

Brunswick

Continued from page 1 into the contract.

An appointed committee will recommend ways to handle the county's commercial accounts. Businesses are not covered in the Waste Industries contract and are left to negotiate deals with haulers on their own. Ms. Collier heads that committee but said Monday's approval of the contract eliminates the bargaining power commercial accounts may have held with Waste Industries.

"We're going to try to meet this week, and maybe we could have sat down and worked things out," said Ms. Collier.

Commissioners Bill Sue, David Sandifer and Jo Ann Bellamy Simmons approved the plan that is scheduled to begin within 120 days. Waste Industries officials have said they need the leeway to order 40,000 roll-out carts and new equipment needed to service neighborhoods that large trucks cannot access.

All five commissioners say they favored the curbside, once-a-week proposal but disagreed with how contract negotiations evolved. Warren said he wanted towns in his district to have at least a week to review the draft. Sunset Beach town administrator Linda Fluegel told commissioners she received a draft on Friday and that her town board hasn't had time to discuss the proposal.

"During all of our discussions with municipalities, we told them we would allow them to review the final draft before we voted on it," said Warren. "In my district, the municipalities were also concerned about the fines, and in having stiff enough fines to be sure Waste Industries did what they said they would do. That's important, especially with the big task of county-wide curbside service. It should have enough bite to be sure they were held accountable."

The contract includes a \$10-per-month penalty for each customer resulting from poor service or ineffective service. The county will pay a contract price based on a rate of \$10.98 per household per month for once-a-week collection. Sandifer said it's in the company's best interest to provide good service so it can earn the full amount from the county.

Municipalities may opt to offer an additional pickup within their jurisdiction or residents can purchase additional pickup or extra carts for \$4.80 each per month from Waste Industries. Tipping fees will be imposed at the convenience stations and landfill to keep trash from being trucked in from outside the county. In the past, there have been no fees and no way to monitor illegal dumping by non-residents.

The contract also doesn't address curbside recycling, but commission-

ers say this is just the beginning of what may eventually include recycling service in both rural areas and inside towns.

"I hope we pursue it on a county-wide level, too, with recycling," said Sandifer. "This doesn't address it, and it was never going to address it."

Commissioners planned to approve the contract February 23, but delays in negotiations with Waste Industries pushed the deadline back several weeks. It may

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Don Warren
District 1 commissioner

already be too late to start July 1 as planned, but under the contract Waste Industries should be able to begin by July 14, or within 120 days, said county attorney Huey Marshall.

"We can't put everything in this contract or we could be sitting here for the next two years talking about this contract," said board chairman Jo Ann Bellamy Simmons.

Recyclables will still be collected at the convenience and transfer stations for newspapers, brown and clear glass, aluminum cans, cardboard, green glass and plastic bottles. Waste Industries will manage and operate the convenience stations and charge fees for solid waste by the truckload. Fees for construction and demolition debris will start at \$5 and increase to a maximum of \$32.50 for a full pickup load.

Yard wastes can be dumped at prices ranging from \$1.50 per bag to \$14 per truckload. A charge will be applied at the convenience stations for white goods and brown goods, or household appliances. Commissioners say they will offer times in the spring and fall when residents can dump yard waste free at the landfill.

The contract does allow both sides to end the deal given 30 days' notice, a clause that Long Beach councilor Kevin Bell said should be handled with caution.

"What's going to happen if Waste Industries says, 'You've got 30 days to decide what you want to do with your solid wastes but we've got to pull out?'" asked Bell.

Sandifer said as long as the coun-

ty's trash is being handled by someone other than Brunswick County, the county will remain under that company's control. He said the county will continue to hunt for a new landfill site as insurance.

Long Beach

Continued from page 1

mments Brunswick County seeks with each municipality bind each town to the Waste Industries contract county commissioners executed Monday night.

Walters presented a proposed interlocal agreement containing five "economic incentives" he said the town needs.

"Sending this (agreement), prepared from our point of view, to the county for their reaction -- this would toss our concerns back into the county's court," Walters said.

Walters proposed interlocal agreement mirrors the agreement drafted by Brunswick County, but adds:

■ A provision whereby Long Beach customers, who already own their PolyKarts, would receive a 93-cent monthly credit for trash service. Waste Industries has contracted to collect trash curbside from all homes in the county at a cost equal to \$10.98 per household, including provision of a 90- or 96-gallon container Long Beach customers don't need.

■ A provision whereby the Town of Long Beach would receive a \$38-per-ton rebate for all recycled materials collected in town. The town has long argued the contract with Waste Industries provides no incentive for recycling.

■ A provision whereby the cost of "tub grinding" yard debris would be rebated to Long Beach.

■ A provision whereby a 60-cent-per-month credit would be given each Long Beach customer as an "economic benefit fee."

■ A provision whereby a \$5,000 lump sum would be rebated to Long Beach as a "community clean-up grant to the town."

While council took no action on the Walters alternative, mayor Joan Altman instructed councilors to review the proposal and to bring back suggestions to improve or alter it for further council discussion in April.

While all councilors expressed dissatisfaction with the county solid waste contract with Waste Industries, each had different reasons and several advocated different solutions.

Councilor Horace Collier suggested Long Beach could save money by exercising the three remaining years of its own contract with Waste Industries, independent of any program Brunswick County begins. He said to make up the additional charges Brunswick County will levy as tipping and transportation fees, the town could initiate a "mandatory recycling program" which would reduce the town's waste tonnage.

"The county action only impacts us for tipping fees and transportation fees, so we are not really under the gun to jump on this thing," Collier said. "I maintain the town would be better off to do nothing, institute mandatory recycling to reduce tonnage."

Councilor Kevin Bell remained the most critical of the county and Waste Industries deal. Though he will be a member of Brunswick County's committee to negotiate a possible deal for commercial trash hauling, he said that committee's bargaining position with Waste Industries was undercut by county commissioners' Monday night contract adoption.

"The contract has been signed and Waste Industries now has a monop-

oly on solid waste in Brunswick County," Bell said.

Bell and mayor Altman said because there was a great distance between homes in rural portions of Brunswick County, densely populated municipalities would be "subsidizing" the cost of rural collection under the county contract.

Bell also asserted trash collection cost for commercial interests would rise 142 percent for an eight-yard dumpster and that the real financial bonanza for Waste Industries was not in the \$30-million, six-year contract with Brunswick County for residential service, but in the busi-

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Long Beach mayor

ness it will do with commercial interests.

Councilor Jim Locke admitted the county plan was poor, but said Long Beach residents would pay the \$10.98 portion of their ad valorem county taxes whether Long Beach participated in the county trash plan or not.

Mayor Altman asserted all of the town's overtures to county commissioners had been ignored. None of the concerns held by several municipalities had been given serious consideration, she said.

"The county is waiting for an interlocal agreement with Long Beach," Altman said. "... The only thing to negotiate is the terms of the interlocal agreement. Apparently the county had no concern for our feelings on the contract. It is the only thing we have to respond with."

But, for now, Long Beach will make no response at all.

"We have to do what is best for the people in this town," Altman said in frustration. "Lying down, rolling over and taking the deal is not the best we can do."

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