

PLANS STILL UNDER SCRUTINY

Original Installer Will Repair Septic System At Supply

BY SUSAN USHER

Only one company bid for a contract to repair the failed septic system at Supply Elementary School before a Nov. 12 deadline imposed by the Brunswick County Board of Health.

Monday night, meeting at Waccamaw Elementary School in Ash, the Brunswick County Board of Education voted to award a contract to Pipeline Utilities of Wilmington for \$179,130. This is the same company that installed the original drainfield.

"He is putting off other work to do this for us," said Dennis Carr, director of maintenance and construction.

The bid total includes preparation of a new field, twice as much lateral piping as before, a subdrainage system, vault and valves and pump timers, plus additional lateral distribution lines if needed and separate drain lines stipulated by the state to keep condensation from air conditioners from entering the holding tank.

Carr said bid opening was delayed then readvertised after several contractors withdrew their bids. Other contractors didn't want to bid either because they were busy, unwilling to bid such a controversial project or were unable to obtain the necessary bonding for the work, architect Charles Boney reported.

Additional "fine tuning" required by the state may cost another \$5,000, estimate and a soil scientist will be needed to monitor stripping of the soil for the new treatment field, at a cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

The bid was awarded subject to release of state half-cent sales tax money for the project. While designated for the schools, the money is controlled by the county commissioners.

In related business, the board met in closed session with Attorney Glen Peterson to discuss the question of liability for the system's failure. Board member

Thurman Gause wanted to know who was responsible.

The system was approved by the state at the time of installation but failed completely two years later, this past March. It requires repairs that will cost as much as the original system, Carr told the board.

The original architectural firm and installation company are involved in the repairs, but a different engineering company is being used.

State and local health officials have still not given final approval of the repair plan, Superintendent Ralph Johnston said. "There's one point regarding groundwater monitoring wells that needs to be resolved."

Learning Center Students Must Go Elsewhere For Lunch

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick Learning Center students will soon be going out for lunch instead of eating in.

With 33 students enrolled and up to 100 expected by the end of the year, quarters at Brunswick Community College's Southport campus don't offer enough space for student dining or for serving food as required by state health laws, Brunswick County Board of Education members learned Monday night.

School food service employees scratched plans to bring in hot lunches from South Brunswick Middle School and plan to begin busing the students to nearby Southport Elementary School four days a week. In the interim students

have been receiving a choice of sandwiches or a chef salad.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays the students and supervising staff will arrive at the cafeteria after the last group of elementary students have finished their lunches, reported Finance Officer Rudi Connor. On Wednesdays, when students are released early to allow for staff development and planning, they will receive individually wrapped lunches.

The alternative school serves students in seventh through 12th grades with behavior problems or other reasons they cannot be served effectively in a traditional classroom. They receive more personalized attention in a more structured setting.

Stopping The Cycle

School board members agreed to a request from Safe Schools Coordinator Linda Shaddix to consider seeking a grant from the State Department of Human Resources to start a teenage pregnancy prevention program.

Aimed at preventing second pregnancies during the teenage years, the program would be housed at the Brunswick Learning Center and would offer teenage mothers a chance to earn a high school diploma as well as parenting and job skills. If possible, day care for their children would be provided on-site or nearby, which would allow more parent training opportunities.

School board member Bill Fairley said he supports the concept. However he wants the board to know how it will provide the local match before acting. The state agency requires an upfront commitment to the project from the school board, health board and board of county commissioners before it will consider an application. If approved, the school system could receive as much as \$75,000 a year for up to five years.

Other Business

The board also: approved a \$51.9 million budget for 1994-95, including \$9.4 million in county money. That's \$700,000 more than the county first

provided the schools while it awaits a jury decision awarding the schools \$14 million this year.

Meeting with attorneys for the two boards, Judge Jack Thompson advised the interim budget should fund the county schools at the same level as last year, including a federal grant that the schools didn't get this year.

set a public hearing Tuesday, Oct. 18, at 5:30 p.m. in the CP&L Visitors Center in Southport on a county commissioners' plan to finance construction of Leland Elementary School using short-term certificates of participation. The county will borrow construction money from a private financial insti-

tution, to be repaid by the school system from its annual state half-cent sales tax revenues.

As part of the financing requirements, the school board had to transfer title of the property to the county, which required special legislation and disturbed board member Thurman Gause. "I don't think we should have to do that," he said. "If it's owned by the school board it's already owned by the county."

approved use of yellow school buses to transport students on field trips into nearby counties because of a shortage of activity buses, and obtaining any additional insurance coverage required.

Each High School To Choose Commencement Site

If you thought it was a sure bet Brunswick County's 500-plus high school seniors would receive their diplomas at the Odell Williamson Auditorium this June 10, think again.

When the county board of education adopted its 1994-95 school calendar it designated June 10 as commencement day, and said it hoped schools would hold their commencement exercises in the 1,500-seat auditorium at Brunswick Community College.

Three years ago, in expectation of the auditorium opening on schedule, the school board planned for each of the three schools to conduct its own commencement program on the

same day, but at different times. The board advocated the auditorium as a more dignified setting that would allow the audience to better hear and see the ceremony.

When students at South Brunswick High School petitioned the school board to let them hold graduation on their own campus, and students at West High and North High also protested, the school board left the decision to each school.

That is where it should remain, Vice Chairman Yvonne Bright recommended Monday night. "I think it should be a site-based decision."

School board member Polly Russ, who has a son graduating from West

Brunswick High this year, pushed for the board to "give some guidance" to high school principals through a motion to support use of the auditorium, but didn't get it. Afterward she said she thought West Brunswick seniors would still choose to graduate at the auditorium even if they are given a choice.

North Brunswick High School Principal Bob Harris said he was leaving the decision to the senior class, but making sure that all graduates have an opportunity to visit the auditorium before the decision is made.

"Our kids are probably split down the middle right now," he said. "It's

the kids' graduation and I think we should respect their wishes."

Students are a "little leery," he said, of holding graduation the same day and place as the other schools and are concerned about how many guests they will be able to invite.

While more people can attend graduation if it is held on the football field or in the school courtyard than if it is held at the auditorium, the situation reverses if the event must be moved into one of the high school's gymnasiums because of bad weather.

Schools must reach a decision by mid-November, in time to order invitations.

MORE LETTERS

Writers Protest Dismissal Of Leland Clerk

To the editor:

The abrupt firing of Leland Town Clerk Joyce Bragg Saturday, Sept. 17, is only the latest in a series of events suggesting that former Councilman George Yates still controls Leland's town government 17 months after quitting his post and moving to Pender County.

While he was on council, Yates changed the town charter to strip the mayor of his powers and ran the town like a dictator, demanding his way on every issue.

His contempt for the people was demonstrated by the hatchet job he did on the zoning ordinance. Disregarding the expertise of a professional planner and the work of the planning board, Yates gutted their proposed ordinance and substituted his own version. The public outcry that followed is credited by some with sending him packing to Pender County.

Unfortunately, his departure did not break Yates' grip on Leland's government. With Councilman Gilbert and Hyatt as co-conspirators and Councilman Richburg afraid to rock them, Yates has had a hand in every important action of the council—including the firing of Mrs.

Bragg—since he left Leland.

Just three days before the firing—on trumped-up charges—Yates, Gilbert and Hyatt held a "strategy" session at the town hall. This meeting, although not illegal, was preceded by many secret meetings of Yates and a council majority, which clearly were illegal.

The results of this "government in secret" have been disastrous for Leland. Example: Council has squandered \$55,000 of the people's money on useless sewer studies, disregarding and duplicating studies made by a previous council. The loss of Mrs. Bragg, a dedicated, highly qualified clerk and finance officer, may prove even costlier.

The pretext used to fire Mrs. Bragg—that she exceeded her authority in a personnel matter—was just that, an excuse. Her real offense was her refusal to cover up the council's incompetence. She allowed citizens to see public documents, as the law requires. For a council that decides the public's business in secret, and allows a discredited former councilman to dictate public policy, that was grounds for dismissal.

Councilmen Gilbert, Hyatt and Richburg have betrayed the trust

placed in them by the people of Leland. They ought to resign.

Ivey C. Duncan
Leland

Trio Criticized

To the editor:

Councilman Thomas Hyatt, Jane Gilbert and Sadie Richburg unjustly fired Leland Town Clerk Joyce Bragg. Councilman Hyatt co-signed the check he used as an excuse to fire her. He should resign.

These are the actions of insecure, self-serving people who conduct public business in private and instruct town employees not to talk to the citizens they serve.

Leland can't continue to pay for their incompetence.

Joe Newman
Leland

SPD Not Collecting

To the editor:

The money that is being solicited over the phone for "Shop With a Cop" to take kids to Walmart doesn't support the Charlotte Police Department. This money is being solicited by the Fraternal Order of Police. The Charlotte Police Department is not collecting any money for any reason or any organization.

Chief Rodney Gause
Shallotte Police Dept.

More DOT Questions

To the editor:

This is in response to the letter Marvin K. Brown wrote last week concerning the Department of Transportation and the paving of Blue Marlin Street and not Barracuda Street.

For one thing, Blue Marlin Street gives access to four other streets—Pinfish, Mackerel, Red Snapper and Manteo streets—which are lined with families. We have to use Blue Marlin Street to reach the highway, not to mention all the people in Bacon's Bluff who use our street, too.

Our development is twice as large as Barracuda, and the road was twice as bad as Barracuda's road. What we want to know is who lined the pockets of the DOT when they took over Barracuda Street ahead of Blue Marlin Street?

I would also like to commend the DOT for the good job they did fixing Blue Marlin Street. It couldn't have been more appreciated or needed.

Michelle Eades
Supply

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Your personnel served us quickly, efficiently, and professionally. Their cheerful nature turned an unpleasant situation into an (almost) enjoyable afternoon.

Your help was greatly appreciated and any time I'm in the area, I will make it a point to stop by and thank you once again in person.

Yours truly,
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