



Arcola Rural Fire Department fireman Wemyss Harris helped firefighters from Warrenton Rural Fire Department battle a blaze early last Thursday morning that left four residents homeless and in disbelief. Efforts

were almost useless, as the intensity of the flames completely destroyed the 1800s-era home located on Hwy. 43.

(Photo by Brenda Clarke)

Flames Destroy Liberia Home

By DIANE DAVIS
Staff Writer

One of Warrenton Rural Fire Department's most intense fires this year destroyed an 1800s-era home located on Highway 43 last Thursday.

The house, a wood framed structure that had been built in the 1800s, was totally engulfed in flames when firefighters from the Warrenton Rural Fire Department arrived on the scene in response to the 12:18 a.m. call.

"It looked like the sun was rising from the highway when we were driving up to it," Chief Kenny Clayton stated. The flames were so intense, he noted, that you could feel the heat inside the cab of the truck as it neared the house.

One of the four residents inside the house was awakened by the smell of smoke. When he went downstairs to investigate, he found that the room containing a wood stove was completely

enveloped in flames and smoke. He immediately woke the other residents and they escaped the burning structure.

With no possible way to re-enter the house to call for help, the residents hurried to a neighbor's house approximately a half-mile away to phone in the fire.

With the roof and the second story of the structure already collapsed, firefighters discovered that they would need assistance in their efforts of saving any portion of the home. The Arcola Fire Department answered Warrenton Rural's call for help with a load of water and eight men.

The house was being rented by Ms. Mary Powell at the time of the blaze. She stated that the owner of the house lived in New Jersey.

Chief Clayton estimated that the house was worth \$15,000, and the contents were worth \$10,000.

During May Primary

\$14.5 Million Bond Election Called For

By THURLETTA M. BROWN
News Editor

The Board of Warren County Commissioners, used to burning the midnight oil in deliberations about the proposed bond referendum for capital needs in Warren County, will assemble once again on Monday at 7 p.m. in the courthouse to introduce bond orders and to set a date for a public hearing on the matter.

By Monday of this week, an application was due to the Local Government Commission, an overseeing body of financial matters, to request approval to issue the bonds.

These actions came on the heels of a resolution adopted last Wednesday night by the Warren County Board of Commissioners to proceed with the issuance of general obligation bonds of Warren County. The resolution gave to the county manager and to the clerk to the board authorization to file a notice of intent with the Local Government Commission and to publish that notice in area newspapers. The notice appeared last week in the Henderson Daily Dispatch. It appears elsewhere in this issue of The Warren Record.

The resolution was adopted following a motion by Commissioner J. T. Fleming, which was seconded by Commissioner George Shearin. Voting in the affirmative for the resolution were Chairman Eva Clayton and commissioners George Shearin, Francis Alston and J. T. Fleming.

Commissioner William Skinner, who cast the only opposing vote, listed as his objection a desire not to "saddle the taxpayers with more debt. I'm not voting against the schools, the jail or whatever," Skinner said. "It is just a vote against an increase in taxes."

Down from the \$18.4 million level discussed earlier, the notice of intent proposed to submit to voters in a referendum issuance of bonds totaling \$14.5 million. The reduction in dollar amount was accomplished by the elimination of certain components contained in the original architectural conception of the law enforcement center and renovations of school buildings for county office use.

According to N. C. General Statutes that govern the process, Warren County citizens may, within seven days of publication of the notice in this paper, send to the local board of county commissioners and to the Local Government Commission written objections to the bond issue. Persons who do so must indicate their name and address on the correspondence, the guidelines noted. Citizens' objections to the

proposal will be considered by the Commission during its investigation.

Warren County's current tax rate per \$100 valuation is 76 cents. The notice of intent estimated that additional property taxes of nine cents per \$100 valuation would be needed to pay the debt service requirements of the bonds. The appraised value of property in Warren County is \$440 million.

Chairman Eva Clayton noted that the bonds must be issued in the most responsible way. "We must achieve the maximum good in the least expensive way," she said. All members of the board agreed, noting that the county's taxpayers should not be overburdened. "We've considered the citizens throughout the entire

process," Commissioner Shearin said. "We've given this question a lot of study and time, but citizens here will have the option of deciding whether to do this or not," Commissioner Fleming said.

Charles Johnson, legal advisor to the board, commented that approval of the referendum by area citizens would not mean that the entire authorization would be used. "The county would have the option to borrow up to that amount," he said, "but we could borrow all or nothing. You are not obligated to borrow all that you have been authorized to get."

The board of county commissioners' called meeting on Monday, Feb. 29, at 7 p.m. to schedule a date for a public hearing on the matter will be open to the public.

Critical Needs Stated

\$3 Million School Application Okayed

By THURLETTA M. BROWN
News Editor

Warren County's application for \$3 million from the N. C. Critical School Facilities Needs Fund was approved jointly by the county's boards of education and county commissioners in a special meeting held Monday night at the Warren County Courthouse.

"The critical needs application is not for a specific amount, but is a statement of need," Superintendent Michael Williams said. "A commission will decide how much, if any, will be awarded."

The allocation, which is sought here as a source of "gap funding" to meet needs not met by the proposed capital needs bonds, will be awarded by a special commission, formed recently by the State Board of Education. The commission will review all applications submitted by counties in the state for portions of the \$96 million legislated last year.

Funds from this and other state sources are funneled through the board of county commissioners rather than through boards of education, Superintendent Williams said.

Board of Education Chairman Henry Pitchford said that all monies received from state sources for construction purposes would be used to retire the bond. "We want to clear the minds of the public and assure them of our intent." The statement was made in response to the county commissioners' request that an assurance be given by the board of education.

"We appreciate that spirit... (because)...no board can bind another (board)," Commissioner Chairman Eva Clayton said. "We want to make sure all hard questions are asked in advance. Once the citizens vote, we enter into debt—and that is binding," she said. "We just want to make sure there is a mechanism in place... (and we are)...not suggesting ill-intent."

The Critical School Facilities Needs Fund Commission will use a number of variables in making its decision, among them state-derived per-capita-income (PCI), per-pupil-tax-base (PPTB) and composite rankings.

According to Superintendent Williams, Warren County's PCI and PPTB rankings are 79 and 59, respectively. The county's composite ranking is 138. "This puts

us in the bottom quartile...a competitive ranking," he said.

Funding for the Critical School Facility Needs Fund, which was created by the School Finance Act of 1987, will come from four sources: (1) the 1983 one-half-cent sales tax, the 1986 one-half-cent sales tax, the public school building fund (ADM) and Basic Education Plan (BEP) transfers.

The application provided for the commission the following statistics that relate to Warren County:

—In 1984, Warren County's per capita income was \$8,347, an amount which placed the county in the last quartile among the state's 100 counties.

—Warren County's adjusted per-pupil property valuation per child is \$135,998. Only 16 (out of 140) school units in the state have a lower tax base.

—Almost 25 percent of Warren County's families live at or below the poverty level.

Warren County's effective tax rate of 69 cents is the eighth highest in the state, ranking the county 124th in its ability to pay and 37th in terms of its relative effort.

"Warren County is doing all it can to provide for its children's education and is deserving of support from this fund," the superintendent said. "We are in a good position; we have done our homework, and we will be there 'first in line' when they start passing it out," he quipped.

Monday Sessions

Planned By Boards

Two of Warren County's policy-making bodies—the board of county commissioners and the board of education—will meet in open session on Monday evening.

The Warren County Board of County Commissioners will convene at the courthouse at 7 p.m. to introduce bond orders to authorize the issue of \$14,500,000 in general obligation bonds.

A date for a public hearing on the subject is also expected to be set.

The general obligation bonds, if approved by Warren County's eligible voters in a general referendum on May 3, will be used to finance capital needs for Warren County.

The Warren County Board of Education will convene in open session on Monday evening.

(Continued on page 8)

Change Of Warren Road Names Draws Response From Residents

Warren County residents came out in full force to the public hearing held last Wednesday evening to receive final citizen input on a road signing project to place road naming signs on unmarked intersections in the unincorporated areas of the county. The project has been limited to roads that are a part of the state system.

Warren County Fireman's Association President Walter Gardner appeared before the board with a corrected list of secondary roads. Gardner represented 13 fire departments and

the county's rescue and ambulance services.

Citizens who were unable to attend the hearing due to scheduling conflicts had made their wishes known by telephone, either to the office of the county manager or to members of the board:

—Russell Currin had asked that S.R. 1336 be named Hub-quarter Road and that S.R. 1347 be called Currin Road instead of Kearns Road.

—Earl Stegall had requested that S.R. 1382, known now as Lynch Subdivision Road, be named Lynch Point Road.

—Mrs. Cora Hawkins had requested that S.R. 1600, known now as the Baltimore Road, be changed to Thornton Road. The residence of Mansfield F. Thornton, the first black register of deeds for Warren County from

1879 until 1900, is located on S.R. 1600.

—An unidentified citizen had requested that S.R. 1001, the Warrenton-Henderson Road, be changed to Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Persons in the audience made known their requests as well:

—Nathaniel Plummer asked that S.R. 1364, known now as (Continued on page 8)

Special Term Set

A special session of Warren County Superior Court to be held on Monday, Feb. 29 will involve allegations between the families of E. N. Brantley and Earl Limer.

The session is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. with Judge Hamilton H. Hobgood presiding. A list of jurors has been drawn for this special session of court.

Closely Watched Sales Re-Set

Two public sales—one involving an historic Warrenton home, the other a farm and home between Warrenton and Warren Plains—will continue next month as upset bids have been recorded in each.

An upset bid was received late Monday which will force a re-sale of the Green-Polk House on North Main Street in Warrenton. The upset bid for the brick Greek Revival house built prior to The Civil War was entered by Norlina native Fletcher Wolfe, now director of the Atlanta Boys Choir. Wolfe had purchased the home earlier in a series of sales and re-sales which began Dec. 18 when a Raleigh executive, John Ross, purchased the house and several acres of land for \$45,000.

Also upping the price during the series of sales was Warren native Betty Halthcock Peoples.

When the re-sale is conducted at noon on Friday, March 4, bidding will begin at \$52,550.

Another re-sale, involving some 70 acres of land and the homeplace of George Willis Shearin on the Warren Plains Road, is scheduled for noon on Thursday, March 3 when bidding will begin at \$58,850.

The re-sale was assured when Priscilla Ann Haddad of Knightdale submitted an upset bid to Clerk of Court Richard E. Hunter, Jr. The property was first bought by Commercial Credit Corp. of Raleigh for \$18,100 on Dec. 14.

Since then bids have been made by Alpheus Jones of Warrenton, W. H. Hawks and John S. Powell of Warrenton and Jesse Brannon and Leonard Price, Lake Gaston property owners.