

## INSURANCE

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the approval of the Perquimans County Commission, Heath said he submitted that request last week. Perquimans County has 97 employees in the health plan.

Even if the request is granted, Perquimans won't see rate relief until next year.

"They said they'd accept 10,000 more, but there is no timeline," Heath said. "We just want to be early to get our names in. Just because we get in, doesn't mean we're going. At least we'll have a spot reserved."

Heath budgeted for the \$843,000 this year.

The county did have a bad year for claims in 2014-15, but Heath said July was good.

Heath agreed with Jerry Parks, the director of ARHS. Price alone won't be the only factor the county looks at. Heath said

Perquimans would look at the total package of what's covered.

Parks said there's no way of knowing the exact cost of State Health Plan coverage for local governments until the General Assembly approves a state budget and the plan's administrators "know what it is they are working with."

The General Assembly is operating on a continuing budget. The deadline to adjourn is Friday, but it can be extended.

Bunch also said that Pasquotank, Perquimans and ARHS would not seek to exit or dissolve Northeast Albemarle Group Health if they switch to the State Health Plan. They would stay on as members and continue offering dental insurance and other coverage to their employees, he said. Keeping the health group alive preserves a backup option if the State Health Plan becomes a bad deal, he added.

## AYDLETT

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N.C. State University to pursue a degree as a veterinarian.

But not all of his credits from his bachelor's degree in biology would transfer so he was facing a lot more schooling.

That's when the school superintendent in Camden County asked him what he

was doing. At that point Aydlett figured he'd have to work a few years to earn money before going back to school, so he took a teaching job.

There was something else — the Vietnam War. Biology and science teachers were excepted from the military draft at the time, and Aydlett figured he was more valuable in the classroom than he would be carrying a rifle in the field.

## WIND RULES

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backing of the Iberdrola project at the groundbreaking, including his statement that wind power is part of his "all of the above" energy strategy.

A large crowd of Timbermill project supporters attended the meeting, with many wearing green camouflage buttons proclaiming their support for wind power.

And while speakers at the July 6 meeting of the county commissioners were overwhelmingly in favor of stricter wind energy regulations, speakers at Monday night's meeting were just as overwhelmingly in support of keeping the current ordinance as it is.

Cy Rich, chairman of the Edenton Chowan Partnership, said he was aware of the county's struggle to provide services for citizens with a limited tax base. The wind energy facility would build the tax base, he said.

In an interview with The Perquimans Weekly Monday, Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath said each of the turbines built by Iberdrola are estimated to produce about \$5,000 in county tax revenue. About 50 are to be cited in Perquimans County. The \$250,000 a year in taxes they would pay amounts to about two cents on the county's property tax rate. Once built, the Iberdrola project would be the largest single taxpayer in Perquimans County by a large margin, Heath said.

Rich said the county's existing wind energy ordinance is aligned with ordinances in neighboring counties and is

consistent with the advice provided by N.C. State University.

The wind energy industry is growing exponentially, Rich said. States have allowed the growth of wind energy because they have determined it is not a threat to public health and safety, Rich said.

The peer-reviewed scientific studies that have been done have shown that wind energy is not detrimental to public health and safety, he said.

Randy Martin said the county has a company ready and waiting to build a wind energy project. He said he is concerned about changing horses in mid-stream by amending the ordinance at this point. That would send a negative message to other companies that might be considering Chowan County as a potential location, he said.

Rebecca Martin said her daughters had been ecstatic when they learned that Chowan County had been selected as a site for a proposed wind energy facility. She said the 2013 wind energy ordinance is a good ordinance that would allow the county to participate in the development of clean energy for the future.

"You cannot be dependent on unclean energy forever," Martin said.

During discussion on the process for considering the planning board recommendations and the citizens' petition in support of those proposals, County Planner Elizabeth Bryant explained that based on her understanding of the county's unified development ordinance, the process would be for her to draft a text amendment based on the

planning board recommendations and then submit it to the Planning Board for review.

The planning board's recommendation on that text amendment would then come to the county commissioners for consideration and a public hearing would be scheduled on the text amendment, according to Bryant.

Susanne Stallings, clerk to the Chowan Board of Commissioners, said that if the planning board could meet on the text amendment this month, then it should be possible to schedule a public hearing at a meeting of the county commissioners in September.

A motion by Commissioner Greg Bonner to get that process started with the drafting of a text amendment and review by the planning board passed 4-2, with Commissioner John Mitchener and Commissioner Emmett Winborne voting against it.

Chairman Jeff Smith, whose family farm has been in discussions with Apex Clean Energy regarding a possible lease of land for the company's Timbermill Wind Project, did not vote. Smith has been advised by the county attorney not to vote on matters related to the wind energy ordinance or the Timbermill Wind Project.

Commissioner Keith Nixon expressed a concern that the Planning Board in developing its recommendations did not consider the Perquimans and Pasquotank wind energy ordinances.

Nixon also said he has been concerned about the Planning Board's split on the recommendations. He said he would like to see a unanimous vote from the Planning Board on recommendation language for the wind energy ordinance.

Commissioner Ellis Lawrence said he saw no need for amendments to the wind energy ordinance.

"We have an ordinance," Lawrence said.

During the public comment period Monday night, two speakers backed the planning board recommendations for stricter wind energy regulations. Tom Credle cited the infrastructure failures and other longstanding issues with the Riversound I Development as evidence of the need for strict oversight of development.

Development can be either a blessing or a curse, and it's the commissioners' responsibility to protect the citizens from the curse of unwise development, according to Credle.

Liz Alons also spoke in favor of amending the county's wind energy ordinance. She said a wind turbine should not be allowed less than a mile from someone's home.

But Bill Elliott called the proposed wind energy facility a "golden opportunity to improve this county."

Elliott said he was in favor of the county's wind energy ordinance as approved in 2013.

Bill Jordan, who said he is a landowner and lifelong resident of Chowan County, spoke about the need to build the county's tax base.

"This is a wonderful project to do it," Jordan said.

Bob Emory, who said he was representing Weyerhaeuser, said Weyerhaeuser supports the Timbermill project as a use that is environmentally friendly and compatible with the company's tree-growing business.

A.O. Roberts, a resident of Perquimans County, said the current Chowan ordinance is in line with what is in the Perquimans ordinance, and the commissioners should go forward with the existing ordinance.

Gary Swanner also expressed support for the Timbermill project, saying it would be good for the environment and also provide financial benefits to the local economy.

Swanner also countered a frequently cited objection to the project — that it would hurt the community's tourism industry.

Swanner said the wind energy project actually would boost tourism, making Chowan County a place where people could come to see both the past and the future.

Gene Jordan urged the commissioners to keep the wind energy ordinance as it is in order to encourage development.


"Chowan County needs to be encouraging development, not discouraging it," Jordan said.

Jen Banks of the Southeastern Wind Coalition said Chowan's existing ordinance strikes a balance between allowing the development of wind energy facilities and ensuring they aren't built in places that are not suitable. The ordinance protects the health and safety of citizens and is aligned with similar ordinances in nearby counties and consistent with model ordinances in North Carolina and other states in the region, she said.

Steve Lane also spoke in favor of moving forward under the county's existing wind energy ordinance.

The planning board recommendations focused on six proposed requirements:

- \* Provide a property value guarantee to non-participating property owners within two miles of a property line of a participating property owner
- \* One-mile setback from property line
- \* Acoustical limit of 35 dBA
- \* Meaningful environmental tests
- \* Escrow account for the life of the project
- \* Adequate decommissioning terms and conditions.



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**SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2015**  
AT 12:00 NOON.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CLUBHOUSE  
All property owners at The Shores  
are welcome to attend.

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Email: perquimansweekly@ncweeklies.com

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