

## Feature:

Bootstrap's 'Cheatin'  
premieres Friday night at  
Angler's Cove. Page 12

## Sports:

Pirates take first  
place in Albemarle  
Conference. Page 6

## Perspectives:

We are an example  
to the children  
around us. Page 4

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 Cents

## News bytes

### Funds transfer

The county commissioners approved transferring a \$30,000 rebate on utilities received by the school board from the town of Hertford from the local current expense budget to the capital outlay budget. School officials will use the funds to install computerized controls on the heating and air conditioning system at the middle school as part of the renovations in progress. Schools Superintendent Randall L. Henion said the control system should pay for itself within three years.

### Tax collections

The Perquimans County Tax Department has collected \$2,457,000 in ad valorem taxes and \$109,044 in solid waste fees. Tax Supervisor Keith Haskett told the commissioners. The tax figure represents an 89 percent collection rate on the \$2,763,796 billed by the county.

Haskett also asked the commissioners to forgive all personal property taxes owing for more than five years. Haskett said his office has attempted to collect the accounts, but has been unsuccessful in locating those who owe. Commissioners Chairman Leo Higgins requested Haskett to submit a list of those who owe before excusing the payments.

### Water woes

John Carter of Holiday Island spoke on behalf of a delegation seeking to change the water sales agreement between the county and Holiday Island. Carter charged that Holiday Island residents are paying too much, by over \$14,000 per year, for service.

Higgins told Carter the water authority will consider the request at the authority meeting scheduled for April 5 at 7 p.m.

### Facilities updates

The commissioners voted to use a \$22,000 utilities rebate from the town of Hertford to begin renovations on county buildings required by OSHA and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### Budget workshops

The commissioners will meet with county department heads on April 20 and 21 to hear budget proposals for next fiscal year. The board will also meet on April 22 to work on the budget. All meetings will be held at 7 p.m.

### Ruritan rent break

The board voted to waive its \$50 rental fee on the Albemarle Commission building conference room for the Parkville Ruritans. County Manager Paul Gregory said he recommended waiving the fee because the Ruritans have provided many services for the county, including building the bleachers at the county athletic fields. The county only paid the cost of materials, Gregory said.

### District attorney request

The commissioners supported one request from the district attorney's office, but said no to a second. The county will send a letter of support for hiring more attorneys to serve the office to the state. But the commissioners did not support a request to add a sexual abuse officer to serve the district. Gregory said by statute social services and the sheriff's department are charged with investigation sexual abuse cases.

## Packed house



LuAnn Riddick, a member of the Concerned Citizens Committee formed to study solid waste management, addressed the Perquimans County Commissioners during their evening session Monday night. Riddick was the first of many residents to speak out against Perquimans County hosting a regional landfill to be used by eight Albemarle area counties. (Photo by Gary Cosby Jr.)

# Citizens speak against landfill in Perquimans

By JULIAN EURE  
Elizabeth City reporter

Approximately 140 Perquimans County residents crowded into the county courthouse Monday night to protest Perquimans commissioners' decision to offer their county as the host for an 8-county, high-tech landfill.

Perquimans' five-member board offered to host the landfill during negotiations with the Albemarle Regional Landfill Authority last year. The authority, which includes Perquimans as one of its eight members, was formed to find a regional solution to solid waste disposal.

Most of those attending the two-hour forum Monday appeared to agree that commissioners should rescind the offer and convince the authority to pursue landfill alternatives, such as contracting with a private company to accept the region's waste.

Many expressed qualms about possible groundwater contamination and river pollution that a high-tech landfill could cause were it ever to spring a leak.

Others expressed concern about large garbage trucks crowding Perquimans' roads should the landfill be built in the county. Still others said they opposed the landfill because they didn't want the county to be renamed "garbage dump" or "landfillville."

But the most common fear was that commissioners had "gone too far" — that Perquimans had already been committed to host the landfill, and that no amount of input from citizens could keep that from happening.

"Assure us that the Perquimans site is not a done deal," asked Doug Layden, chairman of the Concerned Citizens Committee, a grassroots group that organized the mass turnout at Monday's commissioners' meeting.

The committee presented commissioners with petitions containing the names of 1,200 county residents — none of whom "want an 8-county landfill in Perquimans County," said Layden.

The committee also presented commissioners with a list of questions they have about the county's involvement in the authority. At the top of that list is a question that asks why Perquimans was selected to host the authority's first landfill.

According to officials, Perqui-

**"Assure us that the Perquimans site is not a done deal."**

Doug Layden  
Concerned Citizens  
Committee

mans commissioners offered the site to the authority last year because of its proximity to an existing 3-county landfill now used by Chowan, Gates and Perquimans counties. The new site is adjacent to the existing landfill.

Perquimans officials felt locating a new high-tech landfill at the site would save the authority — and thus Perquimans — money in the long-run because it wouldn't require an expensive move of equipment or facilities.

Officials have also talked privately about the benefits of hosting the landfill. So far, the authority hasn't said anything publicly about awarding concessions to the host county, but several Perquimans officials have said they will seek lower "tipping fees" — the cost to dump garbage — if their county gets the landfill.

The authority recently extended its option on the Thomas Chappell property in Belvidere for another year, and voted during its January meeting to let bids for preliminary engineering studies at the site. The studies will determine whether the site is suitable for a landfill.

Another of the committee's questions asked whether the authority and Perquimans County had signed a contract committing the county to host the landfill.

John Matthews, Perquimans County attorney, said the county had signed a resolution joining the authority, but had not signed a contract binding it to a landfill.

The committee also asked if the Belvidere site was the only one "being pursued and aggressively tested." LuAnn Riddick, a committee member, wanted to know for example why Gates County, with its clay soils, had not been chosen to host the landfill.

Bobby Jones, another committee member, asked if citizens could expect the commissioners to make sure the authority makes "good business decisions based upon a

competitive bidding system."

Besides the landfill option, the authority is negotiating with privately owned Addington Environmental to have its garbage hauled to a 120-acre landfill Addington plans to build in Bertie County.

Authority officials have said the choice between options will probably come down to price. If Addington can come up with a price that compares favorably to the price of building and operating a landfill for 20 years, the authority may choose to contract with the private waste company. So far, Addington hasn't given the authority any firm figures, says Authority Executive Director Jerry Parks.

Layden suggested the Perquimans commissioners should keep the citizens committee more informed about the authority's negotiations.

But Mack Nixon, a Perquimans commissioner and the authority chairman, suggested the authority would be shooting itself in the foot if it made the citizens committee privy to all of its negotiations.

"You must understand. If we openly discuss prices, it could hamper our discussions with some of these companies," he said. "We can't lay all our cards on the table tonight. If you tell a man what you're going to do up here, you've got no room for bargaining."

Perquimans County Manager N. Paul Gregory tried to reassure citizens that the commissioners were being fiscally responsible.

"Nothing is a done deal yet. You've elected these officials to look after your best interest. From what I've seen, they're trying to do that. They don't want to dig into your pocket book unless you want them to."

Leo Higgins, the Perquimans commission chairman, said the board should have written responses to the citizen committee's questions by the board's next meeting, scheduled for April 5.

Layden indicated his citizens' group doesn't plan to go away anytime soon. "The long-term goal is that the committee must continue its interest for as long as our governmental agencies are involved in planning ... and operating a solid waste operation," he said.

## Business brisk at district jail

### Additional personnel, space may be needed

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

Business is booming at Albemarle District Jail, according to Jail Commission chairman Thomas Nixon of Perquimans County.

Nixon told Perquimans commissioners Monday that overcrowding and long incarcerations prior to trial are pressing problems at the tri-county facility.

"Your problem with the jail, your biggest problem, is getting the people tried," Nixon said.

The jail commissioner said things get "on edge around there" when over 90 prisoners are packed into the facility designed to hold a maximum of 80. The jail census has topped 100 recently, Nixon reported.

Nixon said the jail commission requested that a judge drop small bonds to allow some of those held awaiting trial to be released. Nixon asked the county to write a letter to district attorney H.P. Williams requesting speedier trials for detainees.

"You can look for another building project unless something changes from what it is," Nixon said.

Nixon said some people seem to like the accommodations at the jail.

"Sometimes people don't want get out of jail. If you turn them out, they come right back to see you. Some of them they let out and they come back without even missing a meal."

The administrative load at the facility has also increased, Nixon said, adding that the jail commission will propose hiring an additional administrator this week. Aubrey Ownley of Perquimans County is the administrator.

"The boys carrying more load than any one human being is supposed to carry," Nixon said.

"We all see the need of it, but we know it's going to cost," Nixon added.

Health care costs for those held at the jail are also increasing. Effective April, Dr. Neil DeNunzio will receive a \$75 per week increase for his weekly visits to the jail. DeNunzio's weekly fee will rise from \$200 to \$275. Nixon said DeNunzio cited more time spent at the jail as the reason for the hike. DeNunzio spends a half day each week examining those housed at the jail.

In a related matter, Nixon said it might be cheaper for the jail to hire an additional employee and purchase a vehicle to transport prisoners who need emergency medical care than to continue to have sheriffs and deputies transport and supervise the prisoners. Prisoners are technically in the custody of the sheriff in the county in which they were arrested, and that sheriff's department is responsible for emergency transportation and supervision.

In addition to relieving the sheriff's departments of the duties, Nixon said having jail employees transport patients would probably result in better medical follow-up for prisoners.

Perquimans County budgeted \$132,944 in the fiscal 1992-93 budget for jail operations.

## Deputies' overtime pay approved...at last

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Perquimans County commissioner Shirley Yates took that cliché to heart Monday, as she made a motion to pay overtime to sheriff's deputies three times before finally getting a second so the motion could come up for a vote.

It appeared that the commissioners would let the issue dangle for another month without approving the \$1,350 for 108 hours of overtime logged by four deputies.

Yates first moved to pay the overtime about an hour into the five-hour meeting. No other board member would second the motion. Chairman Leo Higgins said the board would reconsider the issue at the end of the session.

Around 6 p.m., Yates again moved to pay the overtime. Still no other commissioner would second the motion. For a second time, Higgins moved the matter down on the agenda.

The commissioners recessed for dinner, then reconvened at 7 p.m. to hear citizens' comments on solid waste management. It was around 8:25 when Yates moved for the third time to pay the overtime. Her motion was again met with silence.

Commissioner Archie Miller broke the deadlock. "The thing of it is, we're going over budget here," he said after asking County Manager Paul Gregory if the department had exceeded its overtime allotment.

Gregory said the department has exceeded the amount budgeted for overtime, and that he was surprised at the overtime submitted by Sheriff Joe Lothian on behalf of the deputies.

The commissioners approved overtime in the fall when Lothian met with them about his concerns over manpower due to the Little Rascals trial and a resignation. The board okayed extra pay during

Please see Pay, Page 2

ISSUE  
COMING  
MARCH  
18th

THERE'S  
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