

The Perquimans Weekly

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Hertford, North Carolina 27944



Ben Hobbs

Hobbs takes board seat

Vice-chairman Mack Nixon is loser in 4-way race for 3 seats

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Republican challenger Benjamin Hobbs led all candidates in the bid for the three available county commissioner seats with 1,090 votes.

Hobbs' home precinct, Bethel, gave him a big boost in the race, with almost 300 votes more than Charles Ward, his closest challenger. Hobbs also carried the New Hope precinct.

The seat will not be the first elected office for Hobbs. He formerly sat on the non-partisan school board for eight years.

He said honesty and his willingness to listen to the people are two of the qualities he believes will make him a good commissioner.

Incumbent Evelyn Stubbins received the second-highest number of votes, 1000. Stubbins has served on the board for three years, having been chosen by the commissioners to fill the unexpired term of David Bines, who died in office. She found she enjoyed serving and opted to run in her own right for a full term, she said.

Stubbins was the top vote-taker in Belvidere, East Hertford, Nicanor, Parksville and West Hertford.

Ward, the present board chairman, earned 652 votes, while Nixon, board vice-chairman, tallied 566 votes. Both men said they wanted to stay on the board to see projects, including the development of the commerce centre on Harvey Point Road and the water upgrade presently underway, through to completion. Both incumbents said they were pleased to have been able to provide necessary services without a tax increase over the past few years.

Although there were three seats up for grabs, county voters could vote for only one candidate under the electoral plan approved by the U.S. Justice Department.

The winners will be sworn in at the commissioners' meeting in December.

Vote totals are unofficial until the county canvass.

Robinson will keep his badge

Interim sheriff defeats deputy by landslide

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Interim sheriff Ralph Robinson claimed a landslide victory Tuesday, defeating independent Billy Spruill, 2,420-717.

Robinson, 71, defeated former sheriff David Lane in the Democratic primary in May by over 300 votes. Lane resigned in July effective Aug. 1. The county commissioners tapped Robinson to serve out Lane's unexpired term, which ends Dec. 1.

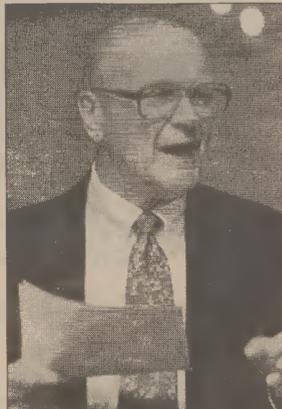
Spruill, presently a Perquimans County deputy, announced his intention to mount a petition drive to get his name on the ballot for the general election in late May.

He collected the required signatures to run as an independent candidate.

In response to a questionnaire from The Perquimans Weekly two weeks prior to the election, Robinson said he decided to run for sheriff after being asked to seek the position by county residents who told him they were not satisfied with the direction in which the sheriff's department was going.

"After much soul searching I decided that I would run as your democratic candidate for sheriff," Robinson wrote in his questionnaire response. "I felt that I could make a difference in the county by unifying law enforcement groups to better serve the people."

Robinson said there is much that needs to be done in the area of drugs and drug-related crime. He said that if elected, he would join the drug task force. He added that he has



Sheriff-elect Ralph Robinson

already begun to initiate steps to secure state and federal grant monies to defray the costs of task force membership.

The sheriff, who also serves as the county's D.A.R.E. officer, said one of the most press-



Billy Spruill

ing issues in law enforcement today is the need for public involvement in community policing efforts. Robinson said working together, communities and law enforcement agencies can develop a safer environment.

Robinson cited dedication, honesty and the fairness that he has displayed to the people of the county as a deputy and D.A.R.E. officer as qualities he would bring to the office that would make him a good sheriff. He added that he has a good work ethic and he will install that same work ethic throughout the department. In addition, Robinson said his years of law enforcement and management skills would help him develop a cohesive law enforcement team. He also said his people skills and compassion are positive qualities for a sheriff.

Robinson could not be reached for comment at his home on election night. By state statute, deputies serve at the pleasure of the sheriff. Robinson has not stated in a public forum whether he will keep Spruill on as a deputy.

All vote totals are unofficial until the county canvass.

SUPER MEETS SUPER



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Former Perquimans County Schools Superintendent John Biggers and his wife, Katherine, welcome Superintendent Gregory Todd and his wife, Libby, to Perquimans County. The two superintendents met at a reception honoring the Todds held at the new Hertford Grammar School multi-purpose room Sunday afternoon.

Local, state, bond referendums approved

By SUSAN R. HARRIS

Hertford voters approved the \$4.8 million bond referendum for water and wastewater system upgrades Tuesday, 450-163. County voters also overwhelmingly approved both clean water and natural gas bonds. The clean water referendum passed locally 2,651-604, with natural gas getting the nod, 2,071-942.

Hertford officials have been studying the capacity and condition of the town's water and sewer systems for several years. Needs total about \$4.8 million.

The lion's share of the funds — over \$3.8 million — will go to the wastewater system. Town Manager John Christensen has said in several Hertford Town Council meetings and public hearings to discuss the needs in the water and wastewater departments that the wastewater system needs a total overhaul. Capacity will be increased from 400,000 to 700,000 gallons per day.

Christensen said growth on U.S. Highway 17 has already stressed the sewer system. The renovations would include upgrading burdened pumping stations to better handle the flow from the highway, as well as have the capacity to serve the commerce centre on Harvey Point Road just off of Highway 17.

In addition, the upgrade will give Hertford the capacity to treat Winfall's sewage. Winfall will pay all costs associated with that endeavor.

The town also plans a \$990,000 water department expansion to include installing a third well, updating old and obsolete equipment and painting both water tanks.

While Hertford residents approved borrowing up to \$4.8 million with the passage of the bond referendum, town officials have said that grant applications have been submitted to try to get state and federal assistance with the projects. The town will only borrow on its own what it cannot finance through grants.

If the state clean water bond referendum passed (the outcome of the referendum statewide was not known at press time), Christensen said Hertford could also be in line for grants resulting from that bond issue, or less costly state funds.

The state funds would provide \$800 million in loans and grants to local governments to build new water and sewer treatment facilities, expand capacity to new businesses and homes, and upgrade deteriorating facilities.

The local bond issue approved general obligation bonds, meaning that the town will back the issue with its taxing power. Christensen stated during discussion of the bond referendum this summer that he does not anticipate raising taxes to pay the bonds. The town raised its water and sewer rates by 14 percent in the fiscal 1998-99 budget to help offset the cost of repayment.

Town officials said if the bond referendum had not passed, the town would have been forced to seek alternative and more costly financing for the needed improvements.

Chamber plans Christmas parade

Christmas will come to Perquimans on Dec. 5 when the annual holiday parade steps off at 2 p.m.

Sponsored by the Chamber of

Commerce, the parade theme is A Carolina Christmas. Chamber organizers are asking bands, businesses, and church, civic and school groups to participate in the parade.

Grand marshalls for this year's holiday event are N.C. Representative and Mrs. Bill Owens.

Applications are available at the Chamber or by calling 426-5657.

How Perquimans voted

	Belvidere	Bethel	E. Hertford	New Hope	Nicanor	Parksville	W. Hertford	Absentee
Sheriff								
Robinson	191	596	371	353	85	521	242	61
Spruill	109	159	53	161	22	91	102	20
Commissioner								
Hobbs	67	452	101	191	18	147	68	46
Nixon	36	82	54	159	17	105	98	15
Stubbins	129	132	209	128	36	239	112	15
Ward	64	161	84	70	34	144	78	17
Clean Water Act (Bonds)								
In favor of	2,651							
Against	604							
Natural Gas Bonds								
In favor of	2,071							
Against	942							
Hertford Bonds								
In favor of	450							
Against	168							
U.S. Senate								
Edwards			1,798					
Faircloth			1,389					
Howe			38					
State House District 86								
Culpepper			1,925					
Embrey			747					
U.S. House District 3								
Williams			1,582					
Jones			1,579					
Nubel			23					