

Four School Principals Shifted In Tense Meeting

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

In an atmosphere charged with hostility from board member James Clemmons, the Brunswick County Board of Education approved Monday shifts in personnel affecting four principal positions.

Ed Lemon, assistant superintendent for curriculum, was assigned as principal at Bolivia Elementary, whose principal Carlton Sligh will move to Leland Middle; Clara Carter, now principal there, will go to Union Primary as principal. Freeman Gause will leave that position to be assigned to a new state-funded principalship at the Alternative Education Center in Bolivia; Jean Parker, Waccamaw Elementary prin-

cipal, will move to the central office; and Bill Shoemaker, social studies coordinator, will take her position at Waccamaw.

Superintendent Gene Yarbrough announced the changes as part of his solution to the loss of over \$400,000 from the school system's general fund budget when county commissioners cut that amount last month from local funding.

"We'll save \$130,219 by moving some personnel from locally-funded positions to state-funded ones," he explained, adding that the rest would come from dropping the expansion budget.

Two locally-paid administrators, Lemon and

Shoemaker, would move to state-funded principalships and their positions eliminated.

Clemmons asked, "Why wasn't I told about this before now?" to which Yarbrough responded, "Because we just put it together about 3:30 this afternoon."

Clemmons immediately moved to table the proposed transfers, saying he needed time to think about them, but his motion died without a second.

"Someone must have had prior knowledge of this," he said angrily, and Yarbrough replied, "Yes, some did."

"You should have given me the courtesy of telling

me about it," Clemmons insisted.

The superintendent turned to Dr. James Forstner, board chairman, and asked, "Did I talk to you about it?" and Forstner quickly replied, "No."

"Is it true you have not evaluated your principals?" Clemmons asked Yarbrough.

"That's true, but I've worked with these principals..."

Clemmons interrupted to restate his question, and Yarbrough, struggling to remain calm, explained, "I can tell when a school is being run well and when it isn't."

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Chamber Gets New President, Directors

Four new members joined the board of directors of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce July 8. They are, from left above, Donald Ray Long, David Batten, Tom Haley and Debbie Sloane Fox. Their terms end in June, 1989. Alan Holden (left in bottom photo) new president of the chamber, presents a gavel plaque to outgoing president Leo Johnson.

EMC Postpones Its Decision On Stormwater Regulations

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

The Environmental Management Commission agreed Thursday, in an 8-6 vote, to postpone a decision on stormwater runoff regulations. It had previously promised the Coastal Resources Commission to have rules in place by May.

The agency will hold a work session on the subject in August, then put the matter on its September agenda, Jim Shepherd, public information officer for EMC, said.

This postponement came after about two years of meetings, studies and public hearings on an issue that pits developers and builders against fishing and environmental interests. Public hearings in May led the EMC staff to draft regulations somewhat different than those proposed earlier.

Stormwater is that which runs off solid surfaces in developed areas, picks up bacteria and other pollutants and carries them into shellfish waters. Increased development in any area usually means increased pollution of this kind.

One of the points of contention before the EMC last week was the regulation describing the severity of a storm builders would have to prepare for. The proposed rule was

that drainage systems must be built to handle the worst storm expected in a two-year period, which is 4.5 inches of water in 24 hours. In an earlier draft, that regulation had called for preparation for a ten-year storm, or 7 inches of water.

Shepherd said, however, that it was not any specific regulation that prompted the EMC to postpone its decision. "The real reason is that this is an important, complicated issue, and they didn't want to rush into it," he said.

Jerry Lewis of Shallotte, a new EMC member, was one of those voting against postponement. "The feeling in the group was that the proposed regulations were too inflexible. I voted the way I did because I had an amendment that would have made them more flexible," said Lewis, who formerly served eight and a half years on the commission.

"I really don't know what everyone else was thinking, but it's my personal opinion that some who are not from the coastal area wanted to have time to understand these regulations," he went on. "The issue was born and gestated in emotionalism. We need to calm things

down and know exactly what we're doing."

The EMC lost its leader shortly before the July 10 meeting. Tommy Harrelson of Southport, candidate for the 7th District Congressional seat held by Charlie Rose, resigned about two weeks ago as chairman. He had steered the EMC through deliberations early this year that resulted in regulations that were approved by the Coastal Resources Commission in April.

Aside from the issue of drainage systems required, disagreement has focused on the percentage of impervious (watertight) surface allowed on a building project. Regulations the EMC saw Thursday limited such surface coverage to 20 percent for projects within 75 feet of estuaries, or 30 percent for those farther than 75 feet from estuaries.

Developers have said regulations proposed thus far will add significantly to the cost of building and make some construction impossible. Fishermen, on the other hand, point to the downward trend of various species of fish, which they attribute to increased pollution. A part of that pollution they believe comes from stormwater runoff.

Nursing Home Hearing Adjourns; Wait Begins For Recommendation

BY SUSAN USHER

A hearing contesting the state's decision to permit Autumn Corp. of Rocky Mount to build a nursing home in the Shallotte area adjourned Tuesday in Raleigh, several days earlier than first anticipated.

In March 1985 the N.C. Division of Facility Services announced its intent to issue the certificate of need, which would allow Autumn to build a 110-bed facility in Shallotte.

Beverly Enterprises, one of several other firms also seeking the right to build a nursing home in the county, challenged that decision, leading to this week's contested case hearing.

Once the case record is compiled, the hearing officer will make a recommendation to Division of Facility Services Director Ira J. Wilkerson Jr. He will make the final agency decision based on the officer's recommendation and the case record.

Construction of a nursing home in the county has been delayed pending the outcome of the case.

Initially, at the request of Beverly Enterprises, the hearing was to be moved to Brunswick County July 14-16 after four days of testimony in Raleigh at the division's hearing room on the Dorothea Dix Hospital campus, then return to Raleigh for the last two days. However, Beverly later decided it wasn't necessary to go to Brunswick County, according to Lee Hoffman, Area 5 project analyst for the division's certificate of need section.

"This way we get through and get a decision sooner and be able to construct a nursing home sooner," Beverly spokesman Mark Davis said optimistically Tuesday. Beverly had planned to locate its facility next to Brunswick Hospital in Supply, and to share certain utilities and services with the hospital.

On Monday and Tuesday, the hear-

ing was instead relocated to the Law Building hearing room in downtown Raleigh.

The state's decision to issue the certificate overrode a recommendation by Cardinal Health Systems Agency Board of Directors and project evaluation committee that the certificate go to Beverly. Earlier, Cardinal's professional staff had

recommended in favor of Autumn.

During the proceedings the state and both health care firms presented their cases to a setting similar to that of a trial.

If either party disputes Wilkerson's decision, it will have 30 days from the date of issuance to file notice of appeal to the N.C. Court of Appeals.

Court Holds For County In Alinda Meares Appeal

BY SUSAN USHER

In an opinion filed June 17, the N.C. Court of Appeals holds that the Brunswick County Board of Social Services didn't have the authority to enter into a settlement with former departmental secretary Alinda G. Meares.

Barring further appeals, the opinion clears the way for a suit filed by Ms. Meares against the county in 1984 to be heard in Brunswick County Superior Court. It also returns the Meares-Board of Social Services settlement to the State Personnel Commission for reconsideration.

On July 1, County Attorney David Clegg filed a motion seeking dismissal of the Meares suit. It seeks enforcement of a settlement agreement between her and the social services board.

Since the court ruled that the board didn't have the authority to enter into that contract, said Clegg, the suit against the county should be dismissed since it is based on the same contract theory. He has asked for the motion to be heard the week of August 18.

Ms. Meares filed suit in Brunswick County Superior Court nearly two years asking the court to force the county to give her back her old job as administrative secretary in the social services department. County commissioners had steadfastly refused to reinstate her or to provide the financial compensation called for in the settlement.

Fire by Social Services Director Jamie Orrick on Sept. 8, 1981,

Meares has since been involved in an extended legal battle to regain the post. She has a wrongful firing suit pending in U.S. District Court.

Hearing of her suit in the local court was delayed pending a judicial review in Wake County Superior Court of the State Personnel Commission ruling which was the basis for the settlement.

The Appeals Court opinion was written by Judge Sarah Parker with the concurrence of Chief Judge R.A. Hedrick and Judge John Webb. It upheld Wake County Superior Court Judge Pou Bailey's ruling that State Personnel Director Harold Webb er-

red when he determined that the social services board became the "local appointing authority" in the absence of a full-time director and therefore had the right to enter into a settlement agreement with Meares. Bailey had ordered the matter back to the Commission.

Meares appealed. The Appeals Court was also of the opinion that the county was a proper party to the proceedings since it was "aggrieved" financially by the settlement, which provided back pay and benefits to Ms. Meares.

Further, said Parker, failure to in-

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Pedestrian Dies Following Accident At Sunset Beach

A teen-age boy died Saturday in New Hanover Memorial Hospital from injuries sustained when he ran into the path of a car at Sunset Beach on July 8.

Jess Daniel Clayton, 14, of Vienna, Va., had been in critical condition since the accident last Tuesday night, according to Audra West, NHHM public information officer.

He was walking east in the roadway of Main Street Tuesday at about 8:10 p.m. when he ran into the path of a westbound Buick operated by Pamela Elene Cribb, 21, of Route 1, Ash. She was traveling at an estimated 35 mph to 38 mph, accord-

ing to a report filed by Sunset Beach Police Lt. Joseph D. O'Brien.

A witness, Matthew McMichaels of Fletcher, told police that Clayton turned suddenly to the left and ran into the path of the vehicle. His body hit its fender and "over" Clayton's head "made contact" with the front windshield at the exact point where the inspection sticker was located, the report indicated.

O'Brien said that Clayton was thrown about five feet to the south side of the road where he'd been walking, about 18 feet west of the 7th Street intersection.

County To Lose Thousands In Household Tax Revenue

BY SUSAN USHER

A decision by the General Assembly to eliminate the household property tax may come as a surprise windfall for individual property owners, but not for local governments who fixed their budgets back on July 1.

According to Assistant Brunswick County Tax Supervisor Ronnie Young, the county stands to lose between \$300,000 and \$400,000 in revenues next year or the equivalent of about 1¢ on the tax rate.

The tax was done away with last week, when a conference committee accepted as part of a compromise deal on the Highway Finance bill. It had been tacked on to the bill by representatives over the objections of the House leadership.

Young and Tax Supervisor Boyd Williamson said the county has about 30,000 households, with household property worth an average of about \$1,200 to \$1,500.

The tax is figured in one of several ways. Homeowners can be assessed at 5% of the value of their house, not including land, while renters can be assessed at 10 times their monthly rent. A property owner may also ask to have their home visited and property itemized.

"It's not going to affect us like it will a lot of counties," said Young, noting that several neighboring counties levy a 10% tax, with the revenues making up a larger portion of their annual budget.

County Finance Officer Lathia Hahn said she wasn't sure what impact the loss of revenue might have on the county budget, which was based on a real property valuation of \$2.2 billion and other property valued at about \$1 billion.

"You'll have to ask the budget officer," she said, referring to County Manager Billy Carter. He was out of town for the week at the annual National Association of Counties conference in Las Vegas, Calif.

When contacted by the Beacon, several local municipalities had not calculated what impact the loss of the tax would have on their budgets. The elimination of the levy will be reflected in lower tax bills this fall.