



THE SCALE MODEL of the proposed Brunswick County courthouse - complex was presented to county commissioners on Monday. Commissioners Franky Thomas and Steve Varnam, Jr., Designer Lesesne Monteith, and Commissioners W.T. Russ, Jr., and Willie Sloan, shown left to right, discuss plans for the complex.

Schools Cut, Budget Still 22 Cents High

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

The proposed 1976 - 77 Brunswick County tax rate is still more than 22 cents higher than last year after three days of budget hearings came to an end Thursday.

Chairman Steve Varnam, Jr., announced that commissioners will continue holding hearings to review the budget in an effort to reduce the tax rate. "This has been just preliminary," said the chairman, who was the only commissioner to attend all the budget review sessions.

Commissioners cut 24.60 cents off the proposed tax rate of 85.87 cents to bring it down to 61.27 cents after the three days of hearings. Most of the reductions came when the Board of Education request was sliced 21.60 cents on Wednesday. (See related story in this edition of The Pilot).

Last week, county commissioners were presented the proposed 1976 - 77 budget that called for a tax rate of 85.87 cents per \$100 valuation. It was 47.37 cents higher than the rate last year of 38.5 cents.

Commissioners were able to cut 1.32 cents off the proposed tax rate on Thursday. Most of the reduction came when the Board of Health budget was reduced.

Several proposed budget cuts were left ending more study or official action. The board did not reach a decision about how much to remove from the Resources Development Commission request.

After completing the "preliminary review," the board heard several requests for salary increases.

The Board of Health budget was reduced from the recommended \$335,289 to \$269,587. The Health board had requested \$393,404.

Most of the reduction resulted from cuts in the salary section, which was reduced from \$233,806 to \$197,062. Personnel Director David Swain said the department, which has reclassified employees, requested a 2.5 - percent

salary increase plus merit increases to bring the pay scale in line with the Department of Social Services as required by state law.

Commissioners were able to reduce the salary section by eliminating the requested ten new positions, including two for sanitarians. Board members noted that the department was asking for the new positions despite the fact it has un-filled vacancies at the present time.

Because the new positions were eliminated, the board

was able to reduce telephone and postage, travel, department supplies and materials and equipment that will not be needed.

After discussing the Resources Development Commission budget with Director Jackie Stephenson, the board took no final action about how much to cut out.

Chairman Varnam recommended that the \$82,000 budget be cut to \$65,000, which is \$3,000 more than the commission received

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Hospital Vote May Depend On Courts

The State Board of Elections will make the final decision about whether the Smithville hospital district referendum can be held, Brunswick County Board of Elections Chairman Johnny Mills announced this week.

Mills said that the State Board of Elections has been asked to make the decision. The state decision will be followed by the county board.

"We would be foolish not to do what the state board tells," Mills stated. "If they say hold it, we will hold it. If they say not to hold it, we will not hold it unless a court tells us otherwise."

Board of Elections contacted the state board after receiving two letters from the N.C. Attorney General's office that did not resolve the matter. "We are not taking sides," Mills pointed out. "We want to do what is right."

Assistant Attorney General Robert R. Reilly said in a letter to Mills on May 27 that "the Brunswick County Board of Elections is without authority to hold an election on the question of establishing a public hospital for Smithville Township."

In a second letter, dated June 2, Reilly said the opinion rendered in the May 27 letter

"does not settle the question as a matter of law."

"Only a court of competent jurisdiction can render a final opinion on the matter," Reilly said in the second letter. "An opinion of this office is advisory only to the city, county or state official who requests the opinion."

Both letters to Mills were signed by Reilly under the printed signature of Attorney General Rufus Edmisten.

The legal question in the issue is who is the governing body of a township? Both County Attorney James Prevatte, Jr., and Southport

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School Board Trying To Make Budget Fit

By EMILY HIGHTOWER
Staff Writer

Faced with resolving a \$2.3 million difference between the budget request for next year and the proposed appropriation from the county, the Brunswick County Board of Education asked school Supt. Ralph C. King to bring recommendations for budget cuts to the next meeting.

The board also heard spokesmen for two citizens groups express support for two persons who have applied for the position of principal of Southport Middle School.

The board had requested a \$6.5 million budget for fiscal year 1976-77. The county Board of Commissioners has proposed it receive an appropriation of \$4.2 million, more than 35 percent less than requested.

Although final allocation of the money will be left to the school board, the com-

missioners recommended slightly more than \$2 million go to current expense and \$2.2 million to capital outlay. The board of education had requested \$2.8 million for current expenses and \$4.2 million for capital outlay.

Mrs. Betty W. Higgins of Long Beach presented board members with petitions containing several hundred names supporting Joseph Butler of Shallotte, now assistant principal at Shallotte Middle School, for principal of Southport Middle School.

Mrs. Higgins said the persons who signed the petitions had children or grandchildren attending the school.

Ralph Parker of Southport spoke for a group of approximately 10 to 15 citizens in support of Mrs. Elizabeth Young, assistant principal at South Brunswick High School. "She has proven

herself," he said. "Her character and integrity are without question."

Mrs. Higgins said the group she represents does not feel Mrs. Young "is as a qualified as the man (Butler) to be principal."

Parker said his group was not aware of the other group's petition drive, or they would have presented petitions in support of Mrs. Young.

The board discussed the principalship during a 42-minute executive session held later in the meeting but took no action.

The board received the architect's plans for the school bus garage and gave them preliminary approval contingent upon the approval of transportation supervisor Herman Love, maintenance supervisor Thomas Allen and the county commissioners.

The board approved hiring Ballard, McKim and Sawyer as architects for the facility

and set the architect's fee at 64 percent of the total expenditure for the project. This action also was taken contingent upon the approval of the county commissioners.

The board agreed to allow the SENland Community Action agency to use three schools for a summer feeding program. Assistant Supt. P. R. Hankins said SENland wants to serve approximately 400 meals at Southport Primary School, approximately 100 at Lincoln Primary School at Leland and approximately 75 at Bolivia Elementary School.

The program would provide meals for children 19 years of age and younger. All food would be prepared at Southport, Hankins said, and would then be carried to the other schools to be served.

The board also authorized the superintendent to negotiate for the purchase of land adjacent to Bolivia Elementary School and the Southport Middle School.

By board authorization, three one-week sessions of basketball school will be held at North Brunswick and three one-week sessions of sports clinics will be held at West Brunswick.

The board also voted to allow William A. Kopp of Boiling Spring Lakes to offer tax-sheltered annuities to school system employees for the Integon Life Insurance Corp.

King said employees may now purchase annuities from three or four other companies, but none of these have a representative who lives in Brunswick County.

The board acknowledged a letter from the U. S. Postal Service which said the service has decided the old Southport Primary School location is not large enough to serve their needs. The postal service had inquired about buying the site for construction of a new post office.

Members approved a request from the Brunswick County Extension Service to use an activity bus for a one-day field trip to Lenoir County.

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Long Beach Tax Rate Dropped To 39 Cents

By ED HARPER
News Editor

The Long Beach Board of Commissioners tentatively adopted a 39-cent tax rate Monday night after the last of three lengthy budget hearings.

The rate, down considerably from the 61-cent levy last year, was made possible by reducing the amount of the town's "reserve" fund. And all of the reserve has been budgeted - "not hidden from public view" - it was noted.

Added to the budget before the cutting began was \$10,000 in capital reserve for the purchase of a new fire truck. The Fire Department had asked for \$43,500 - the total cost - but Chief Jim Somers said Monday night that \$10,000 would be okay for a

remaining unpaid taxes for the current year, bringing the total to \$208,100.

Subtract from that, Commissioner Ellis Dudley asked, \$10,000 that must be refunded to Carolina-National Development because of adjustments made by the office of the county Tax Supervisor. Then sub-

tract \$32,000, the amount Town Manager John Berry said would be needed to operate the town this month. That leaves a balance of \$166,100. Then subtract \$70,000, which Berry said is the net amount required during the slow-collection months of July, August and September.

That leaves \$96,100, the amount the board decided could be applied to the budget as revenue. At the time of the discussion the rate would have been 40.5 cents, based on an estimated valuation of \$79 million and a collection rate of 93 percent.

Later in the budget discussion, the board agreed to reduce the \$70,000 estimate for July, August and September to \$62,000 - adding \$8,000 in revenue; and re-estimated in revenue collection of building fees and interest on savings to add \$3,000.

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The \$62,000 July-August-September reserve, which some have objected to, has been divided and budgeted in the following manner; \$15,000 to contingency, leaving that section within the accepted range; and the other \$47,000 divided and put in capital outlay for the Street and Sanitation sections. The funds cannot be spent without

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Court, Administration May Be Moved First

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

Brunswick County has the money "on hand" to do the proposed construction in Phase I of the relocated courthouse-office complex project.

Chairman Steve Varnam, Jr., who made the announcement during the regular monthly meeting of the county commissioners on Monday, said the county actually has \$3,243 more than the projected costs of Phase I at the present time.

Chairman Varnam, reporting on a meeting held to discuss the complex, said it has been estimated that the county has \$2,213,000 on hand to pay the projected \$2,209,757 cost of Phase I.

He said all the recommendations contained in the "memorandum for record" were tentative. "They are not final and the funds may change," he declared. "They are for you to study and make recommendations."

The plans outlined at the meeting call for constructing Group V, Group VI and Group I in the first phase of the project.

Group V includes court facilities, district attorney offices, adult probation and parole, magistrate, Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds, Sheriff's Department, jail facilities and coroner.

The Tax Supervisor and Tax Collector are included under Group VI. Group I includes county administration and governing

board, the Personnel and Purchasing department and Finance department.

Chairman Varnam said the selections for location in the complex under Phase I were made "because of the groups are co-related to each other."

Chairman Varnam read the letter after officials of LBC&W, architects and engineers on the project, had presented the board with a scale model and color drawing of the complex and site plan.

The plan looked practically like the preliminary one presented to the board at the May meeting. LBC&W Designer Lesesne Monteith said several changes, suggested by the board, had

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Shadow Cast On Beach Aid

By ED HARPER
News Editor

The negative Yaupon Beach vote on the matter of consolidation will have an impact on the services the town can expect from its neighbor, Long Beach commissioners indicated Friday night.

Discussion came during budget talks by the Long Beach town board. Specifically, Commissioner Russell Morrison asked Town Manager John Berry if Yaupon Beach had offered any compensation for help by the Long Beach Police Department. The answer was "No."

"It goes back to what we tried to pass March 25," Morrison said, referring to the vote on consolidating the two Oak Island towns. The issue easily passed in Long Beach, but was

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