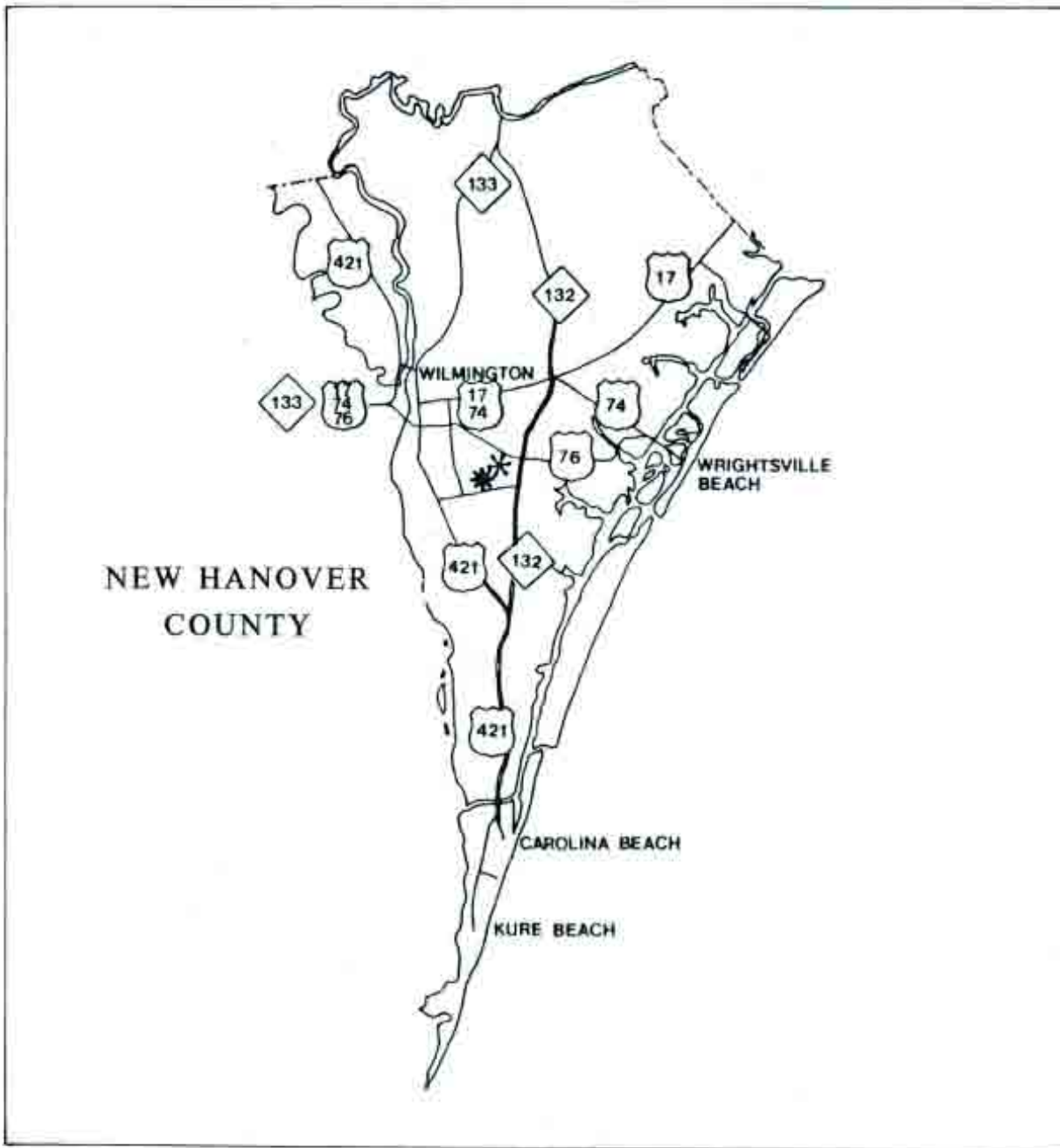


GOVERNMENTAL UNITS CONSOLIDATION  
STUDY COMMISSION  
FINAL REPORT



JUNE, 1985

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Hanover Governmental Units Consolidation Study Commission was established in June 1984 by concurrent resolution of the Board of Commissioners of New Hanover County, the Wilmington City Council, the Carolina Beach Town Council, the Kure Beach Board of Commissioners, and the Wrightsville Beach Board of Aldermen. The Study Commission met from September 1984 through June 1985, and consisted of twenty-nine members chosen by the governing bodies in numbers proportional to the population of each jurisdiction. The members represented a cross section of the adult residents of New Hanover County in age, race, profession, and political orientation.

The Governmental Units Consolidation Study Commission has evaluated the practical and political feasibility of a single government; studied the powers, duties, functions, responsibilities, and organizational structures of the existing governmental units; polled the views of the registered voters; examined the delivery of public services; analyzed the cost of existing governments; reviewed the results of other consolidated areas; considered problems of the previous consolidation efforts; and is now prepared to make its recommendation.

At the Commission's last meeting on June 18, 1985, the following resolution was adopted by a vote of 15 for and 5 against:

The Governmental Units Consolidation Study Commission recommends that a Charter Commission be established to create the charter for a new government which would encompass the powers and duties of the five governmental units within New Hanover County.

Support for this resolution was reached for the following reasons:

1. New Hanover County is the second smallest county in physical size in North Carolina. It is also one of the fastest growing counties in population. A consolidated government could respond better to growth management needs in planning, zoning, and subdivision regulations; water and sewer service delivery; police, fire, and rescue service; and parks and recreation services.

2. A consolidated government could act both as a city and a county. It would continue to deliver state mandated county services and act also as a city to provide urban services such as streets and public transportation. Acquiring street rights of ways and providing public transportation by the consolidated government would also be possible.

3. A consolidated government would speak with one voice about local concerns in Raleigh and in Washington. Other consolidated governments have found their political clout with decisionmakers on the state and national level much enhanced, and positive responses come much more quickly.

4. A savings would be realized by a consolidated government in the areas of insurance premiums, purchasing, and data processing. Interest income from money on deposit would increase.

5. Consolidated services within New Hanover County generally are well accepted by the public. Schools, tax collection, elections, inspections, library, and museum services, for example, have been provided county-wide or for Wilmington and the unincorporated areas for several years with no interest in the municipalities to resume these duties.

6. Broadening the tax base will enable urban services to be provided at a lower unit cost to the community. This has been the case in both Jacksonville/Duval and Columbus/Muscogee consolidated governments where the tax rate has fallen considerably during the years since consolidation took place.

7. Consolidation will end the problem of double taxation if the concept of urban services districts is employed. Urban services districts ensure that citizens pay for only those services they actually receive.

8. Specific community problems can be addressed on a county-wide basis. For example, Jacksonville/Duval has scattered small public housing units throughout the consolidated government area to avoid overly impacting any one neighborhood.

9. Job security should not be a political issue because the governments in New Hanover County are not overstaffed.

The five representatives of the beach communities present at the June 18th meeting voted against the adopted resolution, favoring instead a Charter Commission to create a new government which would consolidate the governments of the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County only, and exclude the three beach towns.

Mayor Fran Russ of Wrightsville Beach offered these reasons for the decision:

1. We agree with the majority vote in the feasibility of a consolidated city/county government based on the reasons given, after our ten-months' study.

2. We contend that our outlying coastal locations caused our small town governments to be formed originally and these governments can continue to serve their citizens in the same responsive manner if the City of Wilmington and the County do consolidate.

3. We endorse a system to avoid double taxation, in which a beach community should receive a rebate from the consolidated government for the services provided county-wide which the beach does not need. For example, if the beach town has its own police department, it should not financially support the law enforcement activities of the consolidated government.

4. We further contend that by remaining outside the consolidated government we can retain our identities and continue to have control over our own destinies in areas such as zoning, taxation, and other items of local interest.

5. And finally, we feel the Charter Commission should have representation from the beaches as it deliberates the form of the new government. Beach community citizens are still New Hanover County citizens and will be part of the consolidated government. Their communities will interact with the consolidated government much as their cities do with New Hanover County now.

The majority of the Consolidation Study Commission agreed that the above comments should be part of the Executive Summary, and added these recommendations to the Charter Commission regarding the beach communities:

1. If Carolina and Kure Beaches do not wish to join the consolidated government, they should annex the unincorporated areas of Pleasure Island and provide services to them. This will ensure consistency in that area for planning, zoning, subdivision regulations, and all other urban services.

2. The beach communities should also consider consolidating some services with the new government or with each other that they currently provide. This would give them better growth management techniques.

3. The Charter should contain a mechanism permitting the beach communities to merge with the consolidated government at a later time if they so desire.

The recommendations of the subcommittees follow this Executive Summary. Each committee has made specific recommendations and listed factors to consider for and against consolidation that a Charter Commission should consider in forming a new government.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Summary and Recommendations

This Committee was charged with studying management functions of the five governmental units in New Hanover County. Areas of study included the following: Governing Bodies; Boards and Commissions; Legal Services, Management/Administration; Personnel Functions, Policies, and Benefits; Data Processing; and the Print Shop. The members of the Management Committee and their area of representation are shown below:

Lisbon Berry, Chairman	— Wilmington
James Finley, Vice Chairman	— New Hanover County
T. R. Cowen	— Kure Beach
Karen Gottovi	— New Hanover County
Lois Whitmeyer	— Wilmington
Philip McGuire (resigned 1/85)	— Wilmington

To complete its task the Committee members each studied a governmental unit different from the one they represent. These assignments are shown below:

Lisbon Berry	— New Hanover County
James Finley	— Wilmington
T. R. Cowen	— Wrightsville Beach
Karen Gottovi	— Carolina and Kure Beaches

Lois Whitmeyer was added to the Committee in January 1985, after the information was collected, to replace Philip McGuire, who resigned. Using a worksheet, Committee members interviewed government officials and read many documents to collect the information that is shown in our report.

Attached are a summary of Committee meetings and the conclusions and recommendations of the Management Committee.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

November 13, 1984      Discussion of Committee responsibility, areas of study, and information needed.

November 26, 1984      Committee assignments made to study a particular governmental unit.

                            Completion dates for the phases of study also discussed.

December 10, 1984      Discussion of a worksheet to guide interviews and information collection.

December 17, 1984      Review of Committee progress in collecting information.

January 14, 1985        Presentation by Committee members of information collected.

February 18, 1985      Discussion of preliminary reports: Legal Services; Print Shop; Data Processing; Boards and Commissions; and Personnel Functions, Policies, and Procedures.

April 9, 1985            Discussion of Committee reports and factors to consider in the event of consolidation.

May 8, 1985             Continuation of Committee report discussion.

                            Consideration of questions to ask the consolidated communities: Jacksonville, Florida, and Columbus, Georgia.

May 30, 1985            Discussion of trips to Jacksonville, Florida, and Columbus, Georgia.

                            Meeting with Managers/Administrations: Felix Cooper, New Hanover County; Bill Farris, City of Wilmington; Rick McLean, Town of Carolina Beach; and Hugh Perry, Town of Wrightsville Beach.

June 4, 1985             Meeting with Personnel Directors: Andre Mallette, New Hanover County; and Joe Dixon, City of Wilmington.

June 6, 1985            Discussion of report conclusions and recommendations.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee members were requested to review the facts and materials accumulated, including the City-County Consolidation Survey results, the "pros" and "cons" summarized from the visits to Jacksonville/Duval, Florida, and Columbus/Muscogee, Georgia, and the summaries of the interviews of the City/County Managers and Personnel Directors. On the basis of the reviews, each Committee member was requested to conclude individually what recommendations the Management Committee should submit to the Consolidation Study Commission.

One member was absent and took no part in these deliberations or results. One member concluded no further action be taken on consolidation, to leave the governments as is. One member concluded that the governments of New Hanover County, the City of Wilmington, and the Town of Wrightsville Beach be consolidated and the governments of the Towns of Carolina and Kure Beaches join forces to solve their common problems either by consolidation or by intergovernmental agreement. Two members concluded that all five governments be consolidated into one completely new government.

A majority of the members present having voted in favor of a new consolidated government, the Management Committee recommends to the Consolidation Study Commission that the Commission recommend to the respective governing bodies that a Consolidation Charter Commission be established to prepare a charter for a completely new government consolidating all five (5) of the existing governing units.

It is further recommended that the Charter Commission be directed to consider the following in establishing the new government:

(a) Governing Body

The new government to be a Commission (or Council)/Manager form of government, with six (6) (or more) electoral districts, one representative elected from each district, and four (4) representatives and a Mayor elected at large to serve staggered four year terms.

(b) Manager

The manager to be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Commission/Council.

(c) Personnel Practices, Benefits and Pension Plans

The services of an independent Personnel Consultant firm be secured to prepare a classification system and pay and pension plan for the employees of the new government.

(d) Data Processing

A consolidated data process system be established that is compatible with other governmental data systems.

(e) Print Shop

All printing shops be consolidated under one department.

(f) Legal Services

All legal staffs be consolidated under one General Counsel responsible to the Commission (Council).

(g) Boards and Commissions

The establishment of authorities be considered to manage some of the existing public enterprises.

(h) Continuation of a Insurance Advisory Board be to advise the government on all insurance policies of the new government.

It is also recommended that the resolution establishing the Charter Commission include instructions to the Charter Commission to conduct public hearings on the various phases of the proposed charter and to otherwise educate and inform the public of the proposed new government, and to employ the services of experts and consultants when considering technical and/or specialized areas of the new government.

These recommendations are based on the materials, documents, and information that follows the executive summary.



PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Summary and Recommendations

It is with a great sense of appreciation that I would like to express my thanks to Committee members B. D. Schwartz, Charles West, Jeannette Bennet, James Whitted, Roy Little, and Staff members Sandra Martin and Gloria Sajgo for their diligent and dedicated work to the Planning and Finance Committee. It is only from work like they gave, that we were able to bring our report to fruition.

Our goal was to study the functions of Planning, Finance, Purchasing, Tax and Annexation as they applied to each of the five areas of New Hanover County and the feasibility of their consolidation. The Committee formed subcommittees as follows:

Planning - Charles West, Jeannette Bennet  
Finance - B. D. Schwartz  
Purchasing - James Whitted  
Taxes - Peter Fensel  
Annexation - Roy Little

Each person then having the responsibility to research the functions, staffing, and operation of each assigned department. From this research and weekly meetings, each subcommittee filed the attached reports.

Also Roy Little, James Whitted, and Charles West participated in a trip to Columbus, Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida to see how consolidation was working and its pros and cons as it would apply to New Hanover County if it was judged feasible. Charles West wrote some enlightening preliminary thoughts on the pursuit of Governmental Consolidation in New Hanover County as a result of this trip. Those thoughts were unanimously endorsed by the balance of our Committee along with accolades for a job well done.

In summary, I would say that each committee person found many reasons why the departments they studied should be consolidated. However, these reasons are in no way an endorsement of consolidation because in many cases they need further qualification by a Charter Committee. For example, we feel that from our study the tax structure in New Hanover County would be more equitable under consolidation because of the formation of urban service districts. Committee members unanimously agree that an objective third party, a local and state government tax specialist, like Jake Wicker from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Institute of Government, with previous experience in this area should be asked to study the tax structure in the County and Cities and produce a report detailing the specific tax rates residents should pay for the services they receive. (If available, Mr. Wicker can conduct this study in less than a month.) Nevertheless, we do feel that with the proper education, the residents of New Hanover County would see that with few exceptions, the future of our county would be better served as one consolidated unit.

Respectfully submitted,

F. P. FENSEL, JR.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Planning

In determining the feasibility of consolidating the Planning functions, the Planning and Finance committee members are divided by their support for two different approaches.

One approach holds that because of the important role the political process plays in planning, it seems impractical to consolidate planning staffs unless the governmental units are consolidated. Since the ramifications of zoning and land use planning on individual rights are pronounced, some residents wish to hold their local elected officials accountable for decisions.

For instance, Wilmington and New Hanover County shared planning staffs for many years until it was decided the wishes of City and County residents and elected officials would be served more adequately by separate staffs. Over the years, as the County became more urbanized and its needs for planned growth and development increased, the County Commissioners insisted that the Planning Boards spend more time on Countywide problems. In 1980 the County Commissioners especially concerned that problems associated with the county landfill needed more attention than they were getting, took steps to abolish the joint City/County Planning Department and Planning Commission.

Another approach holds that the Planning Department of the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County need to be consolidated and the planning process should be as nonpolitical as possible. Under this approach one planning department would report to the two governing bodies, the County Commissioners and City Council, with the governing bodies listening and following the recommendations of their professional planning staffs without being swayed by either friendly or political pressure.

If all five governmental bodies do not consolidate, some degree of needed coordination of planning and zoning county-wide should be accomplished by implementing the following:

a. A single county-wide land use plan that would reflect the individual philosophies of the surviving municipal areas. This would be suggestive only, with each municipality having its own zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.

b. The single county-wide land use plan would be the product of a committee of planning staff from all the municipalities.

## Finance

In determining the feasibility of consolidating the Finance functions, the Planning and Finance Committee noted the following factors.

First, if the governing bodies of the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County were consolidated, the Finance Departments corresponding to each government could be consolidated very easily and could result in substantial savings in a year. Other functions that might be consolidated along with the Finance Department are Data Processing and Purchasing.

Second, if the beach communities were to consolidate with the county, their Finance operations would also merge with the overall organization and would share in the efficiency and effectiveness afforded by larger operations.

Third, since state law mandates that each local government and public authority appoint a finance officer to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing board or official, the notion of consolidating Finance Departments without consolidating governing bodies is of doubtful practical value. However, certain specific functions such as collections of certain fines and fees could be consolidated under one office.

## Taxes

The Planning and Finance Committee set out to find out whether the residents of unincorporated New Hanover County and the municipalities pay an equitable amount of County taxes in relation to the services that are received. Committee members noted that although City taxpayers pay County taxes, City taxpayers are excluded from some county services namely County Sheriff and County fire protection. But Committee members also noted that although in this specific example there appears to be an inequity in the provision of public services, the inequities may not be cumulative. There are other inequities that flow toward City residents. The primary example offered during the deliberation was the provision of Social Services by the County to residents of the City. Most of the clients of Social Services, it is alleged, are City residents and thus Social Services may constitute an inequity flowing toward the City.

Another issue over which Committee members deliberated was the amount of taxes county and city residents actually pay. Although property taxes are the major local taxes paid to local governments by residents, residents also pay a one (1) percent sales tax, a half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) percent sales tax, an intangible tax, ABC taxes, Wine and Beer taxes, privilege license taxes. Many of these taxes are collected and then distributed back to the municipalities and the county on the basis of formulas mandated by statutes. Committee members' findings about whether these formulas distribute the tax money in an equitable manner were inconclusive. Furthermore, committee findings on whether some of these tax monies may flow toward City residents in a manner that offsets perceived property tax inequities were also inconclusive.

However, Committee members unanimously agreed that County and City residents should only pay taxes for the services they receive. Committee members also agreed unanimously that this could be accomplished quite readily with consolidation because the formation of urban services districts is predicated on the notion that tax payers pay for what they get. Committee members unanimously agreed that a local and state government tax specialist, like Jake Wicker from the University of Chapel Hill's Institute of Government, with previous experience in this area should be asked to study the tax structure in the county and cities and produce a report detailing the specific tax rates residents should pay for the services they receive. (If available Mr. Wicker can conduct this study in less than a month).

After a tax study is finalized this committee recommends that the Charter Commission advocate specific tax rates and that when consolidation is taken before a vote of the people the people know exactly the tax rates that would be brought about by consolidation.

## Purchasing

Because the City of Wilmington already has a central purchasing facility, it could easily be expanded to service the purchasing needs of the county and the Beach communities. This would allow for greater purchasing power, more efficient purchasing procedure, more efficient distribution of goods and services. One disadvantage might be that department heads in the County and the beach communities might object to some loss of responsibility. Also delivery from a Wilmington warehouse might take longer than buying from a local vendor. However, a Purchasing Department whose principal goal would be to serve the customer - i.e. the customer comes first - could overcome these disadvantages.

Other factors to consider in establishing a consolidated purchasing department would be:

A. To make a smooth transition from a city central purchasing facility to a consolidated facility, all governmental units would have to be on the same accounting system. Instituting a uniform accounting system, however, could be accomplished readily once the appropriate computer software was selected.

B. Although all governmental units in the area meet the minimum purchasing requirements promulgated by the North Carolina General Statutes, each governmental unit has its own purchasing policy which, in general, goes beyond what the law requires. With centralized purchasing all governmental units would have to agree on a uniform purchasing policy.

C. Individual governmental units may have entered into special contracts which would have to be renegotiated or discarded if purchasing were consolidated.

## Annexation

The members of the Finance and Planning Committee found that:

First, annexation may be a route to orderly municipal progress and development and at least in theory, an increased tax base. Annexation can be done in two ways.

- a. By request of the landowner or his agent.
- b. By governmental initiation.

There is no vote or recourse by property owners and the courts have upheld a municipality's right to annex territory unilaterally.

Second, not all taxpayers want to be annexed. Many are quite satisfied with their standard of service and do not believe that the services provided by a city are worth the extra tax burden.

Third, often a city may annex areas that have a different development standards. Bringing all areas to the same development standards could cause serious problems and expense. Different standards may be found in water, sanitary sewers, storm drainage services and streets.

Differing density developments also necessitate different services. For instance, oversize water, sanitary and storm drainage may be necessitated by commercial, industrial or institutional requirements.

Fourth, because providing services to areas that need different development standards may be expensive, cities tend to annex residential and commercial areas rather than institutional or industrial sites. Committee members were in agreement that annexation is a necessary tool to allow increasing revenues and thereby assuring the existence of the city, but questioned whether residential development should bear a greater brunt of this responsibility than industrial development.

In assessing the annexation that has taken place in New Hanover County, commission members noted the recent annexations of areas A & B by the City of Wilmington, extension of Wrightsville Beaches corporate boundaries west of the Intracoastal Waterway, and the recent southern extension of Kure Beach's boundaries. Members also noted that a few years ago Carolina Beach had considered extending its boundaries across Snow's Cut.

In every single one of these instances, in accordance with the law, neither the voters of the city annexing the areas nor the voters of the areas being annexed voted on whether they wanted the annexation to occur. In light of this fact and in light of the amount of annexations taking place in New Hanover County, consolidation seems like an attractive alternative. At least it gives the voters the option of expressing under what governing structure they would rather live whereas under annexation the governing body has the power to extend its boundaries regardless of the voters sentiments.

PUBLIC AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Summary and Recommendations

The Public Amenities Committee was charged to study the feasibility of consolidating those services that promote the attractiveness and value of our community. These areas are shown below:

- I. Parks and Recreation
  - A. Athletic Fields
  - B. Parks
  - C. Swimming Pools
  - D. Golf Course
  - E. Boxing Center
  - F. Legion Stadium
  - G. Recreational Activities
  - H. Bike Paths
  - I. Beach Access
- II. New Hanover County Library
- III. New Hanover County Museum
- IV. Services for the Aging
- V. New Hanover County Airport

The major area of service this Committee reviewed that is not already offered County-wide is parks and recreation, offered by New Hanover County, the City of Wilmington, the Towns of Wrightsville and Carolina Beaches. This Committee Summary outlines the Committee's composition and study methodology, meetings, and conclusions and recommendations. Following the Committee Summary are the separate reports analyzing each of the Committee's study areas.

Committee Composition and Study Methodology

Committee members have studied the "public amenities" in New Hanover County for almost seven months. Members also journeyed to Jacksonville, Florida, and Columbus, Georgia, as part of their study task.



Appointed by their governmental units to serve on the Consolidation Study Commission, the members of the Committee are:

W. W. Golder, Jr., Chairman	— Wrightsville Beach
Anne Russell, Vice Chairman	— New Hanover County
Mae Kellam	— Kure Beach
Rachel Freeman	— New Hanover County
Donald Britt	— Wilmington

The Committee was very fortunate to have Mr. Ray Sugg, Wrightsville Beach Parks and Recreation Director, as an advisor to this Committee. Sandra Martin, Commission Assistant, worked with us throughout our studies.

Each Committee member worked to collect information for the Parks and Recreation report. Assignments were made as follows:

W. W. Golder, Jr.	— Wrightsville Beach
Anne Russell	— Wilmington
Don Britt	— Wilmington
Rachel Freeman	— New Hanover County
Mae Kellam	— Carolina Beach

Mae Kellam and Rachel Freeman worked together on the airport report; Anne Russell compiled the library report; and Don Britt covered aging services.

#### SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

November 16, 1984	Committee members divided the data gathering task by making study assignments.
December 17, 1984	Information packet was distributed to Committee members.  Parks and Recreation study outline was discussed.
January 9, 1985	Each member talked about the Parks and Recreation information they had collected.
February 19, 1985	The Parks and Recreation report was discussed.  Assignments were made to study the library and airport.
March 5, 1985	The Airport and Library reports were discussed.

April 17, 1985

Committee members discussed the upcoming trips to consolidated communities and outlined questions to be asked during the trip.

An assignment was made to do a report of senior citizens' programs.

May 28, 1985

Committee members discussed the Aging Services report.

An assignment was made to study the Museum and Legion Stadium.

June 5, 1985

The Museum and Legion Stadium reports were discussed.

The Committee conclusions were discussed.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation activities now provided by New Hanover County, the City of Wilmington, and the Towns of Carolina and Wrightsville Beaches should be consolidated under one government and provided to all residents of New Hanover County. Recreational activities and park facilities should be coordinated County-wide since they are an amenity enjoyed by all residents of New Hanover County. Parks and recreation is a vital community service and a key to the community's economic growth. It should be a priority of our government to maximize our natural resources.

If any or all of the beach communities decide not to participate in a charter commission, it is recommended that New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington consolidate their separate Parks and Recreation Departments into one consolidated department.

Currently parks and recreational activities are duplicated in the County. Consolidation of the Parks and Recreation Departments will eliminate duplication of services in New Hanover County. Also, services can be offered in the Town of Kure Beach, which presently has no formal Parks and Recreation Department.

Parks and recreational services should continue to be based on Wrightsville Beach and Pleasure Island to provide services that are unique and characteristic of the area. Parks and recreational activities should also be offered within reasonable distances, convenient to neighborhood areas.

### Aging Services

All services for the 60+ population in New Hanover County should be coordinated and operated by the New Hanover County Department of Aging. There should be one central place for the elderly to get their recreational, shopping, and educational needs. Now there is duplication of services by the New Hanover Department of Aging and the Recreation Departments. Nutritional programs should be continued in sites around the County.

### New Hanover County Airport

The airport is a public facility which receives substantial funding from New Hanover County property taxes. Therefore it should remain under the control of the government, where public accountability can be assured.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

The Public Works Committee has investigated the current public works operations in New Hanover County, the City of Wilmington, and the Towns of Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach and concludes that the consolidation of all area governments into one consolidated government is feasible from the public works standpoint and should be investigated by a Charter Commission. This conclusion is based on the findings set forth in the Summary of Committee Conclusions Section of this executive summary report.

If the full Consolidation Study Commission finds that the investigation of total areawide consolidation is not feasible, the Public Works Committee recommends that the following arrangements be investigated: the consolidation of New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington as one governmental entity, and the consolidation of the entire Pleasure Island area into one governmental entity, and the retention of the Town of Wrightsville Beach as a separate municipality. All of these governmental entities would remain a part of the overall County government.

The following outlines the composition of the Public Works Committee, its meeting and research methodology, and its most salient findings and conclusions:

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Committee Member	Area Represented	Role in Committee	Research Area	Individual Report Assignment
Linda Axson	Carolina Beach	Chairman	Wilmington	Administration and Garage
Frank Ballard	New Hanover County	Secretary/ V. Chairman	Car. Bch./ Kure Bch.	Streets
George Antley	Wrightsville Beach	Committee Member	Wrightsville Beach	Public Buildings Maintenance
Jim Bordeaux	New Hanover County	Committee Member	New Hanover County	Inspections
Derrick Anderson	Wilmington	Committee Member	Replacement member - too late to give assignment	
Ann Rowe	Wilmington	Committee Member	Wilmington	Sanitation
Libby DeChesere		Staff Member		Water and Sewer
Sandra Martin		CSC Asst. & Recorder		Engineering and Traffic Engineering

COMMITTEE MEETINGS SUMMARY

- November 13, 1984 - Elected secretary and decided where and how often to meet.
- November 15, 1984 - Discussed ways of gathering information.  
- Suggestion was made to hire a full time consultant.  
- Discussed role of staff member.  
- Discussed resolution on employee job security.
- December 5, 1984 - Voted 3-1 to accept the original study commission task format (without full time consultant)  
- Voted to reject the resolution on employee job security.
- December 12, 1984 - Information packet distributed and discussed (study outline, questions, etc.)  
- Committee report assignments made.
- January 2, 1985 - Each member went through a worksheet for a dept. from their assignment.  
- Discussed the committee report format, future meetings, and deadlines to complete Phase I.
- January 9, 1985 - Presentation from Kirk Taube of the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority.  
- Format for committee report approved.
- January 16, 1985 - Presentation made by Ed Hilton, Director of Engineering, New Hanover County; Robert Coleman, Director of Public Works, City of Wilmington; John Nesbitt, Director of Public Works, Wrightsville Beach; J.W. Hegler, Director of Public Works, Kure Beach, (Gil Thompson, Director of Public Works, Carolina Beach, unable to attend but sent needed information)  
- Questions and answer session followed presentation.
- January 23, 1985 - Discussed the method for putting together the report and assignments made.  
- Committee members will put together a report of a service as it applies to all the governmental units concerned. Then these reports will be discussed by the whole committee. Revisions and additions will then be made so that the report reflects the views of the whole committee.  
- Committee members reports will consist of the following:  
Similarities and differences between governmental units.  
Advantages and disadvantages of consolidating the services.  
Factors to consider in the event of consolidation.
- February 13, 1985 - Discussed the following reports: Inspections, sanitation, administration, engineering and traffic engineering.
- February 15, 1985 - Discussed the following reports: Garage and streets.
- February 20, 1985 - Discussed the following reports: Public buildings and water/sewer.

- May 8, 1985
  - Discussed committee report and made assignments for added information needed.
  - Discussed executive summary.
  - Voted to invite Public Works Directors to next meeting to discuss water/sewer.
- May 16, 1985
  - Presentation of water/sewer made by Robert Coleman, Director of Public Works, City of Wilmington; Ed Hilton, Director of Engineering, New Hanover County; Bobby Schley, Director of Water/Sewer, Carolina Beach.
- June 5, 1985
  - Discussion of draft executive summary and formulation of Committee conclusions to be added to the executive summary.

#### SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committee researched the current activities of the area governments in the following Public Works related areas: Administration, Garage, Engineering, Inspections, Sanitation, Public Buildings Maintenance, Traffic Engineering, Streets and Water and Sewer services. Individual committee reports outlining the current type and level of service in each functional area were prepared using 1984-85 budget data and personal interviews. The following is a synopsis of the most salient features of each committee report.

#### Administration

New Hanover County's public works function is located under the Department of Engineering and Facilities and is headed by the Department Director who is also a member of the County Manager's staff. Engineering, Garage, Inspections, Solid Waste, Parks and Recreation and Property Management are the specific functional areas covered by the Engineering and Facility Department.

The City of Wilmington's Public Works Department consists of the following functional areas; Administration, Engineering, Operations, Environmental Services and Public Utilities. The Operations Division includes the Streets, Sanitation, Public Buildings, Traffic Engineering and Garage Sections. The Public Utilities function includes the Billing and Meter Reading, Utility Services, Water Treatment, and Wastewater Treatment Sections. The Public Works Director is responsible for the entire department with Division and Section heads performing ongoing supervisory duties.

The Town of Wrightsville Beach's Public Works Department consists of four divisions: Streets and Sanitation, Equipment and Building Maintenance, Water and Sewer, and Inspections. The Director of the Department maintains close communication with the Board of Alderman in the discharge of his duties.

The Town of Carolina Beach's Public Works Department consists of five divisions: Public Buildings and Grounds, Street Maintenance, Sanitation, Fleet Maintenance, and the City Dock and Marina. The Director of Public Works is responsible for the operation of the entire department. A utilities director is responsible for Water/Sewer services.

The Town of Kure Beach's Public Works Department is responsible for water and sewer services, street and storm drain maintenance and trash pick-up. The Public Works Supervisor is responsible for the operation of the department.

#### Garage

All area governments perform some level of in-house maintenance and repair work on their vehicles and equipment and all units also contract out certain types of tasks. The beach communities tend to contract out more work than the larger City and County governments and generally perform only routine repair and maintenance tasks. Fire and police vehicles have top priority in all area governments for repair and maintenance work. Staffing ranges from a high of 13 in the City of Wilmington to a low of 1 in Carolina Beach and expenditures range from a high of \$430,000 in the City of Wilmington to a low of \$23,000 in Wrightsville Beach.

#### Engineering

The majority of engineering work done by all area governments is contracted out on a project by project basis, with each project being separately funded - usually as a capital improvement project. New Hanover County employs a staff of 15 and the City of Wilmington employs a staff of 27 to perform in-house engineering work and to oversee the contracts on the larger capital projects awarded to private engineering firms. The County expends approximately \$350,000 per year on its in-house engineering services and the City expends approximately \$610,000 per year on same.

#### Inspections

The City of Wilmington and New Hanover County consolidated their separate inspections functions in July of 1983. The City retained a Code Enforcement Officer who is responsible for enforcing particular City Ordinances such as zoning and sign ordinances, with the County taking over responsibility for all building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical inspections for both the City and County. All three beach communities have their own building inspectors and do their own code enforcement work, however, Carolina and Kure Beaches rely on the County for plumbing, electrical and mechanical inspections and the Town of Wrightsville Beach relies on the County for electrical and mechanical inspections, doing its own plumbing inspections in-house.

The County has a staff of 30 and expends approximately \$750,000 per year to perform inspection services. Approximately \$400,000 is returned to the County in the form of inspection revenues. The Towns of Wrightsville Beach and Carolina Beaches have two employees

each and expend approximately \$65,000 each to perform inspection services. Wrightsville Beach receives a return of approximately \$35,000 in inspection revenues with revenues undetermined for Carolina Beach. Kure Beach employs one person and spends approximately \$20,000 to perform the service and receives approximately \$10,000 in inspection revenues.

#### Sanitation

New Hanover County operates both an areawide incinerator and a landfill for the disposal of solid waste and charges all public and private entities using these facilities a standard rate of \$22/ton at the incinerator and \$3.62 per cubic yard at the landfill for disposal services. The County employs 33 people and spends approximately 4.8 million dollars per year to provide these services and takes in approximately 4.8 million dollars per year in revenues to cover the costs of service provisions. Refuse collection in the County is totally private with individual firms providing the service and setting rates. Refuse collection service is not mandatory in the County.

The remaining four units of government, all municipalities, have mandatory refuse collection policies. The City of Wilmington provides its own collection service for the most part, but presently is contracting out one of its 11 pairs of routes to a private company in order to compare costs. It employs 42 people and spends approximately \$1.5 million per year to perform this service, and takes in approximately \$1.1 million per year in revenues to help offset the costs of service provisions. The Town of Wrightsville Beach provides its own service and is also responsible for keeping the beach clean. It employs 15 people and spends approximately \$510,000 per year to perform this service. The Town levies a user fee for refuse collection service which helps to offset the costs of service provision. The Town of Carolina Beach contracts out its refuse collection service and employs 2 people to help administer this contract. It spends approximately \$210,000 per year on private refuse collection services and takes in approximately \$150,000 per year in revenues to help offset the costs of service provision. The Town of Kure Beach provides its own service and its 6 public work employees perform refuse collection services in addition to other public works related tasks. The cost of refuse collection services has not been broken out by the Town, rather it is a portion of the \$128,000 total public works budget. The Town collects approximately \$13,000 per year in revenues to help offset the costs of providing refuse collection services.

#### Public Buildings Maintenance

All of the area governments provide some level of public building maintenance. Major maintenance and repair tasks are typically contracted out to private firms. Janitorial services are provided primarily in-house in the Towns of Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach. The City of Wilmington contracts those services to a private firm while New Hanover County provides services for some buildings in-house and contracts out for services for other County owned buildings.



## Traffic Engineering

New Hanover County does not have any traffic control devices that it must maintain because streets in the County are State or privately owned and maintained. In Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach, the State is responsible for traffic control devices on all streets. Thus, this report centers only on the City of Wilmington's traffic engineering role.

The City's Traffic Engineering Section designs, installs, maintains, and evaluates all traffic control devices, including stop signs, on City-maintained streets and also maintains traffic signals under contract on all NCDOT-maintained streets within the City. The Section evaluates needs and recommends installation of CP&L-owned street lights, and maintains decorative street lights downtown, all parking deck equipment and City-owned computer interconnect cables. The City employs 16 people and spends approximately \$1.1 million to perform these services.

## Streets

In the unincorporated areas of New Hanover County all streets are either maintained by the State of North Carolina or are private roads maintained by individuals or associations. The three beach communities and the City of Wilmington all own the majority of streets in their jurisdictions and provide some level of street repair, maintenance, cleaning and related drainage work. In addition to local budget monies, each municipality receives Powell Bill Street Funds from the State which is a formula based share of the State's revenues from its gasoline tax. These monies may only be used for local street maintenance on municipal streets.

A portion of the total public works staff time and budget are spent on street work in all three beach communities and the City of Wilmington devotes a separate section of 47 employees with a budget of \$1.4 million to this effort.

## Water and Sewer Services

Water services are individually provided by each area government in that New Hanover County operates a small water system serving the Flemington community and a few industrial users in the Flemington area, with the remainder of the unincorporated area using private wells. The City of Wilmington operates a large scale water system with water piped to the City for treatment and distribution from the Cape Fear River at Kings Bluff. The beach communities use a system of wells and individual treatment and distribution systems for water provision.

Sewer services have changed from individual government responsibility in the past to more of a cooperative countywide effort at present. A Countywide sewer plan has been adopted which involves the provision of sewer service availability to all parts of the County within a 10 year period. The City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, and the Town of Wrightsville Beach are presently involved in interlocal agreements concerning the provision of sewer services.

to Wrightsville Beach and the Sewer Plan's Phase I area of the County. The pattern of interlocal agreements and the functional consolidation of sewer services among the City, County and Wrightsville Beach is expected to continue as future phases of the County-wide sewer plan are built. Sewer services in the Towns of Carolina Beach and Kure Beach are currently provided by individual sewer systems in each town and a shared sewage treatment plant. Treatment plant expansion is anticipated in the near future with treatment allocation percentages for the two towns to remain roughly the same.

The level of staffing for water and sewer services range from a high of 99 employees in the City of Wilmington to a low of 6 employees who devote only a portion of their time to these services, in Kure Beach. Expenditures range from a high of \$6.7 million in the City of Wilmington to a low of \$200,000 in Kure Beach. Water and sewer service provision in all areas are generally self supporting in that fees are levied on users to pay for most of the cost of service provision.

A regional organization called the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority is also in existence and is able to provide both water and sewer services to any and all area governments. To date none of the governments in New Hanover County have chosen to participate in the Authority due primarily to cost considerations. Use of the Authority is an option for all area governments should future water and sewer needs warrant such participation.

Summary of Revenues and Expenditures

The following is a summary of the total public works related revenues and expenditures for fiscal year 1984-85 for all area governments. Due to the variations in the types of services provided by each government and the various budgetary and accounting methods used. The figures presented below are not directly comparable and are meant only to provide a general idea of the costs involved in providing public works related services and the revenues that are generated from these services.

PUBLIC WORKS RELATED REVENUES 1984-85  
SUMMARY

New Hanover County	\$ 5,642,469
City of Wilmington	8,768,200
Town of Wrightsville Beach	972,100
Town of Carolina Beach	1,571,179
Town of Kure Beach	<u>246,225</u>
Total	\$ 17,199,173

PUBLIC WORKS RELATED EXPENDITURES 1984-85  
SUMMARY

New Hanover County	\$ 7,548,021
City of Wilmington	12,117,800
Town of Wrightsville Beach	1,588,180
Town of Carolina Beach	1,861,851
Town of Kure Beach	<u>357,435</u>
Total	\$ 23,473,287

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

In the process of preparing the individual committee reports pertaining to specific functional areas, each Committee member included a brief discussion of advantages and disadvantages to the consolidation of the function and listed factors that should be considered when weighing consolidation. These discussion items were considered by the Committee at its final meeting and a consensus was reached on the feasibility of consolidating each functional area. The Committee did not discuss the administration of public works functions, feeling that administrative consolidation would be part of the management aspect of a consolidated government. Overall conclusions were also drawn at the Committee's last meeting.

The following is a summary of the Committee's conclusions as they related to the specific functional areas.

Garage

Consolidation of the garage function is feasible and should be investigated. The advantages of consolidation are:

1. Development of an areawide fleet management and maintenance system with a central focus of responsibility.
2. Increased potential for the standardization of equipment, vehicles and parts.
3. Greater ability for more effective inventory control.
4. Potential for increased service efficiency.
5. Receive benefits from centralized purchasing.

Factors that should be considered in structuring the consolidated garage function are:

1. The pros and cons of establishing a central garage. The Committee recommends that a centralized garage be used primarily for scheduled maintenance and routine repairs with major repairs

being performed on site. Satellite service and storage areas should be explored and be effectively located as needed.

2. Fire Stations retain mechanics in order to be able to provide the fast specialized service on site needed by this high priority equipment.

3. The garage have a mechanic on call at all times to be able to provide needed services whenever and wherever they may occur.

4. The existing airport maintenance facility remain in place to service airport equipment on-site.

### Engineering

Consolidation of the engineering function is feasible and should be investigated. The engineering function lends itself to consolidation as it would support better overall areawide planning efforts. Contracting out larger capital projects to private firms should be continued under consolidation with better project control and administration being realized by merging the existing in-house engineering efforts.

### Inspections

Consolidation of the inspections function is feasible and should be investigated. The advantages of consolidation are:

1. Potential for a higher level of service being provided to all areas, particularly the beach communities by having more qualified inspectors available for some type of assignment to these areas.

2. More effective administration of services by having one director that all inspectors are responsible to.

3. Opportunity to take the local politics out of inspections service delivery.

A factor that should be considered in structuring the consolidation inspections function is the need for localized service centers for the convenience of those needing permits.

### Sanitation

Consolidation of the sanitation function is feasible and should be investigated. Consolidated sanitation services should involve a combination of contracted collection services and government provided services in order to keep the cost of the service reasonable and competitive.

Factors that should be considered in structuring the consolidated sanitation service function are:

1. The need for determining how much trash collection service residents of various areas desire and structuring districts to tax them accordingly.

2. The possibility of including trash collection service in the overall tax bill in lieu of having separate billing for it.

3. The use of transfer stations to reduce the cost of hauling truckloads of refuse to the landfill and incinerator sites.

4. The need for determining better methods for dealing with illegal dumping.

#### Public Building Maintenance

Consolidation of the public buildings maintenance function is feasible and should be investigated. Savings could be realized in the consolidated purchasing of maintenance supplies and equipment and maintenance costs could decrease if fewer and/or newer buildings were used to house consolidated governmental services.

Factors that should be considered in structuring the consolidated public building maintenance function are:

1. The need for personnel to be available on site in all areas to perform simple maintenance and repair services.

2. The need to centrally locate any new consolidated government office buildings as opposed to locating them in downtown Wilmington.

3. The possible increased maintenance costs involved in governmental ownership of several buildings that are not of practical use to the consolidated government.

#### Traffic Engineering

The Committee recommends retention of the existing City of Wilmington service level and State service levels in the three beach communities under a consolidated government.

#### Streets

Consolidation of the streets function is feasible and should be investigated. Consolidation of the streets function should be contingent upon the State being required to continue to maintain streets in the "unincorporated" areas of the County and for the private roads in those areas to remain private unless and until the consolidated government wants to take them over and assume responsibility. The Committee recommends that all future roads built in the area be built to the consolidated governments standards and then become the responsibility of that government.

Transportation planning would be a function of the consolidated government; it is currently a City function. This would allow public transportation to be provided throughout the consolidated government area. Highway rights-of-ways and bike paths could also be acquired by the consolidated government.

#### Water and Sewer Service

Consolidation of the water and sewer services function is feasible and should be investigated. Sewer services are currently moving in the direction of consolidation and areawide consolidation is both necessary and practical in order to provide good sewer services to the areas residents. Water services are not now consolidated but cooperation may be needed in the future to ensure that an adequate supply of water is available to the area.

The Committee recommends that the organizational arrangement of a water and sewer authority be looked into as a possible way to structure consolidated water and sewer services. The Committee does not recommend participation in the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority as its services are not needed at this point in time nor are they expected to be needed in the foreseeable future. Participation in the Authority is also too costly for all area governments. Use of the Authority should be considered if the area's needs change dramatically in the near future or the costs of participation decline significantly.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Summary and Recommendations

This Committee was charged with studying public safety in New Hanover County. Areas of Committee study were fire protection, emergency medical services, and law enforcement. Members of this Committee and their area of representation are shown below:

Fran Russ, Chairman	— Wrightsville Beach
Meares Harriss, Chairman (until 4-22-85)	— New Hanover County
Frank Carter	— New Hanover County
Joe McQueen	— New Hanover County Sheriff
Darryl Bruestle	— Wilmington
Sonja Green	— Wilmington
Jack Land	— Kure Beach

The Committee also was fortunate to have the benefit of the participation of Captain George Vallender and Captain David Turner, substitutes for Sheriff McQueen and Chief Bruestle.

Following is a summary of the Committee's meetings and its conclusions and recommendations. Reports on fire protection, emergency medical services, and law enforcement are also included.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

December 5, 1984	Discussion of Committee charge.  Worksheet compiled from which all information was to be collected.  Division into teams to interview the fire department representatives.
February 4, 1985	Feedback from the Committee members given on their visits to the fire departments.  Assignments made to study the rescue squads.
February 18, 1985	Presentation by Dan Summers on the New Hanover County Emergency Medical Services System Proposal.

April 22, 1985	Discussion of trips to consolidated communities.
	Discussion of the fire tax districts.
April 29, 1985	Discussion of the rescue squads in New Hanover County.
	Discussion of the advantages/disadvantages of a fire marshal.
May 6, 1985	Continued discussion on the advantages/disadvantages of consolidating the rescue squads.
June 3, 1985	Conclusions and recommendations drawn on the fire protection and rescue squad services in New Hanover County.
June 4, 1985	Discussion of law enforcement in New Hanover County, conclusions, and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fire Protection

The fire departments should be consolidated into one organization. Existing fire departments would be called stations (i.e., Myrtle Grove Fire Station).

- (a) Combination paid-volunteer staffing will be utilized.
- (b) Volunteers will receive commensurate training for the job that is done. Also, volunteers will wear the same uniform. Volunteers are a valuable asset to the community, and this philosophy should continue in the consolidated government.

A Fire Marshal should be appointed by the governing body of the consolidated government as authorized in the North Carolina General Statutes 153A-234. Duties specified for a Fire Marshal in this statute should be followed by the consolidated government.

- (a) In the event of consolidation, an Office of the Fire Marshal should be set up to handle additional inspection and training responsibilities.



- (b) The Fire Marshal should report to the Fire Chief of the consolidated department.
- (c) The Inspection Committee would be retained as an advisory Board to give input into volunteer relations. The Committee should be made up of the chiefs of each fire station.

A County Fire Service District is a fair and equitable method of insuring that New Hanover County residents pay for the fire protection services they receive.

- (a) In the event of consolidation, the district lines can be extended or new ones can be drawn.
- (b) A flat rate should be levied that will insure that minimally acceptable levels of fire protection exist within a district. Where further services are requested by the residents in a district, this flat rate should be increased to support the new services. If a service district cannot collect the flat rate necessary to provide minimum services, a request should be made to the consolidated government for additional funding.

#### Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services should be consolidated in New Hanover County as a Department of Emergency Medical Services and report to the chief administrative officer of the consolidated government. Volunteers should continue to be utilized.

#### Law Enforcement

A majority of the Committee members (4) voted that the Sheriff should be in charge of a consolidated law enforcement department in New Hanover County. One member voted that the chief law enforcement officer should be appointed rather than elected as the Sheriff is. These two different views are both presented in this report for further consideration of the Charter Commission, and their authors are noted.