

## Town of Hertford in financial crunch

The town of Hertford is currently operating in the red and will apply for an emergency loan of \$39,000 in an attempt to make up for a deficit of some \$56,000 left over from the 1979-80 fiscal year.

The town also moved to increase water rates by 30 percent, and increase the sewer charge by 15 cents per thousand gallons of water, effective with the Oct. 1 billing. The increase is expected to generate approximately \$26,984 in additional revenue for the current year. Further fiscal measures are forthcoming.

The decision to increase water and

sewer rates followed a specially called Monday night meeting attended by some 15 Hertford citizens concerned with rumors "that the town is going broke," as one citizen put it.

### Emergency meeting last Wednesday

Monday's action to increase the rates was prompted by the recommendation of two representatives of the Local Government Commission, who met with council members in an emergency session last Wednesday night.

Wallace Harding, a commission representative from Raleigh, told the council that the town was in trouble

"simply because you spend more money than you bring in."

He added that if the town continued in this manner, that a projected deficit of some \$100,000, or roughly twice the amount of the present deficit, could be expected at the end of the 1980-81 fiscal year.

Harding detected the \$56,000 shortfall in the General Fund of the 1979-80 budget.

In projecting future cash flow, Harding looked at the recently approved 1980-81 budget and found the following flaws:

- an excess of some \$100,000 budgeted into the electric fund, which would in

turn cause a deficit of that amount in that fund

- a possible deficit of \$20,000 to \$40,000 in the general fund

- a Water-Sewer fund that is not self-supporting, despite a projected \$2,000 surplus

The 80-81 budget forecasts \$939,770 in electric fund revenue, a \$100,000 increase over the \$824,000 in revenue collected during 1979-80.

Harding asked Hertford Mayor and Town Manager Bill Cox if the council had included a rate increase, or whether the amount of customers had increased

sufficiently to warrant an anticipation of a \$100,000 excess.

Cox answered that the amount was off because the figures from the 1979-80 audit were not available at the time the 80-81 budget was drawn up, and that the budget did not reflect an increase in either rate or customers.

Although Harding said that the Water-Sewer Fund was not operating "in the hole," he defined it as non self-supporting because it was not paying its share to the Dept Service Fund. He told the council that some \$30,000 was needed

to make the Water-Sewer Department self-sufficient.

The town's move to up water and sewer charges will contribute \$26,984 to the cause. In addition, the council moved to trim \$6,000 off of the \$18,000 budgeted for the department's supplies and materials.

Although water and sewer materials ran the town about \$5,000 to \$6,000 last year because of manhole repairs, council members determined that they did not anticipate any major water-sewer improvements during the present year.

John Barnes, another representative of

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## Accident claims Virginia man

One man was killed and another injured Sunday afternoon in a one car accident that occurred Sunday afternoon on Beach Springs Road some six miles north of Hertford.

Andrew Hemby, 32, of Newport News, Va. was killed instantly when the car in which he was a passenger skidded in a sharp curve on the road and overturned, according to investigating officer M.J. McArthur, of the N.C. Highway Patrol. Another passenger, Stanley Parker, also of Newport News, was injured.

The driver of the vehicle, Charles Luther Burch, 30, of Hampton was charged with exceeding safe speed and causing death by vehicle.

The charges are punishable by as much as a \$500 fine or two years imprisonment or both.

The three men were on their way home from a church homecoming in Hertford when the accident occurred, McArthur said.

In another accident occurring in Hertford on Thursday afternoon, a woman was injured slightly after a vehicle attempting to cross Dobbs Street struck her car with such impact that it slid sideways into a telephone pole and snapped it in two.

Delphine White Barr of 613 Edenton Road Street suffered a gash on her forehead, a mild concussion, and multiple bruises in the collision and was treated and released from Chowan Hospital. She is the wife of Perquimans County Rescue Squad captain Ralph Barr.

Lynwood Henderson Norman of Rt. 1, Cresswell said he stopped at the corner of Hyde Park and Dobbs Street, but did not see Mrs. Barr's vehicle, and proceeded on into the intersection, according to Hertford police officer Brooks Hart.

Both Norman and a passenger in his vehicle, Aaron Everette, were taken to Chowan Hospital for examination, each with a swollen knee.



### Delicate rescue operation

Delphine Barr is removed from her automobile by rescue workers after a crash on Dobbs Street in Hertford Thursday afternoon. Mrs. Barr was cut and bruised, but not seriously injured.

## Schools open with early dismissal

Perquimans County School students will start off the first week of the year with an abbreviated schedule, according to school superintendent Pat Harrell, who said the board moved Monday night to shorten the school day in an effort to cope with the heat.

Students will be dismissed at 1:45 p.m. Aug. 25-29. Following Labor Day, Harrell said he would meet with school principals to determine if early dismissal is warranted. "Every effort will be made to make decisions that will involve several days, rather than by a day-by-day basis, so that parents will know ahead of time what their children's schedule will be," said Harrell.

County enrollment is approximately 1,750 students, a figure Harrell said was comparable to enrollment at this time last year.

Harrell said the board also moved to postpone the previously scheduled open house at the newly-constructed high school addition because some of the office furniture has not arrived. He said the open house would be re-scheduled for sometime in September.

## Engineer says

# Water system is operating as designed

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners approved the processing of the final payment on Phase I of the county water system in a Monday night meeting, thereby officially accepting the system.

A \$53,283.42 payment had been withheld from Tucker Brothers Construction Company because of questions as to whether or not the system is operating properly.

A malfunction in the filter cleaning "backwash" cycle at the water plant has in isolated incidents sent orange, iron-laden water coursing through the lines of the system and into the homes of customers.

But board engineer Tom Harwell, of Rivers and Associates, said that the system is operating as it should be. "The plant is working in accordance with plans and specifications," Harwell said. He attempted to shift part of the blame

for the red water to water department personnel. "Some of our recommendations have not been carried out," Harwell said. "Some of the things we've suggested have not been tried."

Harwell suggested that part of the problem might be too few workers. "For a system this size, the personnel is not enough to operate and maintain the system properly," Harwell said.

But water department supervisor Russell Chappell contradicted Harwell's statement. "We've tried everything we've been told," Chappell maintained. The water department received its most recent complaint over red water last week.

Harwell told the board that the backwash system is not intended to operate automatically, though the commissioners had said at prior meetings that they had been told it would do so.

He also maintained that the county

might be liable for interest on withheld funds and that the contractor would be likely to file suit if the payment process were not initiated.

Tucker Brothers published a public notice in the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY during September, 1978, claiming that it had "substantially" completed work on its contract on Sept. 5, 1978.

In other water department related matters, Harwell suggested that billing and expending of funds in the water department be placed under one management operation.

Currently, the tax department collects on water bills, and Chappell is in charge of expenditures by the water department. Harwell suggested that both functions be carried out by the tax department.

Harwell also said that Phase II of the water system, which would include another plant and would expand

production capacity, is still under consideration by the Farm-Home Administration.

He had met with the the board of directors of the Holiday Island Property Owners Association on Saturday and said he had that he told them that \$100,000 in lines and meters would have to be installed in the resort development to get its water system in shape for a county takeover.

Harwell said he told Holiday Island representatives that it would not be feasible for the county to deliver them water on a bulk rate basis (through a master meter).

If the resort community were to donate the county the money to install lines and meters, it might become financially feasible to include Holiday Island in the county system near the end of Phase II, Harwell said. He said he recommended that a letter be sent to the commissioners

requesting consideration.

In an unrelated matter, the commissioners were informed that if they want to change sites on proposed softball-multi purpose recreation fields, they will have to make a wide range of changes in their Land and Waters Conservation Fund grant application before Sept. 1, or miss the current funding cycle.

The commissioners approved a motion to seek a grant at their August 4 meeting, on the condition that a shift in site to school-owned property be sought.

In order to locate the park on school property, the county must secure a 25 year irrevocable lease, obtain an environmental assessment based on the new site, submit a statement of hours during which the facilities will be available to the general public, and draw up a new park plan based on the school site.

The next funding cycle will begin March 1. County officials will attempt to meet with representatives of the school system this week to discuss the project.

Other business included:

- The approval of a nine lot waterfront subdivision on Harvey Point, Goose Neck Annex (developer Ed Nixon);

- A report that a \$6,166 check received from the state to compensate for a formula change in Medicaid funding would be put in a social services General Assistance fund used for Aid to Families with Dependent Children;

- Notification that the emergency generator for the county radio tower will only generate 20 AMPs of electricity and in the event of a power outage the lights on the tower would have to be turned off, and;

- Approval of a metal hut for storage of rescue squad equipment, price not to exceed \$1,200.

# Travel part of getting job done for local officials

By MIKE McLAUGHLIN

Travel by public officials has traditionally been a sore spot among many taxpayers in counties like Perquimans.

They wonder how what they picture as luxuriating by swimming pools and sipping social hour cocktails before

dinner meetings can possibly be of benefit to the average Joe back home in rural America.

What really infuriates them, is knowing that they are footing the bill for what they see as a glorified vacation.

A letter we received at the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY office signed

"Angry Taxpayers" is typical of this view.

"We would like to know what justification the commissioners have for the amount being spent on conventions," reads an excerpt.

"Within the month of June the sheriff in Miami and the two commissioners in

Las Vegas... and they say recreation is a 'luxury program.'

"It will be most interesting to know how many tax dollars are being spent in this manner by the various departments. Don't forget the board of education. They've enjoyed some mighty fine trips themselves."

A different view

Public officials interviewed on the subject, however, paint a different picture. They say that travel is necessary in order to stay current on trends and practices, and to maintain relationships with outside agencies and officials who can benefit the county.

They also argue that conventions are more work and learning than pleasure.

"I make no apology for attending any conference or meeting that will aid me professionally," said Pat Harrell, superintendent of the Perquimans County Schools System.

He said that board of education members are encouraged to attend district and state conventions each year.

"At these meetings they have the opportunity to participate in roundtable

discussions on pertinent educational issues. They have the opportunity to attend clinics. Examples of topics include legislative issues, school law, budgeting, as well as instruction in teacher evaluation," Harrell said.

One or two board members per year also generally attend the national school board association convention, Harrell said. He said, however, that "very little" money from the local budget has been used to finance the trips.

Alliance for Progress funds have been available for the past two or three years to help defray the expense, he said, and the state school board association has handled board chairman Clifford Winslow's convention expenses because he is currently president of that organization.

On the road

Winslow logs a great deal of travel time in his work for both the county school system and the school boards association, and much of his travel expense is paid by the association, Harrell said.

Winslow was the only board member

who attended the national convention this year.

According to Harrell, travel has comprised a very small portion of the system's budget. "Our board has been very conservative in attending meetings," Harrell said. "We've only attended those conferences or meetings that we feel are absolutely relevant."

Joe Nowell, chairman of the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners, was one of those commissioners who represented the county at the June convention of the National Association of County Commissioners in Las Vegas, Nevada.

According to Nowell's philosophy, establishing contacts in Raleigh and Washington is essential to good government in Perquimans County.

"Say I go to Raleigh enough to get to know the head of the Department of Natural Resources. When we have a problem if I can just pick up the phone and call, and I know him, I'll get a better

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## Artist-in-schools program getting started

Perquimans County will have an opportunity to participate in the Artist-in-Schools program during the first semester of the school year that starts on Monday.

Frans Van Baars, 44, of New Bern, N.C. has been hired by the Perquimans County Board of Education to serve grades K-4.

His stay in the county is made possible by a grant from the North Carolina Arts

Council and by matching funds from the schools budget.

Van Baars' area of concentration will be visual arts with an emphasis on drawing and painting.

He is a native of the Netherlands and is a 12 year Navy veteran. Van Baars has exhibited widely in Eastern North Carolina, and has worked as art instructor at Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville.



Van Baars