

Burnett Holding Price, Offering Terms On Shores' Sewer Plant

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That meeting marked a turning point in planning for a joint Calabash/Sunset Beach sewage system. Until then, Powell Associates had recommended the purchase of Carolina Blythe as the cornerstone of the system and advised Calabash commissioners to pay Raleigh consultant George Dennis \$10,000 for an analysis of the company's worth.

Burnett broke off talks with Powell Associates after Dennis advised that the Blythe system would only be worth about \$1.5 million to another private utility company. Burnett has consistently said that he intends to sell the company and is willing to negotiate the terms of a

purchase by the town, but that his asking price of \$4.5 million is "not negotiable."

"They paid \$10,000 for \$500 work. Dennis never even looked at the plant," Burnett said.

Powell engineers have said that Burnett is correct in stating that the Dennis estimate does not represent a realistic price for selling Carolina Blythe to a public utility because tap fees and other indicators of income potential were not included.

But there have been no further negotiations toward a purchase of Carolina Blythe since the March meeting.

Instead, Tombro and Billups offered an alternate plan involving construction of a new sewage treat-

ment system to serve Sunset Beach and areas of Calabash outside the Carolina Blythe service area. Both towns have endorsed the concept and are awaiting approval of state and federal loans and grants to pay for the project.

Both towns had planned to hold referendums before allowing their joint South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority to accept money and begin construction. But since most opposition to the project has come from the residents of Carolina Shores—which already has sewer service from Carolina Blythe—Calabash commissioners are considering canceling the vote because those residents won't be customers of the new proposed system.

Burnett contends that building the larger system is not in the best interest of Calabash. He said the Powell engineers have promoted the idea because it will bring their firm more money in consulting fees. Calabash has paid Powell and Associates \$30,036 in the past two years, Sanborn said at the Aug. 10 meeting.

"They were originally hired to do a study of how to sewer the downtown area," Burnett said. "They have lost the concept of what Calabash wanted."

He said he had repeatedly asked Tombro and Billups if he could speak directly to the Calabash commissioners and was advised against it. Burnett also accused the engi-

neers of misrepresenting the Carolina Blythe purchase option in their loan negotiations with the Farmers Home Administration.

"They (the FmHA) have told me that nothing is going to be done (about the loan applications) until they explore all avenues," Burnett said. "So whether they like it or not, they're going to have to talk to us or this thing's not going to get funded."

Robert Soles, a programs specialist with the FmHA in Raleigh, said Friday that the latest information he had received from Powell Associates indicated that Calabash had "eliminated the purchase of Carolina Blythe as an alternative" in the sewage system planning.

proach. Our engineer will evaluate their proposal to assure that they have taken into account all alternatives. We expect them to look at all the options"

While holding firm to his \$4.5 million asking price for Carolina Blythe, Burnett said he is willing to offer Calabash attractive terms for purchasing the company. He said he could give the town 100-percent financing "for 40 or 50 years" at the same interest rate as they could expect from the FmHA. He said the town would not have to begin payments until it begins receiving revenue.

Burnett said he wants to meet directly with the Calabash commissioners to give them a formal presentation of the company's profit potential and to outline the town's purchase options.

"The numbers will speak for themselves," he said.

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Sewer Plan Subject To Hearing, Fund Decisions

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all work," Billups said. "As each stage is done, (homes) will need to be required to connect, but this will take five to six years overall."

Stormwater At Sunset

For some citizens and organizations, support for the sewer plan is contingent upon a proposed tandem stormwater management program for which plans and funding sources are not as evident.

The consultants recently met with state officials and N.C. Reps. David Redwine and Dewey Hill to ask for \$500,000 to study stormwater management needs throughout the county. They argued that an integrated regional stormwater and wastewater system in Brunswick County could serve as a demonstration project for other regions in need of water quality improvement. That concept has been endorsed by the Brunswick County Commissioners and health department, eight local municipalities and Gov. James B. Hunt.

"We were told it was too much to ask for at one time," Billups told the citizens' committee. For the time being, the consultants are proposing that the island of Sunset Beach become the site of a stormwater pilot project estimated to cost \$1 million and that funding for the project be part of the sewer referendum at Sunset.

The N.C. Shellfish Sanitation Division has said it cannot endorse the sewer system concept unless there is a stormwater component.

The state's public hearing will be at 1 p.m. Sept., 1, in the Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

The 800-member Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association, while having expressed skepticism about the need for a sewer system, is vitally interested in stormwater management, said committee member John Watts, who represents the taxpayers' group.

"They think your environmental study is a wash, that your tests haven't proved anything one way or another," Watts told the consultants Monday night. "You haven't sold them on the fact that septic systems are polluting the island. They don't believe the \$18 rate estimate, and they would like to see you implement stormwater first, then see what happens before you go with sewer."

Engineer Tombro called that suggestion "ridiculous," and suggested SBTA hire an independent firm to conduct dye tests in island homes. "I believe that would confirm what we've prepared and show you some things that would surprise you."

Committee member Annette Odom suggested

inviting the SBTA leadership to discuss the plans in an effort to reach consensus on the town's water quality needs.

Discussion Suggested

Odom expressed concerns about SBTA hurting the towns' funding chances at the Sept. 1 hearing. "If the Sunset Beach Taxpayers' Association makes the community not look cohesive, it hurts us all, and that's not fair. The rest of Sunset Beach has as much right as the SBTA has to have an opportunity to have sewer service."

While SBTA has a vocal membership, only a small minority of its members are eligible to vote because most are absentee property owners, Odom added.

Tombro told Watts, "The N.C. Coastal Federation essentially endorses this project, and (SBTA) is affiliated with them. This concept has been endorsed from the governor to DEM to the county level. I'd like to get input to try and address any remaining concerns SBTA has. More and more environmental groups are looking at Sunset Beach and Calabash as towns that are doing something."

Odom added, "I wouldn't mind us being known as the community that saved its water first."

The Sept. 1 public hearing is scheduled for 1 p.m. in the ground floor hearing room of the Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

County Board Contemplates Noise Regulations

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to assure that renters do not create unlawful noises. Violations by tenants could subject the building owner to civil penalties. However the tenant would also be liable under the law.

Violators of the noise ordinance could receive a citation from the sheriff's department subjecting them to a \$50 civil penalty, which would have to be paid within 20 days. A misdemeanor warrant could be issued for failing to pay the penalty.

The commissioners took no action on the proposed noise ordinance, which they plan to discuss at the board's next meeting. A public hearing will be scheduled before adoption, Chairman Don Warren said.

In other business the board:
 ■ Heard an activities report from County Manager Wyman Yelton in

which he said an unspecified number of county employees had been "laid off" for "laying around." He commented that "the ones that aren't working don't need to be around."

Yelton was out of his office Tuesday and could not be reached for clarification of the statement. County Personnel Director Starie Grissett said no county employees have been laid off since the board's last meeting. Under a recently approved policy, Grissett and County Attorney Michael Ramos must be made aware of all proposed employee dismissals.

■ Informally agreed not to have the county take over regulation of its seven local cable television operators. Both Harvey and Ramos advised the commissioners that the complicated and rapidly changing nature of federal cable regulations

would require the county to hire a full-time staff, including a legal adviser, to oversee cable operations.

■ Voted unanimously to deny a request from Pfizer Inc. to rezone a 16-acre tract along Bethel Church Road from its current designation as low-density residential to allow commercial-manufacturing uses. About 20 residents of the area appeared at the meeting to protest the proposed zoning change, saying it would increase traffic and adversely affect the residential character of the area.

■ Set a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 7, on the new schedule of values to be used in setting county property taxes.

■ Scheduled a public hearing on the preliminary assessment resolution for special assessment district (SAD) 19. The hearing will be held before the Utilities Operations Board in the public assembly building at the county government complex in Bolivia.

■ Unanimously approved a motion by Commissioner Wayland Vereen to allocate \$15,400 in matching funds from capitol improvements reserves to help Yaupon Beach extend a 6-inch waterline down Old Fish Factory Road.

■ Named V.A. Creech of Leland to fill an unexpired term on the Economic Development Commission board. In a split vote that fell along party lines, Republicans Jerry Jones and Donald Shaw supported the appointment of Malcolm Grissett to the commission.

■ Took no action toward filling a vacancy on the Brunswick County Planning Board. For the second time, Vereen said he was not prepared with a nominee from his district.

■ Presided over a five-minute public hearing on the county's CAMA Land Use Plan update. No members of the public attended. No action was taken.

Warmer Weather Expected

Residents and visitors can expect above-average temperatures and a normal amount of rainfall across the South Brunswick Islands over the next few days.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady is forecasting temperatures ranging from the low 70s at night to the lower 90s during the day. He expects about three-quarters of an inch of rain in the next week.

For the period Aug. 10-16, Canady measured 2.90 inches of precipitation. The daily average temperature during the period was 78 degrees, which was 2 degrees below normal.

The maximum high was 91 degrees on Aug. 16, and the minimum low was 67 degrees, also on the 16th.

The daily average high was 87 degrees and the average nightly low was 70 degrees, Canady said.

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