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A NEW BOARD of Commissioners for Brunswick County was sworn into office Monday by District Court Judge Giles Clark. Left to right are Willie Sloan, Chairman Franky Thomas, W.T. Russ, Jr., Steve Varnam, Jr., and Ira Butler, Jr. An organizational meeting of the board was held Monday but little action was taken on matters of county business.

At Least Feb. 1

Tax Listings Are Delayed

Brunswick County residents will not have to list their 1975 - 76 taxes until February, members of the Board of Commissioners were told Monday.

Regional Director Bob Davis of Allied Appraisal said that his company was behind schedule in re - evaluating and mapping property for tax purposes.

The job, which should have been completed Dec. 1 under the contract, will not be finished until the middle of January according to present projections, Davis reported.

"We know we are going to be late," Davis told the board. "We are late. But we are going to do the job. We will get it done, but we don't want any penalty."

Under the contract Allied signed with the county, Tax Supervisor Charles Mills said, the company could be fined \$100 each day the work is late during the month of December. The penalty jumps to \$300 a day every day it is late after January 1.

It was the first time members of the Board of Commissioners - old or new - have been told at a public meeting that Allied could not meet the Dec. 1 deadline. The company is being paid more than \$369,000 to re - evaluate property for tax purposes as required by state law.

Davis and Monty Blackmon, county company director, said that Allied bid on the project on the basis of Brunswick County having about 25,000 parcels of land. But they said they found out this summer that the county has over 40,000 parcels of land.

Davis said he did not blame anyone after he discovered that the county had more parcels of land than anticipated. The tax office, he said, estimated that the county had around 25,000 parcels of land. "It was stupidity on my part for taking someone else's word," he stated. "I have no excuses, just 15,000 extra parcels of land. We just got more than we bargained for in the contract."

Roger Ellis of the North Carolina Department of

Revenue said that taxpayers in most counties list property in January. But he said listing can be done until the end of March under state law.

"It looks like February 1 is the earliest possible date you will be able to mail out notices and start listing

property," Ellis said. "You will start one month behind and you will never catch up."

Davis said he knew it was "very rare" for a county to start listing property in February. "But it is also rare to find 40,000 parcels when

(Continued On Page 2)

Despite Economy

Tax Collecting Is Okay Here

Although some counties and municipalities are finding tax collecting slow the problem has not developed in Brunswick County, said Tax Collector Homer McKeithan.

A spot check made last week showed that tax collections are up between \$15,000 and \$20,000 over the same period last year, McKeithan reported.

"I made the spot check because I was afraid collections might be off due to the state and national trends to postpone paying taxes," he stated. "I have looked for it, but I have not seen it yet."

Tax collections are running behind in most counties and municipalities this year due to general slow economic conditions. When money is tight, experts say that people postpone paying their taxes.

"We should know for sure how collections are going after the notices of penalty are mailed," McKeithan stated. "We should be able to tell by the middle of December if we are doing as well as previous years or if inflation is causing the postponement of payment."

McKeithan, who has served as county tax collector since 1966, ranks high in the state based on tax collection percentage. According to a report from the Institute of Government, McKeithan ranked third in the state last year based on percentage collected.

He said he is pleased with the collection rate at the present time. "We are running \$10,000 to \$12,000 ahead of last year on money collected from average taxpayers," he pointed out. "Our bigger taxpayers and companies have not paid their taxes yet."

McKeithan said that after notices were mailed in September, the payment response was better than anticipated. "Collections have slowed down some from the first payments, but we are holding our own since it leveled off," he explained.

The veteran county official said collections always pick up after notices are mailed to citizens. "The notices remind citizens to pay their taxes," he pointed out.

McKeithan said his office is in the process of mailing out final tax notices to all citizens who have not paid yet. The notices about penalties will go out in early December.

"We try to get the final notices to taxpayers before the penalty period starts," he pointed out. "We try to give them a 30-day notice."

Residents pay taxes without a penalty between September 1 and December 31. They are charged a two-percent penalty for paying taxes in January. The penalty goes up three-quarters of a percentage each month they don't pay their taxes.

Bowman Is Chief Deputy

New Deputies, Policies In Sheriff's Department

By BILL ALLEN
Herman Strong, a veteran law enforcement officer, took command of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department Monday morning.

After receiving the oath of office in the courtroom in Southport during morning ceremonies, Sheriff Strong walked down the stairs and into his office at the courthouse.

Strong, a Democrat, defeated Veteran Incumbent Harold Willetts, who was seeking his third four-year term, in the November general election.

"It is hectic around here since we are just getting organized," Strong said

Tuesday. "But we are making progress, and people are going to see the results."

The sheriff announced that Julian Bowman, who has been serving as chief of police at Holden Beach, has been named chief deputy in the department.

Other new deputies include Phillip Perry of Leland, a former member of the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department, Carolina Beach Police Department and member of the Wilmington Police Department drug squad; Marty Folding, former police chief at Bolling Spring Lakes; Jim Moyer, former Long Beach and Southport police department

officer; and John W. Bowen, former Southport police department officer and A.B.C. officer.

Earlie Gore, George Ballard, Robert Wayne Long, and Douglas Padgett, who served as deputies under Sheriff Willetts, have been renamed deputies in the department.

In addition, Nelson Eddy Adams and Raphael Frink, who served as jailors under Willetts, have been promoted to deputies.

"Our deputies are working three shifts a day," Strong said. "We are keeping two cars on the road all night."

The sheriff said that Deloris Varnam has been

employed as a clerk in the office. Two other members of the department under Sheriff Willetts, Matron Deputy Jeanette Roach and Clerk-Matron Joyce Cox, also will work in the office.

Frances Hewett, Sarah Owens and Edwin Walker have been appointed dispatchers. Walker held the same post under Sheriff Willetts.

Billy Gurganus, who has been serving as office deputy, has been named chief jailer at Southport and Shallotte. In addition, he will serve as court officer at Shallotte District Court.

New jailors appointed include Lewis Edward Medley, Johnny Delmar Smith and Kelus Thomas. Homer Best, who served under Sheriff Willetts, was renamed a jailer.

David O'Neil, who served under Willetts, was re-appointed a jailer by Sheriff Strong. However, O'Neil turned in his equipment late Monday afternoon and announced his resignation.

Sheriff Strong said he was still taking applications for deputies, jailers, dispatchers and other posts to find the needed employees to staff the department.

County records show that a total of 22 members, who were employed as of Dec. 1 under Sheriff Willetts, were not given the oaths of office to serve in the new administration. The total includes 11 men who served as field deputies.

Sheriff Strong said he plans to make several changes in the department to provide better law enforcement in the county. He said he was especially interested in improving "communications."

"The radio communications system will be set up according to federal guidelines," he declared. "One central dispatch office will handle all radio communications for the Sheriff's Department, the police departments in the county and the Civil Preparedness department. All calls and messages received will be logged."

He said he is working on a plan to allow all Brunswick

Charge Filed Vs. Teacher

A Bolivia school teacher has been charged with assault and battery on a minor following a disciplinary incident, it was learned this week.

Van Galloway, who teaches the seventh and eighth grades, was charged with assaulting Jeffery Hinson, 13, by striking him with a board, one-inch thick and about 12 inches long, about the thighs and buttocks Nov. 25.

Galloway was charged after Verna Ellis of the Bolivia Motor Lodge signed a complaint with the Sheriff's Department.

County School Supt. Ralph

(Continued On Page 2)

Town Meeting

A variety of topics were discussed during a public meeting conducted by the Southport Board of Aldermen Tuesday night at the Courthouse.

Mayor E.B. Tomlinson, Jr., fielded questions asked by about 20 residents who attended the public meeting. Questions dealt with drainage, mobile homes, pre-constructed buildings, traffic, etc.

The meeting was about 50 minutes old before the first question dealing with the hospital was asked.

Thomas New Chairman; Hospital Meeting Is Set

The new all - Democrat Brunswick County Board of Commissioners elected Franky Thomas chairman and set-up a hospital hearing during the organizational meeting Monday in Southport.

Thomas, who is associated with Coastal Mobile Home Sales in Leland, was unanimously elected chairman of the board. He was the only man nominated for the post.

Steve J. Varman, Jr., a Lockwood Folly Township seafood processor was unanimously elected vice - chairman of the board without opposition.

The board decided to hold a special meeting next week to hear the Smithville Township

which has been the topic of much discussion in recent times. Southport Mayor E.B. Tomlinson, Jr., and members of the Board of Aldermen will be invited to attend the meeting tentatively scheduled for Thursday night, Dec. 12, at 7:30 p.m. at the courthouse.

The board moved the meeting up to next Thursday afternoon at 3:30 o'clock at the commissioners' room.

No more than four members of the Southport governing board will be asked to form a panel and present the Smithville side of the hospital question. It will be an "information only" meeting.

In other business, commissioners unanimously appointed to represent the

board on agency committees included Varnam, Council of Governments; W.T. Russ, Jr., Lower Cape Fear Planning Unit policy board; Ira Butler, Jr., Southeastern Mental Health Commission; and Willie Sloan, Brunswick County Board of Health. Law requires that one elected official from member counties serve on the agency committees.

Sheriff Herman Strong was appointed to serve on the Lower Cape Fear Planning Unit. Law requires that a law enforcement officer hold the post.

Southport Attorney James R. Prevatte, Jr., was unanimously appointed county attorney. He asked the board to pay him a monthly retainer plus the normal per-

hour rate. He said he would submit a detailed bill each month and attend all meetings.

County Manager Neil Mallory will investigate the rate of payment other county attorneys receive and report back to the board before Prevatte's compensation is set. Prevatte suggested the approach in setting the payment.

Mrs. Carole Greene was unanimously re - appointed to serve as clerk to the board.

The board voted unanimously not to pay any bills from county departments without purchase orders "without exceptions."

The action was taken during a discussion of the budget with Financial Officer

(Continued On Page 11)