

# Spending, Appointments Highlight County Board's Last Meeting

**BY ERIC CARLSON**  
 "Christmas is coming early!" That was the observation voiced by audience member Eileen Kellagher of Long Beach as she watched the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners appropriate \$147,427 worth of last-minute spending before three newly elected members took office Dec. 5.

At a continuation of their Nov. 21 regular meeting Wednesday night (Nov. 30), outgoing Republican Commissioner Donald Shaw joined lame-duck Democrats Wayland Vereen and Chairman Don Warren in a series of votes that raised the total of new spending since the election to \$338,827.

Returning Republican Commissioner Jerry Jones said no to several of the new expenses, but he agreed to most and suggested one new allocation of his own. Democrat Tom Rabon, who also was reelected, did not attend the meeting.

In other last-meeting action, the board voted unanimously to appoint Ocean Isle Beach building contractor Tom Pope to the Brunswick County Board of Health and to reappoint former county commissioner Benny Ludlum to his seat on the board.

Pope's appointment increases to three the number of health board members who are involved in septic tank installations, which are regulated by the health department. The board continues to function without a physician or an optometrist. The latter state-mandated seat has been filled for the past year by Ocean Isle

Beach builder Bruce Quaintance. The commissioners made 11 appointments to other area boards. All but two were approved without opposition.

Warren voted against a motion by Jones to return former Republican Commissioner Gene Pinkerton to the Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees.

It was Pinkerton who spearheaded the creation of a county library system as a commissioner. He served as the first chairman of its board of trustees until Democrats captured a majority on the county board and replaced Pinkerton with former Democratic Party Chairman William Stanley.

Stanley recently resigned from the library board. Warren remains a member.

Jones, who represents the commissioners on the county planning board, voted against Vereen's nomination of Robert Quinn of Southport to replace Rosetta Short on the newly formed Zoning Overlay Study Committee. Quinn has been a vocal opponent of numerous planning board decisions on zoning. Quinn's appointment was overturned by the new board of commissioners on Monday. (See related story, Page 1-A.)

All other votes on appointments were unanimous.

Dale Carter was named to the Economic Development Commission of Brunswick County to fill a vacancy left when his father, Billy Carter, resigned after being elected to the school board.



**JERRY JONES takes the oath of office for a second term as Brunswick County Commissioner shortly before being named chairman at the new board's first meeting Monday night. Joining him during the ceremony was his wife Barbara Jones.**

Other new appointments include Frances Allen, Parks and Recreation Committee; Ed Allen, Aging Advisory Board; Sabrina Puckett, Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Authority; Linda Bethune,

Southeastern Center Area Board; James Marlow, Transportation Steering Committee; Debbie Bartlow and Paul Wayne Reeves, Home and Community Care Block Grant Committee.

Several of the appropriations approved Wednesday night drew opposition from Jones, who will continue to serve on the board during the seven months remaining in the 1994-94 budget year. He questioned the wisdom of spending the board's entire contingency fund this early in the funding cycle.

"I guess for the next six months it will just be tough luck, huh?" Jones remarked.

Jones opposed Vereen's request for a donation of \$30,000 to a group that wants to purchase a building for a senior citizens center in Long Beach.

Vereen also won approval, despite Jones' opposition, for a \$5,000 donation to Brighter Tomorrows Unlimited. The non-profit organization collects aluminum cans for recycling and uses the money as graduation gifts to encourage students to finish high school. Vereen's wife Linda helped start the program.

Also approved in a 3-to-one vote with Jones dissenting was a \$30,000 donation to the West Brunswick High School Booster Club to help build a field house at school's M.H. Rourke Stadium.

In a last-minute spending proposal of his own, Jones asked the board to appropriate \$25,000 to the Supply

Volunteer Fire Department for the purchase of a used 2,500-gallon tanker truck.

Supply VFD Chief Roger Suggs told the commissioners that the department's current 1957 army surplus tanker is on its last legs. He said the group has been "throwing good money after bad" trying to keep it running, but a recent breakdown has kept the vehicle out of service for three weeks.

The board voted unanimously to make the expenditure. It also approved Shaw's request for a \$35,000 grant to the town of Northwest for the purchase of a used tanker and ambulance. He said the town wants to establish a "first responder" emergency capability.

"They're mostly poor farmers up there," Shaw said. "If we don't do it this way, they'll never get it."

In another unanimous vote, the board agreed to appropriate \$15,000 to the Brunswick County Clerk of Courts office to purchase a portable aluminum building for records keeping.

The board also agreed to pay temporary Clerk to the Board Joyce Johnson \$2,427 for nearly 200 hours of overtime accumulated since her appointment.

## Changes Include 24-Hour Sheriff's Office

(Continued From Page 1-A)

rank and duties as supervisor of the detective division. Lieutenant David Crocker remains head of the department's narcotics squad.

Several detectives have been promoted to the rank of lieutenant, including former narcotics investigator Mike Speck, who will continue serving as county ABC officer while assuming additional duties as department training officer and Emergency Response Team leader.

Former Detective Charlie Miller returns to the uniform division as a lieutenant in charge of road deputies and transport officers. Detective Gene Allen Caison also has been promoted to lieutenant to join Lt. Donnell Marlowe as a detective shift supervisor.

Sgt. Cliff Eubanks, an experienced Drug Abuse Resistance Education officer formerly with the Henderson County Sheriff's Department, has taken over Sheriff Hewett's former duties as department DARE officer.

Former patrol Deputy Patti Hewett has been transferred to the department's narcotics squad, while drug officer Douglas Todd returns to patrol division as a uniformed sergeant. Newly advanced to the rank of detective were former Deputy Michael Cierpiot and Jailer Zelma Babson.

Sheriff Hewett said six new telephone lines will be installed next week to give the public better access to his department. A sworn officer will man the front desk at all times, he said.

Shift schedules have been rearranged to assure that the number of officers patrolling and on call will not be reduced because of the changes, Hewett said. Some shifts have been overlapped to provide increased patrol coverage during peak hours.

"It's going to be hard at first, but we're going to do it," Hewett said. "I expect we'll eventually need to ask for a position of desk officer, but for now, we'll do whatever it takes to keep the doors open and the desk staffed at all times."

Hewett said he plans to increase



**JUDGE William C. Gore Jr. congratulates new Brunswick County Sheriff Ronald Hewett and his wife Julie moments after administering the oath of office during swearing-in ceremonies in Bolivia Monday.**

the emphasis on continuing training for officers and will encourage deputies to get more involved with investigations normally handled by detectives.

Other plans for the future include adding more K-9 units to assure that a drug-sniffing dog and handler will be available during all shifts. Hewett also plans to have a tracking dog to help locate fugitives and another animal cross trained in bomb detection as well as drug investigation.

In an effort to encourage "professionalism" and maintain good morale, Hewett said he will develop a program of departmental awards to recognize hard work and efforts "above and beyond the call of duty."

An internal affairs division also will be established in the department to investigate complaints from the public or allegations of improper conduct, Hewett said.

"I want to provide the citizens of

Brunswick County with the very best law enforcement available," Hewett said. "My goal will be to

professionalize this department, to train, to supervise, but most of all to serve the people who elected me."

## Library To Reopen Jan. 9

**BY ERIC CARLSON**

Shallotte's newly expanded and remodeled Rourke Branch library is scheduled to re-open Jan. 9, a member of the Brunswick County Library Board of trustees said last week.

The temporary library currently operating in Resort Plaza shopping center will close Dec. 15 to allow county employees and volunteers from the Friends of West Brunswick Library to move books and other materials into the new facility, according to Don Eggert, chairman of the trustees' building committee.

A formal dedication for the new library is planned for mid-January. Library board members toured the new building with architect John Sawyer and county engineer Robert Tucker during a "punch list" inspection last week. Contractors were given their final instructions for completing the remodeling job before turning the building over to the county for use.

The final work to be done at the newly remodeled library includes touch-up painting, some electrical work and the installation of telephones and other electronic equipment. The carpeting has been put down and most of the book shelves are in place.

The former West Brunswick Branch library has been closed since April, when part of its collection was moved to temporary quarters located and paid for by the Friends of the Library. The \$289,649 remodeling project includes a renovation of 2,232 square feet and the construction of a 1,904 square foot addition.

## New Signal Light Going Up At Grissettown Intersection

A contractor began work last Thursday erecting poles for a new full traffic signal to replace the caution light at the accident-plagued intersection of N.C. 904 and U.S. 17 at Grissettown.

However, work has not begun on a controlled signal approved last summer for the intersection of U.S. 17 and Union School Road, also south of Shallotte.

"I still haven't received the plans for that project," Archie Wells, DOT assistant division traffic engineer, said Friday. "I don't know what has happened to them."

Union School officials and the school's advisory council campaigned for the signal throughout 1993 for safety reasons. They increased their lobbying effort after the state Department of Transportation

said a full signal was not warranted and put up poles at mid-summer for a flashing caution light instead.

That work was halted when the state Board of Transportation changed its mind. At that time a DOT official told *The Brunswick Beacon* that the newly-approved full signal would be installed as soon as a contractor completed improvements under way on U.S. 17 south of Shallotte, and possibly by the time school opened in early September.

Approval of the N.C. 904 signal came in early fall, after a DOT review of the intersection's high accident rate and after New Hanover County Sheriff Joe McQueen's van was struck by a car attempting to cross U.S. 17 on N.C. 904.

## Mild Weather To Continue

South Brunswick Islands residents can continue enjoying a mild autumn, as the forecast for the next few days includes no significant changes.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday he expects temperatures to average from

the upper 40s at night into the mid-60s during the daytime, with near-normal rainfall.

For the period of Nov. 29 to Dec. 5, Canady reported 1.42 inches of rainfall, above average, with rain over four days and over seven out of the past 10 days, he said. "It's been an exceptionally rainy period."

Temperatures were mild, ranging from a low of 34 degrees on Dec. 1 to a high of 76 degrees on Dec. 3.

A daily average high of 66 degrees combined with a nightly average low of 51 degrees for a daily average temperature of 58 degrees, which is about 8 degrees above the long-term average.

The long-term forecast is for continued above-average temperatures in this area.

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## \$5 Million Loan For Regional Sewer Venture On State EMC Agenda Friday

**BY SUSAN USHER**

If all goes as consulting engineer Joe Tombro anticipates, the state Environmental Management Commission will be approving a \$5 million state bond loan for the South Brunswick Water & Sewer Authority's regional sewer project Friday in Raleigh.

That approval would spark a lengthy chain of activity already delayed by three months, said Tombro, as the authority worked to allay environmental concerns regarding the project.

The loan is one element in the funding plan for a \$35.6 million project to build a 2 million-gallons-per day treatment plant and collection and transport lines serving a 45-square-mile area of southwestern Brunswick County. A low-interest (3.035 percent) revolving fund loan of \$3.75 million from DEM was set aside earlier for the project. Other funding includes nearly \$4 million in projected "capacity" charges paid by initial customers, and \$22.8 million in authority-issued revenue bonds.

State bonds for the loan haven't been sold, but will probably carry an interest higher than the 5.85 percent on bonds issued in September, estimated Tom Fahnestock of DEM's construction grants section.

With Piedmont Olsen Hensley consulting engineers meeting the Nov. 30 loan application deadline, its approval hinges on DEM Director Preston Howard's "sign-off" this week on a finding of no significant impact or FONSI. The finding was is-

**"We received some comments of all types and we're trying to decide what to do."**

**—Cecil Madden, Division of Environmental Management**

sued a month ago for comments now being reviewed within DEM and the N.C. Department of Administration.

With a signed FONSI in hand, the authority would be able to obtain interim financing, proceed with plans for an early 1995 revenue bond sale to generate funds, and begin work on construction contracts.

That sign-off may be likely, but it was not assured as of Monday afternoon.

"We received some comments of all types and we're trying to decide what to do. We don't know how long that will take," said Cecil Madden of DEM. "Staff will discuss and then we'll discuss it with the division director. Ultimately the decision on what to do is his responsibility. What we do is take all the concerns expressed and try to make sure they are all taken care, that they are adequately addressed."

Tombro, consulting engineer with Piedmont Olsen-Hensley, said almost all of the concerns raised by the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association and N.C. Coastal Federation had been previously

addressed. One of those concerns is stormwater planning.

SBTA says it does not oppose a central sewer system that includes concurrent stormwater management. It advocates that the FONSI not be approved until a stormwater management plan actually exists.

The authority has adopted a resolution committing to having a plan in place before construction or operation of its treatment plant is permitted. The Town of Sunset Beach has received a state grant to develop a model stormwater management ordinance, and the authority is appointing a stormwater management committee whose membership is expected to include SBTA members, he said.

"That will keep them apprised of what's going on and we're sincerely hoping for their input," said Tombro. "I'll say it again: Let's get this thing rolling together."

SBTA President Clete Waldmiller said several directors have been out of town so the board hasn't met to decide whether to take legal action in an attempt to insure the project does include stormwater management. SBTA members were polled; only 30 so far have voiced opposition. Under SBTA bylaws, no response is considered a yes to proposals circulated by mail.

The board is also waiting to hear the result of dual requests by the SBTA and the N.C. Coastal Federation for administrative review of the environmental assessment procedures.

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