

'Minor' Problems Shouldn't Delay Shallotte Library Reopening

BY ERIC CARLSON

Weather delays and newly uncovered deficiencies have set back renovations at Shallotte's West Brunswick Branch Library, but the problems are minor and should not prevent completion of the project by the Oct. 11 target date, according to architect John Sawyer.

Meanwhile, renovations at the Southport library branch are likely to be more costly and take longer than expected because of unforeseen structural problems with the building's roof, Sawyer told the Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees at its regular meeting Monday.

After removing old shingles at Southport, the contractor discovered plywood used in the library's construction is a type that has a history of deteriorating under heat and is beginning to fall apart. One worker's foot went through the roof while walking on the library recently, Sawyer said.

He recommended that the old plywood be torn out and replaced, which is likely to add \$10,000 to \$15,000 to the project cost.

"These type problems are frequently encountered during renovation projects," Sawyer told the board. "There are things you don't find out (about a building's construction) until you start tearing out walls."

In estimating the project costs at the West Brunswick Library (recently re-named "the Rourke Branch") Sawyer said he had hoped to re-use the original plumbing and ventilation ductwork. But after tearing out walls, it was discovered that parts of the old systems no

Appointee Says Fellow Trustee Slandered Him

BY ERIC CARLSON

Former Democratic Party Chairman Bill Stanley, whose appointment to the Brunswick County Library Board sparked controversy last month, wasted no time in ruffling feathers at his first meeting Monday night, calling the group "hostile" and accusing a fellow member of "slandering" him.

Democrats on the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners recently approved Chairman Don Warren's nomination of Stanley to replace library trustee Gene Pinkerton, the former Republican commissioner who spearheaded the creation of a four-branch county library system.

As its first chairman, Pinkerton guided the library board through planning and construction of two new libraries at Leland and Oak Island and the renovation of existing branches in Shallotte and Southport.

At its previous meeting in June, library board member Margaret Harper called the move to replace Pinkerton "disgraceful" and an example of "disrespecting politics."

Harper made no direct reference to Stanley during her comments last month. Her criticism was aimed

longer meet state building code standards and will need to be replaced.

Change orders to date have added about \$2,200 to construction costs in Shallotte, he said. Although work

at the Democrat commissioner.

"I heard Mrs. Harper got her nose out of joint," Stanley said Monday. "I was about to not take this seat. I felt I had been appointed to a hostile board. Then I talked to quite a few people who encouraged me to stay, and I'm going to stay."

Harper agreed that Stanley should remain on the board and insisted that her comments were not a reflection of her feelings about him.

"I was sad to see Gene Pinkerton taken off," Harper said. "More than any other person, he is responsible for getting this money we're spending."

Undeterred by the explanation and Harper's insistence that she is a life-long Democrat, Stanley accused her of "praising Gene Pinkerton and slandering me." He also questioned her political affiliations.

"I know you ran for lieutenant governor and got beat pretty bad," Stanley said. "I didn't know if you had changed your party or not."

Library Board Chairman Anne Hines called for a halt in the exchange saying, "If you want to discuss your opinions, do it outside. This is not pertinent to library business."

has fallen about a week behind schedule, Sawyer said he expects the project to get back on track now that the building has been dried in and no longer subject to delays caused by the weather.

A \$70,000 contingency allowance was included in the project funding to cover such unexpected costs, Sawyer said.

Library board members from Shallotte and Southport are scheduled to meet with Sawyer and Library Director Maurice Tate later this week to discuss interior color schemes for the two branches.

In other business the board:

■ Apologized to Burt Keppel of Long Beach for a "misunderstanding" about the use that would be made of books he donated to the library system. Keppel had hoped the 90-year-old Mark Twain collection would be available to patrons of the G.V. Barbee Branch library on Oak Island instead of being sold to raise funds for new books. At Monday's meeting, Keppel was told that such old volumes would not stand up to the rigors of regular library circulation.

■ Heard a report from Tate indicating that traffic at the Leland library branch has increased dramatically since moving into its new building. Registrations in June were up nearly 400 percent over the previous year, circulation has increased by 60 percent and the number of library visitors has risen 147 percent, Tate said.

■ Voted to temporarily discontinue evening hours at the new Leland library branch until schools open. Attendance has been minimal during those times, board members said.

■ Agreed to make the official name of the Southport library branch "The Southport Brunswick County Library."

Plan Week Around Rain

More rain is forecast for the South Brunswick Islands; you can count on it.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady anticipates "at least" 1 inch to 1½ inches of rainfall over the next few days, coupled with normal temperatures.

Temperatures should average from the lower 70s at night to around 90 degrees during the day.

For the period July 19-25, Canady recorded 2.30 inches of rainfall at the Point.

He recorded a high of 91 degrees on July 25 and a minimum of 73 degrees on July 21.

A daily average high of 88 degrees and an average nightly low of 75 degrees combined for a daily average temperature of about 81 degrees, which is normal for this time of year.

Additional Schools Funds Are Designated

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Schools will receive increased state funding for the 1994-95 school year, almost all of it is for purposes specified by the state legislature.

An extra \$514,477 will be used to decrease kindergarten class sizes, buy more textbooks, aid dropout prevention and allow the schools to add two additional support positions such as guidance counselors and/or social workers.

Jan Calhoun, assistant superintendent for instructional services, said the school system will receive \$363,757 in Basic Education Program funding. Included are 3½ more kindergarten teachers and four teacher assistants.

One teacher/assistant team will be allocated to each of four elementary schools, including Union Elementary in Shallotte, to decrease overall kindergarten class size.

The additional \$75,000 in textbook money is intended to bring the school system back up to the "buying power" it had in 1985.

Calhoun said 1993-94 was a "big textbook adoption year," when the school system was expected to replace social studies and health texts, but wasn't given enough money to do it.

"We spent more than we had last year," he said, and social studies classes were still left short. At most schools each social studies classroom received one set of textbooks that students in each period had to share and could not take home.

"This will help us buy additional texts," said Calhoun, especially to "catch up" on texts for the Legal, Economic and Political Systems class required for high school gradu-

ation. The school system generally receives \$26 to \$27 per student for textbook adoptions, he said, while the cost for books ranges as high as \$30 to \$35 at the high school level.

The schools also will receive nearly \$3 more per student for instructional supplies. "That's a piddling amount, but we'll take anything we can get," said Calhoun.

The school system will also receive \$150,720 from an \$18.2 million crime bill adopted during the earlier crime session. That money will be used to fund four positions at the Alternative Learning Center, a non-traditional program that will serve potential drop-outs.

Some state funding decisions will cost the Brunswick County Schools more money. When legislators voted to raise salaries of teachers and other state employees that included school employees who receive state pay checks. It didn't include school system employees paid with county funds who perform the same jobs.

Teachers with less than three years of experience or more than 30 years of experience will receive, on average, a 5 percent pay raise. Teachers with more than three years of experience but less than 30 years of experience will receive raises of up to 7 percent, depending on where they fall on the pay scale, said Rep. E. David Redwine (D-Brunswick).

In past years teachers who participated in the Senate Bill 2 differentiated pay plan could receive extra money if they met achievement goals for the year. The money was allocated from a pool equal to 2 percent of all teachers' salaries.

This year the legislature took that 2 percent and applied to the pay raises, Redwine said. It then created

another pot of money, for this year only, that will allow teachers to receive up to 1 percent of their salary in differentiated pay under Senate Bill 2. If the pot isn't refunded next year, Senate Bill 2 differentiated pay could end.

Other school system employees received raises as well. Central office employees with certification and employees without certification received 4 percent raises plus 1 percent bonuses based on the new salaries.

Bus drivers received 4 percent salary increases, plus a 4.6 percent increase in average hourly wage rates and a 1 percent bonus. Brunswick County bus drivers had been among those seeking raises this year. The school board had included a request to county commissioners for \$7,600 to supplement salaries by \$50 each plus benefits.

School principals and assistant principals received raises that averaged 9 percent, based on a new salary schedule adopted by the legislature.

Legislators chose not to fund the 100-plus N.C. Information Highway sites proposed by Gov. Jim Hunt. Instead, school systems, counties, community colleges and other public entities can apply for a share of up to \$100,000 of a \$7 million cache. Redwine said the money can be used for purchasing capital equipment, paying line charges, hiring a site coordinator—anything the applicants choose.

"This is one-time only money," said Redwine. "The reason we did it that way is because there are some very low wealth counties that can't afford to set up sites."

Brunswick Community College

and West Brunswick High School had anticipated going on-line with the N.C. Information Highway this fall because they were among the sites initially targeted by Hunt to receive state funding to pay on-line telephone access charges and some other expenses.

However, neither received county funds to hire a site coordinator and will now be bidding against other sites for state funding.

The two sites were part of a regional project, sharing in an REA grant to wire and equip an interactive classroom at each location.

Jury Trial Begins Over School Funds

(Continued From Page 1-A)

said. "Of course they do. This is about fiscal responsibility and prudence. I submit to you that the board you have elected has been financially prudent."

In his brief opening remarks, school board attorney Glenn Peterson reminded the jury that the county commissioners are required by law to provide the board of education with enough money "to provide an adequate system of public schools." He said his case would attempt to establish "what level of funding will allow our students to achieve."

"We will lay that out and show you how to get there," Peterson said to the jury. "The future of education and our children's future is in your hands."

Shallotte VFD, Aldermen Differ On Squad's Needs

(Continued From Page 1-A)

"It was not authorized. It was done wrong. It's something the town needs to take up with the fire department," Durham said.

Carter said money for the project was included in the 1992-93 and 1993-94 budgets, and the department voted to go ahead with the work only after finding the most reasonable price available.

The incident involving the drop ceiling was just the latest in a series of minor conflicts between the town board and fire department.

On July 5, aldermen rejected a department request to purchase 20 license plates for the firefighters' personal vehicles. The plates requested cost more than \$15 each, which town officials said was too expensive.

The first public show of friction this year between the town board and department came during a May 17 budget workshop when Carter was asked to explain a request for \$2,500 in departmental supplies.

The chief was at first reluctant to answer the question and later lashed out at the town board, pointing out that firefighters volunteer hundreds of hours to serve the community.

"If our time is not important you need to find somebody else to run the fire department. If you're going to cut the budget, cut it somewhere else," Carter demanded.

"It's like this," he continued. "There's some people involved in this fire department who do not like you all."

Carter has served as Shallotte's fire chief since November 1987, when a power struggle between the fire department and town board resulted in 13 of 18 firefighters quitting the department.

Carter said the relationship between the town board and department was fine for a few years after the mass walkout, but it started deteriorating in the spring of 1991 and

has gotten progressively worse.

He said town aldermen have gradually imposed more "sanctions" against the fire department and given the firefighters less input into how their budgeted funds are used.

He cited the town board's refusal to purchase a \$3,000 computer that would have allowed the department to send incident reports directly to Raleigh instead of filling them out by hand and taking them to Bolivia.

The computer was included in the department's budget request two years ago, but it was rejected by the town board.

Carter said the current tension between the town board and department dates back to April 1991 when some board members tried to prevent firefighters from using a car that was donated by then-Alderman Jody Simmons.

"It sort of changed the morale and attitude of the department," Carter said. "We had to go through so much trouble proving to them we needed the vehicle, which is something that was donated to us."

Although Shallotte budgeted \$46,049 for the fire department this fiscal year, Carter said the figure is misleading.

Excluding a \$20,709 fire truck payment and \$14,500 that Brunswick County provides for each volunteer fire department in the county, Carter said the town only gives about \$12,000 per year (\$10,840 this year).

He said the fire department's annual budget has hovered around \$50,000 for the last seven years, while the police department budget has increased from about \$190,000 in 1987 to \$293,000 this fiscal year.

Despite the problems, Carter said firefighters are not planning another walkout. He also said he will continue to serve as a volunteer fireman even if he isn't re-appointed as chief.

"We're not planning to walk out," Carter said. "This is a good group of people that's down here. With their families and their work they do the best they can in the time they have."

Murder Investigation Gaining Focus, Detectives Say

(Continued From Page 1-A)

Investigators remain unsure about where Frink stopped to make a phone call on the way to meet her sister in Cherry Grove, S.C. Frink was last known to be alive at 2:49 a.m. June 23, when her voice was recorded on a telephone answering machine.

Reports that the call was made from a Food Chief convenience store in Little River were "premature" and have not been confirmed through interviews or evidence, Hunter said. Detectives have viewed the store's surveillance video tape and found no indication that Frink stopped there before she was murdered.

Frink, 18, was stabbed repeatedly, beaten and run over with her own car at least twice before bleeding to death. Evidence "strongly suggests" she was sexually assaulted by the person or persons who killed her, according to Horry County Police Lt. Bill Knowles, who is heading the inquiry into Frink's death.

Hunter said investigators have not ruled out the possibility that Frink was the victim of a serial killer who may have also abducted and murdered a Myrtle Beach woman listed as missing since she disappeared from a Seaside bar last April 15. Police have yet to find a trace of 38-year-old Delores Melton, who was

also a petite, blonde, blue-eyed woman like Frink.

Two weeks ago, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) called in a team of dogs specially trained to find bodies for a search of the woods around the suspected site of Frink's murder. No other human remains were found.

A psychological profile of the suspected killer has been prepared by South Carolina authorities and a more detailed study is under way by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Quantico, Va. Hunter said police are also investigating possible similarities between the Frink murder and other killings in the southeast.

Meanwhile, a task force of officers from Brunswick and Horry County, S.C., SLED and the SBI is "alive and well" and continues to work on the Frink investigation from new headquarters in Little River, Hunter said.

Another detective has been assigned to the case from the Ocean Isle Beach Police Department, Hunter said. Frink was known to have several friends in that area.

A \$6,000 reward remains unclaimed for information leading to the arrest and indictment of Frink's killer. Hunter said he was surprised at the low number of calls regarding the case and repeated a plea for help.

"Sometimes people get hesitant to call, thinking what they know might

not mean anything. But let us decide what's useful and what isn't," Hunter said. "This kind of investigation is like working on a big puzzle. You need all the pieces—even the small ones—to see the whole picture."

Anyone familiar with Amy Frink's travels on the night of her murder, or anyone with other information about the case is urged to notify authorities through Horry County CrimeStoppers at (800) 248-5000, North Carolina CrimeStoppers at (800) 531-9845 or by leaving a recorded message on a special 24-hour telephone line at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. That number is (910) 253-4797. All calls will be kept confidential.

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