

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021

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PAL gallery exhibiting Mullen's artworks until Dec. 17



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Recreation All-Star Fall League championship teams recognized



PAGE A9
Third-graders write letters to Santa Claus

School board raises bus driver pay to \$15 an hour

Board also votes to continue mask mandate another month

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Perquimans County school officials have approved new incentives to recruit and retain more bus drivers that include raising starting pay to \$15 an hour.

The Board of Education voted unanimously earlier this week to approve a \$2-per-hour increase

above the state pay scale for bus drivers for the 2021-22 school year. The move raises starting pay for bus drivers to \$15 per hour.

In addition, the school district will cover the cost of drivers' initial license certifications, license renewals and N.C. Department of Transportation physicals.

Speaking at Monday's board meeting, Chairwoman Anne White praised "our amazing bus drivers" and remarked how they are critical to the district being able to hold in-person school.

White said in a later interview that school officials want to increase pay for all Perquimans County Schools staff but can't do it all at once. Officials decided to start with bus drivers, she said, and will look next at other key support staff such as cafeteria workers, maintenance workers and teacher assistants.

The board also voted to extend the district's mandatory COVID-19 masking policy. School staff recommended requiring "the wearing of masks for all students, staff,

and visitors/spectators ... while inside school facilities in order to limit the number of (COVID-19) quarantines and spread within the district."

The recommendation is the same the board has approved previously. Under the board's current policy, the school masking mandate expires at the end of each month. For it to remain in effect, the board has to vote to continue it at the end of each month.

COVID metrics in Perquimans and the school district are

presented to the board at each monthly meeting as part of the decision-making process.

Superintendent Tanya Turner reminded the board that the school district had switched from optional masking to mandatory masking in September.

Last week, she told the board, there were a record 22 students who tested positive for COVID-19 while two staff members also tested positive.

See **DRIVERS, A3**

New role for Cole



REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Retired Judge J.C. Cole is administered the oath of office as a member of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission by Superior Court Judge Eula Reid in the James Carlton Cole Courtroom in the Perquimans County Courthouse, Monday, Nov. 22. Cole's wife Janice, herself a former Judge, holds the Bible as her husband is sworn in.

Ex-judge joins Wildlife Commission

Retired judge looks to get more youth involved in hunter safety

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Retired Superior Court Judge J.C. Cole took the oath of office as a member of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Monday, Nov. 22, in the courtroom that now bears his name.

Cole was administered the oath of office by Superior Court Judge Eula Reid in the James Carlton Cole Court-

room on the first floor of the historic Perquimans County Courthouse. He was appointed to the office Oct. 7 by Gov. Roy Cooper.

"I'm looking forward to this," Cole said of serving on the WRC in an interview after the ceremony.

Cole said he brings his concern for young people to his new role as a state wildlife commissioner.

"I just have a passion for working with young folk," Cole said. "I want to see what

See **COLE, A3**



REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Officers of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and "hunting buddies" Herbert Mullen Jr. and Herbert "Herb" Mullen III join retired Judge J.C. Cole after his swearing-in as a member of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Monday, Nov. 22.

Spaugh will not seek a 4th term on school board

White will seek re-election, Peeler undecided right now

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

The vice chairwoman of the Perquimans County Board of Education announced last week that she will not seek re-election next year.

Amy Spaugh, who is completing her third term on the school board, said she will not seek a fourth.

"Public schools are truly the center of our community, and I've been honored to serve," she said in an email.

Spaugh encouraged others interested in putting students first to run for her seat.

"With at least one seat open for 2022, I encourage others to research the role of a school board member and consider getting involved — not for a single constituency, issue or political view — but to ensure public schools in our county stay effective and serve all students well," she said.

One of Spaugh's fellow board members up for re-election in March, chairwoman Anne White, said she does plan to seek another term. Matt Peeler, however, said he's undecided about seeking another term.

The filing period for local and state offices opens at noon on Dec. 6 and closes on Friday, Dec. 17.

White, who is in her third year as the board's chair,



SPAUGH



WHITE



PEELER

is an appointee to the North Carolina School Boards Trust and was recently elected to serve as a member of the North Carolina School Boards Association. She says the Perquimans schools have great leadership and are "on the cusp of a mighty wave striving to make" the district "second to none in the state."

"It would be an honor to continue to serve and support our amazing students, parents, superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, teachers, staff, community and local and state leaders," she said.

Peeler said he enjoys his service on the school board.

"I feel honored that I live in a county where the community backs our schools, especially our teachers," he

See **BOARD, A3**

\$5 million in budget for Inner Banks ferry

Goodwin: Could be year or more before ferry service begins

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

The recently approved state budget includes \$5 million for an Inner Banks ferry system that could start transporting passengers between Albemarle Sound towns as early as

late next year.

State Rep. Ed Goodwin, R-Chowan, confirmed this week that the budget includes the appropriation for the new ferry system.

Goodwin said much preliminary work on the Inner Banks ferry system has been done but more needs to be done.

"It won't happen overnight," he said.

It could be a year or more before the new ferry service is able to begin operations, said Goodwin, who

See **FERRY, A3**

Cooper earns top awards at State Fair



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Hannah Cooper (center) of Perquimans County holds one of her awards at the N.C. State Fair Junior Livestock Show in October. Cooper won awards for Champion Overall Market Barrow and Reserve Supreme Champion Breeding Gilt.

PCHS student to compete at national show in January

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

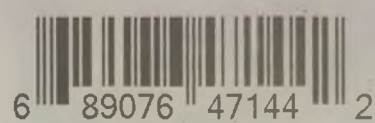
A Perquimans County teen earned top awards at the N.C. State Fair Junior Livestock Show in October.

Hannah Cooper, a student at Perquimans County High School, won awards for Champion Overall Market Barrow and Reserve Supreme Champion Breeding Gilt at the State Fair in Raleigh.

Cooper said she's very excited with the wins and looks forward to competing in the show next year.

The 14-year-old explained that she gets the pigs from Lander

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Vol. 87, No. 48
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