

# Commissioners Agree To Settlement In Long Beach Water Rate Dispute

BY RAHN ADAMS

After 18 months of negotiations, Brunswick County and the Town of Long Beach have come to terms—basically the county's terms—over the price the town will pay for county water.

At the county board's meeting Monday night in Bolivia, commissioners unanimously approved a water contract amendment and agreement with Long Beach. Formal talks between County Attorney David Clegg and Long Beach officials had been underway since January 1988, although the dispute was then already about 1½ years old.

Commission Chairman Frankie Rabon, who presented the matter to the board in Clegg's absence Monday, explained briefly that the proposed amendment and agreement sets out that Long Beach will pay the same water rate as do other towns that buy water from the county. Also, Long Beach has agreed to make \$88,635.77 in late water payments, Rabon said.

When contacted Tuesday, Long Beach Mayor John Vereen confirmed Rabon's outline of the agreement. Vereen added that the county agreed not to raise Long Beach's water rate unless the rates of every other major water customer is raised in turn.

"We got as good a deal as we're going to get," Vereen said of the agreement. "The thing had drag on too long, and it needed to be settled." He added that Long Beach officials were satisfied with the new contract.

In January 1988, when the issue was last discussed in depth by commissioners, Clegg said the rate dispute began when the county raised its wholesale water rate to \$1.20 per 1,000 gallons and Long Beach continued paying at the town's 1980 contract rate of \$1 per 1,000 gallons.

At that time, Long Beach maintained that the old contract should remain in effect, despite the county's contention that the town's water rate was raised to help pay for expansion of the county's "unified" water system. Long Beach is served by the county's old water plant on N.C. 211, not the new Northwest Treatment Plant.

#### Other Water Matters

Also at Monday's meeting, commissioners unanimously approved several other water-related matters, most of which dealt with special assessment water districts. The actions were taken at the recommendation of the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board.

"We got as good a deal as we're going to get."

—John Vereen  
Long Beach Mayor

Commissioners confirmed the final assessment role for SAD 4, located in the Sea Pines area on Long Beach Road. Property owners there will be billed for water line extensions at a rate of \$5.38 per front foot to recoup \$171,271.99 in project costs.

The county board adopted the preliminary assessment roll and set an assessment rate of \$6.86 for SAD 5, located in the Pine Acres and Ocean Pine Acres area off N.C. 179. A public hearing on the preliminary assessment roll will be held on Aug. 22, at 7 p.m., in the Public Assembly Building, Bolivia.

In other action, commissioners agreed to give Tax Collector Nancy Moore the authority to identify needy SAD property owners and allow them to participate in an installment payment plan, even if they do not meet income guidelines.

Also, Planning Director John Harvey informed the board that a long-range study of the county water system's needs will not be finished until mid-October. William G. Daniel & Associates of Cary was contracted last June for the \$20,000 study, which was to be completed last month.

In a letter to the county, engineer Ed Odom stated that the company "grossly underestimated" the amount of time necessary for the study. Additional costs incurred by the extension will be absorbed by the company, he said.

#### Positions Sought

On a motion by Commissioner Gene Pinkerton, the board voted 3-2 to amend the county hiring freeze and allow County Manager John T. Smith to fill two positions created in the 1989-90 budget and a third post that was funded last year but left vacant.

The two new positions are for a county engineer and county purchasing agent. The engineer's annual salary and wages are budgeted at \$43,308, while an original salary and wage figure for the purchasing agent

was \$22,872.

Commissioners Benny Ludlum and Kelly Holden voted against Pinkerton's motion, after Holden questioned a provision in the motion to raise the purchasing agent's annual salary from the budgeted amount to about \$26,000.

The third position is for a Clean County Department coordinator, a post which was advertised in February. A list of 72 applicants was narrowed to four finalists for the \$22,872 per year job, before the hiring was put on hold while officials worked on the county budget.

#### Other Business

In other action at Monday's meeting, the commissioners:

- Approved several year-ending budget amendments involving no local funds in the Health Department, Public Housing and Operation Services budgets.

- Reappointed Boyd Williamson and Nancy Moore to their positions as tax administrator and tax collector, respectively.

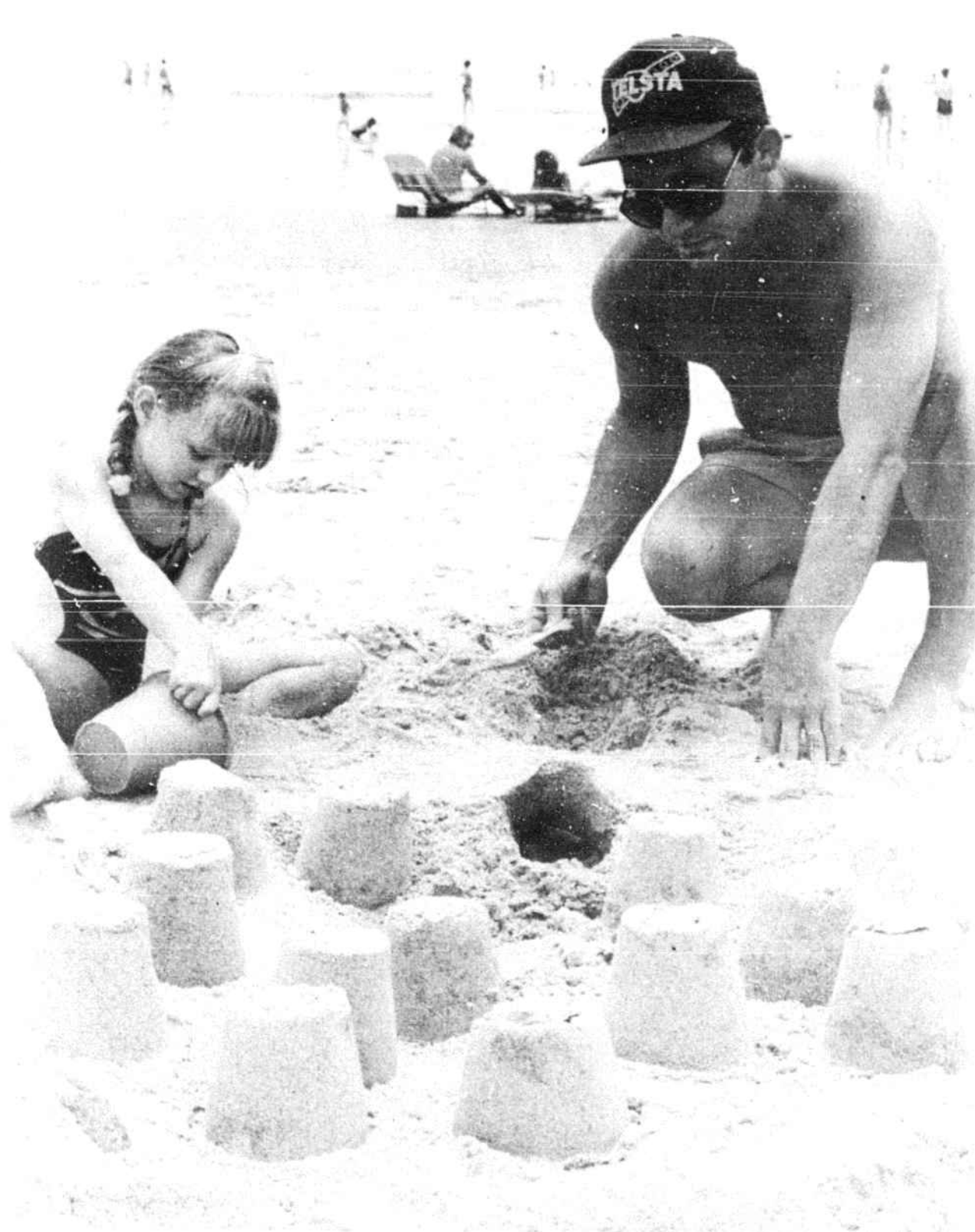
- Voted to officially inform Brunswick Community College trustees that the county is interested in sharing the college's old administration building near Supply. They also instructed Smith to prepare a plan by Aug. 7 as to how county offices can be rearranged to help relieve overcrowding.

## Water Source Heat Pumps To Be Topic

Water source heat pumps will be the subject of a public workshop next week sponsored by Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. and Brunswick Community College.

The session by Ronald D. Mahan of Nesco Inc. of Monroe will be held Wednesday, July 12, at 6 p.m. at BCC's Supply campus.

To make reservations to attend call BEMC at 754-4391, Ext. 218.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

## Like Father, Like Daughter

Toni McLamb of Fayetteville, left, fills another bucket of sand while her father, Tony McLamb, digs a tunnel in the sand at Holden Beach Saturday. The McLamb were among thousands of families vacationing on the South Brunswick Islands during the Independence Day holiday.

## Expo Contest Seeking Photos Of Region

Photographs which depict the varied marine resources of the Cape Fear Coast are being sought for the Marine Expo '89 Photography Contest.

Categories for subject matter are the following: education and research, commercial and business, and recreation and conservation. Residents of Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties are eligible to enter. Photos must also be taken in one of these three counties.

Marine Expo, held every other year concurrent with Wilmington's Riverfest, emphasizes the importance of the region's marine resources to the economy and the local quality of life.

Expo Publicist Teresa McLamb said through programs, exhibits and special events, Expo strives to increase awareness of how coastal resources affect residents' lives and vice versa.

In selecting subjects for their photos, she suggested, entrants should consider the goals of Marine Expo.

Photos may be submitted as color or black and white prints no smaller than a 5x7 photo, with a minimum mount of 8x10 and a maximum of

16x20. They may be borderless. Each entry should be mounted, unframed and unsigned on the front.

Entries are limited to three per person in each subject matter category. Each entry should also include a card with the name, address and telephone number of the photographer, title of the work (if any) and the date and location where the photo was taken.

A \$100 purchase prize will be awarded to the best photograph in the advanced division and in the beginner/intermediate division.

First place prizes will also be awarded in each subject matter category.

All entries will be displayed at the New Hanover County Public Library during September and at the Coastline Convention Center during Marine Expo/Riverfest '89, Oct. 1-8.

Judges will be selected by the Marine Expo executive committee.

Entries become the property of Marine Expo and may be used for promoting future events in our coastal area.

Entries must have been photographed within two years of the deadline for submitting entries, Aug. 15.

Entries may be taken to Coastal Foto, 4609 Wrightsville Avenue or Plaza East Shopping Center.

For more information call McLamb at 799-3252.

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SCOTCHMAN  
SHADY PARK EXXON  
THOMAS DRUGS  
TWILIGHT MOTEL  
WILSON'S  
SHALLOTTE PLAZA



STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

## Boys Of Summer

Danny Prigel and his father, Mike Prigel, of Rochester, N.Y., show that boys of all ages enjoy the national pastime, as the pair take advantage of pleasant weather Sunday afternoon in the South Brunswick Islands to enjoy a game of catch. The Prigels were spending the Fourth of July holiday with relatives who live near Sunset Beach.

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