



## Councilors not required to attend meetings

### Boards can link pay to attendance

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**  
Editor

Although the late Councilwoman Phyllis Britton's prolonged illness contributed to lengthy periods of absences from town council meetings, state law requires no attendance for elected officials.

Records show Britton missed 19 of 21 meetings in 2011 as the representative of ward 3. In 2009, the year she decided to seek re-election and ran unopposed, Britton missed 14 of 24 meetings. During the periods of Britton's absences she continued to collect the \$350 monthly

stipend paid to councilors for their service, records show.

Britton died Dec. 4 after a lifelong battle with sickle cell anemia.

In addition to concerns for her failing health, Town Manager Anne Marie Knighton said fellow councilors also expressed concern about her inability to attend scheduled meetings and represent her constituents. Knighton said she researched the town's charter and state law and found no attendance requirement.

Professor Frayda Bluestein of the University of North Carolina's School of Government also confirmed the absence of any such law. Neither is there any remedy

for the Council to remove an elected official due to extended absences, she added.

"There is no authority for a board to remove a board member to deal with the situation," Bluestein said. "It's up to the board members to step down."

Boards also have limited authority to amend town charters, which typically require state legislative approval, Bluestein said.

"They can't legally modify their basic powers," Bluestein said.

Among those limited actions, boards can tie councilors' meeting attendance with their pay, Bluestein added.

"Some jurisdictions link

See **MEETINGS**, 6A

### Town OKs search for Council vacancy

By **REBECCA BUNCH**  
Staff Writer

The Edenton Town Council is initiating a search for someone to fill the late Councilwoman Phyllis Britton's ward 3 seat. Her term was scheduled to end in 2013.

Britton, 64, died Sunday, Dec. 4 at Brian Center Health and Rehab in Hertford after battling the effects of sickle cell anemia since childhood.

The council agreed at its Dec. 13 meeting with a suggestion by Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton about a suitable procedure to follow.

"In the past, you have interviewed the candidates at a special meeting, then spent time contemplating the appointment, and voted on the appointment at the next council meeting," Knighton said.

Knighton recommended that an ad

be published in The Chowan Herald for several weeks asking those who were interested to apply. Deadline for applications to be received would be Friday, Jan. 20.

The council would then spend time during a special meeting on Monday, Jan. 23 reviewing those applications.

At that point a special meeting would be scheduled to interview candidates, followed by a vote at the next council meeting.

Mayor pro tem Steve Biggs said he was in favor of that timetable.

"That would give everybody plenty of time," Biggs said.

Britton was first elected to a four-year term in November 2005, and was re-elected in 2009, both times running unopposed. She was appointed in February 2005 to fill the unexpired term of Jerald Pery who had moved outside the ward.

## CANDY BOMBER'S PLANE LANDS AT AIRPORT



STAFF PHOTOS BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

A C-54 that serves as a flying museum depicting the Berlin airlift between the years of 1948 and 1949 soars above the Northeastern Regional Airport in Edenton Monday morning. The airplane remains at the airport for maintenance until March.

### C-54 to stay in area until March

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**  
Editor

Added another feather to the wing of Edenton airport's quest to become a hub for aviation history.

A C-54 airplane used during World War II's Berlin airlift and now commemorates the historical event as a flying museum landed at the Northeastern Regional Airport Monday morning for scheduled maintenance. Monday's jaunt follows the plane's weekend participation in the annual commemoration of the Wright brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk. At the controls as co-pilot was 91-year-old Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Gail

See **C-54**, 2A



U.S. Air Force Retired Col. Gail Halvorsen signs an autograph Monday at Edenton's Northeastern Regional Airport. Halvorsen, better known as the original Candy Bomber, after he first began dropping candy to children during the Berlin Airlift.

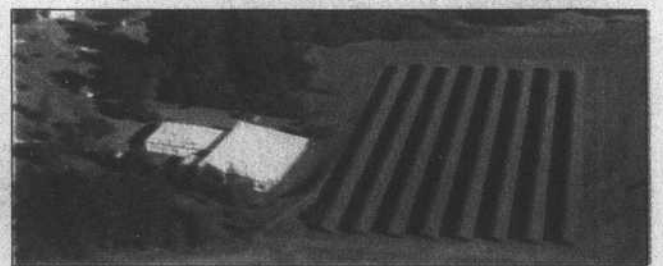


PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN SOLAR INTEGRATORS

The panels at the Edenton solar farm on Peanut Drive will be installed on a racking system with full tilt installation. The angle of the tilt is about 15 degrees. The panels do not track the sun, rather, energy is generated when the sun hits them.

## Town leases lot for solar farm

Proceeds to fund economic development

By **REBECCA BUNCH**  
Staff Writer

Plans are under way to establish a solar farm in Edenton aimed at providing funds for economic development while also creating a local tax base.

At its Dec. 13 meeting, the Town Council unanimously approved an in-

terconnection agreement with Edenton Solar 1, a limited liability corporation affiliated with American Solar Integrators of Cornelius, N.C. The group plans to establish the solar farm on an undeveloped, 8-acre tract owned by Edenton Today. Edenton Today

See **SOLAR FARM**, 6A

## Woman rear-ends school bus

From staff reports

Forty-eight students escaped serious injury after a woman rear-ended the school bus they were riding.

Students riding Bus No. 86 from White Oak and D.F. Walker elementary schools were taken to Chowan Hospital where they were treated and released after the Dec. 13 crash, according to Edenton-Chowan

school officials.

According to N.C. Highway Patrolman L.M. Hill, the bus was traveling south on N.C. 32 about 1.5 miles away from the schools when the driver stopped for another bus ahead that was letting students off. At that time, Ashley Patricia Jernigan, 30, of Edenton slammed into the rear of the waiting bus at 3:30 p.m.,

See **BUS WRECK**, 6A

## Pilot crashes plane near U.S. 17

### Neighbors: Not victim's first crash

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**  
Chowan Herald

MERRY HILL - A pilot remains in critical condition after crashing his airplane



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Friday in a field alongside U.S. 17N near his home.

Neighbors identified the victim as Michael B. Taylor. After rescuers pulled Taylor from the wreckage, he was airlifted to Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville. Bertie County Sheriff John Holley described the victim as semi-conscious when he was pulled from the wreckage.

As of late Tuesday morning, Taylor was listed in critical condition, according to Barbara Dunn, a

hospital spokeswoman.

Holley said the crash occurred around 11:30 a.m. in Midway, between Windsor and Edenton near the intersection of U.S. 17 and N.C. 45. Taylor lived about 150 yards from where the plane crashed.

"It appears it nosedived into the ground and then flipped upside down," Holley said.

Parts from the aircraft, including the propeller,

See **CRASH**, 9A

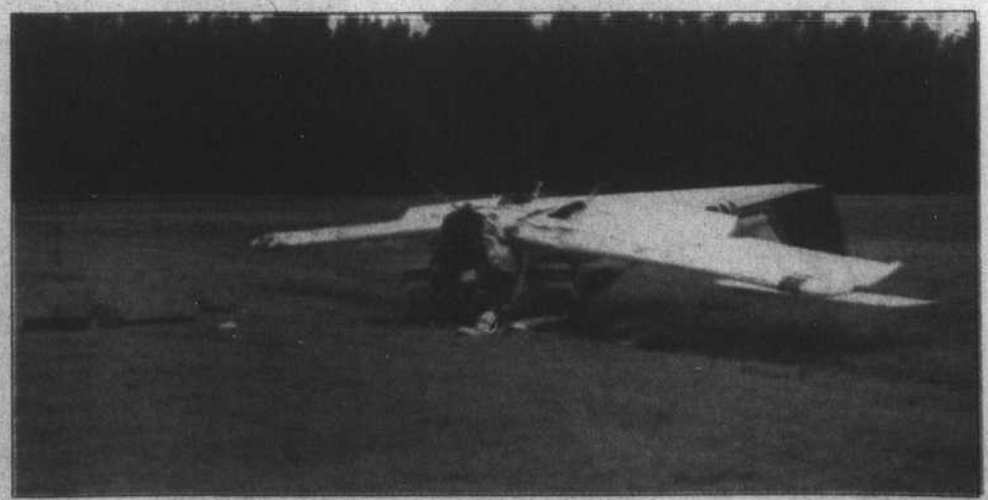


PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Pilot Michael B. Taylor of Merry Hill remains in critical condition after crashing his '78 Piper Tomahawk in a Bertie County field adjacent to U.S. 17 North near N.C. 45 Friday at 11:30 a.m.

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Rev. Dr. Rob MacSwain | 10:00 AM