

Shootings Dominate 2020 Crime Coverage

BY MILES LAYTON
Editor

Local law enforcement agents had a busy year investigating incidents of gun violence reported in Hertford and Perquimans County during 2020.

Provided below is a listing of shooting incidents since Jan. 1 that are/were under investigation.

■ Dec. 4, a shooting in Hertford ended with a vehicle striking a house in Elizabeth City. According to the Hertford Police Department, officers heard what appeared to be gunshots in the King and Stokes streets area around 9:53 p.m. Friday. Officers found a 40-year-old

man on Stokes Street who had been shot. Police have an eyewitness who saw the driver of the vehicle fire gunshots at the man, Hertford police official says. Four juveniles, who are between the ages of 13 and 17, are suspected of taking part in the shooting have been arrested, according to HPD.

■ Nov. 4 after someone was shot on King Street, Perquimans High School and the Hertford Grammar School were temporarily on a modified lockdown.

■ Oct. 31, a man was shot at a house party on Market Street and Edenton Road.

■ There was a trio of shootings in Perqui-

mans County between Sept. 13 and Sept. 14; one that claimed the life of a Hertford man, two others that sent two men to area hospitals. In the wake of the shootings, a two-week curfew was enacted that started Sept. 15 and ended Sept. 29. The first shooting that was reported at 2:36 a.m. Sept. 13 at 112 Miller St. outside Hertford where Tay'quan Coleman, 23, of Hertford was shot. Coleman was taken to Albemarle Hospital where he died. State Bureau of Investigation was called in to assist. Second shooting occurred around 3:30 p.m. Sept. 13 when HPD and PCSO responded to a shooting in the area of King Street and

Edenton Road in Hertford. Officers arrived on-scene and found a man shot numerous times. Final shooting happened around 9:30 p.m. Sept. 14 when HPD responded to a report of a shooting where a man had been shot by King and Brace streets.

■ June 3, the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office, assisted by the United States Marshal Service and the Bertie County Sheriff's Office, arrested Torrance Brock, 18, of Edenton. He faces charges of assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to kill inflicting serious injury and attempted murder. Brock was placed under a \$1

million bond and taken Albemarle District Jail. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Brock, who was wanted in connection with the May 23 shooting of Ahmad Trafton in Perquimans County. Deputies responding to a shots fired report found Trafton at a residence in Burnt Mill Creek Trailer Park.

■ May 24, a shooting was reported into an occupied dwelling on Edenton Road.

■ According to HPD, an officer responded to a reported shooting and robbery at the Food Lion off U.S. Highway 17 on Saturday (Feb. 15). No injuries were reported in the incident. HPD conducted an intensive investigation

which led to the arrest of Don Juan Myers of Snug Harbor for assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, robbery, and a felon in possession of a firearm.

■ A shooting was reported Dobbs Street reported at 12:30 a.m., Feb. 5. A silver Nissan Versa or Audi pulled up with several young males inside. HPD said a male approached an older resident while he was exiting his car. The older male told the younger male late teens early twenties to stop. The young man pulled out a pistol and shot at the older man multiple times. The older male was not injured. No one was hurt.

OBITUARY

S. Ann Benton

HERTFORD - Sallie Ann Benton, 77, of 1171 New Hope Road, passed away Friday, December 25, 2020 in Elizabeth City Health and Rehabilitation.



Miss Benton was born in Perquimans County on June 2, 1943, and was the daughter of the late John Marvin Benton, Sr. and Essie Barclift Benton Turner and step-father, Robert W. Turner. A graduate of East Carolina University with a Masters in Education, she was a retired elementary teacher having taught 1st grade for over 30 years at Central Elementary School in Elizabeth City. Following her retirement from teaching, she volunteered for many years with Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools.

An active member of Woodland United Methodist Church, she served as its Music Director and played piano for 65 years having started playing at 12 years of age. Other memberships enjoyed included the Alpha Delta Kappa Teachers Sorority, Forestburg Ruritan Club, and formerly with the Red Hat Society.

In addition to her parents and step-father, she was preceded in death by her brother, John Marvin Benton, Jr.

Surviving are her sister-in-law, Cynthia R. Benton; a niece, Pamela Benton Brown (Scott); two nephews, John Linwood Benton (Rebecca) and Karl Wayne Benton (April), all of Hertford; two great-nieces, Katlyn Benton and Jewel Benton; and two great-nephews, LTJG J.L. Benton, Jr. and Jeremiah Brown.

Graveside services were held Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. in Cedarwood Cemetery and were conducted by her pastors, the Revs. Toni Wood and Renee Edwards.

Memorial contributions may be made either to Woodland United Methodist Church, 453 Woodland Church Road, or to the Ramp Ministry at Hertford Baptist Church, PO Box 34, both in Hertford, NC 27944.

Miller & Van Essendelft Funeral and Cremation Providers, 1125 Harvey Point Road, Hertford, is assisting the family with arrangements, and online condolences may be made by visiting www.millerfhc.com.

OBITUARY POLICY

For information on submitting obituaries or death notices Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 252-329-9505 or email obits@apgenc.com and specify that you are interested in obituary information for The Perquimans Weekly. On weekends and holidays, email obits@apgenc.com. We do not accept notices by fax.

Obituaries must be received, processed and approved by noon on Tuesday to appear in print in the Thursday edition.

Death notices are \$25 and can include the name and age of the decedent; funeral and visitation or viewing information; and the name of the funeral home.

Order Extends Evictions Moratorium

FROM SUBMITTED REPORT

RALEIGH — Governor Roy Cooper signed Executive Order 184, extending North Carolina's evictions moratorium through January 31, 2021, on December 31, 2020.

Research shows that eviction moratoriums help prevent the spread of COVID-19. States that let their eviction moratoriums lapse saw a COVID-19 incidence rate that was 1.6 times higher than states that

kept a moratorium in place.

"Too many families are living on the edge, trying to do the right thing, but left with impossible choices. This Order will help them stay in their homes, which is essential to slowing the spread of the virus," Cooper said.

E.O. 184 clarifies and expands the federal eviction moratorium, which was extended by Congress until January 31, 2021. With many people struggling financially due to this pan-

demic, this Order halts evictions for nonpayment of rent.

In North Carolina, an estimated 485,000 adults in rental housing reported that they are not caught up on rent and nearly three million adults reported difficulty in covering usual household expenses, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

This order also extends protections for individuals applying for assistance through the state's Housing Oppor-

tunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program.

This program assists North Carolinians facing financial hardship by providing rent and utility payments directly to landlords and utility companies.

Over 21,000 renters have been notified that they will receive rent or utility payment help and award notices totaling \$37.4 million have been issued as the HOPE Program continues to provide more assistance to its applicants.

COUNCIL

Continued from A1

Elizabeth City in November.

Town Manager Pam Hurdle was asked if the search for a permanent utilities director remains ongoing or if the search ended. Hurdle replied that yes, the search continues.

In other business, council discussed raising employee pay based on a salary study conducted by the Management and Personnel Service Group.

Previously, Town Hall hired the MAPS Group to provide a comprehensive assessment of personnel/HR policies to including identifying appropriate pay ranges for each Town staff position.

Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Hodges, who presided over Monday's meeting, said council did this for two reasons:

1. Hertford hasn't performed this study since 2005. If that sounds like a long time it should – most municipalities in North Carolina perform this study about every 5 years.

2. The Town has experienced extraordinary staff turnover the last few years which is both expensive and disruptive to Town operations.

Noting the high staff turnover within the last two to three years, Hodges said the goal of the study was to identify steps council could take to address these issues and consider implementing them in the FY21-22 budget year.

All members of Council have expressed their desire to see the pay adjustments implemented as soon as possible, but there are still some sticking points in the personnel policies that they will work through in the coming weeks.

"I believe the implementation cost for the salary portion is estimated to be about \$67K, meaning our operating costs would increase by \$67K every year moving forward," Hodges said. "We'll have to work hard in budget season to identify where we can find those additional funds, but I think we're in unanimous agreement that it needs to happen if at all possible."

Councilman Frank Norman added, "We are probably the most underpaid community that there is and while we know we don't have some of the finances other communities have, we have to be fair to our employees if we want to keep them."

In other business, local businessman Tony Riddick criticized council's decision

from September not to pursue the possible development of a 245 residential unit federal Housing and Urban Development housing complex.

In September, council voted 3-2 against paying \$25,000 for legal fees to explore whether a low to moderate income HUD housing complex is feasible – a project estimated to cost \$40 million – money that would come primarily from an Urban Development Block Grant, if the grant was awarded.

Though the total annual revenue was forecast to be \$2.3 million per year, that figure didn't take into account maintenance costs and \$1.2 million annually estimated depreciation costs.

If the project had moved forward substantial upgrades to existing infrastructure would be needed, necessitating the hire of additional public safety and public works personnel.

Riddick asserted that the housing complex would've created jobs and served as a safety net for more and more people who have fallen behind economically, particularly in these trying times.

Also, Riddick took aim at Town Hall's attempt to eliminate blight and enforce the collection of back

taxes. Last year 57 properties meeting the criteria of being uninhabited and have owed taxes for more than three years were identified to go to Zacheaus Legal Services for resolution pending final confirmation with the Perquimans County Tax Office.

"If the town is genuinely concerned about the citizens, if a citizen is behind in their taxes or what have you, the first impression should not be to take the property," Riddick said. "The first impression should be how can I help the citizen maintain their property and how to help the citizen keep their property."

And lastly, council appropriated somewhere in the neighborhood of \$67K of its CARES Act funds to provide grants to small businesses directly impacted by the Governor's COVID-19 executive orders. This amounted to roughly \$5K per business and the checks went out just before Christmas.

Also, there will be no official town-sponsored car show this year. However, car enthusiast JT one stop and upholstery will be holding a small show later this year.

More Town Council news to follow in a future edition.

"We always welcome new patients."

COMFORT • QUALITY • EXPERIENCE

Modern Dentistry in a relaxed environment for the entire family.



DR. CHRIS KOPPELMAN, DDS
DR. ETHAN NELSON, DDS

482-5131

ALBEMARLE
DENTAL ASSOCIATES
General and Cosmetic Dentistry

103 Mark Dr. Edenton, NC
(behind Chowan Hospital)

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

(USPS428-080)

Published Each Thursday

A publication of Adams Publishing Group

Established 1934

111 W. Market St., Hertford, NC 27944

Robin L. Quillon.....Publisher
Sean O'Brien.....General Manager
Miles Layton.....Editor
Bev Alexander.....Advertising Representative
Phone 252-426-5728 ■ Fax 252-426-4625
Email: mLAYTON@ncweeklies.com

Subscription Rate

Home delivery..... \$35 + tax per year

Information

For subscription questions, delivery issues, classified ads, legal notices, and obituaries, please call Customer Care at 252-329-9505

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Perquimans Weekly, Hertford, NC 27944

TOWNE INSURANCE
A Towne Family Company

114 Kathryn Court, Elizabeth City, NC 27909
Towneinsurance.com • 252-335-0811