



THE NEWS RECORD

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF MADISON COUNTY

80th Year No. 45

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE COUNTY SEAT AT MARSHALL, N.C.

THURSDAY, November 5, 1981

15c Per Copy

In Municipal Mayoral Contests

Ponder, Baker, Powell

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK
Editor

Two incumbents and a newcomer won mayoral posts in Madison County's three municipal elections yesterday as voters turned out in strong numbers to cast their ballots before the polls closed at 7:30 p.m.

Incumbent Mayor Lawrence Ponder received better than 68 percent of the votes cast in Marshall to soundly defeat three challengers and secure his third term as mayor of the county seat. Total votes in the mayor's race were Ponder, 288; Charles Crowe, 82; Marion Jones Wallin, 27; and Albert Rector, 14.

Newcomer **Deborah Ponder Baker** captured 58 percent of the vote in Hot Springs to become the first woman mayor in the town's history. Mrs. Baker's 154 votes easily defeated Frank Robert's 27 and Richard Waltz's 79. Incumbent Hot Springs Mayor Swann Huff did not seek reelection.

Incumbent Mars Hill Mayor William Powell had no opponent in the election, and neither did the town's three aldermen. Consequently only 70 people showed up at town hall to vote. After a mere 10 minutes tally, final figures

showed Powell with 69, Alderman Carl Eller with 69, Alderman Art Wood with 67, and Alderman Gordon Randolph with 70 votes.

The contest for the three aldermen's seats in Marshall was anything but cut and dried as five of the 10 candidates remained almost neck and neck until the last 45 minutes of the vote counting. Voters finally elected incumbent Jackie Davis, John Dodson, and incumbent James Penland as their aldermen, but Sammy Lunsford and Ed Niles proved to be strong contenders in the race.

Incumbent alderman S.L. Nix was solidly beaten by newcomer Dotson.

Vote totals in the Marshall aldermen's race were Jackie Davis, 190; John Dotson, 183; James Penland, 173; Sammy Lunsford, 154; Ed Niles, 129; Cleophas Ward, 95; James B. Mariar, 88; Roy Reeves, 76; and Harold Anders, 12.

In the Hot Springs aldermen's race, incumbents Jerry Ramsey and Wesley H. Staudé and one-time alderman Ernest D. Autry defeated four other candidates by better than a two to one majority. Each of the aldermen-elect received more than 62 percent of the 264 votes cast there.

Hot Springs aldermen totals



Lawrence Ponder

were Autry, 166; Ramsey, 174; Staudé, 171; Rex Brendle, 36; Franklin S. Holmes, 62; Arthur Roberts, 44; and Curtis Roberts, 65.

Although Mrs. Baker has

become the first woman ever to be elected as mayor in Hot Springs, she is certainly no novice at Madison County political life. Currently a Hot Springs alderman, she is a



Deborah Ponder Baker

member of the long-time politically influential Ponder family.

Her father, R.Z. (Bobby) Ponder, is chairman of the Madison County Board of

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Marshall, NC 28753 9/81



William Powell

Education, and her great uncle, Zeno Ponder, is known throughout the state as the political "king pin" of Madison County. Another great uncle, Sheriff E.Y.

Ponder, has been re-elected to that office for 20 some years.

Mrs. Baker, 24, is married to Clayton W. Baker and she is employed as director of the

Madison County Food Service program.

More than 50 percent of registered voters turned out in both Marshall and Hot Springs for the election.



District Visit

BOB ORR, district assistant for Congressman Bill Hendon, will be in Marshall Thursday, Nov. 5 to listen to any problems local citizens may have with which Rep. Hendon may be of help. Orr will be at the Town Hall in Marshall at 9 a.m. and said he welcomes anyone who would like to discuss federal government.

Ernest Messer Sworn In As Division Of Aging Director

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK

ASHEVILLE — Assuring Gov. Jim Hunt that he would do his "dead level best," Ernest B. Messer of Canton became the state's new director of the Division of Aging and assistant secretary of the N.C. Department of Human Resources in a swearing in ceremony Friday in Asheville.

Hunt appointed Messer to the position Oct. 15, and upon being sworn in by Buncombe County District Court Judge Peter L. Roda, Messer gave up his 44th District House seat ending a 19-year career as representative from Haywood County.

Messer told reporters he plans to keep the state's elderly citizens busy and to teach them good eating and exercise habits to keep them from getting sick.

He said many of the state's 600,000 residents over 65 years old have nothing to do. "They need motivation and involvement," he said. One of his goals is to get the elderly involved in volunteer work in various community activities.

Hunt told newsmen and Messer's friends at the ceremony, "You are going to see and you are going to hear from this man all over the state."

Messer, a Democrat, served

as chairman of the House Committee on Aging in the General Assembly for the past four years. To date, no one has been appointed to replace him in the House.

Messer began work in his new office Monday, but he began to feel the responsibility of his position Friday when confronted with questions regarding the impact of state-imposed restrictions on the number of drug prescriptions the elderly can receive with Medicaid funds. That number will be limited to four per month.

Messer said the state has received a mandate from the federal government to take \$25 million out of the Medicaid program. And, rather than completely eliminate some of the programs, "the administration and the General Assembly agreed to cut all of them rather than deprive the people of some service," he said.

He said the state has cut Medicaid coverage for outpatient hospital care from 90 percent to 80 percent, the number of visits to doctors and mental health centers to 18, the dental program by "several million dollars," and the drug prescription program to four prescriptions per month.

Messer said he has been told that four prescriptions per month "will be satisfactory for about 95 percent of the people" and people should realize that "pharmacists have a vested interest in selling drugs" when they hear pharmacists saying that some elderly persons may die as a result of the cutback.

"If we have problems, it

may be possible that we can change it (the restriction) so some of them can get more than four," he said.



SWEARING IN - Ernest B. Messer (left) takes the oath of office as director of the North Carolina Division of Aging Friday at the Governor's Western Office in Asheville.

Buncombe County District Court Judge Peter L. Roda administered the oath to Messer.

School Board Authorizes 'Choice' Menu At High School

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK
Editor

Whether or not the one dollar price tag on school lunches in Madison County has hurt lunchroom sales is debatable, but school officials took measures Monday to overcome a 17 percent drop in sales at Madison High School and "increase participation and revenue" in the school's lunch program.

The board of education unanimously adopted a resolution which authorizes Madison High to offer "a choice of foods and alternate sales" in the high school cafeteria on an experimental basis.

High school principal David Wyatt approved at the board meeting saying students and the administration at the school want to try a plan in which

students would have a choice of two Type A meals with the opportunity to buy extra items.

In granting the request for the new meal plan, board members said the plan would not sacrifice the dietary needs of students nor increase the cost of the meals to the school system.

Consequently, students may wind up paying more than one dollar for lunch if they elect to buy extra items under the alternate sales part of the plan.

School officials said 87 percent of the school's 600 students bought lunches during last year, but that figure has dropped to 79 percent this year. Wyatt said he thinks the new plan will work. "I think it will increase participation and also increase the revenue," he

said. If student participation in the lunchroom program continues to slump, the school could face laying off some members of the cafeteria staff since all programs must gauge their employee hours according to how many lunches are served.

Board chairman Bobby Ponder wanted to know if second choice on the menu would provide students with proper nutrition or would it be set up "where a student could just run in and grab a hamburger." Wyatt assured the board the plan would offer a choice of two Type A meals.

All school meal programs must meet the federal standards of two ounces of protein, three-fourths cup total of fruits

and/or vegetables, one-half pint of milk and one ounce of bread. Standards for K-3 children are slightly lower.

Wyatt said the choiced menu plan would be similar to the one used at Mt. Heritage High School in Yancey County.

In other business, the board: *Approved budget amendments to incorporate both state and federal monies into the 1981-82 fiscal budget.

Budget amendments concerning state school monies amounted to \$96,378: Bus Drivers' salaries, \$22,500; Maintenance salary, \$6,000; Teacher aide plus benefits, \$14,838; Developmental Day Care, \$18,000; Michigan salary, \$1,000; and Sports medicine program, \$900. A \$1,000 item

was taken out of the budget since the board declined to enter the "Adopt-A-School" program authorized by the state.

Budget amendments concerning federal monies totaled \$30,507.25 for two categories: Youth Opportunity Specialist, \$18,000 (for salary, benefits, travel and instructional supplies); and Gifted and Talented, \$12,507.25.

*Approved a \$5,000 contract with Greene, Skidmore and Smith, public accountants.

*Approved a deferred day on which to meet monthly beginning with the January calendar. The board will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m.

*Approved a recommendation from Marshall School Principal Fred Stegalski

to terminate the employment of Barbara Bullman, a teacher aide, and hire Jane Goforth as a teacher aide.

*Approved the hiring of Laura Stewart as a teacher of handicapped children at Mars Hill Elementary School.

*Approved the request of Roxann Allen to transfer her handicapped child from Mars Hill Elementary to Marshall School and agreed to request funds from the state Department of Transportation to pay for transporting the student to Marshall.

*Informal Budget Review, since he has become a resident of Yancey County, had proposed that the school system should consider a plan to reduce the number of school buses.