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NC

SBSD weighs budget

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Residents of Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District will have a new district property tax to pay for the first time next year if district commissioners adopt the budget proposal they continued to refine Tuesday.

The \$962,000 SBSBD budget proposal debated by commissioners calls for establishment of a first-time district property tax of 30 cents per \$100 valuation. The property tax is expected to yield \$162,000 next year, or just under 17 percent of all district revenue.

With the district's treatment plant scheduled to come on line at mid-year -- around January, 1999 -- sewer use fees are projected to provide the district \$274,000 in the fiscal year to begin July 1. Sewer connection fees are expected to add \$370,000 next year; "other services," which include building inspection and permit fees, will provide \$155,000 and "miscellaneous" revenues are expected to total \$1,000.

Projected expenses in Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District for the year beginning July 1 include \$50,550 for office expenses and \$61,850 for operation of the district treatment plant. General expenses -- including \$119,000 for personnel, \$240,000 as a contract payment to the City of Southport and a \$235,000 capital fund -- total \$849,600.

Personnel expenses indicate the district proposes to hire a manager and employ a billing and administrative clerk, a building inspector and a clerk-typist. The budget also reflects a \$20,000 appropriation for a "police officer," but sanitary districts may not establish police departments under existing state law.

A draft budget is to be publicly presented by commissioners when they meet in regular monthly session Monday. That meeting is to begin at 8 a.m. at the district office on Long Beach Road. The board will also likely schedule a public hearing on the budget proposal for mid-June. Commissioners will be free to adopt a budget after conduct of that hearing and before June 30.

TAKING FLIGHT



Memorial Day weekenders had a fine time at Brunswick County Airport on Saturday, inspecting the new "Carolina Belle" biplane of Ocean Aire Aviation, or even taking a ride. Skydivers and "Moonwalking" for kids kept interest at a high level throughout the afternoon.



Photos by Jim Harper

Financial plus

Yaupon plan of annexation said feasible

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

It will cost the Town of Yaupon Beach an estimated \$30,000 to provide services in the first year of annexation to its 483-acre target area on the mainland bordering Long Beach Road, Airport Road and Fish Factory Road.

That same area will generate about \$60,000 in new revenues for Yaupon Beach in the same period.

In short, annexation of the mainland tract by the Town of Yaupon Beach is financially feasible as the area will provide twice the revenue Yaupon Beach will need to provide it services, the town's recently published annexation study has concluded.

Yaupon Beach commissioners in

March adopted a "resolution of intent" to annex the sizable mainland tract. Mayor Dot Kelly said the annexation of new land was to be done for "economic" reasons, providing sufficient land for the town to grow as it nears build-out on the island side of the Oak Island bridge. The annexation will also bring the Yaupon Beach wastewater plant site into corporate limits.

Under terms of state law governing annexation, Yaupon Beach on Friday published its formal annexation study -- a document establishing that statutory requirements of the target area have been met and that the town is financially able to provide all services to the annexation area it provides to current residents of the town. A copy of the

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Long Beach

Council opens budget review

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Town manager Jerry Walters' proposed \$6.751-million 1998-99 budget proposal for the Town of Long Beach will be the subject of an initial budget workshop of town council Thursday at 10 a.m.

Council will begin its examination of the proposal which calls for a property tax increase of three cents, to 42 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. The proposal also calls for a \$1.37 monthly increase in solid waste fees and suggests an unspecified water rate increase to reflect an anticipated increase in Brunswick County's wholesale water rate.

The proposed 42-cent tax rate is based on a total estimated townwide valuation of \$483.9 million and a tax collection rate of 95.41 percent.

The property tax is expected to generate \$1,939,068, or just under 44 percent of the town's proposed \$4.44-million general fund budget for fiscal year 1998-99.

The general fund is proposed to be balanced this year with a nearly \$256,000 appropriation from general fund unappropriated balance at the end of the current fiscal year.

Greatest costs anticipated by the proposed general fund budget are \$1.02 million for general government, \$1.15 million for police, \$924,000 for streets and \$715,000 for recreation.

The town's fire department is projected to receive \$83,608 in the coming year and the town's rescue squad, which will have four new full-time salaried employees, is to receive \$196,255.

Although water system costs cannot be accurately determined until Brunswick County commissioners declare wholesale rates for the coming year, a proposed municipal water system budget of \$1.29 million has been advanced, based on current costs.

That water system budget, subject to change, is based on the current-year basic monthly water rate of

\$7.18 and a user rate of \$1.93 per thousand gallons of consumption.

Total cost of all solid waste efforts in Long Beach next year -- including a new curbside recycling program, curbside yard debris removal with a leaf vacuum and a second weekly household waste collection seasonally, will cost just over \$465,000.

The three-percent tax on accommodations in Long Beach is expected to generate \$235,533 in the coming year and a capital reserve fund of just over \$48,000 has been authorized.

Council will likely address most budget concerns in three or four workshop meetings. A public hearing on a refined budget proposal reflecting council's input will be set later in June.

Brunswick schools

Writing skill grades exceed region, state

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Brunswick County's seventh and tenth graders scored better than other students from across the region and state on the 1998 end-of-grade writing test.

While the county's fourth graders as a whole didn't reach state level, their scores also climbed from last year's results.

The scores left school administrators and teachers ecstatic over what is viewed as steady progress in the county schools. For the first time since the state began administering the writing test program, all grade levels in Brunswick County showed improvement.

Some, like South Brunswick Middle School's seventh grade and North Brunswick High School's tenth grade, scored remarkably higher than the state and regional averages by 15 to 20 points. Test results tell school officials the percentage of students who score a passing grade of 2.5 or 3.0 on the state's expository writing tests, which are graded by readers on a scale from 0 to 6.

"Generally, the results are excellent," said assistant superintendent for instruction Mary McDuffie. "This is a real cause for celebration in Brunswick County."

Brunswick County's seventh and tenth grade students scored higher than New Hanover County students,

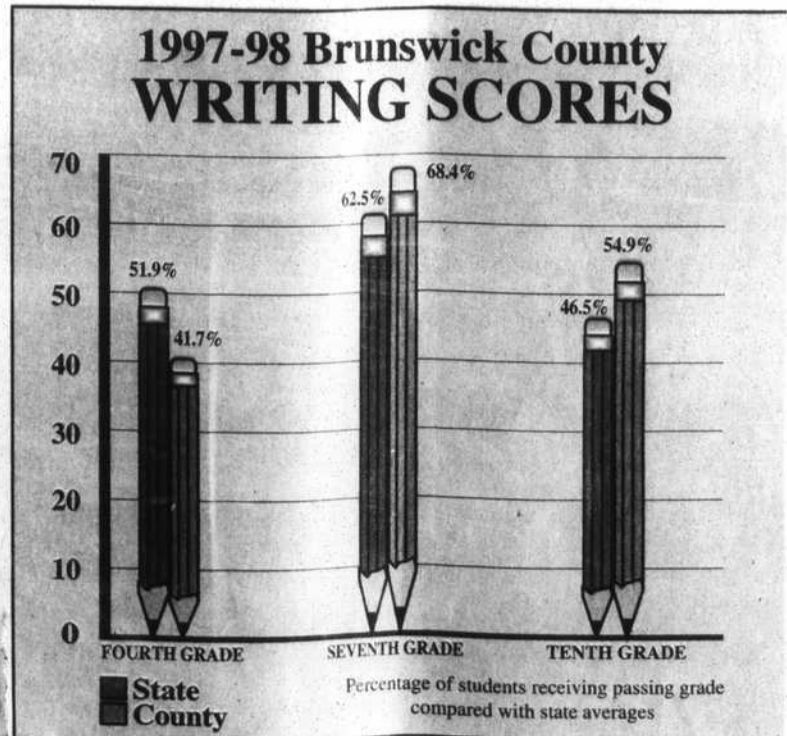
In the tenth grade, Brunswick County is almost ten percentage points higher than the state with 54.9 percent making a passing grade of 3.0 or higher. Last year, only 48 percent of county tenth graders made passing marks.

"Historically, this has been an area where we have had to really focus on improvement," said Ms. McDuffie. "We exceeded the regional average and the state average, which is tremendous progress for our high schools."

Seventh grade students improved their scores in one year by 15 percentage points. That means 68.4 percent of seventh grade students scored a 2.5 or higher on the scale compared to 53.4 percent in 1997.

"Our results in the seventh grade were phenomenal," said Ms. McDuffie. "The scores exceeded the

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Juvenile reforms proposed

By Terry Pope
County Editor

A juvenile justice reform act sponsored by state Rep. David Redwine (D-Ocean Isle Beach) and introduced to the N. C. House of Representatives would hold parents more accountable when their children break the law.

Parents could be required to attend court hearings with their child, pay court costs and make sure the child complies with court orders or probation requirements under House Bill 1373. They could also be required to attend family counseling or parenting classes.

Redwine said HB 1373 is a good starting point for trying to reduce juvenile crime and involves \$40 million in the recommended state budget to pay for the proposals.

"We have tried to make parental responsibility and community

See Juvenile, page 7

Bald Head plans hike in tax rate

By Jim Harper
Staff Writer

A budget calling for a tax rate increase of 14 cents will be the subject of a workshop Friday and public hearing Saturday on Bald Head Island.

Village manager Wade Horne's proposed 1998-99 budget calls for increase from the present 67.5 cents, for a total of 81.5 cents per \$100 valuation, to help build a capital reserve fund.

In his May 1 budget message to council, Horne proposed applying accommodations tax proceeds, which have been previously used to pay for debts incurred in beach renourish-

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