

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

Hertford seeks sewer payment from Winfall

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Hertford officials are turning to their attorney to seek back payments from the town of Winfall for wastewater treatment.

Winfall officials are turning to their attorney to try to get Hertford to accept what they consider reasonable compensation.

Last Monday, members of Hertford Town Council voted to give Winfall one week to pay \$34,867 or have Hertford turn the matter over to the town's attorney, Ben Gallop of Hornthal, Riley, Ellis & Maland, L.L.P.

No payment had been made by Tuesday morning, however Winfall's mayor says a check is on its way.

Fred Yates said Winfall's attorney is currently drawing up a cover letter to be sent to Hertford along with a package detailing the amount Winfall officials have determined is reasonable. A check will accompany that package, Yates added.

Hertford officials say Winfall has not paid Hertford for treating their wastewater since March, 2008.

"This has been going on way too long," said Councilman Carlton Davenport. "Something needs to be done."

Hertford and Winfall have disagreed for several months on how much Winfall actually owes Hertford for treating the town's wastewater each month.

Last June, Hertford asked Winfall to pay \$7,975.99 in past due charges for treatment in March and April 2008. Winfall, instead, said Hertford overcharged them around \$8,000 between May 2007 and Feb. 2008 and wanted that amount applied to their March and April bills.

Winfall believes the temporary flow meters at Winfall's lift station No. 6 that have measured Winfall's

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Sweet on Antiques



JANE MCMAHON OF HERTFORDSHIRE Antiques (left) checks the progress on one of the many items up for bids during Saturday's 9th annual St. Valentine's Silent Antique Auction benefitting Historic Hertford, Inc.'s downtown beautification projects. McMahon described the auction as "slammed at times," bringing in folks from around the area bidding on furniture, lamps, mirrors, pictures, china, crystal, jewelry, silver, and much more. McMahon has been the backbone of the auction since its inception. The event has provided thousands of dollars over the years. Kevin Sary (above) of Portsmouth contemplates bidding.

Budget helper

Hertford offers budget utility billing plan

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Hertford is now offering town utility customers budget billing to help take the stress of fluctuating monthly bills off the consumer.

However, budget billing may not be for everyone.

The program averages out utility costs for a year, and the customer pays one set amount for 11 months. They make up the difference or receive a credit on the 12th month, called "true-up time."

"This process allows the customer to know what their bill will be each month. It will save them the cost of late payments."

John Christensen
Town Manager

"This process allows the customer to know what their bill will be each month," explained Town Manager John Christensen. "It will save them the cost of late payments."

For example, a customer who averaged paying \$195.98 a month for the past 12 months would pay \$214 for 11 months. On the 12th month, that customer would receive a credit of a little over \$1, meaning they would have no bill to pay that 12th month.

The new billing process is designed to help those who heat and cool with heat pumps or other electrical systems.

Years with colder or hotter than usual temperatures may impact the budget billing process greatly, Christensen pointed out.

How much would you pay? Add your utility bills for the past year and divide by 11. That would be your cost. On the twelfth month, you would get a usage adjustment.

For example, if a customer's past 12 months reflects cooler than normal summer months and the current summer is a scorcher, the customer may actually face a higher "true-up" bill on the 12th month.

Not everyone will want to take advantage of the budget billing process, Christensen explained. Customers who heat with gas, for example, may not want a higher utility bill in the winter accompanying the gas bill as well.

"The program will allow them to choose," added Mayor Sid Eley. "Everyone's needs are different. They can opt out if they want to."

Customers may sign up in March for the volunteer program. The sign up window will be held only once a year.

Customers may not have a past due balance prior to signing up for the program.

County shoreline project under budget

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Competitive construction bids will enable the county to get more bang for its buck in stabilizing the shoreline behind the recreation center.

County commissioners recently agreed to submit a change order that will allow the county to build a better nature trail and plant larger trees and shrubs to help stabilize the bluff and natural beach area behind the recreation department in the county's Commerce Centre.

The county received a grant from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to stabilize 2,000 feet of riparian shoreline, but a 13-month long process to receive a needed CAMA permit delayed actual construction until after the local construction boom had subsided.

"When we first started this project, the construction business was at a peak," said County Manager Bobby Darden. "But because we had to wait for



Perquimans Weekly photo by Cathy Wilson
ABOUT 1,000 FEET OF shoreline behind the recreation department at the county's commerce centre has been protected with rock sills. Trees, shrubs and grasses will be planted to further protect the area from erosion. A nature trail will also be created for county residents to enjoy.

the permitting process, building had slowed down, allowing us to get decent bids. They came in well under budget."

CAMA basically halved the shoreline footage to 1,000 feet which has already

been protected with rock sills. And, approximately 450 feet of shoreline bluff has been re-graded and planted with winter ryé grass.

Darden said the work completed to date for the

wetlands has cost about half of what was originally budgeted.

The county is asking to upgrade the size of the trees to be planted from seedlings to 5-9 foot trees in 7-10 gallon containers. Shrubs will also be increased in size from 1-gallon to 3-5 gallon size. Native grasses will be planted behind the sills, and Bermuda grass sod will be placed along the re-graded bank this spring.

Darden said county officials believe using more mature plants will help to more quickly stabilize the shoreline.

The county also wants to install an irrigation system along the re-graded bank section in front of the recreation center building. The irrigation system would help ensure survival and growth of planted materials.

In addition, the county plans to construct an enhanced nature trail along the area.

"We'll have the funds left to build a really nice, long nature trail," Darden said.

SunTrust enjoys new location off U.S. 17

SunTrust Mortgage celebrated the grand opening of its new office with a ribbon cutting last Thursday sponsored by the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce.

The local mortgage company moved to its new location at 220A Ocean Highway the end of September.

"We have better visibility, a better location, and more room here," said Manager Darla Semonich who has 41 years experience in the mortgage industry and also

leads the office in Elizabeth City.

The Hertford branch, which has done business locally for the past eight years, has two employees to help customers with their mortgage needs. The local loan officer is Marianna Stanton who has over 12 years of experience in the industry.

SunTrust Mortgage is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, call 426-2200.



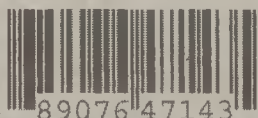
Perquimans Weekly photo by CATHY WILSON
THE PERQUIMANS CHAMBER OF Commerce held a ribbon cutting Thursday at the new location of SunTrust Mortgage, located at 220A Ocean Highway in the new MCS shopping center.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 59 Low: 31
AM SHOWERS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 48 Low: 30
SUNNY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 53 Low: 36
PARTLY CLOUDY



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