

ENGINEERS ADVISE AGAINST IT

Sewer System Owner Offers Calabash A New Purchase Plan

BY ERIC CARLSON

Last March, when a plan to purchase the Carolina-Blythe Utility Co. was the cornerstone of a proposed regional sewer system, company owners rebuffed Calabash's efforts to negotiate a reduction in their \$4.5 million asking price.

Last week, as Calabash and Sunset Beach awaited likely approval of loans to build their own treatment facility, Carolina-Blythe's owner told members of the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association that he has a new purchase proposal for the town to consider.

But planning engineers for the joint system warned Calabash Commissioners Tuesday night that Carolina Blythe's collection system is in disrepair, that it does not have the capacity to serve the entire town and that purchasing it would result in higher rates for sewer service.

Calabash commissioners Jon Sanborn, Stuart Thom and Robert Noe all attended the Carolina Shores

meeting as members of the POA and heard Carolina-Blythe owner Billy Burnett say that the town should reconsider its original plan to buy his company.

"The 4.5 million asking price remained constant," Sanborn told the other commissioners Tuesday night. "But everything else has changed."

He said Burnett is now offering better terms for purchasing the company, including a proposed \$1.5 million down payment, some "up-front operating cash" and a 15-year note at interest rates comparable to federal loans.

Burnett also said Carolina Blythe is prepared to immediately take on the disposal of 300,000 gallons of sewage per day that the town temporarily needs to serve the downtown area while a permanent treatment plant is built, Sanborn said. And he is offering to do so for less money than the Little River Water and Sewer Authority, which has agreed to take on the town's waste

water for up to four years.

"If you can get that price without committing to purchase the plant, do it. Don't hesitate," said engineer Jim Billups of Powell Associates.

"But keep in mind that Billy Burnett does not make that decision. It's up to the Public Utilities Commission," added Powell engineer Joe Tombro.

Although they agreed that any savings on temporary disposal would benefit the town, the engineers cautioned commissioners that the town could run into problems in purchasing the Carolina Blythe system.

Tombro said the system's treatment capability is currently being upgraded, but most of that additional capacity is already committed. If the town purchases the company, it would have to honor those commitments, leaving only enough capaci-

ty to service downtown Calabash.

"You would still have to build another plant if you want to sewer the rest of the town and the ETJ (extra-territorial jurisdiction)," Tombro said.

Billups said that a closer inspection of the Carolina Blythe system revealed "a significant infiltration problem" in the collection lines. He said infiltration is commonly caused by deteriorating pipe and poorly fit joints that allow rain water to seep into the system, overloading its treatment capacity.

"We found some problems," Billups said. "We brought a Farmers Home Administration staff person down to take a ride around the area and there happened to be a heavy downpour. We went by the Carolina-Blythe plant and found sewage running out onto the ground."

Billups estimated that the town

could spend more than \$150,000 just to inspect the system for infiltration. Repairing a leaking length of sewer line often costs more than putting in new pipe, he said.

Commissioner Noe said he felt the board "would be remiss" if it didn't explore a revised offer from Carolina-Blythe. Sanborn agreed, saying that Burnett had offered to make a "first-class presentation" of

his proposal to the commissioners.

But a member of the audience, Tom Roberts, criticized the way Burnett announced his offer.

"If he wants to sell to Calabash, why did he come to the POA and not to Calabash?" Roberts said. "And why isn't he here tonight? I think he just wants to stir up trouble."

Board To Discuss Rezoning PUD

The Calabash Planning and Zoning Board will hold a special meeting Monday, Aug. 23, at 7 p.m. to discuss a proposal to rezone a tract currently designated for planned unit development (PUD) to allow multi-unit residential development.

The property is located west of N.C. 179 between the Landing II development and the Heritage Haven development.

Schools, County Board Reach Funds Agreement

(Continued From Page 1-A)

at the commissioners' public hearing on the budget.

"Each of us was expecting the other to initiate contact," said Baxter. "It got lost in the shuffle."

When the new Leland school (intended to relieve current overcrowding and provide for anticipated growth) wasn't funded, she said, "we knew we didn't have three or four years to wait. We decided this process was the best solution for us."

District 2 member Polly Russ said she was pleased with Tuesday's session.

"This process worked better," she said. "The mediator was able to cut down a lot of unnecessary dialogue."

"As a result we're going to be able to at least get started on the new school and we will be able to address the fact that we have capital outlay needs over the next five to 10 years to be met."

While he would have preferred getting a chance to discuss the school board's budget requests earlier, District 2 County Commissioner Jerry Jones indicated he also thought Tuesday was time well spent, given the circumstances.

"I'm glad we went through the process today," he said. "I felt like we did accomplish something. As boards we know where each other stands."

"My biggest catch was where they thought we could come up with \$5 million at once."

The two boards first convened jointly at 9 a.m. at Brunswick Community College, expressing their respective positions and concerns face to face before moving to separate rooms to begin the negotiation process.

The school board's delegation included board members Thurman Gause, Yvonne Bright, Russ and Baxter, Peterson, Superintendent Ralph Johnston, Assistant Superintendent Jan Calhoun, Staff Development/Public Information Director Gloria Yount and Finance Officer Rudi Connor. School board member William Fairley was out of town on a prior commitment.

The county's delegation included Commissioners Donald Shaw, Tom Rabon, Wayland Vereen, Jones and Warren, County Manager Wyman Yelton, Clerk to the Board Kelly Barefoot, Finance Officer Lythia Hahn, county attorney Michael Ramos and additional legal representation, attorney Cyrus Faircloth of Sampson County and his assistant.

Court-appointed mediator Andy Little of Mediation Inc. of Chapel Hill moved between the two parties, working first with one board, then another as they gradually shaped a

Driver Charged After Accident

Two persons were injured in a one-car accident that happened Friday, Aug. 6, at 8:15 p.m. on Blue Banks Road in northern Brunswick County.

According to the report filed by Trooper D.A. Lewis, driver Jeremiah E. Green, 18, of Leland, was operating his 1987 Nissan truck "in a careless and reckless manner" along Blue Banks Loop Road (S.R. 1422) about 9.5 miles northwest of Navassa, weaving to one side of the road and then the other. He lost control of the vehicle and struck a tree.

He and his passenger, Jay Green, 16, also of Leland, were transported to Cape Fear Hospital in Wilmington with serious, but non-incapacitating injuries.

Lewis charged Jeremiah Green with driving without a license and careless and reckless driving.

compromise.

The boards spent much of that time "educating each other" in regard to the budget process and their respective roles and concerns, said Baxter.

Three commissioners left the session Tuesday evening temporarily to conduct a previously-scheduled public hearing on several zoning changes.

B I N G O

Thursday Nights • Doors Open 6:15 pm
Calabash VFW Post 7288

Carter Rd., Trader's Village, Calabash, 579-3577

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Games begin at 7:30 PM

Minimum "Buy In" \$5.00

Minimum Pay Out \$650.00 Maximum \$725

Snacks Available • No Children under 12

NEW SMOKE-FREE AIR SYSTEM

©1993 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Arts & Crafts Show

Now At 2 Locations



- Over 60 crafters
- Miniatures

- Gourmet Fudge
- Sugar-Free Chocolate

The Gingerbread House

A Delightfully Different Place to Shop

We Ship Everywhere

First Quality Crafts Wanted On Consignment Basis

Shalotte	Calabash
Hours 9:30-8:00	Summer Hours 10-9:30
Holden Beach Rd.	Beach Dr. SW
1/2 mile from Wal-Mart	500 ft. east of stoplight
754-8979	579-8485

©1993 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

It's everywhere your advertising ought to be...

Island Living

Don't forget the advertising deadline is Thursday, August 12, for the Labor Day issue, coming Sept. 2.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

CALL AN ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE RIGHT NOW, 754-6890