

Absences At Council Meeting Cause Budget Woes At Sunset

BY BILL MCGOWAN

The Town of Sunset Beach is operating with an unbalanced budget this week, against North Carolina statute.

According to Clerk Linda Fluegel, council's failure to reach a quorum at its May meeting Monday night has prevented her from transferring some \$30,000 within the current budget to cover shortfalls.

The governing bodies of North Carolina municipalities may not take action at meetings at which a quorum, or majority, of members is not present.

Fluegel's problems paying the bills will result in a special meeting being called. As of late Monday afternoon, the meeting tentatively had been scheduled for today (Thursday) at 7:30 p.m. at the town hall, Fluegel said.

While council members Don Safrit and George Foster and Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gore found their hands tied by lack of a quorum Monday night, the men listened as Fluegel read through the list of May bills. They agreed to authorize Safrit, as financial officer, to write those checks.

Not in attendance at the meeting were council members Mary Catherine Griffith and Kathy Hill.

Contacted at her place of employment Tuesday, Griffith said she was unable to attend the meeting because of a "family emergency."

When questioned about off-the-record statements by a town official that she and Griffith had stayed away from the meeting intentionally, she said, "It seems that when other people miss meetings, whether they are public hearings or work sessions or whatever, no one says a thing. But when I miss a meeting, questions arise."

The Beacon was unable to reach Hill by telephone.

Concerning the town's finances, Fluegel said Tuesday afternoon she needed budget amendments "to get the budget back to balance. We have an unbalanced budget. That's illegal."

Amendments totaling \$30,805 are needed for the following line items to see the town through the end of the fiscal year (June 30): planning and zoning, \$4,760; public buildings and inspection, \$4,600; police, \$3,615; streets, \$6,400; power bills, \$11,430; and nondepartmental (FICA and retirement), \$908.

Had council held its meeting Monday night, Fluegel said, all of the funds needed could have been transferred from within the current budget. When council does take action, she said, some \$25,000 will most likely be transferred out of the sanitation department's capital outlay fund.

Also at Monday night's meeting, council members attempted to set a public hearing on the fiscal 1985-86

budget for July 1, one day after the deadline for approving municipal budgets.

According to Fluegel, council will have to reset the date for the hearing at its next meeting.

Annexation Proposed

Although not formally presented to council, a petition for annexation of Sea Trail Links was discussed briefly by Mayor Pro Tem Gore, also head of Sea Trail Corp., developer of the 18-hole, par-72 course.

While Gore said he did not know the exact acreage of the area proposed for annexation, he said there are 100 acres of fairways on the course, and much of the course is included in the proposal.

Martin said the land is contiguous. It begins at the entrance to the course and circles most of its entirety.

All of the land is owned by Sea Trail Corp., Gore said. The land is bordered on the west by the entrance road to the club house (off Highway 179), he said, but it crosses 179 on the east by the depth of the property, which ranges from 200 feet to 350 feet.

Gore recommended Monday night that a public hearing on the annexation issue be conducted July 1, the same time the town has proposed to conduct its budget hearing. But there is some question if proper procedure has been followed in the matter.

According to Gore, who said he has given all materials to Martin, Sea Trail filed the petition sometime around May 5-10. He added that a map of the area was prepared and sent ahead of the formal application.

Clerk Fluegel, however, says it is up to her to certify the document. According to the N.C. League of Municipalities regarding annexation, once the petition is received, council must call on the clerk to investigate its sufficiency and to certify the results of the investigation. Once council receives that certification from its clerk, then it may proceed and fix a date for a public hearing.

Fluegel said that as late as last Friday, the town had not received a legal description of the property in question from the surveyor.

"I can't certify we even have (a petition)," she said Tuesday afternoon.

Department Reports

Although no action was taken Monday night, Town Manager Wallace Martin presented department reports as information.

During May, the Sunset Beach Police Department investigated two cases of breaking and entering; issued 60 town citations ("mostly for parking," Martin said); answered six disturbance calls; assisted at five fires out of town; delivered 16 messages; and assisted at town boat accidents.

Police department cruisers rolled out 3,400 miles during May and consumed 421 gallons of fuel. Sanitation department vehicles used 143 gallons of gasoline, compared to 88 used by the water department.

In addition, Martin told council members present that two police officers will be hired in the near future to replace two drafted by the state highway patrol.

The town used 4.5 million gallons from the county water system during May at a cost of \$4,237.

Martin told council he has interviewed and hopes to hire a man for the water department.



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

AMONG the first to arrive in jail last Thursday are, from left, Coach Greg Norris of West Brunswick High School; Karen Moshoures co-director of the South

Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce and Malcolm Grissett, former county commissioner candidate.

Jail-A-Thon Raises Funds

Karen Moshoures, co-director of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, was arrested last Thursday morning for soliciting without a license. Well, almost.

It was all in fun, and for a worthy cause, in the American Cancer Society's annual Jail-A-Thon held at the Charlotte National Guard Armory. Judge Glenn Humpert set bond at \$350 for Ms. Moshoures, who was busy for nearly an hour calling friends and co-workers to help raise the pledges needed to make bail. While away from jail, Humpert is an employee of United Carolina Bank in Charlotte.

Proceeds from the pledges collected in the annual event are used to support programs of cancer

research, education and patient service. The American Cancer Society is a national voluntary health organization that receives no funds from the federal government or from the United Way agency.

Transported by local off-duty law enforcement officers, eight volunteer "officers" dressed in uniform, wearing fake badges and carrying toy water pistols made the arrests last Thursday.

A group of students at West Brunswick High School had Coach Greg Norris arrested for "imper-

sonating a coach, a serious crime," Judge Humpert said. "I'll set bail at \$200."

"I'll never leave!" Norris replied. "They get out after about an hour and a half on good behavior," Judge Humpert said.

Those who agreed to participate in the arrests were dressed in prisoners' garb and "locked up" behind bars in a mock jail set up on the steps of the National Guard armory. The West Brunswick Unit of the society borrowed the jail from the state Cancer Society organization.

Action On Parking Solution Postponed

With a temporary parking solution just around the corner and throngs of beach-happy motorists with hands perched on their horns, Sunset Beach Town Council Monday night found itself in the position of having to circle the block one more time.

The lack of a simple majority of members is seemingly all that kept council from approving a stop-gap parking solution which received state approval last week.

In a May 28 letter to Town Manager Wallace Martin, T.W. Funderburk, Division 3 engineer for the N.C. Department of Transportation, okayed the town's proposal to provide parking along the left side of Sunset Boulevard.

"If you know of property owners who would have no objections to using the right of way in front of their property for parking, then I would have no objection provided that adequate traffic control was installed," Funderburk wrote.

Martin said the letter followed a meeting at which he told Funderburk that it would be in the interest of public safety to provide the parking on Sunset Boulevard and to eliminate parking completely on Main Street.

Funderburk first replied that parking would be allowed on a parallel, one-car parking basis, Martin said. Martin, however, told Funderburk that such a plan would accommodate only a small number of cars and, as such, would not solve the town's problem. Funderburk resolved the problem in the letter.

The property to be used if approved by council belongs to Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gore and would allow parking for about 60 cars. The two lots (10 and 11 in Block 1) in question would be leveled and leased to the town by Gore for \$1 per month. The lease would allow parking each day between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. and calls for the lots to be

maintained by the town. Termination of the lease would require 30 days notice by either party.

In addition, Gore has offered to lease two lots next to the old Kanoy Realty building for parking.

Both proposals follow nonaction by council at May's meeting on Gore's offer to lease or deed the town property on the west end for parking.

Also Monday night, Councilman Don Safrit said he had spoken with Dr. John Madison, owner of property near the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and main street, about using a section of his land for parking.

Concerning all three proposals, Martin said, "We're talking about 150 cars. That's relief. It would be a start on a solution for the time being. I feel it would be pretty much of a break through. We would be doing something for the people who come over (to the beach)."

Don Safrit expressed impatience at the delay caused by the lack of a quorum. "We need to make some action immediately. We can't wait for next month. We're into June already."

Also along parking lines, Martin said the town has ordered 100 "No Parking" signs which town employees could install on Main Street to save time. He also said he has drafted an ordinance that would outlaw all parking on Main Street.

John McCarthy, head of the Sunset Beach Taxpayer's Association said he feels the parking proposals are "an excellent solution in terms of safety."

Gore replied, "I'm glad you qualified it as a solution, because it really is not. Temporary solutions build expectations," he said.

Action on the parking proposals was delayed until the next meeting, which has been tentatively scheduled for today (Thursday) at 7:30 p.m. at the town hall.

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