

Officials, Trustees Looking Forward To New County Library Department

BY ERIC CARLSON

More books, longer hours, more branches, computer catalogs and expanded services for children top the wish list for the Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees as the county prepares to take over the library system.

On July 1, the Brunswick County Library Department will officially come into being with a recommended first-year operating budget of \$248,512. If adopted, that would more than double the amount of county money given to the library system.

Both partners in the upcoming merger say they are pleased with the new arrangement and optimistic about its effect on the future of the library system.

"I think it's a very good move that will mean a lot more for the library and therefore a lot more for the county," said Marie Harrison, chairman of the Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees. "We're all delighted and looking forward to next year."

The library currently has branches at Southport and Shallotte, with a small modular facility in Leland. Among the improvements Mrs. Harrison and others hope to see in coming years are a full-fledged branch in Leland, longer opening hours throughout the system and, of course, more books.

The proposed county budget earmarks \$60,000 for new books and \$12,000 for audio and video tapes. That money would go toward the purchase of 800 hardcover adult fiction books, 500 hardcover adult nonfiction books, 800 juvenile fiction books, 100 reference books, 200 large-print fiction books and 90 books on cassette. Three hundred video cassettes and 200 audio cassettes

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Library Board Chairman

would be added or replaced.

Under the new system the nine workers currently employed by the library would become county employees, with a recommended salary range of \$12,800 to \$29,300. All assets of the library board of trustees will belong to the county.

Specific plans and policies for the library department will not be established until the county commissioners appoint the new nine-member library board, which will oversee its operation and make budget requests.

The makeup of the new library board has not been determined, but it is expected to include members from each voting district plus four at-large members. The county commissioners have asked the present 12-member library board of trustees for its recommendations. Most of those suggested by the library board are current trustees.

Besides the increase in funding, County Manager David Clegg sees other advantages to the county's takeover of the library system.

"For the first time there will be an ascertainable chain of authority," Clegg said. Workers will be governed by the county personnel policy and will be covered by its insurance and retirement plans. Purchasing and payments will be streamlined.

Clegg cautioned that residents shouldn't expect to see significant changes immediately.

"We're not going to turn the library into a 21st century information center in 12 months," he said. "The first year will be an education process to get people thinking about going back to the library."

Still, those who have been involved with the library for years have definite goals for its future.

Matilda Sugg of Yaupon Beach, senior member of the library board of trustees, would like to see an increased use of computers, especially for cataloging books. Such an electronic card catalog would give library patrons easier access to the system's collection and keep better track of a book's whereabouts, she said.

Mrs. Sugg also hopes the county will go ahead soon with plans to construct a permanent branch at Leland. A public fund-raising effort has collected nearly \$200,000 for the Leland branch. When the county assumes control of library operations, that money will remain in a fund earmarked for construction of a Leland branch, Clegg said.

It was the effort to establish a permanent branch at Leland that sparked the move toward a county-run library system. Most people involved say the catalyst for the merger was Edith Tillman of Leland, the library trustee who spearheaded the drive for a branch there.

She too is pleased with the outcome.

"I think it's great that the county has taken over," said Mrs. Tillman. "It's going to make the representation much more democratic."

With its former makeup of six representatives from Southport and six from the rest of the county, the library board of trustees was too heavily weighted toward Southport, Mrs. Tillman said. This was fine when both the primary branch and the county's population center were in Southport.

"But things are different today," she said. "Our county is so much more populated and so spread out that we need more varied representation."

Besides her first priority of upgrading the Leland branch, Mrs. Tillman also hopes to see expanded hours, a computer catalog, more books and reading programs for young people and a citizen's review committee.

A group on Oak Island also has begun raising money to build a branch there. About \$35,000 has been collected so far. Clegg would not speculate on the possibility of a fourth library branch, saying that would be up to the trustees and the board of commissioners.

Mrs. Sugg said she is in favor of an Oak Island branch, noting that the area has the highest population density in the county. She said children there need to have access to a local library.

"For years it has been the policy (of the trustees) that if any community wants a branch bad enough to build it themselves, the Brunswick board would agree to operate it," she said. "I don't see why we can't afford at least four branches."

Alliance Wants To Offer Pilot Program In Next School Year

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County's Math/ Science Alliance hopes to begin offering programs to teachers and students on a limited scale as early as the 1992-93 school year.

Eventually the proposed Center for the Advancement of Math/ Science Education (CAMSE) would offer after school, weekend and summer enrichment programs for students, educators and the general public if it develops according to its primary model, a center in Aiken, S.C.

However, for now, says Committee Chairman Frank Blackmon, the alliance is seeking the support it needs to begin offering a pilot program.

"It would be limited in application and scope," he said, "and would initially involve only a few schools across the county."

Success of the proposed center, Blackmon told BCC Trustees last week, "is dependent on a lot of participation of people in this county." As an employee of a local industry, Carolina Power & Light Co., a student at Brunswick Community College and a parent, Blackmon personifies three of the groups the alliance hopes to involve in supporting development of the center.

The committee is trying to keep to a timeline that calls for the naming by June 7 of a coordinating committee to oversee center programs and activities. By August it hopes the sponsors—the governing boards of Brunswick County Schools and Brunswick Community College respectively, have decided on a supervisor for a director, so that a search for a director can be launched.

To do that, says Blackmon, funding needs to be secured by September.

The alliance's program development recommendations received a general nod of approval last week from the BCC Board of Trustees, but the panel is awaiting final word from the Brunswick County Board of Education before proceeding with its plans.

At its last meeting, the school board heard the report of the seven-member panel, but at the suggestion of Chairman Donna Baxter, delayed a vote of approval

pending consultation with the BCC Board. Both boards must approve the recommendations.

The proposal calls for the two governing boards to serve as an advisory committee to the center's coordinating committee. The boards would also make recommendations for hiring of a director and participate in evaluating the director's performance.

The coordinating committee would be supervised by an administrator from either BCC or the public school system, a point still to be determined.

Much of the work of the center would be accomplished through subcommittees comprised of representatives (faculty, staff and students) of the school system and community college as well as volunteers from business and industry and the community at large.

The six proposed subcommittees are for finance, facilities, planning and evaluation, communications, math and science curricula.

Using existing space and equipment initially, and later a facility designed for that purpose, the center is intended to provide hands-on learning experiences and resources to help better equip teachers to teach math and science concepts and to excite both teachers and students about learning. Programming would be tied to specific goals set by the educational institutions and resources provided through the collaborative efforts of learning institutions, businesses and the community.

That is viewed as the solution to a problem identified by the team thusly: "Brunswick County learning institutions from preschool through college are neither adequately nurturing students' natural curiosity nor developing a capacity and motivation for continued learning in mathematics and science."

"As a result, too many students take no more than the required courses in mathematics and science, ultimately limiting their career choices to other fields. Too many students are not prepared to compete favorably in institutions of higher education and the job market."

The panel included two representatives each from the sponsoring institutions and three representatives of local industry.

ABC LOSSES CAUSING CRUNCH

Shallotte Cuts Chamber Donation

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shallotte officials agreed Tuesday night that a \$2,000 donation to the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce should be cut from the proposed 1992-93 budget.

Town board members said the town doesn't get much from the chamber. Since money is so tight, they said the \$2,000 could be better spent in other areas.

"I personally don't think it helps us that much," said Alderman David Gause, who chaired the budget workshop in the absence of Mayor Sarah Tripp.

Gause said the chamber is devoted to promoting area beaches and golf courses more than Shallotte's businesses.

Alderman Roney Cheers said real estate developers run the chamber. "I can't see where the Town of Shallotte gets any benefit from it," he said.

As the beaches develop, Alderman Wilton Harrelson said fewer people are coming to Shallotte to conduct business. "I think the money can be better spent myself," he said of the donation.

The chamber of commerce, which received \$2,500 from the town this year, isn't the only organization that may be affected by the budget crunch.

Town officials only plan to give \$2,000 to Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad. Aldermen say they want to support the squad, but can't spare the money.

The rescue squad had asked for \$20,000 to help buy new equipment. Town Clerk Mary Etta Hewett said the town board would have to raise taxes to meet the request.

"I don't want to raise taxes," Alderman Morris Hall said Tuesday. "It's not the right time to raise taxes. There's too many people out of work."

Town officials plan to check how other ABC systems in the area distribute their profits, and may decide to change their method of dividing the money.

To do so, Shallotte would have to go through the state legislature and change its charter, which sets forth the method of distribution.

Cheers said the town's formula of dividing the profits is outdated, and he would like to see it changed.

Harrelson said the town shouldn't continue giving money to the schools if the county liquor store doesn't donate but cuts into the town's profits.

"We may be paying more for trash pickup for some businesses than we get in taxes," Harrelson said.

Shallotte pays for up to 16 yards of trash pickup per week for town businesses, and also pays for residential pickup.

Public Works Director Albert Hughes said few other towns provide trash service for businesses.

"We're becoming the exception to the rule rather than the normal," he said.

ABC Revenues Shrinking

Decreasing revenues from the ABC store over the past two years is one of the big reasons for Shallotte's bare-bones budget.

Shallotte ABC Board Chairman Roy Mintz said Tuesday profits have dipped from \$96,000 two years ago to a projected \$33,500 this year.

Mintz attributes the loss to the opening of the Brunswick County ABC store on Holden Beach Road, which has taken business away from the town store.

Of the money distributed by the Shallotte ABC store, the town receives 80 percent and the schools get 20 percent. West Brunswick gets 10 percent, and Shallotte Middle and Union Primary get 5 percent each.

CHOLESTEROL SCREENING

There will be a cholesterol screening and general health risk profile offered at Walmart, Shallotte, NC, on May 28 and 29 from 9 a.m. -6 p.m. There is no fasting required for the total cholesterol and the cost is only \$7. Other packages include (1) Chol, HDL (the good cholesterol), and Risk Ratio for only \$16. (2) Chol, HDL, LDL, Triglycerides and Risk Ratio for \$22 (fasting or non-fasting). The new, accurate Kodak analyzer is being used.

Calabash Sets June 4 Hearing On Proposed \$550,000 Budget

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Calabash Board of Commissioners is considering a proposed \$551,020 budget for 1992-93 that would require increasing the tax rate from 10.5 cents to 13.5 cents, an increase of 28.5 percent.

That means the owner of a \$50,000 piece of property would pay \$67.50 in taxes next year as compared with a bill of \$52.50 for the current fiscal year.

The town board has scheduled a public hearing on the budget for Thursday, June 4, at 8 p.m. in the fire house. The commissioners will meet at 7 p.m. before the hearing. The budget includes \$440,820 for general fund expenses, \$789,300 in state Powell Bill funds, and \$30,900 in the enterprise fund.

The board would not furnish a copy of the draft budget for public inspection at its regular meeting Tuesday night. Commissioners said parts of the proposal might be modified before the public hearing.

There was a lively discussion between commissioners and a District 1 businessman who felt the board favored District 2 residential areas in its spending for beautification programs.

"What are we getting in return for our tax dollars?" asked local hardware dealer Tom Roberts. "All we had was trash pickup and now you've taken that away from us. If we don't have that, then where does our money go?"

At its last meeting, the board voted 3-2 not to renew the town's contract for commercial trash pickup. Saying the service had become too expensive, the commissioners decided to fund residential pickup twice weekly within District 1 and to continue providing green boxes for residents in District 2 under next year's budget.

Commissioner Ray Card noted that very little town-owned property—where the beautification money is spent—is located along roadways in District 1. He said most of the easements along N.C. 179 in District 1 are owned by the state.

Commissioner Jon Sanborn noted that District 1 benefited from many of the town's services and should expect to pay its share of municipal overhead costs. He suggested that District 1 residents come to the upcoming hearing with ideas on how beautification funds might be spent in their areas of the town.

Although no formal motion was made, several commissioners expressed agreement with the idea.

A heated exchange ensued between Commissioners Edward Rice and Ray Card over bids for grass cutting on vacant lots and along ditches. Rice insisted the town should accept the lowest bids for such services, while Card felt the bidders' qualifications should be considered in making the decision.

"Why put out for bids if you're not going to take the lowest one?" Rice asked.

Card said he spent a great deal of time "out on that road trying to find out what's going on" with companies who contract with the town for services. He said the board should consider more than price before accepting a bid.

Rice withdrew his motion to accept what appeared to be the lowest bid when confusion arose over how the bids were presented. It was unclear whether all the bidders were



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