



Most Government Offices To Close For July Fourth

With one exception, government offices and financial institutions in the South Brunswick Islands area will be closed for the Independence Day holiday on July 4, as will some area businesses.

The Town of Ocean Isle Beach is the exception. Its town hall will be open July 4 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the convenience of visitors and non-resident property owners. Town halls at Calabash, Sunset

Beach, Holden Beach, Shallotte and Bolivia will be closed Thursday, as will the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia and other county and state offices.

The Brunswick Beacon office will be among local businesses closed Thursday.

For the July 11 issue, advertising and news deadlines will be at their regular times.

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COMMISSIONERS VOTE 3-2 to adopt the 1991-92 county budget. Board members are, from left, Frankie Rabon, Donald Shaw, Kelly Holden, Jerry Jones and Gene Pinkerton.

Fire, Rescue Districts To Get Money After All

BY TERRY POPE

What Brunswick County Commissioners took from the county's fire and rescue departments Friday, they gave back Monday night without hesitation—\$250,000.

The board has stressed in recent weeks how tight the 1991-92 budget is stretched.

However, an amendment adopted Monday allows the county to dip into its fund balance, returning to the fire and rescue districts money the board took Friday to help fund the solid waste department.

District 3 Commissioner Gene Pinkerton's motion to return the \$250,000 passed 4-0. Commissioner Donald Shaw was out sick, said County Manager David Clegg.

The vote came just minutes after Brunswick County Fire and Rescue Association President Al Nord of Civetown told the board that departments could not afford to lose the money this fiscal year.

About 25 fire and rescue personnel from various county departments crowded into the commissioners' chambers for

Monday's meeting.

The money will come from the county's operating budget, noted Clegg, who said the vote was a surprise to him.

Counties operate for six months of the year on a fund balance, a figure that fluctuates, said Clegg, until taxes are collected.

Each of the five county fire and rescue districts annually receive \$50,000 to be placed in a contingency fund to be shared by departments in that district.

"Simply because they appropriated the money doesn't mean it will be spent," said Clegg. "It's not like the fire and rescue departments can spend it at leisure."

Purchases must be recommended to a commissioner in the district for approval.

Pinkerton said some fire and rescue departments are operating on tight budgets.

The \$250,000 taken Friday was part of \$1.2 million transferred to the solid waste department. The move was made in case House Bill 86, which would allow the county to charge an improved parcel fee to help fund solid waste disposal, is not approved.

Clegg expected the state Senate to vote on HB 86 Tuesday after (See FIRE, Page 2-A)



NORD

\$1.2 MILLION GOES TO SOLID WASTE

Commissioners Split Over Final Budget

BY TERRY POPE

A divided Brunswick County Board of Commissioners listened to a divided audience Friday before adopting a 1991-92 county budget, 3-2.

The final version slices more than \$1.2 million away from a number of departments to pay for solid waste disposal.

As of Friday, House Bill 86, which would allow the county to charge an improved parcel fee for each lot that contains a dwelling or establishment, had not cleared the final hurdle in the state Senate. The fees would finance the county's solid waste department.

The \$35 million budget is contingent upon HB 86 failing, said Vice Chairman Jerry Jones. However, if the bill should pass, a number of budget amendments would be adopted to return the \$1.2 million to departments that faced the ax Friday morning.

Jones' motion transfers to the solid waste department an anticipated \$400,000 in state reimbursements along with the following amounts: \$225,000 from capital reserves;

\$153,000 in budget reductions from the June 17 meeting; \$250,000 in fire and rescue district allocations; \$54,696 to cut six months in funding for six new Emergency Medical Services positions; \$14,000 from the general fund; \$16,000 for an engineering department vehicle; \$2,300 from governing body and \$103,720 from health department fee increases also adopted by the board Friday.

The motion transfers \$1,218,716 to solid waste.

Commissioners Jones, Kelly Holden and Donald Shaw voted for the motion while Frankie Rabon and Gene Pinkerton, both saying they needed more time to work on the budget, voted against it.

The budget will keep its 68.5 cents per \$100 of property valuation, the same as last year. It's based on real property value of \$4.05 billion and a collection rate of 95.3 percent for projected tax revenues of \$26.4 million.

A Board Divided

For Pinkerton, it was his first vote against a county budget since he was elected to the board in 1988.

When Shaw and Jones were elected in November, it gave the county an all-Republican board of commissioners, but recent votes on key issues indicate a lack of unity.

"Unfortunately, I think the board's divided," said Pinkerton following Friday's meeting. "We're not having any dialogue. I simply don't think the budget was worked on enough in proportion to the job to be done. There was less than three hours spent on it."

Chairman Holden called objections to the proposed budget a "show and dance" for those in the audience. The board agreed to hold a public forum, allowing each speaker three minutes to comment, after an estimated 75 people showed up at the government complex Friday morning.

"All of the commissioners had the same information," Holden said. "They knew exactly what was being proposed."

Holden said County Manager David Clegg, who was in Raleigh Friday, had determined the board could adopt a budget contingent on parcel fees. County Tax Administrator

Boyd Williamson has estimated the parcel fee at about \$35 per improved lot instead of the previous \$40 estimate.

"I have always voted for the budget," Holden pointed out following the meeting. "All three years."

Cuts Criticized

Cut are plans to build a storage warehouse and drivers' license office building at the complex in Bolivia and district allocations to the county's fire and rescue units.

Holden said no county fire or rescue department currently has less than \$30,000 in its contingency fund. Both Rabon and Pinkerton criticized the board's move to cut those allocations.

"It overwhelms me to think that we're considering cutting out 100 percent of that budget," said Pinkerton. "I can't vote to adopt this budget. That would mean I would be endorsing this budget."

Rabon suggested the county adopt an interim budget until the fate of parcel fees is settled. He questioned if the county could "take action on a budget based on what the state is go-

(See FINAL, Page 2-A)

Health Board Looks At County Personnel Cuts

The Brunswick County Board of Health was to hold a special meeting Tuesday, July 2, at 7:30 p.m., to discuss changes in the environmental health department, said Health Director Michael Rhodes.

As part of the 1991-92 county budget cuts, Gary McDonald's position as environmental health supervisor I was eliminated.

"Today is the first day that we've been without that position," said Rhodes on Monday. "The board needs to do some restructuring."

Rhodes said that is the only item on the agenda.

McDonald served as a supervisor for site inspections for persons needing septic tank per-

mits. He also worked the field, doing site evaluations during peak periods, said Commissioner Frankie Rabon, who serves on the health board.

The board voted June 17 to eliminate the position along with a number of other personnel cuts. At a meeting Friday, Rabon's motion to reinstate McDonald to his job failed, 2-3.

Commissioners Kelly Holden, Donald Shaw and Jerry Jones voted against the motion. Commissioner Gene Pinkerton voted with Rabon.

The health board notified the press of the special meeting Friday afternoon, before reports were published Saturday asserting that its vice chairman, Jerry D. Lewis, had approached

county commissioners to help rush a special improvement permit to speed a project Lewis is working on at St. James Plantation. Lewis is also a member of the state Environmental Management Commission.

The report stated that Lewis works as project director for Longview Golf Corp., which is building a clubhouse and golf course at St. James on N.C. 211 near Southport.

An improvement permit can be obtained before the state has had time to review plans for a sewer system.

Rhodes said Monday that matter was not on the agenda.

BURIED SINCE WORLD WAR II

Visitor Uncovers Airplane Wing On Ocean Isle Beach Strand

BY DOUG RUTTER

An old airplane wing uncovered on the Ocean Isle Beach strand last week is believed to be the remains of an American military plane that crash landed during World War II.

A visitor from Asheboro uncovered part of the wing while digging in the sand last Tuesday, but it was covered back up when the tide came in. The wing is located below the high tide line toward the east end of the island.

Herman Love of Shallotte, who was stationed at Ocean Isle Beach with the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II, said he thinks the wing found last week is from a P-47 fighter plane that landed on the beach in 1944.

"I was right there when it went down," he said. "There's possibly some more of it

around there close."

Ocean Isle Mayor Betty Williamson said the town wouldn't put a backhoe on the strand and try to remove the wing at least until after the Fourth of July holiday, when the island's population is expected to top 20,000.

"You really don't need to go out digging the strand with so many tourists on the strand," she said. "That has been there, it appears, for many years so there is no immediate danger."

The mayor also said water department employees, who would operate the backhoe, will likely be very busy during the holiday week.

Love, a former Brunswick County commissioner and retired Brunswick County Schools employee, said a P-47 Thunderbolt was forced to crash land on the strand in early 1944 due to high oil pressure. Nobody was injured, he said.

The pilot was involved in target practice training at Ocean Isle Beach and safely landed the plane near the high tide line. When the

"His shovel hit something that he knew was different than sand. That got his curiosity up and he kept digging."

—Donna Menius
Ocean Isle visitor

tide came back in, the plane was partially covered with sand.

Love said the Army Air Corps removed some of the equipment from the plane including bomb sights, radios and the nose of the propeller.

Because the plane was damaged by salt water, however, the Army left it in the sand. Love said the military tried to blow up part of the plane that wasn't buried.

Ocean Isle Beach Police Chief Curt Pritchard, who saw the wing after the tide started covering it back up last Tuesday, said it was "well-preserved."

He said he's not sure if any other parts of the plane are buried in the

same location. The visitor who found it uncovered a 15-foot stretch of the wing, which may or may not be all of it.

Pritchard said the gray-green wing appeared to be made out of a heavy aluminum, like a military aircraft wing.

Myrtle Beach Air Force Base officials told the police department they don't need to get involved in the matter unless explosives are found.

David Menius of Asheboro, who has been vacationing at Ocean Isle Beach for 18 years, uncovered part of the aircraft wing last Monday while digging in the sand with a shovel near his rental cottage.

He found it about three feet deep in the sand, according to his wife, Donna. "His shovel hit something that he knew was different than sand," she said. "That got his curiosity up and he kept digging."

An incoming tide prevented Menius from identifying his find, so he paced off the distance from the steps at his cottage and waited for Tuesday afternoon's low tide.

"We just knew we found buried treasure," Mrs. Menius said. "We joked about it all Monday night."

Menius started digging again Tuesday, and two other vacationers helped out with their shovels. Together, they dug a trench about three feet wide, three feet deep and 15 feet long.

Mrs. Menius said they uncovered part of a wing, which could be identified by its flaps. "The kids were just crazy all down the beach," she said.

Military planes used Ocean Isle Beach for an aerial gun range during World War II when the island was still uninhabited. Love said the

P-47s were nose-heavy and required a long runway to take off and land.

"It was a pretty good size fighter, and it was a heavy fighter," Love said of the P-47. "It was kind of short and stubby. It was a very effective plane during World War II."

Love served with the Coast Guard at Ocean Isle from March 1943 to August 1944 before going overseas.

The Coast Guard had a barracks on the island, and men patrolled the beach on horseback to look for submarines off the coast and enforce the blackout. At one time, Love said there were 16 horses and 24 men on the island.

The Army Air Corps flew P-47s out of Blumenthal Field in Wilmington, which is now called New Hanover International Airport.

Love said another P-47 crash landed on the Ocean Isle Beach strand in 1944, but it later flew back to Wilmington. At least two other planes crashed in Brunswick County during the war, according to Ouida Hewett.