

County

Continued from page 1

the Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees be dissolved, plans commissioners have since said they will not support.

Helen Cashwell of Long Beach said the county proposes spending \$175,000 in contracted legal services when former county manager/attorney David Clegg's salary was only \$69,900 per year. The action would "worsen our budget" by \$105,100, she said.

Clegg, who resigned under political pressure in March, hasn't been replaced although commissioners have interviewed three men for the job and hope to interview a fourth candidate soon. Interim county attorney Michael Ramos, who works on a monthly retainer and hourly rate, submitted the \$175,000 request.

"This is a new era and changes have taken place," said Ms. Cashwell. "We are between managers. Leave the current budget in place. Leave the tax rate in place. Let him (manager) resolve the differences."

Eileen Kellagher of Long Beach said the proposal is ambiguous for it includes reductions in force in some departments yet recommends hiring additional staff in others.

Jobs cut by the proposal include Bobby (B. J.) Jones, parks director, two in the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Service programs and Kelly Barefoot, clerk to the board and secretary to the county manager.

In the 1991-92 budget, the previous board of commissioners combined Mrs. Barefoot's duties as secretary and eliminated the clerk's position from the governing body.

However, the proposal returns the clerk to that category, creating another job. Commissioner Jerry Jones questioned the move at a work session last week.

Mrs. Barefoot is reportedly under pressure from three Democratic commissioners to resign. Several speakers last week said she should be allowed to keep her job.

Reductions in force are used to cut the number of people on the payroll, not to fire some and to hire others, said Ms. Kellagher.

"Don't use vindictiveness to phase out Kelly Barefoot and B. J.," she said. "I'm waiting to see the final results."

She labeled this budget process as "Budgetgate", a comment that brought a loud applause from the audience.

Dale McDowell, president of the Long Bay Artificial Reef Association, said reef projects have succeeded because Mrs. Barefoot was willing to "wade through a ton of paperwork. She has helped us greatly for the past nine years," he added.

Politics is getting in the way of business, added Carson Durham of Shallotte. He said a "grave injustice was done" when Clegg was forced to resign.

"We don't need that," said Durham. "Now you're trying to do another thing to force another employee to resign."

Funds were tentatively restored to the Brunswick County Literacy Council but many spoke in favor of more funds.

Larniece McKoy, Miss Brunswick

County to fund outside agencies

Brunswick County commissioners have tentatively agreed to fund some agencies and non-profit groups previously cut in the proposed 1993-94 budget.

Most of the funds were eliminated in interim county manager John Harvey's proposal May 17.

Another workshop was held Tuesday to revise the figures. The board has agreed on the following amounts:

- * Brunswick County Airport Authority: \$30,000;
- * Long Bay Artificial Reef Association: \$25,000;
- * Ocean Isle Beach Airport: \$15,000;
- * Brunswick County Law Enforcement Association: \$1,000;
- * Chamber of Commerce/Travel Package: \$70,000;
- * Fifth District Civic Center: \$5,000;
- * Brunswick County Literacy Council: \$3,500;
- * Volunteer and Information Center: \$17,000;
- * Southeastern Sickle Cell: \$3,000;
- * Hospital Hospitality House: \$1,000;
- * Lower Cape Fear Hospice: \$2,500;
- * Miss Brunswick County Scholarship Pageant: \$5,000;
- * Hope Harbor Home: \$13,000;
- * Senior Games: \$3,000;
- * Special Olympics: \$3,000;
- * American Legion Baseball: \$5,000;
- * Brunswick County Arts Council: \$1,250;
- * Southport Maritime Museum: \$20,000;
- * WHQR public radio: \$1,000;
- * Brunswick County Amateur Radio: \$1,000;
- * Black History Month: \$500;
- * Ocean Isle Beach Museum: \$15,000; and
- * District fire/rescue allocations: \$250,000.

County, said the scholarship pageant is a reflection on the community and should be funded. It was included in the list read by Warren before the hearing.

Others spoke to support the cooperative extension 4-H programs, parks programs, the Hope Harbor Home shelter for battered women and children, educational spending, the Brunswick County Volunteer and Information Center, senior citizens, fire departments service district fees, county water expansion, WHQR public radio and the Southport Maritime Museum.

South Brunswick Middle School assistant principal Tom Simmons made a pitch for more school funds. "Education is expensive, but tomorrow's ignorance is not going to have a price tag on it," said Simmons. "Do what is right for the boys and girls in Brunswick County."

Harvey has recommended a bond referendum for new school construction and renovations.

Landfill

Continued from page 1

the state for not meeting minimum standards at the landfill near Supply.

His duties were assigned to operation services director Darryl Somersett and the solid waste department effectively dissolved, one of the last official actions taken by former county manager David Clegg before he resigned.

However, not all commissioners were aware that board chairman Don Warren had authorized the position he advertised. Warren said he polled commissioners by telephone last week to reach a consensus.

But polling members by telephone to reach a personnel decision raises legal questions on the interpretation of the state's open meetings law.

"In my view that's a violation of the law," said Hugh Stevens Jr., general counsel for the North Carolina Press Association. "What you in effect do is conduct a meeting where the public cannot participate."

Commissioner Jerry Jones questioned the action at the close of a budget workshop last Wednesday.

Rumors indicate Democratic board members, who hold a 3-2 majority, want to hire Pearly Vereen, a former operation services employee whose job was cut from the 1991-92 budget by an all-Republican board.

Vereen is also a past Democratic chairman on the board of commissioners.

"I'm just letting you know how I feel about it," said Jones. "The reports to me are that the landfill is operating better than it ever has before."

The position can be eliminated to

save the county some money, said Jones.

Clegg effectively cut the solid waste department from the county budget when he suspended Hewett on March 15, the day Clegg also resigned as manager. Hewett's job was then assumed by Somersett's staff.

Somersett's department has always supplied equipment and manpower needed to bury garbage and to operate the landfill.

"In my recommended budget it is a reduction in force," said Harvey.

But Harvey was contacted by Warren last week and told to advertise the position. When asked if the board had authorized that action, Harvey was told that a poll was taken which indicated a majority of commissioners wanted the job filled.

However, not all board members were contacted by telephone. Jones said he was never called by Warren.

A section of the open meetings law allows for commissioners to be polled by telephone, but it suggests a speaker phone be present in a public meeting, a way to let the public participate, said Stevens.

The issue of polling members by phone as a violation of the open meetings law hasn't been challenged in North Carolina courts.

Not calling all board members is another issue.

"I think that's just absolutely improper," said Stevens. "It potentially jeopardizes the legality of the decisions they make."

Warren defended the personnel move and said someone needs to be in charge at the landfill.

"As we have seen already, it's a position that needs to be filled," he added. "Mr. Somersett has many, many duties. With the awesome responsibilities there, we need a director for the landfill."

Piggy

Continued from page 1

his Oriental amigo.

"Well, one thing," said Deborah, "Sebastian was house-broken first."

Regarding Sebastian and Chelsea one gets a sense of looking through a window into the Turner's life, and that may be the case.

"We have eight cats," Deborah says, "including a Norwegian forest cat, two from Scotland, two from Belgium, three more American -- one of those Tonkinese, and two strays."

"And a blue and gold macaw. Ten cockatiels. Eight parakeets. Two finches."

She pauses, and then recalls: "The iguana."

"And the ferret," she continues. "And three rabbits, two ducks, two horses, and I think that's it. The pet food bill is high."

The Turners live in Supply where, Deborah says, the zoning is rural. But no big thing because, as she points out, "Everything stays in the house except the ducks, the horses and the rabbits."

Deborah says she'd wanted a pot-bellied pig for several years, since she first saw one on TV. "They're smart," she says. "They're easily trained; they make good pets. Sebastian used the cat's litter box the first few months,

then we trained him to go outside.

"He's affectionate, too. He'll lay in your lap and nuzzle against you. He has a good personality. He loves sleeping with our son, Anthony."

(Says daughter Marie, "I don't sleep with him. His hooves are lethal weapons.")

Michael and Deborah Turner named him Sebastian "because the name seemed to fit."

Charcoal gray, about two feet long and weighing perhaps 30 pounds, Sebastian is sort of your basic pot-bellied pig, though others may be spotted or come in different colors.

Deborah says Sebastian and Chelsea like to chase each other around the house -- a fairly even match on carpet, but when hooves hit the hard surface in the kitchen it's a wipeout for Sebastian.

In the yard, though, Sebastian gets to do his pig thing and root around in the dirt.

"He loves to investigate," Deborah said.

And what does Sebastian like to investigate most?

The kitchen.

"He does love French toast," Deborah says. "He'll eat it with syrup or without."

In the grading at the recreation center last week, judge Jerry Hawkes noted "stays good" on Sebastian's sheet. Not hard to understand, considering Deborah had parked him over a patch of lush clover.

But Hawkes also noted that Sebastian was "noisy."

That took Sebastian out of the upper echelon of patrolman Dove's class, but in truth the pig handled himself admirably, setting a good example for his classmates.

A dog could do worse than to pattern its deportment on Sebastian's.

It's one of the first things you notice.

Speller

Continued from page 1

to ask the pronouncer for as much information as possible before spelling the word, she pointed out, "then go slowly so you know what you're doing."

Brunswick County Spelling Bee director Debbie Lemon, who is accompanying the Shallotte Middle School speller this week in Washington, is optimistic about Caroline's chances.

"Since she seems enthusiastic and has obviously dedicated time and effort in preparation for the bee, I feel she will do her best as she represents Brunswick County," Lemon said.

Although she is among the older students participating, Caroline, one of 130 eighth graders, is facing some tough competition. One speller is making her fourth appearance at the national bee. Four are making their third try for the title, and 38 competed last year. She also faces eight other spellers from North Carolina.

The top prize in the bee is \$5,000, along with the winner's choice of the Heritage edition of the New Encyclopedia Britannica or the Founder's binding of the Great Books of the Western World, plus a Language Master 3000 electronic dictionary and an engraved loving cup. The winning speller's school also receives a set of the New Encyclopedia Britannica. All spellers will receive at least \$50 for participating and a commemorative watch at Friday's awards banquet.

In addition to the competition that takes place Wednesday and Thursday, Caroline and her fellow spellers will be taking in many sites around the nation's capital. This is Caroline's first trip to Washington.

After arriving Monday afternoon, Caroline traveled to Gunston Hall in Luray, Va., the original home of George Mason, who was an author of the Bill of Rights. There she joined other spellers in a barbecue dinner and showed off her square dancing abilities. Later in the evening she traded autographs with other spellers while enjoying an ice cream sundae.

social.

On Tuesday, Caroline and dozens of spellers and their families headed to Baltimore, where they toured Fort McHenry, the site of America's victory over the British in the War of 1812. They also visited Baltimore's Harborplace and the six-level National Aquarium which features a tropical rain forest on its top level.

Caroline is hoping for a chance to tour the White House, which is visible from the Capitol Hilton, bee headquarters. On Friday she plans to visit the Smithsonian museums and attend the awards banquet that evening, hoping to bring home the number-one prize.

Creek

Continued from page 2

most site in Bald Head Creek.

While coliform bacteria counts were relatively low in February and March (only one, in Cape Creek on March 10, exceeded the 41-count mark), extraordinary figures began to crop up in Bald Head Creek in April.

On April 20 the bacteria counts, proceeding upstream by station, were 23, 110, 110, 49, 130 and 240; and on May 21 the counts were 14, 33, 9.3, 49, 23 and 140.

For comparison the counts in Cape Creek for April 20 were 7.8, 21, 13, 23, 23 and 33; and on May 21 they were 33, 2.0, 22, 2.0, 7.8 and less than 1.8.

Gilbert said his office will continue the special sampling in Bald Head waters "for the next few months."

"We'll see if the winter is going to be better than the summer," he said. "That is the height of the shellfish sanitation season. But it doesn't look good for the tourist who wants to get out in the creek and clam."

Gilbert said that in the long run

further shore-side examinations -- including putting dye in sewer and septic tank systems on the island -- may be necessary to discover or rule out sources of human pollution.

Deal

Continued from page 2

ing to the Town of Long Beach, and dumped them into a private person's field," Payne said.

While the employees stated that Johnson did not give them this order directly, they said their supervisor, public works director Charles Derrick, gave them the order, and that it apparently had come from above.

Johnson denied these allegations, however, and said he is having his attorney look into the possibility of suing Payne, Montgomery and Webb for slander and libel.

"I'm not going to play with these people," Johnson declared. "I don't have a whole lot of respect for someone who tries to pull something out of the air because he doesn't have anything else to work with. He didn't have a defense; it was just pure and simple sour grapes."

Johnson said the only order he gave to his employees was to clean out the town garage, which he said was "filthy" when he arrived. During this clean-up, he said employees removed a pile of corroded pipes that had been sitting outside since the water system was installed 14 years ago. Street superintendent Cliff Brown apparently wanted some of the pipe, and Johnson said most of it was then dumped at Brown's house.

"If he had a use for it, I have no problem with that," he said. "I certainly couldn't do anything with it.... If I did something wrong, I'd want to know what I did and what I gained from it."

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