

Commissioners Consider Plan To Alter Countywide Voting System

By JACK GROVE

County Manager Cliff Copeland has been working behind the scenes since November of last year readying a plan that would change the present at-large voting system in the county.

Commissioners have watched from the sidelines as other counties and towns over the past several years have been sued over voting rights issues, cases which have been uniformly lost by local governments in the state.

In bringing the suits, black leaders have maintained that at-large voting restricts blacks from office due to white majorities. Elizabeth City fought a losing battle for four years and spent over \$100,000 in the process on attorneys' fees.

Pasquotank County opted to negotiate with NAACP officials after a suit was brought charging discrimination in that county's at-large voting system. The result was minimal legal fees and a new system combining ward and at-large voting.

In an executive session held last fall, county commissioners asked Copeland to begin work on revising the present system. The county manager said that he began his task by consulting with Pasquotank's County Attorney, Herbert Mullen, and County Manager David Harris and by amassing demographic information on Chowan residents and registered voters in each voting district.

Chowan has a 40 percent black

population and Copeland said that he could find no record of a black commissioner in recent times. "We may have had one during Reconstruction," he speculated. He said that a general rule of thumb is that if a county has at least a 20 percent black population and hasn't elected a black commissioner in the last twenty years, it is in violation of the federal voting rights act as amended in 1982.

The amended act "holds that minority participation in any electoral changes has to be documented," Copeland said. For that reason, and to devise a plan acceptable to the black community, a seven-member panel of local black leaders was assembled to work with the county on a new plan.

The panel, which has held meetings with the county manager for four months, is composed of James Taylor, convenor, Mrs. Joyce Cole, Thurlis J. Little Jr., Willis M. Privott, Dr. Johnny Horton, Mildred H. Vanterpool and Charlie N. Boyce.

Copeland commented, "We've narrowed it down to three or four general concepts. I'd say at this time we're looking at some combination of at-large and ward voting." He said that he had a sense of progress being made and "We'd certainly like to come up with a plan in the next two or two and a half months."

Issues that have not been resolved include:

- The number of elected com-

missioners from each ward; • Boundary lines of wards (wards have to be of equal population); and

• The size of the board of commissioners.

Currently there are five commissioners, two from the first township and one each from the second, third and fourth. Pasquotank, in its reorganization, went from five to seven commissioners with four representing wards (where only people in that ward elected the representative) and three elected at-large.

The county manager said that any ultimate plan "may cause drastic redrawing of boundaries for districts within the county. We are certainly looking at having at least one district with a substan-

tial black majority."

Copeland was asked if Chowan had been targeted for a voting rights suit. He replied, "Not to my knowledge. Our action is voluntary before the county becomes a target. We're trying to avoid a costly lawsuit we would certainly lose. We see no reason to defend a system that other counties have failed to successfully defend."

He said that, contrary to recently published reports, no lawsuit was contemplated as far as he knew. He said that Elizabeth City NAACP attorney Ronald Penney has "never talked to me, nor to my knowledge, any of the (Chowan) commissioners." Penney was involved with the litigation against Pasquotank County and Elizabeth City.



Pride in Edenton, Too

We are happy to note that President Reagan's Take-Pride-in-America program has reached Chowan County with the appointment of Roger Spivey as local coordinator. We here at the Chowan Herald want to pledge our fullest co-operation.

Instead of taking pride in America, too many of us are inclined to take America for granted, confident in the expectation that it will continue to provide the best of everything for the next 200 years just as it has in the past two centuries.

But that doesn't necessarily follow. We as a nation are today facing greater challenges than we have at any time in our history. Our ability to out produce, not only the fibers of war, but the goods essential to economic survival, is under critical challenge by a widening imbalance of trade with the rest of the world.

Our leadership in innovation and invention, in science and technology and in literature and the creative arts can no longer be taken for granted. Alien students, more often than not, outscore our students at every level of the education system.

And, finally, the Puritan ethic of hard work and upright living which characterized Americans for the best part of our history to date appears to be under attack from every direction at all levels of our society.

So it is time to begin showing pride in American, which can best be done following the formula laid down by the German philosopher when he said, "Let every man first sweep before his own door then pretty soon the whole world will be clean."

That is another way of saying that if everywhere people begin to take more pride in their local communities, then, for sure, before long pride in America will follow.

To that end, we here at the newspaper are planning a Pride In Edenton edition, which will employ the unusual approach of permitting residents of the county to nominate individuals in

Continued On Page 4

Bass Tournney Set For Kids

The Pembroke Bass Club's first annual Children's Fishing Tournament is planned on Crisanti's Lake Saturday, June 13.

Entry into the tournament is free and the first 50 children to register the day of the tournament will be accepted. A free lunch will also be provided.

Registration will be held from 8-9 a.m. The tournament will run from 9 a.m. until noon. Lunch will be served from noon until 1 p.m.

Entry forms are available from merchants in Edenton and the county or more information can be secured by telephoning Mike Layton, 482-7163 or Ray Layton, 482-3294.



THE CHOWAN HERALD

Published In The Most Beautiful Little City On The North Carolina Coast



Volume LLIH - No. 23

Edenton, North Carolina, Thursday, June 4, 1987

Single Copies 25 Cents

Budgeted Expenditures To Increase

Chowan commissioners have been presented a proposed budget for fiscal year 1987-88 with spending increases in the general fund of \$666,578, but without an increase in the tax rate and no appropriation from county reserves. The county tax rate was increased last year from 67 cents per hundred dollar valuation to 79 cents per hundred.

In presenting the budget at Monday night's meeting, County Manager Cliff Copeland observed that it "provides for continued growth in reserves". He said that the estimated general fund balance at the end of this fiscal year, June 30, will be \$650,000.

The total general fund budget for 1986-87 was \$3,980,000, while the projected budget calls for \$4,646,578.

Highlights of the new budget include expenditures for:

- A 911 central communications system - \$77,000 (plans call for the county to fund 60 percent of a \$90-100,000 system with the Town of Edenton picking up the remainder of the tab);

- Replacement of two vehicles in the sheriff's department - \$24,000;

- New equipment for the Land Records Office - \$10,000;

- Continuing renovation of the County Office Building - \$30,000;

- Increased current expense funding for the schools - \$142,700 (for locally paid teachers, janitors and supplemental salaries); and

- Increased capital outlay funding for the schools from \$108,000 to \$386,941 (includes a new activity bus in addition to the existing one, a mobile classroom for White Oak School, renovation of Holmes High School science lab and installation of two new roofs at D.F. Walker School).

"I think it's a good budget," the county manager concluded.

The board took action on a number of other agenda items before it.

Final approval was given on the plat for the Mulberry Hill Subdivision being developed by Tom Wood of Raleigh.

Approval was given to two resolutions in support of area projects. The first was in reiteration

of previous resolutions endorsing the four-laning of U.S. 17 and U.S. 64. The resolution has been requested by the Albemarle Commission of the 14 counties bordering the highways.

The second resolution was in support of Dare County's efforts in stabilizing Oregon Inlet. Dare is trying to get final federal approval for the construction of jetties to block silting of the inlet.

The board scheduled a public hearing for the July 6 meeting to receive public comment on the possible adoption of a preliminary assessment resolution for improvements costing \$5,800 to Yeopim Trail at Chowan Beach and at Bella Vista Drive at Hornblow Point at a cost of \$20,912.

Also scheduled was a public hearing for comment on the adoption of a final assessment roll for road improvements to Huron Trail in Arrowhead Beach, which are now complete.

The board returned to the planning board for reconsideration a preliminary plat of Robert L. Barker for subdivision of a lot located in an existing subdivision at the intersection of SR 1217 and the Chowan River.

The board reappointed three individuals to local boards: West Byrum to the ABC Board; Rosita Avery to the Nursing Home Community Advisory Council; and John Bond to the Medical Development Authority. Accepted "with regrets" was the resignation of Barbara Burroughs from the planning board.

Guilty Plea Is Entered

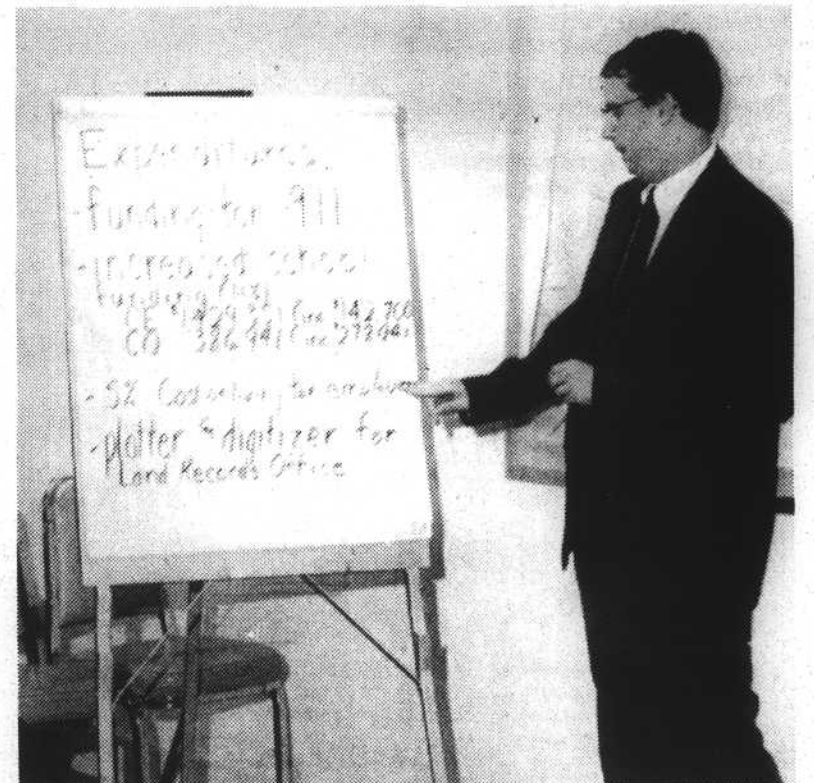
A Roper man pleaded guilty to misdemeanor death by motor vehicle in Superior Court Monday in the aftermath of an accident last year on Albemarle Sound Bridge which killed one man and injured two women and a child.

Howard Thomas Smith, Rt. 1, was sentenced to two years with the N.C. Dept. of Corrections, with immediate work release and early parole recommended. He was ordered to pay \$5,000 to the victim's family and Judge Paul M. Wright recommended incarceration at Creswell, saying work release would be more feasible near the defendant's home.

Smith was originally charged with felonious death by motor vehicle, driving while impaired and driving left of center.

The accident occurred October 17 when official reports said Smith's car crossed the center line one mile north of the draw on Albemarle Sound Bridge. His vehicle struck head-on a car driven by Lori Peale Ross, 23. Mrs. Ross' father, James Walter Peale, 60, a passenger, was killed instantly. Injured were two other passengers, Regina Annette Peale, 19, a sister, and Crystal Lynn Peale, 7, a niece.

Smith was pinned in his car for an hour and received a broken arm and multiple cuts and



EXPLAINS BUDGET—County Manager Cliff Copeland used a flip chart to explain proposed expenditures in the 1987-88 fiscal year budget at the county commission meeting Monday night. There is an increase of \$666,578 proposed in the general fund over the current year's budget.

League Meeting Attended

Town officials traveled to Raleigh last Thursday for a meeting of the N.C. League of Municipalities, returning Friday. The meeting, dubbed "Mayor's Day," allowed the Edenton contingent to mingle with state legislators and get an insight into legislation affecting the state's towns and cities.

In the Edenton party were Mayor John Dowd, Town Manager Phillip Whitaker, Coun-

cil Member Allen B. Harless and Council Members and their spouses, Herbert Hollowell, Marina Crummey and E.N. (Pete) Manning.

Whitaker said Tuesday that the trip depleted the annual budgeted figure of \$7,000 for official trips such as this. Other authorized travel expenditures during the year include Electricities conferences, the fall convention of the league and for representation on the league's board of directors (Councilman Hollowell) and the insurance panel of the league (Councilman Harless).

The purpose of the trip was twofold according to Whitaker. The NCLM is lobbying against a list of legislative bills before the General Assembly that, in the league's words represent "an unwarranted intrusion into local affairs."

The second purpose was to meet district legislators in "a different

Continued On Page 4

Town, County Sale Begins

Chowan County merchants are going all-out today through Saturday to provide local residents with extra incentive to shop at home during the "Sunsational Savings Time" sale.

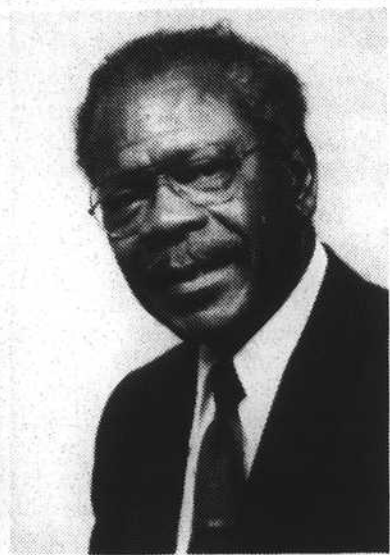
The promotion is being conducted by the Merchant Committee of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, co-chaired by John Cuthrell of Cuthrell's Department Store and Lorraine Bunch of Fame Men's Shop.

Participants include 24 businesses in the town and county. A special supplement included in this week's edition of the Chowan Herald offers readers a look at some of the bargains available.

Continued On Page 4



Dr. Kenneth Word



Rev. Anthony Hathaway Jr.

Baccalaureate Service Set

The Baccalaureate Service of John A. Holmes High School will be held at Rocky Hock Baptist Church on Sunday, June 7th at 7:30 p.m. Speakers for the occasion will be Rev. Anthony Hathaway, Jr., and Dr. Kenneth Word.

Anthony Hathaway, Jr., is pastor of Popular Run A.M.E. Zion Church of Winfall, and Porter's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church of Chapanoke. He is a native of Edenton and an ordained elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of the Albemarle Conference. He is a retiree of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, a graduate of Sales Management School, Life Underwriters Training Course, and a World War II veteran.

Hathaway is listed in the World Edition of the International Register of Profiles in Cambridge, England and Who's Who In Black America. Presently, he is a member of the Chowan County Commission Advisory Board, Veteran of Foreign Wars and a member of the Chowan Hospital

Chaplain Association. He is married to Etta Hankins, and they are the parents of six children, all college graduates.

Dr. Kenneth E. Word was born in Greenville, S.C. and reared in Laurens, S.C. His wife is Faye C. Word with three children all living outside of N.C.

Dr. Word attended and received degrees from Presbyterian College, Clinton, S.C. and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He was granted the Doctor of Divinity Degree by the Baptist College at Charleston, S.C. His pastorate include five locations in S.C., and he is presently pastor of Edenton Baptist Church. He has participated in many denominational activities.

Rev. Hathaway will be introduced by Molly Lane and Tammy Copeland will introduce Dr. Word. The welcome will be made by Principal Rob Boyce. Solos will be sung by Jackie Boyce and Don McClure. The John A. Holmes Concert Choir will also participate in the program.