

Ocean Isle Beach Proposes No Change In Tax, Service Rates

BY DOUG RUTTER

Ocean Isle Beach residents will not face any change in taxes or water and sewer rates in the coming year under a tentative town budget presented Tuesday.

The town tax rate of 17 cents per \$100 of valuation and water and sewer rates which have drawn criticism from residents in the past would be unchanged during fiscal year 1988-89.

Based on a projected property valuation of \$275 million, approximately \$3 million greater than this year, and a collection rate of 99 percent, the town expects revenues of nearly \$463,000 in town taxes next year.

Commissioners anticipate final review of the tentative budget during

a special meeting scheduled for May 24 at 9 a.m. Other topics to be discussed at that time include canal dredging, repurchase of the water system bond and beach access.

According to the budget discussed during a workshop Tuesday morning, commissioners anticipate revenues and expenditures of about \$810,000 next fiscal year, reflecting a decrease of about \$160,000 from this year.

Town Clerk Alberta Tatum said the main differences will come in the accommodations tax fund and impact fees.

The accommodations tax fund is projected at \$283,000, about \$115,000 less than the current fiscal year. The decrease reflects the \$120,000 which will be spent this year on the exten-

sion of a water line to the island.

She also said revenues from impact fees will be less next fiscal year, noting that the town collected an additional \$72,000 in fees this year from developers of the high-rise condominium project at the west end of the island, Ocean Point.

Other tentative changes in the accommodations tax fund include the allocation of \$10,000 for beautification of the causeway and \$10,000 for strand cleanup. There are no other major changes in contributions to the general fund from the accommodations tax fund.

Town commissioners also expect to collect \$419,000 in sewer fees next fiscal year, about \$110,000 more than was budgeted this year, without increasing the rates.

Mrs. Tatum said the town will slightly exceed the budgeted figure for income from sewer fees this year, and said the addition of the Ocean Point project and about 40 new homes expected next year will bring in a lot more customers.

With a proposed increase of about \$300,000 in sewer fund revenues over this year, the town plans to set aside some money for land acquisition and future expansion of the facility and a smaller amount for emergency sewer needs.

A minor change in the water fund for the coming fiscal year will have the town paying annual installments of \$24,700 for its water system bank loan as opposed to the \$19,000 it had been paying on the Farmers Home Administration bond.

Almost all of next year's proposed airport fund will be used to match a \$55,000 state grant to provide for expansion of the airport apron.

Executive Session

Town commissioners also met for approximately 50 minutes in executive session Tuesday to discuss personnel matters. Mayor Betty Williamson said the session was needed to discuss salaries of town employees for the coming fiscal year.

Other Business

In other business, commissioners: •Read a letter from George Goolsby Jr., vice president of Starboard By The Sea condominiums, requesting lower water and sewer rates. Board members said the rates could not be lowered if the town wanted to continue expansion of both the water and sewer systems and urged conservation.

•Nominated LaDane Bullington for appointment to the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission. (See related story this issue.)

Bullington Nominated

Ocean Isle Beach Commissioners this week nominated former mayor and island developer LaDane Bullington for appointment to the Coastal Resources Commission.

Mrs. Bullington served as mayor of Ocean Isle Beach for 14 years before suddenly leaving the country last August for an extended vacation in the British West Indies. She returned to the area in early April and has been living in Wilmington since then.

In making a motion to nominate the former town official, Commissioner Debbie Fox said, "She's as well versed in coastal issues and issues affecting the beach communities as anyone."

Despite earlier statements to The Brunswick Beacon that she was not interested in spending the time needed to serve on local and regional boards, Mrs. Bullington has agreed to serve on the commission if appointed, according to Ocean Isle Mayor Betty Williamson. Mrs. Bullington could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Prior to leaving the country, Mrs. Bullington served four years on the Coastal Resources Commission Advisory Council as the appointee of the Region O Cape Fear Council of Governments.

The terms of eight members of the 11-member CRC will expire next month. Appointees to the commission are selected as experts on various issues affecting the coast.

Coastal towns have recently received letters from the governor's office requesting one nomination to the commission in any category. Ocean Isle Commissioners did not specify the category of their nomination.

Local Merchants Told To Be Wary Of Fund-Raising Scheme

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Department isn't doing any fund-raising these days, despite what some local businesses have been led to believe.

According to Crime Prevention Officer Don Gates, the sheriff's department received at least one inquiry last week from a merchant in southern Brunswick County who was approached to buy advertising for a law enforcement-related publication.

Gates identified the publication as the State Police Officers' Press.

"They (salesmen) infer they're doing fund-raising for us, but they're in no way affiliated with the sheriff's department," he said.

Last year, a Texas-based company sold an estimated \$20,000 worth of advertising, mostly in the Southport

area, and sent the sheriff's department 15 copies of the publication for distribution in Brunswick County, Gates said.

He added that the salesmen will ask merchants for "whatever they think the traffic will bear," in terms of advertising rates.

Gates said no one associated with the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department currently is doing fund-raising. However, the Brunswick County Law Enforcement Association soon will be raising money for a gospel singing later this year.

If approached by salespersons who claim to be affiliated with local law enforcement agencies, merchants should contact the sheriff's department's crime prevention office, he said.



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Seeing Well As You Grow Older

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The Warning Signs Of Eye Disease

By George Tate, Jr., M.D.

The following symptoms may or may not indicate a serious eye disease. An eye examination determines if a problem exists.

1. Pain in or around the eye. This could be eyestrain, inflammation, or glaucoma.

2. Sensitivity to bright light. This may be due to early cataracts, iritis, or injury to the cornea.

3. Blurred vision. This could be caused by cataracts, viral disease of the cornea, nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism.

4. Continual eye redness. Usually this is insignificant, though it could be caused by glaucoma, iritis, or episcleritis.

5. Excessive tearing. This can be caused by allergy, blocked tear drains, sagging of the lower eyelids, or lacrimal disorders.

6. Floaters. Small black

dots that dart around in your vision are usually not a problem, but many of them can sometimes indicate a serious problem of the vitreous or retina.

7. Light flashes. This may be the first sign of retinal detachment.

If you are having problems with your eyes, come to our free community SightSaver eye screening, celebrating the grand opening of Carolina Eye Associates NEW Brunswick County Eye Center in Supply, North Carolina. The eye screening will be held on Saturday, May 21st. Join us for complimentary refreshments and get a free SightSaver Eye Kit to take home with you.

To sign up for the free eye screening, or to get more information about eye problems, call SightLine, our toll-free information service at 1-800-227-5189.

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