

Health Board Postpones Sewer Endorsement To Study Opposition's Case

BY LYNN CARLSON

The county health board Monday night postponed endorsement of a proposed central sewer system for southwest Brunswick County until its members can review materials they received from opponents to the plan.

The Sunset Beach Taxpayers' Association, in a letter accompanied by 70 pages of attachments, calls plans for a central sewer system to serve Sunset Beach and Calabash "a very costly and inadequate solution to a still poorly defined problem" and concurs with an environmental group advocating a moratorium on public funding of new sewer projects.

"This represents the other side of the coin," said Skip Davis, health board chairman. "This is a very important issue from a health point of view," adding that the health board must vote on the issue soon.

Clete Waldmiller, president of the 1,500-member SBTA, in a letter to members of the Brunswick County Board of Health, charges that consulting engineers have not proved that septic tanks on the island of Sunset Beach are polluting area waters.

Although Waldmiller said he agrees with Powell and Associates engineers that waste-borne bacteria levels are increasing in the waters around Sunset Beach, "historic data indicate that pollution is entering area waters from the Waccamaw River, Calabash Creek, and the Little River, carried by the Intracoastal Waterway."

Powell engineers Joe Tombro and Jim Billups are seeking the health board's endorsement of a central sewer system as a means of curbing water pollution in southern Brunswick County, where some once-bountiful shellfish beds have been closed to fishermen for most of 20 years because tests indicate high levels of

fecal coliform bacteria.

The Sunset Beach and Calabash town boards, over the vocal objection of the SBTA and the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association, in late 1992 created the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority to serve as a "management entity" to seek grants and loans for the proposed \$25 to \$30 million central sewer system.

Some town officials have promised the opponents that if the sewer system plan cannot pass a referendum, the authority will be dissolved.

Waldmiller's letter charges that construction of a sewer system would accelerate resort development, "thus exacerbating area water pollution problems rather than solving them, primarily by greatly increasing the volume of pollutants in stormwater runoff."

His attachments included a research paper which

concludes that New Hanover County's sewer system, while costing much more than was originally planned, opened the door to dense commercial and residential development while failing to deal with the water pollution caused by the resulting stormwater runoff.

However, Billups says examination of the New Hanover report can help make a case for the South Brunswick system. "The objective data and information provided in the main body of the report would only tend to support the proposed Environmental Management Program, and demonstrates why all of the elements of the proposed program are required as a whole."

In an eight-page response to the SBTA letter dated March 9, Billups says the engineers understand SBTA's concerns about the central sewer system plan.

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BRUNSWICK BEACON

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THE REV. COY PRIVETTE, executive director of the N.C. Christian Action League and unsuccessful 8th District Congressional candidate, speaks to about 100 Brunswick County Republicans at a party convention on Saturday. Privette is flanked by outgoing GOP treasurer Phil Norris and new party chairman Shirley Babson.

GOP Agrees On Life, Values Issues; Splits On Local Resolutions, Offices

BY LYNN CARLSON

Shirley Babson was elected chairman of the Brunswick County Republican Party at a Saturday convention in which nominations for the two top party offices were contested, and delegates voted to soften resolutions criticizing local legislators and educators.

Babson's bid for the chairmanship easily survived a challenge by unsuccessful county commission candidate Pete Barnette, who said he had not expected or asked to be nominated as the party's head.

Former and prospective sheriff's candidate James Brown defeated another surprise challenger, former state House of Representatives candidate Randy Sullivan, for the position of vice chairman.

Pat Adams of Caswell Beach and Tom Yeagle of Sunset Harbor were elected secretary and treasurer, respectively, by acclamation.

Babson, nominated by outgoing chairman James

Payne, pledged to "respect everyone's opinion," adding, "I realize that some of you feel one way and others, another. I am for the Republican platform, but I will listen to those of you who feel different."

The elections followed the passage of four resolutions, two of them amended to tame language proposed by the Resolutions Committee comprised of Sullivan, Robert Maultsby and narrowly defeated school board candidate Janet Pope.

Dividing Calabash

In a resolution opposing the proposed legislation to split Calabash and Carolina Shores into two municipalities, the party, on a motion by Barnette, struck language referring to "the duly elected self-important State Senator R.C. Soles and State Rep. David Redwine" and accusing Soles of "open contempt for those he is supposed to be serving."

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Schools Improvement Plan Calls For 'Lead Teachers,' Restructuring Central Office

BY SUSAN USHER

Restructuring of the central office staff and using lead teachers to improve instruction are key elements of a systemwide plan for improving student achievement in the Brunswick County Schools over the next three years.

Monday night, to applause from an advisory panel, the Brunswick County Board of Education approved a system-wide school improvement plan that identifies 10 goals for improvement and strategies for attaining them.

"This is the best opportunity this school board has ever had to improve the education of the children of Brunswick County," said plan coordinator Gloria Talley, staff development director. "This is not a quick-fix plan...but a very serious document."

Echoing her sentiments, Superintendent Ralph Johnston reiterated his belief that Brunswick County is at "a critical point" in a number of areas, and that parents must be involved in the schools "if we are to reclaim our children."

"Brunswick County can move forward if it decides to. Much of this is people deciding deep down inside to do something for our children. It is time not just to say it, but to do it," he said to applause from the audience.

Committee member Ed Lemon, principal of West Brunswick High School, urged the board to action, saying, "Whatever it takes to get this done has to be done. It will require a massive plan and a complete restructuring."

Plan efforts for immediate improvement will focus on science, plus the five areas in which the system did not meet state standards on its most recent report card: algebra, U.S. history, sixth grade writing essay, percent of certificates issued instead of diplomas, and attendance.

As modified by the countywide advisory panel of educators and parents led by Talley, the plan calls for employing a total of approximately 10 lead teachers in algebra, U.S. History, K-8 math and writing; hiring an attendance counselor for each district; and hiring a life skills teacher at each high school to work with upperclassmen who haven't passed the state competency test. It also calls for designating central office coordinators for math, science, history and writing.

This could be achieved in part by the proposed restructuring of the central office to support local schools and classroom teachers, including the possible combining of some jobs; setting higher expectations for schools and students; providing intensive training of principals to provide leadership, student learning style assessment, technical support for teachers in using good teaching methods and in using the computer to increase student achievement; and reorganizing the school schedule to provide teachers time for team planning and more in-service education.

Additional goals in the three-year Performance Based Accountability Plan call for developing a written plan

for using technology; increasing parent/community support for student educational achievement; incorporating a schoolwide plan that requires student accountability for learning; and evaluating the effectiveness of the system wide plan and individual school and central office plans.

"It's a prime time for our schools and the central office to do some major restructuring so our teachers can get the help they need," said member Polly Russ. "If it takes restructuring the central office completely that may not be such a bad idea. Having somebody who hasn't been in a classroom for 15 years showing teachers how to do their jobs doesn't cut it with classroom teachers. They want somebody who's been there."

Lead teachers would be experienced teachers who have demonstrated achievement in their teaching area and model good teaching for their peers. They would serve one-year stints out of their own classrooms.

An overall goal in all curriculum areas is to have all teachers teaching according to objectives outlined in the state's standard end-of-course tests.

Specifically, the plans calls for these strategies to achieve key goals:

■**Science:** Incorporate a more hands-on approach to science instruction and provide more staff development in that instructional approach; employ two lead teachers, one for grades K-8 and one for grades 9-12; designate a central office coordinator for science.

■**Algebra:** Require students to demonstrate superior math abilities to take algebra in eighth grade; employ three lead teachers for a 12-month rotation to teach math for grades K-8 and one algebra lead teacher to serve countywide; designate a central office coordinator for math. The goal is to improve student performance on both the algebra I and algebra II end-of-course tests.

■**U.S. History:** Emphasize the Socratic method of teaching; employ one lead teacher for a 12-month rotation; designate a central office coordinator for history.

■**Writing Essay,** particularly for sixth graders: Daily process writing instruction for students; in-service education for teachers identified as needing improvement in writing instruction; required testing in grades other than those when testing is required. Hire three lead writing teachers on a 12-month rotation; designate a central office coordinator for writing. The goal is to increase the percent of sixth graders scoring 2.5 or better from 37.6 percent to 38.6 percent next year and to 40.6 percent by 1995-96.

■**Certificates:** Hiring three teachers to teach a new elective course, Life Skills in Math/Communication, for students in the 11th and 12th grades who have not passed the N.C. Competency Test. Last year 3.7 percent of all Brunswick County "graduates" received certificates.

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CONDEMNATION SUGGESTED

Blythe Won't Lower Price Or Deal With Consultants

BY ERIC CARLSON

The \$4.5 million asking price for the Carolina-Blythe sewerage system is "not negotiable," according to the company's owners, who told the Calabash Board of Commissioners Tuesday that they will not deal with any consultant hired by the town to negotiate a purchase.

In a terse prepared statement read to the board, Coleman Burnett of Carolina-Blythe chastised town officials for "creating, repeating and spreading rumors at the meetings which place Blythe in an unacceptable position with regards to how Blythe may be viewed by its customers."

Burnett criticized unnamed town "consultants" for not properly evaluating and making clear the benefits of the town "acquiring the utility assets" and for not considering "the true value and advantages of the utility to the citizens of Calabash."

Blythe can no longer "waste time and resources" attempting to negotiate with Calabash's paid consultants, who "appear more interested in their present and long-term fees," Burnett said.

"Carolina Blythe is mystified as to why paid consultants would waste the town's resources to attempt to negotiate a sales price which the town's consultant has known since October 1991 was not negotiable," he said.

Burnett concluded by saying the company is "no longer willing to negotiate with the town's paid consultants." Instead Blythe will sell its assets if Calabash agrees "to negotiate the terms, not the sales price" of \$4.5 million.

Jim Billups of Powell Associates, consulting engineers for the proposed Calabash-Sunset Beach sewer system, denied Burnett's charges. He said his firm was "damned if we do and damned if we don't" try to negotiate a reduced purchase price for Carolina Blythe. He said Powell Associates had "no fee interest whatsoever" in the negotiations.

Commissioners and Calabash residents alike have repeatedly questioned Burnett's asking price of \$4.5 million. A rate-base study by accountant George Dennis of Raleigh determined that Carolina Blythe

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Change Of Watch

A helicopter drops off a tired crew and picks up another one at the Oak Island Coast Guard station Friday during an ocean rescue mission. The Coast Guard helped save the crew of the Aimless Lady after the boat started sinking near Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower. The boat was safely towed to Southport Marina.

PHOTO BY BRYAN VARNAM