

# Town of Emerald Isle

*Mayor*  
Arthur B. Schools, Jr.

*Mayor Pro-Tem*  
Floyd Messer, Jr.

*Board of Commissioners*  
Pete Allen  
Nita Hedreen  
Robert Isenhour  
John Wootten



*Town Manager*  
Frank A. Rush, Jr.  
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Visit our web site at [www.emeraldisle-nc.org](http://www.emeraldisle-nc.org)!

## Emerald Tidings / Island Review – December 21, 2005 Print Edition

### Mayor Schools Re-Elected for 4-Year Term

Two-term Mayor Art Schools was re-elected for his third term in the Town's election held on November 8. Mayor Schools ran unopposed and received 684 votes.

Mayor Schools is the first Emerald Isle Mayor to serve a 4-year term. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved extending the Mayor's term from 2-years to 4-years earlier in 2005, and this change takes effect with the winner of the 2005 election. Mayor Schools has served the Town since December 2001, serving two 2-year terms prior to his re-election this year.

### Incumbents Pete Allen and John Wootten Re-Elected, Newcomer Maripat Wright Elected to Board of Commissioners

Incumbent Commissioners Pete Allen and John Wootten were also re-elected in the Town's election held on November 8. Both candidates ran unopposed, and secured 572 and 534 votes, respectively, garnering the two highest vote totals. As a result, both will serve 4-year terms expiring in 2009. Newcomer Maripat Wright joins the Board of Commissioners after securing 532 votes, also after running unopposed. Commissioner-Elect Wright will serve a 2-year term expiring in 2007.

Allen, Wootten, and Wright will join current Commissioners Floyd Messer and Nita Hedreen to comprise the 5-member Board of Commissioners. Commissioners Messer and Hedreen are currently mid-way through their 4-year terms that expire in 2007.

### Commissioner Bob Isenhour Completes Term as Town Commissioner

Commissioner Bob Isenhour completes his second term as a Town Commissioner in December 2005. Commissioner Isenhour has served since December 2003, and also previously served on

the Board of Commissioners from December 1997 to December 1999. The Town extends its sincerest gratitude to Commissioner Isenhour for his dedication and commitment to improving the Town of Emerald Isle over the past two years. We wish him the best in his future endeavors!

### **Town Offers On-Line Payment of Property Taxes**

As part of our commitment to provide citizens with efficient, convenient service, the Town of Emerald Isle has partnered with Official Payments Corp to offer payment of real estate and personal property taxes over the internet at [www.emeraldisle-nc.org](http://www.emeraldisle-nc.org) (click on "Online Tax Payments" on the left hand side of the home page) and by telephone by calling 1-800-2PAY-TAX (1-800-272-9829).

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover credit and debit cards are accepted. Official Payments Corp, the service provider, charges a 3% convenience fee for payment processing. For example, the payment of a \$500.00 property tax bill would incur a \$15.00 convenience fee.

Official Payments Corp is a leader in assisting local governments with online tax payments, and partners with many local governments in NC to offer this service. Carteret County also offers this service through Online Payments Corp, and our citizens can also conveniently pay their County taxes online by visiting [www.co.carteret.nc.us](http://www.co.carteret.nc.us).

### **More Sidewalks Set to Be Constructed Along NC 58**

Johnson Construction Company is set to begin work on the construction of approximately 2,200 linear feet of new sidewalk along the north side of NC 58 between Emerald Landing subdivision and the intersection with Coast Guard Road. Work is expected to be completed prior to the start of 2006.

The completion of this segment of sidewalks will result in a continuous 2-mile, 6 ft. wide sidewalk along the north side of NC 58 all through the commercial areas of Emerald Isle (from the Town Hall complex to Coast Guard Road). The Town is pleased to have reached this milestone in our efforts to encourage more people to walk to our commercial areas in a safe and aesthetically-pleasing environment.

### **FY 2004-2005 Financial Audit Confirms Town's Excellent Financial Position**

The Town's FY 2004-2005 financial audit was recently completed by an independent auditor, Pittard Perry & Crone of Belhaven, NC. Town Manager Frank Rush is happy to report that the Town continues to maintain its excellent overall financial position.

Some of the highlights from the recent audit include:

- The Town's total General Fund balance as of June 30, 2005 totals \$2,282,350. This amount is equal to approximately 35% of total General Fund expenditures for FY 04-05, and is a key indicator of the Town's fiscal strength. A healthy fund balance level is important in order to respond to fund response efforts for natural disasters, weather economic downturns, provide necessary cash for reimbursement grants, to maximize investment earnings, and to provide financial flexibility when challenges and opportunities present themselves to the Town. The Town's healthy fund balance

levels also helped the Town to secure excellent bond ratings from Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's.

- General Fund revenues in FY 04-05 totaled \$6,638,673. General Fund expenditures totaled \$6,449,633, resulting in a net surplus of \$189,040 in the General Fund for FY 04-05. This amount represents a net addition to the Town's General Fund Balance.
- The Town's two largest sources of General Fund revenue are property taxes and sales taxes. General Fund property tax revenues were \$2,374,476, while sales tax revenues totaled \$1,757,400. Solid waste fees are the third largest revenue source, with \$925,659 collected in FY 04-05. Together, these three sources represented more than 76% of General Fund revenues.
- Public Safety expenditures (Police and Fire) continue to represent the largest portion of the General Fund budget. Total expenditures were \$2,720,072 in FY 04-05, or approximately 42% of all General Fund expenditures.
- The Town continues to boast an excellent collection rate for property taxes. The FY 04-05 collection percentage was 99.65%, which is among the highest of all local governments in North Carolina. Thank you to our taxpayers for your diligent payment of Town property taxes, and to the Town staff for their efforts to maintain this high collection rate!
- The Beach Nourishment Debt Service / Reserve Fund maintains a fund balance of \$2,580,205 following the third year of its existence. The Town intentionally accumulated this large fund balance in order to stabilize the special district property tax rates over their projected 9-year life. Thus far, this fund is performing according to plan, and the Town foresees no increase in the special district rates of 48 cents for oceanfront property owners and 3 cents for non-oceanfront property owners.
- The Town's outstanding debt as of June 30, 2005 totals \$14,900,000, and all but \$250,000 of this amount is in the form of General Obligation bonds approved by the voters for the Town's two beach nourishment projects. The remaining \$250,000 outstanding at June 30, 2005 was actually fully retired in July 2005, thus leaving the Town with no outstanding debt other than the beach nourishment bonds. The beach nourishment bonds will be fully retired in FY 12-13.

### **Seasons Greetings - Town of Emerald Isle Holiday Schedule**

It's that wonderful time of the year again, and the Mayor, Board of Commissioners, and staff of the Town of Emerald Isle wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. We hope that you will all remember those less fortunate this season, and give special thanks to those who are currently serving in our armed forces at home and abroad. Please cherish the blessings in your own personal lives, and give thanks for this wonderful place that means so much to us all - Emerald Isle!

Please note that Town Hall will be closed on December 23 and 26 (Friday and Monday) for the Christmas holiday. Normal office hours will resume on Tuesday, December 27. Town Hall will also be closed for New Year's on Monday, January 2, 2006. Have a great holiday season!