



EXAMINING NEW SEATS in the Brunswick County Courthouse in Southport are county officials (left to right) Commissioners Ira Butler, Jr., Franky Thomas, W.T. Russ, Jr., Steve Varnam, Jr., and Personnel - Purchasing Director David Swain.

Rushed, 3-2 Vote Picks County Complex Architect

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners took a major step toward the employment of an architectural-engineering firm to design the new county complex on a split decision during a regular meeting Monday at the Hood Building in Southport.

The board voted 3-2 to employ Jerry Lewis

Engineers in association with LBC&W to provide architectural and engineering services for the new county complex, "contingent upon a satisfactory contractual agreement being worked out."

Commissioner Willie Sloan cast the swing vote on the split decision to act to hire Lewis and LBC&W for the major project. The motion was made by Commissioner

W.T. Russ, Jr., and seconded by Commissioner Steve Varnam, Jr. Chairman - Interim County Manager Franky Thomas and Commissioner Ira Butler, Jr., voted in opposition.

Lewis, a former county manager and Republican county chairman who is associated with the construction of the water system, the LBC&W representatives Paul Wood, Dennis Day and

John Boudreaux asked the commissioners for the contract when they appeared before the board earlier in the afternoon.

After hearing the presentation, the board voted unanimously to exclude the public and the press and hold a closed executive session. The closed session lasted 82 minutes.

Shortly after the doors were reopened, the board voted 3-2 to take action to hire Lewis and LBC&W. When asked about the matter, commissioners denied that they had discussed it during the closed session in violation of the Open Meetings law.

However, the board did not hold an open discussion to consider other firms before voting on the matter. Russ read the approved motion, which had been written out on a piece of paper.

Both Thomas and Butler urged the board to take more time before acting to employ a firm to design the complex.

Butler said the board should consider other firms although the presentation made by Lewis and LBC&W was impressive. "I would like more time to consider this," said Butler, who added that he did not want to delay the "mandate of the people" to move the county seat.

Thomas said he agreed with Butler. "Today is the first time I have seen these people in my life," he declared. "I am not prepared to go into negotiations with them."

Sloan pointed out that during a joint meeting with the Board of Education last Thursday night, the point was "stressed very highly that we do something right away. We should go ahead and start something."

LCB&W officials told the board, has headquarters in Columbia, S.C., and offices in North Carolina, South

Carolina and Virginia. The firm has between 200 and 250 employees who can provide architectural, engineering and planning services.

Representatives said the firm has designed numerous buildings, including the Darlington County, S.C., courthouse and office building, the Law Enforcement Center in Greensboro and a tax courthouse in Washington D.C.

"Basically," Lewis told the board, "we would consider ourselves an extension of your administration. We can provide answers to your questions without delay."

When Russ asked about the cost to be charged the county, representatives said a "ball park" estimate of their fee would be 6.5 percent of the total construction costs.

Varnam asked if the firm could design a complex that could be built for around \$4 million since "we are limited in funds." Although it is too early to tell, Lewis said he believed the firm could "live" with the \$4 - million figure with single - story buildings containing 90,000 square feet.

Lewis said the firm would establish a work schedule, which would be approved by the commissioners. He said the firm will try to "strictly adhere" to the agreed schedule as close as possible.

Lewis estimated that the firm would work to have construction contracts left for the complex within nine months after receiving the contract. Representatives said it would take about 30 to 45 days to design the complex after the master plan is approved. Another 90 days will be needed to create working drawings and contract drawings, they said.

LCB&W representatives

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Galloway Tract Wins Site Committee Favor

By KENNY HEWETT
Staff Writer

The Richmond Galloway tract was chosen by the Site Selection Committee as its first priority to present to the county commissioners on Monday.

The site offered by Canal Wood Development is directly across from the state park on US 17. It has 3,234 feet of road frontage on US 17 and 1,500 feet on State Road 1401. The 199-acre tract is offered at a price of \$750 per acre,

firm until September 30.

The committee voted to choose three sites with first, second and third priorities, after having narrowed their choice to four from the six sites viewed. The first choice receiving three points, the second, two points, and the third, one point. The Canal Wood site received 30 points.

The second choice of the committee was the site proposed by Arliss Willetts, receiving 12 points. The tract is 1.5 miles north of the fire tower. Willetts has offered to donate 50 acres and sell an additional 50 acres for \$900 per acre.

The third choice of the committee was the McKay-McKeithan tract receiving 10 points. The selling price is \$1,500 per acre, and if 100 acres or more are needed there will be a donation of 25

acres.

A fourth site presented by L.A. Lewis, consisting of approximately 160 acres for \$200,000, received six votes but will not be included in the recommendation to the commissioners.

Committee members Paul Dennis (Shalotte), Hoyal Varnam (Lockwood Folly) and James Bellamy (Shalotte) heavily favored the Canal Wood Development site.

Varnam stated that, "the Canal site was the best piece of land and could be bought at a very good price." Dennis noted that he "personally wanted the board to keep their thoughts on the county for the next 200 years and the Canal site was the A-1 choice."

Bellamy commented that the committee "choose a site where the complex would be consolidated in one area so the people could park and visit all the buildings from that point." He noted that the McKay-McKeithan site was a straight layout and only a limited amount of designing could be done. You would have more than one entrance - exit and numerous parking lots," Bellamy told the committee.

Phil Yount (Town Creek) and Donald White (Northwest) favored the McKay-McKeithan site. Yount noted that "Bolivia would serve the complex with a water system, and a sewage plan would be submitted immediately if the site (McKay-McKeithan) were chosen."

John Hughes told the board

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City Aldermen Lower Tax Rate To 68 Cents

By ED HARPER
News Editor

The tax rate for City of Southport property owners was lowered from 92 cents to 68 cents Thursday night by the Board of Aldermen.

And the rate could be considerably lower, aldermen felt, if not for "something wrong" in the county tax department. "We were expecting \$30 million (property valuation)," said Auditor Walter Aldridge. With about 99 percent of the information in, City Manager Alvin Kornegay said, "We have come up way short."

\$20.5 million is the figure

the city got from the county, and it represents only an 80-percent increase over last year's \$11-million tax base. Aldermen said most property owners report a two- or three-fold increase in their property values.

The 92-cent rate, which was "tentatively" adopted June 12, was based on a \$19.5-million estimated tax base, which Aldermen thought to be conservative at the time. But the 68-cent rate formally adopted Thursday night was lowered primarily because of a revised budget - not more tax base.

The Budget Committee,

which included Aldermen Harold Davis, Pierce Horne and Conley Koontz, deleted from the Administration budget one-half of the cost of a bookkeeping machine and the salary of the building inspector. Savings amounted to \$10,644.

From the Police budget the committee cut \$3,440 by eliminating the purchase of a new vehicle. From the Street budget, \$6,000 in capital outlay was omitted.

The committee trimmed \$7,500 from the donation to the Frying Pan Lightship project, at the suggestion of Horne. The lightship project

will receive \$7,500; the \$7,500 which was deleted was earmarked for the purchase of land adjacent to the lightship, but Aldermen are investigating another means of acquiring the land for a waterfront park.

Mayor Eugene Tomlinson voiced concern over the low tax rate that has been set by the county Board of Commissioners.

"If there is not \$1.5 billion worth of property in the county," which the mayor doubted, "then the county is in trouble." He said he is not

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Correction

The State Port Pilot incorrectly quoted two statements by Long Beach Commissioner Ellis Dudley in a front-page article last week.

The Pilot said other board members knew in advance what Dudley would read from a prepared statement. In fact, none of the other board members knew what Dudley would read.

Dudley read from his statement that "at least \$70,000 of any additional tax monies should be set aside" to rebuild the cash balance of the town. The Pilot reported the figure incorrectly as \$7,000.

Consolidation Vote Possible Next March

Residents of Long Beach and Yaupon Beach may be able to vote on the question of consolidation next March.

That target date was set last Tuesday night at a meeting of the Consolidation Commission, which includes four members from each of the two Oak Island communities. The fact-finding group will present its report to the commissioners of Long Beach and Yaupon Beach in the next few months, with open public hearings possible in December.

The Commission will ask approval of the respective town boards for the employment of the Institute of Government at Chapel Hill "for advice and guidance." Cost would be between \$1,000 and \$1,200 - "considerably less than the \$5,000 appropriated" by the beach towns, it was noted.

Present at the meeting, held at the Long Beach town hall, were Chairman Hannon Templeton and Mrs. Inez Shannon of Long Beach and Mrs. Dorothy Thompson, Hugh Zachary and Mack Aman of Yaupon Beach. Mrs. May Barbee of Yaupon Beach and Troy Davis and Ed Morgan of Long Beach were absent.

Bald Head Receiver Will Assume Control

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

A receiver has been appointed to administer the Bald Head Island property covered by the deed of trust in security held presently by Builders Investment Group (BIG).

Bruce Macleod of Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, was appointed receiver following a hearing on BIG's foreclosure suit to satisfy an indebtedness of \$6,288,344.63. The hearing was held in Brunswick County Superior Court last Wednesday with Judge Thomas Lee of Raleigh presiding.

Macleod will take into his possession and control the real property and im-

provements already made, including fixtures and personal property subject to the proceeding.

BIG agreed to advance funds to Macleod that they deemed necessary for the completion of the harbor construction project, "if feasible." He is authorized to request funds from BIG that may be required for the maintenance and operation of the project.

"Any advance made by BIG for such purpose shall have the same priority and the same interest rate as advances for the completion of construction," the order noted.

All funds advanced shall bear interest at the rate

agreed upon in the promissory note of Carolina Cape Fear Corporation. They will constitute and be deemed a charge and lien against the property, paramount to that of all lien creditors.

Macleod will be required to file with the Clerk of Court monthly accounting that reflects all receipts and disbursements made during the preceding accounting period applicable to the management of the receivership estate, the completion of construction and all costs and expense incurred.

He is required to file bond in the amount of \$50,000 conditioned upon the performance of the duties in

the order. But he will not be liable under the bond for loss resulting solely from misfeasance.

Attorney Gibson L. Smith, Jr., trustee for BIG, told the court during the hearing that the firm was not asking for a receiver for the entire corporation.

"Basically, our position is that under our deed of trust, we have legal title to the property in that we have alleged in our complaint the existence of an \$800,000 interest default," Smith told the court.

"Our apparent right to the property or at least the sale of the property exists," he

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Leland Group Plans Meeting

A North Brunswick Action organization has been formed in the northern part of Brunswick County as a direct result of the concerned parents meeting held at Lincoln School in Leland on July 31.

The purpose is "to achieve more community concern for better county government, and also to improve education and educational facilities in the northern end of the county," a spokesman noted.

As the "first step" towards achieving these goals, a public meeting has been set for 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 23 at the North Brunswick High School auditorium. County commissioners and Board of Education members are expected to be there for a question - and - answer session, and it is asked that anyone having questions to present to either board regarding county government or education be present at the meeting.

Also in progress is a voter registration drive. The aim is to register 1,000 people in Northwest Township between now and the May primary, thus creating a voting block for the community.

"The southern and western parts of the county have elected officials to speak in their behalf in matters brought before the county commissioners or the Board of Education. It is hoped that a greater voter registration and voter turnout at the polls will voice the desires of Northwest Township," it was pointed out.

Officers have been elected, with the chairman being John Ivey; vice-chairman, Mrs. Frances Poole; secretary, Mrs. Shirley Horne; and publicity chairman, Mrs. Marilyn Hardy.

All interested citizens are invited to attend the meeting on Sept. 23 and following meetings, "to help obtain more benefits for the northern end of Brunswick County," it was noted.