

Secondary road improvements are set

A total of \$130,000 will go toward the improvement of secondary roads in Perquimans County during the 1980-81 fiscal year.

The county commissioners adopted a spending plan for the funds following a public hearing on Monday morning.

The majority of the money will go towards the stabilization of Deep Creek Road (S.R. 1328) in the Durants Neck section of the county.

The road will be graded, drained, and stabilized at an estimated cost of \$72,465,

from State Road 1300 to its dead end. An N.C. Department of Transportation staff member in attendance at the meeting said he hopes that funding can be found to pave the road next year, but the \$205,000 cost makes paving the 2.9 mile stretch of road impossible this year.

Turkey Pond Road (S.R. 1331) is scheduled for an estimated \$15,335 in improvements. The road will be stabilized with stone from SR 1329 east for 1.3 miles. Also to be stabilized with stone is a 1.12 mile section of Carver

Road (SR 1214). The road will be improved from SR 1213 to SR 1200 at an estimated cost of \$13,200.

Yeopim Station Road will receive some \$18,000 in spot stone stabilization. The road will be improved from the Chowan County line to the Southern Railroad crossing, a 4.2 mile stretch.

The Department of Transportation had also planned to stabilize a 1.6 mile segment of Poor Hill Road (SR 1346) at a cost of \$19,000, but the road was deleted after county residents said it is rarely used.

Two previously unscheduled roads were added to the Stabilization program and \$8,000 was added to the stabilization program on Yeopim Station Road, which had originally been slated to receive \$10,000 in improvements.

A six tenths of a mile segment of SR 1316 was added for stone stabilization at a cost of \$6,000. The road travels from SR 1300 in a northeastern direction.

A half mile segment of SR 1100 was also added, which begins at its intersection with U.S.17 and travels west.

An additional \$14,963 in funds available to Perquimans County will be retained for road additions, overdrafts and other unforeseeable needs.

Of the \$144,963 total, \$42,250 was derived from bond allocation, \$98,521 from proposed secondary road allocations, and \$4,192 from unallocated funds.

N.C. Board of Transportation member Marc Basnight was in attendance at the meeting, and said that funding is allocated to the county based on mileage in unpaved roads.

Basnight said there is too little money for secondary road improvements this year, and funds will be even scarcer next year, as bond money will no longer be available.

The state legislators control the purse strings, and Basnight said they should be pressed about loosening them a little.

"We need to change the amount of money spent on secondary roads," Basnight said.

Drowning mars holiday weekend

It was sudden, and final. While his girlfriend and another friend struggled to save him, a 25 year old Winfall man drowned in the Perquimans River on Saturday afternoon.

The body of Billy Cherry, who drowned while attempting to retrieve a boat adrift in the river, was discovered at 6 a.m. on Tuesday by a Hertford resident after search of nearly three days.

According to witnesses, Cherry dove into the river from a homemade houseboat tied up near the Reed Oil Company in Hertford after fishermen alerted him to the fact that another boat, that had been tied to the houseboat, had drifted away.

After he had swam some 200 feet from the house boat and was a few feet from the drifting inboard-outboard, he shouted for help. His girlfriend, Virginia Landing, jumped in the water with a life jacket and swam after him.

Donald "Fig" Newton, paddled after her in another small boat. Newton said that Ms. Landing was only a few feet from Cherry when he went down.

Back on the houseboat, Anne Marie Newton clutched Ms. Landing's five year

old son Jason and watched the tragedy unfold.

She said that the five of them had been sitting on the houseboat eating watermelon when the drifting boat was detected, and Cherry jumped in to try and retrieve it.

She said that Cherry had been exceptionally cheerful on the hot, sunny day. "I don't know when I've seen him in such a good mood," she said.

Cherry, employed by the N.C. Forestry Service, had recently completed the home-made boat working on it after work and on weekends in his yard in Winfall, according to "Fig" Newton.

He said that for the past four or five months, Cherry had been working on the boat "about every day." The boat had no motor, and Cherry had used the inboard-outboard to tow it around in the river.

From the shore, the boat was hardly distinguishable from factory made house boats. The pontoons fashioned from oil drums were the only giveaway.

Newton said that Cherry had only learned to swim this past summer.

Rescue squad and volunteer fire department members began dragging the river at about 3 p.m. on Saturday.



Area volunteers search for the body of 25 year old Billy Cherry, who drowned in the Perquimans River Saturday afternoon.

The search

In the background is the houseboat from which Cherry dove in an effort to retrieve the inboard-outboard

boat tied to the railing. Cherry's body was recovered on Tuesday at 6 a.m.

Assistant extension agent may be hired

Perquimans County will apparently be getting an agent to assist agricultural extension chairman Bill Jester.

A contingent of county farmers led by Donald Madre attended the commissioners' Monday meeting to press for the position, and found no resistance to funding the post at all.

In fact, county chairman Joe Nowell told the farmers that the money, \$3,456 in a 30 per cent matching share, had already been figured into the county budget.

So it appears that the next move is up to the state, which must recommend a candidate to fill the position.

The state, however, allowed the position of county chairman to go unfilled for more than six months, before presenting the present chairman, William Jester III, as a candidate for the post this past fall.

"Most of us feel Bill is doing a good job," said Madre. "But he's overworked. He's not getting to all the problems he needs to be getting to."

Madre pointed out that while Perquimans County has more farm income than any surrounding counties, with the exception of Gates, it has the smallest extension staff.

The county commissioners apparently agreed that the extension staff needs to be expanded. Commissioner Lester Simpson suggested that the board submit a letter to the appropriate state

officials, urging them send a candidate to Perquimans County to be interviewed for the position.

Rachel Pittman, of the six county Alliance for Progress, sought a 10 per cent in kind match for a developmental disabilities case management program.

The program would attempt to streamline public services to the severely handicapped, with a case manager serving Perquimans and Chowan Counties.

Computerized data files would be kept on the clients and the program would save paperwork for the myriad agencies that deal with the handicapped, Ms. Pittman said.

A.L. West, a former Perquimans County social worker, would serve as case manager for Perquimans and

Chowan Counties and is, in fact, already set up in an office for that purpose at the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission building in Hertford.

The program, however, was met with some skepticism from Perquimans County Social Services director Paul Gregory. Gregory said that district Mental Health director Charles Franklin had said he wasn't sure his organization could turn over information to AFP for fear of violating client confidentiality and opening mental health up to a law suit.

"If we can't give information to the system, there's no way it can operate," said Gregory. He said that N.C. Attorney

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Freedom lights

Freedom lights brightened the sky over Hertford on Friday night as the grand finale of a Fourth of July celebration photos.

New recreation head expected by August

Hertford mayor Bill Cox said the town hopes to have hired a parks and recreation director by the first of August.

The position, left vacant by Billy Wooten who will be leaving his post to move to Rocky Mount, requires a four-year degree in parks and recreation with at least two years of experience. The town has advertised in newspapers both locally and in Raleigh.

Cox told council members at their regular monthly meeting Monday that he had already received six applications for the job. The council is expected to begin interviews shortly after July 15, the deadline for application.

The board also moved to formally incorporate into the town minutes a resolution acknowledging outgoing director Wooten.

The resolution, presented to Wooten at a dinner held in his honor on Sunday, reads in part:

"...the Council expresses its sincere appreciation to Billy Wooten for the excellent job he has done since 1977 as

the first Director of the Hertford-Perquimans County Recreation Department.

"That the Council feels the leadership and unending devotion provided by Billy Wooten has made the department an entity of our local government of which we can be proud."

In other business, Hertford police chief Marshall Merritt reported that a total of 48 arrests and citations had been made during the month of June, including one whiskey violation, and one larceny of automobiles. The department recovered two stolen autos in June.

Merritt also reported that a candidate he had planned to swear in as police officer had decided against accepting the position, stating that he could not work for the salary offered. The police force is presently short one officer due to the recent resignation of Eugene McLawhorn, who opted to devote his time to preaching.

The police department, which worked a total of 134 hours of overtime during the

month of June, is presently advertising for another officer.

Cox reported on the progress of the community development project, which entails the revitalization of the King Street area. He said all but one parcel of land was in the process of being closed, and that the relocation of Ella May Brickhouse was still pending.

Councilman Eric Haste inquired as to whether any further complaints had been received about late-night loitering at the One Stop service station on the corner of Church and Grubb.

Cox said no complaints had been received.

The council also moved to re-appoint the following positions: Sam Long as building inspector; Charlie Skinner as fire chief; Marvin Hunter as town clerk and budget officer; and Marshall Merritt as chief of police.

The council was expected to meet in executive session following the public meeting to discuss personnel matters.

Storm puts lights out

Many Perquimans County residents were without power as a result of damaged power lines after Saturday evening's thunder storm swept through the area.

And although most of the county's electricity was restored within a couple of hours, many did not see the light until early Sunday morning.

According to Ed Brown, general manager of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation, a fallen tree on a Virginia Electric and Power Company line in Winfall caused power outages in EMC's Winfall substation, as well as in their Burgess substation on Harvey Point Road.

Hertford Mayor Bill Cox also attributed the damaged Vepco line in Winfall to the power failure in town.

"The line was repaired and the power was back on around 9 (p.m.)," said Cox.

Brown said most of EMC's some 2,200 customers were also restored to power at that time. "The power went off around 6:15 or 6:20 and was restored at 8:55 (p.m.)," he said.

But residents of Bear Swamp, Bethel, and those living in sections 'M' and 'N' of Snug Harbor were not as fortunate.

Because of a fallen tree on a line near Bear Swamp, electricity was not restored until around 9 a.m. Sunday morning.

Bethel residents regained power around 1 a.m. Sunday, and those affected in Snug Harbor did not receive power until 2:30 a.m., according to Brown.

Brown, who said that restoration of electricity was delayed because of the fact that the line had to be repaired in sections, attributed the outages in Bethel and Snug Harbor to fallen tree limbs.

Program employs youths

Some 36 Perquimans County youth joined the ranks of the labor force last week, thanks to the Summer Youth Program, a federally funded project designed to provide job training and employment opportunities for the unemployed, underemployed, and economically disadvantaged.

The program is sponsored locally by the Economic Improvement Council and the Employment Security Council and is funded under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act within the Department of Labor.

CETA employees are allowed up to 30 hours of labor each week and are paid the minimum wage of \$3.10 an hour.

Any non-profit organization, such as units of local government, or school systems, may qualify as employers. Most of the Perquimans County CETA work force is employed by the town of Hertford, the Perquimans County Parks and Recreation Department, the Hertford Housing Authority, the Perquimans County School System, and the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission.

According to Mary Humphrey, who along with Darnell White serves as work counselor, local youth are working in capacities ranging from clerical to maintenance.