

Ocean Isle Beach Extends Cable TV Franchise

BY DOUG RUTTER

Ocean Isle Beach officials have extended the franchise agreement with the community's cable television provider into the next century.

The contract with Vision Cable, which was due to expire in 1995, has been extended until May 12, 2000.

Town commissioners adopted an

Tax Collection Almost Perfect

The Ocean Isle Beach Town Hall staff was almost perfect last fiscal year when it came to collecting taxes.

The town had collected 99.05 percent of its 1989 taxes as of June 30, 1990, according to the audit report for last fiscal year.

"That is just about as good as you can get," Mayor Betty Williamson said Tuesday. "We're very proud of that."

Local auditors have said the state average for tax collections is around 97 percent, and 95 percent is considered a good rate for southeastern North Carolina.

John Caraway of Wilmington compiled Ocean Isle's audit report, which indicated that the town was in good financial condition going into the current fiscal year.

ordinance at their meeting Tuesday amending the franchise agreement. The board adopted the ordinance on a first reading last month, and the second and final reading was Tuesday.

Earlier this year, cable company officials requested a 10-year extension of the franchise agreement. However, town officials agreed to only a five-year extension.

Vision Cable had asked for the extension in response to a town proposal to bury all electric, telephone and cable television lines. The cable company wanted the agreement extended to make their participation in the project worthwhile.

As part of the new agreement, Ocean Isle should receive more money each year from Vision Cable. Mayor Betty Williamson said the franchise fee has been increased from 3 percent to 5 percent, based on a formula used by the company.

The town expects to receive \$6,736 from the cable company this fiscal year. Using the higher percentage, the town would receive an extra \$2,694 per year.

The mayor said the new franchise agreement gives the town the right to negotiate a renewal when the expiration date nears.

Plat Approved

Based on a town planning board recommendation, commissioners approved a preliminary plat Tuesday for a property owner who plans to build oceanfront condominiums.

Stuart Cooke had requested that 2 1/2 beachfront lots along West First Street near Shelby Street be combined and subdivided. The land is zoned R-2, which means it can be used for multi-family development.

Building Inspector Drued Roberson said last month that the owner plans to build two four-unit condominium buildings on the property, which already has one duplex on it.

With the preliminary plat approval, town officials said the property owner can begin site work. Final plat approval is required before construction can start.

Budget Amended

Ocean Isle Beach officials are expecting more revenue than they did when they adopted this year's budget, leading them to approve a budget amendment at Tuesday's meeting.

The town expects \$22,625 more revenue than it budgeted this year in the general fund. Among other things, the extra money will be used for wages and supplies and to build the contingency fund.

Commissioners also expect to collect an extra \$9,000 in the water fund and \$36,650 in the sewer fund. Most of the additional money will be put into materials and supplies and contingency funds.

The budget amendment approved Tuesday also reflects the recent purchase of land off Four Mile Road, which town officials plan to use to expand the sewer plant capacity.

The town spent \$451,247 for the property.

In the occupancy tax fund, the budget was amended to show an extra \$50,000 in anticipated revenue. Most of the money has been allocated for sanitation, signs and streets.

Commissioners also transferred \$30,000 in anticipated impact fee revenues to revenues expected from building and other permits. Ocean Isle did away with impact fees a few months ago when it revised its permit fee schedule.

Other Business

In other business Tuesday, commissioners:

■ Approved several changes in the town's flood damage ordinance to address mobile home parks and subdivisions in the mainland extraterritorial area. Roberson said the changes were taken from the county's flood damage ordinance and from federal guidelines.

■ Promoted sewer department employee Larry Sellers from probationary to permanent status. The action followed a 10-minute executive session called to discuss a personnel matter.

■ Heard the November building inspections report. Roberson issued 13 building permits in town last month and collected \$1,384 in fees based on a construction value of \$92,784. He issued one permit in the extraterritorial area and collected fees of \$117 on a construction valuation of \$14,688.

Two Charged With Larceny

Two men have been arrested and charged with a string of break-ins in the Southport and Long Beach area.

Paul Steven Woodall, 21, of Green Lewis Road, Bolivia, and Samuel Allen Fridley, 21, of Route 5, Southport, were each charged on nine counts relating to larcenies that occurred between October and November 27, said Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Kevin Holden.

The two men were stopped by Sheriff's Deputy Carl Pearson Nov. 27 behind the Food Lion store on Long Beach Road. According to Deputy Pearson's report, he was patrolling the area near Skateworld when he heard loud banging noises coming from a nearby business around 12:15 a.m.

He spotted a vehicle speeding from a business and followed it to behind the Food Lion store. Inside the suspects' vehicle was an outboard boat motor with cables dragging the highway. One suspect told Pearson he bought the motor from a friend in Carolina Beach, the report states. The other person said the motor came off a friend's boat at Long Beach.

Following an investigation, both men were charged with allegedly taking the motor from the Southport Marine Mart on Long Beach Road. A search of the suspects' vehicle also turned up three weapons, one shotgun, a .22-caliber rifle and a .30-caliber carbine, Deputy Pearson reported.

"Interviews with the suspects led to the recovery of more than \$8,000 in stolen goods from various break-ins," Det. Holden said, "taken from the residence of both suspects."

Both suspects have been charged with two counts of breaking and entering and larceny, two counts of breaking and entering a motor vehicle, two counts of larceny after breaking and entering, and three counts of larceny of a firearm, Det. Holden reported.

"All of this stemmed from a routine car stop made by Sgt. Carl Pearson," said Det. Holden.

Woodall gave a Charleston, W.Va., address to officers but was staying at a home on Green Lewis Road, Holden said. Both men were scheduled to make a first appearance in Brunswick County District Court Monday.

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