

COASTAL OBSERVER

Vol. XL No. 15

Pawleys Island, South Carolina ~ September 23, 2021

\$1.00

School board approves \$1.3 million in employee bonuses

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School District had a nearly \$2 million budget surplus at the end of the 2019-20 school year. The school board decided this week to spend more than half of that on bonuses for employees.

Approximately 1,300 full-time employees will receive \$1,000 each. Nearly 200 part-

time and temporary employees who have worked at least 75 hours between July 1 and Oct. 1 will get \$350 each.

The extra pay, which the district is calling "hard work" bonuses, will be distributed on Oct. 29. Superintendent Keith Price told the board that the district adopted the motto "hard work pays off" at the beginning of the school year.

Part-time and temporary em-

ployees who fall short of the required hours will have until Dec. 1 to reach 75. Bonuses for them will be paid on Dec. 15.

The payout for the bonuses will be around \$1.3 million.

The board also approved bonuses for employees who have gotten the COVID-19 vaccine. It's the district's way to encourage unvaccinated employees to get the shots.

SEE "DISTRICT," PAGE 3

Superintendent gets high marks and a raise

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Superintendent Keith Price got a contract extension and a raise this week.

After a two-hour executive session, during which Georgetown County School

Board members reviewed Price's summary of the district's progress and talked about his performance, the board rewarded him for their "excellent evaluation" of his work during the 2020-21 school year.

SEE "SCHOOLS," PAGE 2

LAND USE

Commissioners want more vision in community survey for plan

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Before the Georgetown County Planning Commission updates its land-use plan, members say it first needs to update the community survey that will help shape the plan. They want to revise a set of 20 questions planning staff proposed for the survey.

"There needs to be some massaging of it," commission member Sandra Bundy said.

The land-use plan is one of 10 elements of the county's comprehensive plan, a document required by state law that must be updated at least every 10 years. The county last updated the land-use element in 2007, although it reviewed it in 2015.

Work on the update began in 2019. One element, cultural resources, is awaiting approval from County Council. Three others - transportation, natural resources and housing - are in progress.

The land-use element was passed last year after complaints that there wasn't enough public input. Limits placed on public meetings by the coronavirus pandemic and a hack of the county's computer system delayed work on a new round of input.

Holly Richardson, the county planning director, told the Planning Commission last week that she was ready to send out an updated community survey.

"Shouldn't we get maybe a little more in it," Bundy said.

The survey asks about the features people value in Georgetown County and the type of growth they want to see in different parts of the county. Some questions contained in the draft survey ask people to choose their favorites from images of what future development could look like.

It concludes by asking, "What
SEE "PLAN," PAGE 4



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer
Commission member Marla Hamby, a leader of Keep It Green, said residents are frustrated.



Nate Giltmier and Mary Cegledy, students at Waccamaw High, scour the beach at the north end of Pawleys Island.

BEACHES

The fall cleaning

Even on a clean beach, volunteers find enough litter to fill their bags

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The annual cleanup of the state's beaches drew about 100 volunteers to Pawleys Island over the weekend. It was the first Beach Sweep since 2019.

"It's always surprising how much we pick up. When you're on the beach, it looks so clean," said Frank Johnson, a Hagley resident who has organized the island sweep for the last 15 years.

But there is trash lurking. Barbara Cobb rode her bike from her house on Atlantic Avenue to the Nature Park, where trash bags and litter census forms were handed out Saturday morning. She said she had spotted plenty of items along the roadside that needed to be picked up.

One of the worst places is the North Causeway, Johnson said.

His wife, Susan, and their son, Eli, filled up several bags with roadside trash. Scott Townes, a member of the Pawleys Island events committee, put on waders to haul in trash from the marsh edge along the causeway.

Despite the turnout, which was 25 percent higher than the number seen in 2019, Johnson said he wants to do more with the creek. He recalled that the late Howard Ward, an island resident, had recruited paddlers and the state Department of Natural Resources to help out.

SEE "SWEEP," PAGE 4



PAWLEYS ISLAND

Town objects to fee claim in lawsuits over beach easements

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The cost of challenging the condemnation of easements on three oceanfront lots was more than \$180,000, according to the owner who represented himself and two neighbors in a year-long legal battle with the town of Pawleys Island.

The town says the cost is too high, since the owners didn't get what they asked for in their three individual lawsuits.

Barry Stanton, a Columbia attorney who owns a house on the island's south end, obtained a summary judgment in January quashing the town's effort to condemn easements that would allow it to partner with the Army Corps of Engineers for future beach renourishment projects. The federal agency requires easements to conduct and maintain those projects.

The town received easements from 110 south end lot owners for a renourishment project that was completed in the spring of 2020. Although the town did the work without Corps, the agency is due to erect sand fence and plant dune vegetation this fall on 1.4 miles of the new beach. That will make the project eligible for future federal funding that town officials say is worth tens of millions of dollars. But any future project will require easements from the three remaining property owners.

Circuit Court Judge Michael Nettles ruled that the condemnation process that the town began in July 2020 was flawed and, therefore, invalid. He said the town could start the process again. Stanton filed a petition for fees and costs for just over \$101,000. He noted in the filing that he was not seeking fees for representing himself.

This month, Stanton filed an amended fee petition that put the cost at \$180,595 through the first week in October.

The fees "are reasonable because they are based on no more than the actual time and expenses required. They are in fact based on less than the actual time and expenses required and give the opposing party the

SEE "PAWLEYS," PAGE 2

Inside

Plaintiffs see a smoking gun in mayor's email about "nuclear option."

PAGE 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Making a splash: WHS relay team sees success against bigger schools.
SECOND FRONT

Crime: Partnerships are key to prosecuting drug crimes, says solicitor.
PAGE 4

Safety: Civilian joins first responders at awards ceremony.
PAGE 4



Running: Race for the Inlet winners enjoy wide margins.
PAGE 16

Obituaries	2
Crime.....	5
Opinion	6
Crossword	10
Classifieds	11
Sports	14

Online
coastalobserver.com

