

Pay Hike, Other Expenses Reviewed By Commissioners

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

Brunswick County commissioners indicated that the proposed 7.5-percent salary increase for county employees might be reduced during the first hearing on the 1975-76 budget Monday at the Hood Building in Southport.

Chairman Interim Manager Franky Thomas suggested that the board determine the amount of the pay raise before taking up other items in the budget.

Commissioner W.T. Russ, Jr., suggested reducing the pay increase to five percent. He said he did not plan to give any of his employees a raise this year because of economic conditions.

Commissioner Willie Sloan said he was not in favor of giving any raises over five percent this year. "Most county employees make pretty decent salaries considering the unemployment in Brunswick County," he stated.

Budget Officer - Assistant County Manager Neil Mallory said the difference between 5- and 7.5-percent raises will be between \$25,000 and \$26,000.

After hearing the suggestions voiced, commissioners decided to postpone action on the question until next week when they review the budget during special meetings.

About half the department heads in the county reviewed their budget requests with the commissioners Monday. The other half were scheduled to make their presentations today (Wednesday).

Thomas said the governing

board, which received \$32,750 last year, is requesting \$63,900 this year. Per diem paid to board members and contracted services will both increase under the proposal.

He said it is proposed that the pay received by commissioners be increased from a total of \$8,000 to a total of \$19,200. He said the current rate of pay received by commissioners for attending meetings is running almost \$19,200 at the present time.

Thomas said the increase is needed to pay commissioners for work done outside the meeting rooms and to encourage other residents to run for the board.

Once the members decide whether to have a set monthly salary or an increased per diem, a public hearing will have to be held on the question, Thomas told the commissioners.

He said contracted services should be increased from \$800

to \$9,800 because Larry Minton and Associates has been hired by the county to seek federal funds for Brunswick.

Under the proposed budget, the administration division costs will increase from \$37,373 to \$61,327. The reasons for the increase, Mallory said, is additional personnel and equipment.

It is proposed that the salary of the county manager be increased from \$18,590 to

\$20,653. In addition, the county will hire the manager an administrative assistant at \$11,171 and a secretary at \$6,489.

Mallory said the secretary is needed because the county clerk's job is a full-time position. The clerk also needs to make an index book in order to find old minutes easier, he said.

An executive desk and chair, a secretary desk and chair, typewriter, side chair and file cabinet will be needed for the two new employees.

The proposed budget includes \$4,600 to purchase an automobile and \$2,600 for automotive supplies, maintenance and repair. An additional \$1,200 is included to purchase radio equipment to communicate with employees in the field.

Finance Officer Regina McKeithan requested a 20-percent increase in her department from \$83,726 to \$104,427 due to higher operational costs.

Cleon Hewett requested that the Veteran's Service Officer budget be increased from \$10,662.80 to \$11,895. "I can show you that I make money for the county helping veterans obtain benefits," he pointed out.

Acting Tax Supervisor K.T. (Continued On Page 5)

50-Cent Tax Rate Tentative In County

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners was presented the tentative 1975-76 budget of \$13,583,416 with a tax rate of 50 cents per \$100 valuation.

Assistant County Manager and Budget Officer Neil Mallory, who presented the proposed budget at a special meeting Thursday morning, said the tax rate is based on an estimated county tax valuation of \$1.45 billion.

"Should the tax supervisor determine any change in the tax valuation base as a result of the revaluation study, this must be taken into consideration prior to adopting the budget ordinance and determining a tax rate for the next fiscal year," Mallory pointed out.

Last year, the county required a 70-cent tax rate to balance the total expenditures of \$11,436,917.10 in the 1974-75 budget. But revaluation has changed the tax base picture.

The total county budget last year was \$15,274,682.10, which included the state and federal funds used to construct the county water system. The county water system funds have not been added to the proposed expenditures of \$13,583,416 in

this year's budget to reach the grand total.

After hearing Mallory's budget message, the board voted unanimously to hold the hearings on the 125-page document with county department heads all day Monday and Wednesday. The commissioners will continue to review the budget until June 30 when a public hearing will be held prior to adoption.

Requested general fund expenditures contained in the new budget are \$2,252,767,

about \$650,000 over last year. Mallory said the major items contributing to the increase are additional personnel, increase in salaries and wages, increase in donations, department increases, and an overall increase in departmental supplies and materials.

Additional personnel requested includes an administrative assistant to the county manager and a secretary in the Ad-

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Manager-Chief 'Fuss' Said Straightened Out

No action was taken during a closed meeting of the Long Beach Board of Commissioners, Mayor Ed Joyce announced following the almost one hour executive session Thursday night.

Mayor Joyce said the board talked about Interim Manager Carole Greene and the Police Department during the closed session,

which lasted from 8:17 until 9:12 p.m. During the time, Mrs. Greene was out of the closed session the last 22 minutes of the meeting.

After the meeting, Chief James Hamlett announced that he felt he and Mrs. Greene "had things straightened out" about the operation of the police department.

In other business, Dave Alexander of the Accounting Advisory section of the Local Government Commission, reported that the Long Beach books are ready to be audited.

Alexander said that three Local Government Commission representatives had spent the last weeks straightening out the Long Beach bookkeeping system. He said his office representatives did the posting from July until November and the town hall staff did the work up to April 18.

The Local Government Commission was called in after Menton Padgett of W.E.

Brock and Company, town auditors, told the board that the books were "in a mess" during a meeting in early May.

Ward Foster, Capt. Walter Reinheimer and Jerry Wood were appointed to serve on the Planning Board after Town Attorney James Prevatte, Jr., conducted a secret ballot to select the new members.

Commissioner Ellis Dudley nominated Foster and Reinheimer and Commissioner Don McNeill named Wood.

McNeill, who served on the Planning Board until he was appointed a commissioner, said he wanted to nominate Wood to have a young man serve.

The board discussed whether to replace Foy Lunsford, who lives out-of-state and does not attend meetings regularly, on the Planning Board. Chairman Otto Maehl was asked to contact Lunsford about the matter and report back to the board. If (Continued On Page 4)



HANGING THE FLAG in front of the Bicentennial offices on Moore Street in Southport are new Bicentennial employee Gelois Reeves (left) and Mary Gornto, director. This is Flag Week, climaxed on Saturday by Flag Day, and Mrs. Gornto encourages everyone to fly the American flags now and throughout the Bicentennial celebration.

Thomas Defends His 'Good Faith' Funding

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

The Long Beach Board of Commissioners decided to hire a recreation director following a long and heated discussion during the regular monthly meeting Thursday night.

The board voted unanimously to create the recreation director position and to apply to the county for \$1,800 in Manpower money to fund the post this summer.

The action was taken after Brunswick County Commissioner Chairman - Interim Manager Franky Thomas, who said he came to the meeting to "explain" the situation, announced that he was withdrawing the \$1,800 he had authorized the town in county Manpower funds.

Numerous citizens attending the meeting spoke in favor of Long Beach having a summer recreation position funded with county Manpower money. Town Interim Manager Carole Greene was criticized for using the \$1,800 Thomas authorized to hire a carpenter instead of a recreation director. She said "at least" three commissioners approved hiring the carpenter with the money.

Commissioner Russell Morrison, chairman of the Long Beach Recreation Committee and an active supporter of the little league program, announced that he approved hiring the director. Morrison originally said Long Beach did not need a summer director, it was pointed out during the long discussion. Thomas told the board that

he and County Recreation Director Marshall Kestler were invited to a meeting about four weeks ago with Jarvis Jones, who is chairman of the Oak Island Recreation Committee, to discuss the need for a recreation director for the summer program at Long Beach.

He said he was "agreeable to help" because of the interest the county commissioners had in supporting programs helping people, especially young people. The county official said he was informed by County Per-

sonnel Director David Swain that un-used Manpower money was available to fund the Long Beach recreation director post this summer.

"On May 19, Mrs. Greene called Jack Stone, state Manpower assistant, and asked what authority I had to give money to Long Beach for the director," Thomas stated. "Later she called Swain to tell him we could expect a call from Mr. Stone, apologizing because she thought possibly she had got me in trouble."

After a two-week waiting period, Thomas said he

contacted Manpower Regional Coordinator Pam Davison about the matter. "She told me the county could use Manpower money in any way it saw fit as long as we abided by the guidelines, which we have," Thomas declared. "She also told me we had in no way violated any state regulation. Also, Brunswick County had done an outstanding job using this money and for the purposes it was originally designed."

Thomas said he wanted "to personally apologize to you for the circus atmosphere this has created. Also, I want

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Beach Budget Is Considered

The Long Beach Board of Commissioners is considering a \$631,787 budget for 1975-76 with a tax rate of 67 cents per \$100 valuation.

The board will hold hearings on the proposed budget the next two Friday nights (June 13 and 20) at 7:30 before the public hearing is held June 26 prior to the adoption.

Interim Town Manager Carole Greene, who presented the proposal, said the total budget is \$631,787 with \$476,664 budgeted for the general fund.

She said it is an 18-percent increase over last year's budget due to a general five-percent increase in employee

salaries, an increase in the number of authorized personnel and capital outlay contingent upon the receipt of LEAA grants for the Police department and increased costs for utilities and purchases of supplies.

"It should be noted that revenues anticipated from sources which are based on the economy of the state have been estimated conservatively to protect the town's financial condition," Mrs. Greene said in her budget message. "Revenue anticipated from ad valorem taxes is based on a \$50 million valuation with an 85 percent

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Survey Shows Wishes Of City

The Planning Board for Southport will conduct a house-to-house canvass next week in an effort to get a comprehensive answer to questions included in a questionnaire mailed several weeks ago to residents of this community.

In making this announcement J.M. Porterfield, who recently was elected president of this authority, said there had been only a 13-percent response to the mailed questionnaires. "We need a more realistic expression of opinion from our citizens to the questions," Porterfield said.

Joe Walton is vice-chairman of this body, which also includes as members

Mrs. Janice Jackson, Mrs. Cecelia Franck, Roscoe Davis, J.D. Ward and Marion Burn.

Ten high school students will participate in this complete coverage effort next week, starting Monday. Porterfield stated that this will be done at no cost to the city. He was very much concerned with the 13-percent return from the 1,000 forms mailed to city residents several weeks ago.

"13 percent return! That was the response to the opinion survey conducted recently by the City of Southport when only 130 persons completed and returned the questionnaires mailed to 1,000 residents," said

Chairman Porterfield. "The sole purpose of the survey was to solicit citizen opinions and attitudes toward the use of the city's land - both public and private. The 1,000 survey recipients represented 90 percent of the city's water and sewer service users.

"Nevertheless, the following represents an analysis of opinions of the 130 persons who took the time, including one individual who penned a poem to emphasize his dismay," Porterfield declared.

The median age of the respondent is 59 years of age - generally of an age group who would have more time to complete a questionnaire, but

certainly not to be considered a cross section of the community. In 1970 the median age of Southport's population was 32 years. Of those responding, 88 percent live in a single-family dwelling.

Community Growth The fifth question dealt with the amount of community growth desired. 47 percent wanted a slight increase in population; 33 percent wanted a great increase, while 17 percent wanted the population to remain the same.

Development preferences The sixth question asked which type of development would one like to see more or less of in Southport? The following types of develop-

ment were requested most often in order of priority: single-family dwelling, recreational facilities and public open space, industrial, commercial and apartments. The least requested type of developments were mobile homes and condominiums.

Reasons for locating The seventh question dealt with the reasons for locating in Southport. In most cases, several reasons were indicated; thus, of 220 selections: 32 percent chose the community for its pleasant surroundings; 24 percent because of its closeness to family and friends; and 16 percent said because it was close to work. Of all the (Continued On Page 2)