

# Request Would Give Engineers Control Over Large Sewer Systems

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Board of Health members voted unanimously Monday night to ask county commissioners to name another county agency to manage large sewer treatment and disposal systems beginning July 1.

"A lot of lives are going to be affected, a lot of economics are affected," said Dr. H.J. "Skip" Davis, board chairman.

The changes require periodic maintenance and inspection of sewer treatment and disposal systems that rely on ground absorption.

Health Director Michael Rhodes said the department's staff has "a fairly decent handle on" dealing with the smaller systems that fall under the regulations, since it has been making preparations for the changes over the past year.

However, it is not in a position to handle the larger systems, he said. Rhodes and Environmental Health Supervisor Andrew Robinson are recommending that the county's engineering department be designated

as the public entity management for the large systems, while the health department maintains an oversight role. The engineering department has a soil scientist, Walt Marley, on staff.

Robinson said either the county's public utility or engineering department should take on the job "because they are the only ones qualified to do the administrative function."

However, he said the utility department might have a potential conflict of interest since its director serves as operator for the county complex sewer treatment system.

In any case, meeting the requirements of the regulations "is going to take a tremendous amount of manpower," said Robinson. He anticipates it taking two to two and a half employees to handle the additional workload placed on his unit.

Added Davis, "It has to be done; the sad thing is there is no money in the budget to do it." In a related matter, the board's budget committee, headed by Dr. Brad Williams, plans to appeal directly to county

commissioners to fund more of the agency's budget requests that were eliminated by county administration, mainly personnel.

Approximately 18 county residents have been certified by the state as private operators for the smaller systems. Their services may range from \$300 to \$500 a year, Robinson indicated, though he has not seen a signed contract yet.

These systems include Type I, which includes privies; Type II, which includes conventional septic systems for single-family homes or with a flow of less than 480 gallons per day (GPD); Type III, which includes non single-family septic tanks larger than 480 GPD capacity and gravity fill systems; and two classes of Type IV systems, including low pressure pipe systems. With most soils suited to conventional septic tanks now in use, these alternative systems are becoming quite common in the county, Robinson said.

Most of the smaller, less complex systems require inspections and management reports at less frequent intervals and can be

managed by a certified private operator under the monitoring and oversight of the health department.

Property owners will be required to have a management contract in hand before permits will be issued by the health department for these systems. Existing low pressure pipe systems will come under the regulations at the point repairs are required, said Andrews.

However, the department does not have the staffing to handle the more frequent inspection of the larger Type IV through Type VI systems, such as aerobic or tertiary treatment plants. An estimated 20 such systems exist in the county, and were previously monitored by the state.

They now must be managed by a local public management entity such as a county agency, a town, sanitary district or sewer authority. Some of the systems require inspection up to five times a week or can take a full day to inspect.

Environmental health staff members are

informing restaurants, schools, mobile home parks and other large-system operators of new state regulations that go into effect with the new fiscal year.

### Other Business

In other business, the board tentatively approved guidelines presented by Nancy Leggett, R.N. for meeting new OSHA standards for blood-borne pathogens, pending routine review by the board's personal health committee. The standards are an effort to protect health care employees from occupational exposure to human blood through Hepatitis B immunizations, protective equipment and changes in work procedures.

With the county water system set to begin fluoridation Aug. 3, the board reviewed plans to alert area health-care providers to ensure that patients not receive excessive fluoride through both prescription and water supply sources.

The board also agreed for staff to begin reviewing plans in advance of construction. (See related Page 1 story).

## Sheriff Agrees To Staff Phone 24 Hours A Day

Reacting "under protest" to a request from the county commissioners, Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis Monday agreed to station an armed deputy at the sheriff's office 24-hours a day.

The new policy was suggested by Board Chairman Kelly Holden in response to numerous telephone calls he said he had received from residents complaining that they could not speak to a deputy after business hours.

Beginning Monday night, a deputy has been stationed at the front desk around the clock.

The department phones had been staffed from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. After that the sheriff's department phone carried a recorded message explaining that emergency calls should be directed to 911. It also gave the 24-hour toll-free number for the county jail. Callers with non-emergency business could leave a message for deputies or detectives.

Davis told the commissioners he feels the community would be better served by keeping a deputy on patrol rather than in the office. Stationing a deputy at the sheriff's department is unnecessary now that the 911 center is staffed full time, he said.

Speaking at the board's budget

meeting Monday, Davis asked the commissioners to reconsider their request.

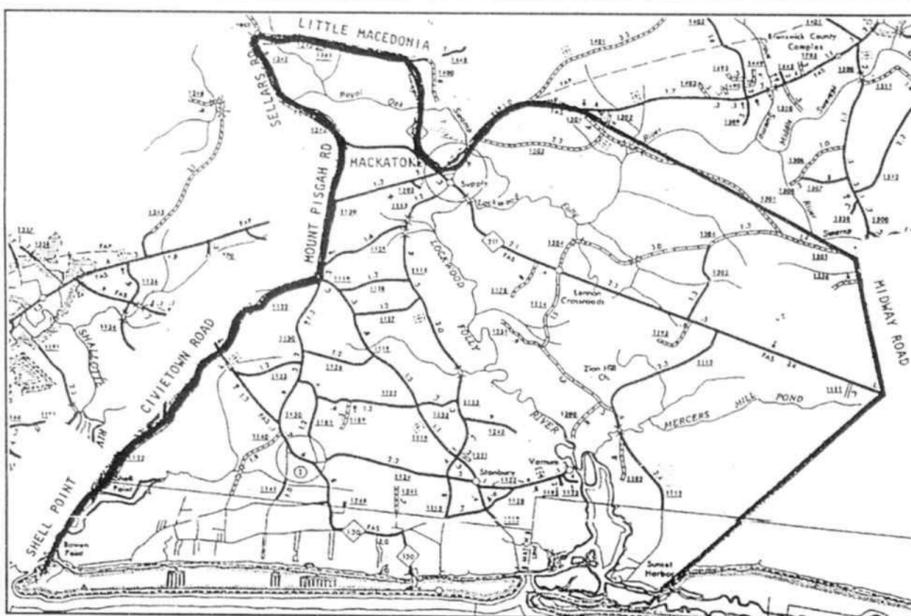
Holden said the sheriff's department ought to be available 24 hours a day as a "safe haven" for residents. He also expressed concern that the county complex was left unguarded at night.

"In a violence situation, people are going to run here," Holden said. "I think it is a disservice to the community if they get to the complex and there's no one here."

Davis said he had never stationed a deputy in the office 24 hours a day. After 5 p.m. a desk sergeant remained at the sheriff's department until 2 a.m., then went on patrol. He said the desk officer also provided backup for patrol units when necessary, a policy he intends to continue.

"I don't care what they (the commissioners) say," Davis said in an interview. "If one of my men gets in trouble out there, that desk man is going to back him up."

Between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 a.m., there are two full shifts of deputies patrolling the county, Davis told the board. Until Monday, three deputies were on duty after 2 a.m. Now there will be two on the road and one in the office, Davis said.



A THIRD VERSION of the new Supply Elementary School district was approved by the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday. The heavy line on the map above indicates the district borderline. Some 642 students within this line will attend Supply School, the latest revision intended to avoid overcrowding at Union Primary School, one of Supply's feeder schools.

## Supply School Boundaries Undergo Another Revision

(Continued From Page 1-A)

have some room to spread out, but I don't see a problem with it." Principal Mark Owens said of the action, "I think it's unwise, but I don't know all the information behind it. If any fifth graders were to be moved, I think they should all be in the same place."

He referred to those within the Supply district lines being enrolled at the new K-5 school this fall, while some of last year's Shallotte Middle fourth graders will return there.

The spring issue of The Pirateer, SMS newspaper, reported the move of fifth graders on its front page, reflecting mixed emotions among students. Some were described as "sad and depressed" at leaving familiar surroundings, but others said they wanted to get away from older students. Student reporters said, "Shallotte Middle School will finally become a 'real' middle school... with middle school philosophies completely implemented, easier scheduling and discipline problems lessened."

The revised Supply district approved by the board Monday was the third arrangement it had endorsed. The first district line followed a highway, requiring two school buses to travel that road, one picking up students for Bolivia Elementary School on one side and the other transporting students to Supply School on the other.

After that problem was remedied, it was discovered that Union Primary was still heavily overcrowded, which prompted the rearrangement of fifth graders and new district lines. The new map shows the boundary line beginning on the north at Sunset Harbor, proceeding southeast to Midway Road, following it to U.S. 17, south to N.C. 211, then west to Little Macedonia, east onto Sellars Road, which becomes Mount Pisgah Road, then Civietown Road and Shell Point, back to Bowen Point on the south. Some 642 children living within this line will attend Supply School, Turner said.

Most faculty and staff for the new school, headed by Principal Carolyn Williams, were approved. The required number of teachers was reduced from 29 to 24 by the new district arrangement.

Transferred from Union Primary were the following teachers: Ramona Parker, Pamela Jackson, Lisa Tate, Annie B. Hewett, Lynn Semke, Louise Butler, Ollie Hickman, Ann Barton, Carolyn Yarbrough, Brenda Spencer, Annette Keesee, Mary P. Beall, Janis Simmons and David Everett.

Teachers moving from Shallotte Middle are Annie Hewett, Debra Noble, Eunice Abercrombie, Stephanie Bernard, Shelly Ludlum, Ann McManus, Eva Smith, Priscilla Shoemaker, Memory Goforth, Martha Mentzer, Deborah Lemon, Marsha Utterback, Marguerite York, Bobbie Sellers, and Joan Head.

Transferring from Bolivia Elementary are Ronda Caster, Shelba Thornton, Greta Galloway, Rose Gemborsky, Charles Snow and Stephanie Woodard.

Barbara Sligh and Susan Huggins will transfer from South Brunswick Middle, and Lisa Brown from Leland Middle.

Classified staff transfers include these from Union Primary: Cafeteria worker Kathy Creech, and assistants Pamela Robertson, Anna Home, Utha Hewett, Lorna Marlowe, Charlene Hewett, Theresa Rhodes, Valerie Fullwood, Brenda Fullford, Ada McDonald, Helen Hamer, Doreatha Johnson, Ada Fullwood, Lynn Ellis and Lou White.

Assistants Nancy Vereen, Janet Herzog, Maxine Jones and Gloria Foss will transfer from Bolivia Elementary, as well as media assistant Donna Green and assistant secretary Joyce Cox.

In addition, Patricia Cumbee, SIMS operator, will transfer from West Brunswick High; Shirley Robinson, cafeteria worker, from North Brunswick High; and Pam Pahl, secretary, from the central office.

## Budget Includes \$1.5 Million For Libraries

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include: —An increase of \$1,000 for each of the county's 32 volunteer fire departments, giving them an allocation of \$14,500 each.

—An additional \$5,000 for the Southport Maritime Museum, raising its funding to \$10,000 for a second year.

—Another \$2,000 added to the Brunswick County Literacy Council budget, giving it \$3,500.

—A \$2,000 increase in spending for the Volunteer and Information Center, raising its allocation to \$17,000.

—A one-time reduction in the SoutheasternWelcome Center allocation from a proposed \$45,000 to \$10,000. The board said it would increase its allocation next year, when state funding ends.

—Deletion of a \$2,500 allocation to the Yahweh Center in Wilming-

ton, which serves troubled youths from the Lower Cape Fear Area.

—Reallocated \$3,000 to The Marine Crescent, which works to develop maritime related business and industry and is working with Brunswick Community College in development of an aquaculture program. The contribution had first been cut from the budget.

In other business the board approved an emergency allocation of \$20,000 for the Department of Aging, which was reportedly out of funds and unable to meet its next payroll. Noting that the department head's "fiscal accountability was in question," board chairman Kelly Holden instructed County Manager David Clegg to "deal with the personnel issue involved here."

The board also appointed Margaret Dennis to the Nursing Home Advisory Board. She replaces Jonathan Hankins of Southport.

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## Building Plans Review Offered

(Continued From Page 1-A)

"I think it should have been done before," said board member George Young, who made the motion. "Anything we can do to stem that tide."

The board stopped short of requiring plan review for rental property, saying too many loopholes exist at this moment.

Instead, it plans to invite representatives of area beach communities to attend a health board meeting to discuss the situation and ways to resolve it, a suggestion made by a Holden Beach town commissioner, said Rhodes.

Especially in the coastal area, rental houses with septic systems intended to accommodate six or eight occupants are often advertised and rented to sleep a dozen or more people, overburdening the systems.

The owners of the house in question at Holden Beach said that was not their intent. However, following a contested case hearing in Raleigh, the state Attorney General's office

is to decide what changes, if any, must be made to bring the house into compliance.

His remarks drawing guffaws of disbelief from board members, Robinson said a building inspector cannot dispute, but must accept as fact, the use of a room specified by an owner on his plan.

"They can call them anything. They can have a great room, a den, an office all in the same rental house," he said, with Rhodes interjecting, "And a library."

The building inspector can ask the health department to make a final inspection, as happened in the Holden Beach case.

In its review of a house or plan, the health department uses the same general definition of "bedroom" that's found in state statutes, Robinson said. Basically, it considers to be a bedroom any room that can be "reasonably expected" to function as a bedroom. Indicators include doors, closets, windows and direct access to a bathroom.

## Wet, Warm Days Ahead

More wet, warm weather's in the local forecast.

Shalotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday that the outlook calls for near-normal temperatures coupled with above average rainfall.

He anticipates temperatures ranging from nightly lows in the mid-60s to highs in the mid-80s, with at least three-quarters of an inch of rainfall.

"That's probably a conservative estimate," he said, referring to a front expected to hover over the area.

For the period June 2 through 8, he recorded a maximum high temperature of 89 degrees on both the 6th and the 8th and a minimum low of 56 degrees on the 2nd.

An average daily high of 84 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 66 degrees for an average daily temperature of 75 degrees, which is about normal for this time of year, Cannady said.

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