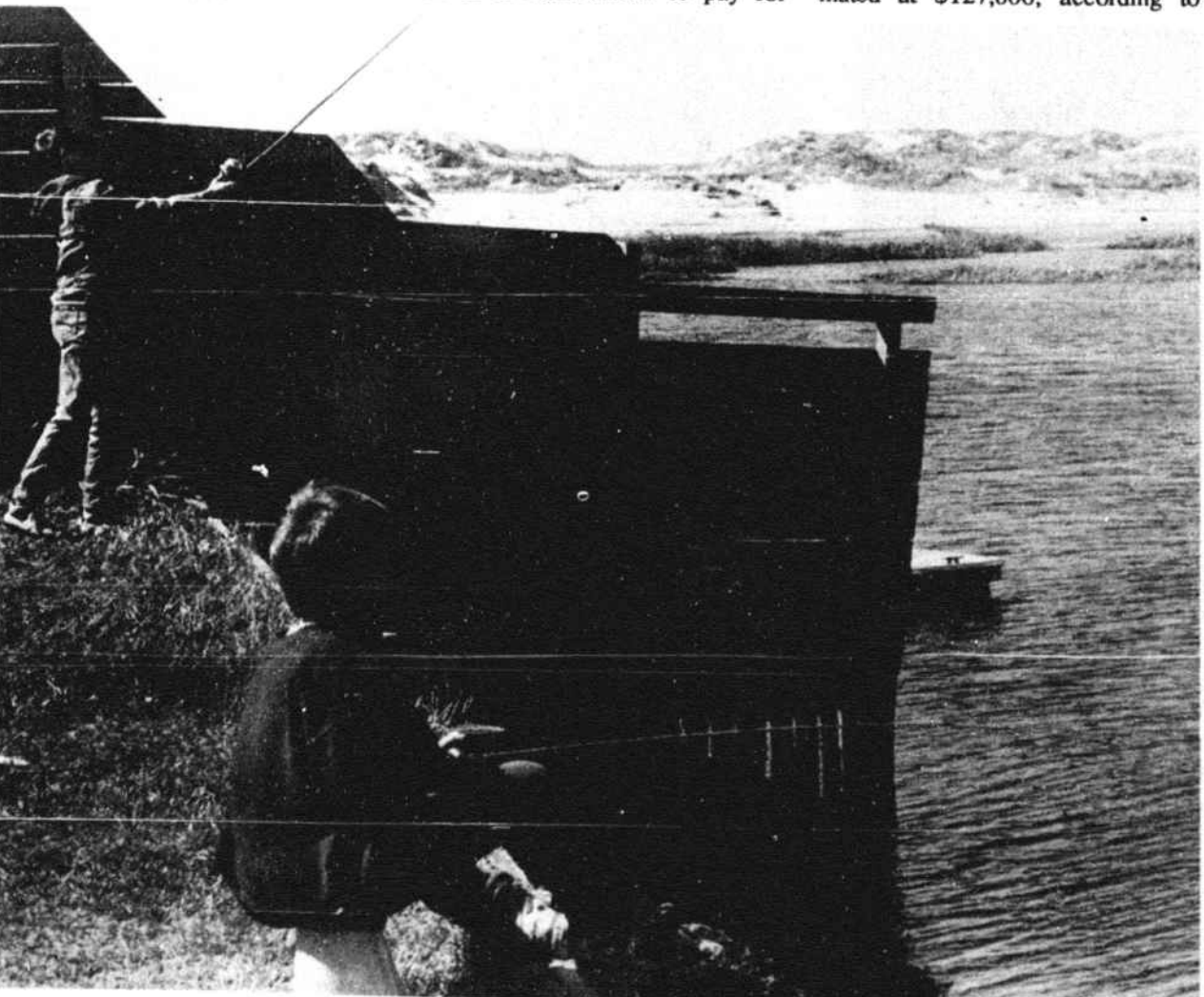
traterritorial boundaries and related matters.

—Heard from Schaack that another convenience store and with gasoline plans to locate on N.C. 179, even though there are already four within the town limits. "I don't see how the man expects to make a living here unless he sells gas for 15 cents a gallon," said Commissioner Ed Rice.

—Adopted a calendar for preparing and adopting the 1990-91 fiscal year budget. The commission will hold a special meeting Tuesday, May 1, at 7 p.m. to begin the budget process. Officials plan to hold the budget hearing May 22 and adopt the budget June 12.

—Heard from Taubel that the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) has turned down a request to lower the speed limit on Calabash Road, also called Country Club Drive, from 45 mph to 35 mph.

—Heard from Commissioner Stuart Thorn that DOT officials will be at Northwest Drive in Carolina Shores April 26 at 10 a.m. to talk about plans for a barrier between the residences on the street and U.S. 17.



Fishing Like 'Mad'

Friends Cody Groeber (left) and Brandon Haynie, both of Anderson, S.C., try their hands at fishing in Mad Inlet at the west end of Sunset Beach Sunday morning. The boys said no fish had taken their bait, although they were getting plenty of nibbles—from unwanted crabs.

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