

**Merry Hill, North Carolina
October 21, 2013**

Watershed Ordinance Amendment Public Hearing and Regular Commissioners Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met at 7:00pm on October 21, 2013 at the Midway/Merry Hill Community Building located at 112 NC 45 N in Merry Hill, NC. The following members were present or absent:

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| Present: | J. Wallace Perry, Chairman Charles L. Smith, Vice-Chairman Rick Harrell John Trent Ronald "Ron" Wesson |
| Absent: | None |
| Staff Present: | County Manager Scott Sauer Clerk to the Board Sarah Seredni Assistant County Attorney Jonathan E. Huddleston Finance Director William Roberson Planning Director Traci White |

Media members present included Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Thadd White of the Bertie Ledger-Advance. North Carolina's Department of Transportation District Engineer, Scott Emory, was present for a portion of the meeting.

Chairman Perry opened the meeting.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Harrell led the Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Perry opened the floor to Public Comments.

Joe Hoggard of Sans Souci commented on the proposed curbside solid waste & recycling program. Mr. Hoggard said the program would help some but would create hardship for others. He also noted particular communities where it would be difficult for citizens to use the trash containers. Mr. Hoggard concluded by thanking the Board for the innovative idea but that he did not think it was suitable for rural areas. He requested that the Board make a swift decision so that the County could move forward.

Reverend James Clemons of Merry Hill asked the Board about owning multiple properties and if those owners would have to be taxed annually per property.

Commissioners informed Rev. Clemons that the Bertie County Tax Department would only charge this service fee on the occupied properties.

Betty Mizelle of Green's Cross presented concerns for senior citizens with mobility issues especially for those that live alone.

Lucille Phelps of Hardintown expressed that safety and cost should be of utmost important in this decision.

Terry Pratt of Merry Hill commented that Waste Industries had been granted 3 different permissions to expand the landfill but that has not happened yet to his knowledge. He concluded by saying that the current system in place is working and that the trash trucks and trash containers would present traffic hazards.

Commissioner Wesson clarified that seniors are able to receive additional assistance from Waste Industries with their curbside trash pick-up. He also stated that many counties in the area are having success with similar curbside programs.

Stacy Hoggard of Sans Souci asked about when the vote for this project would take place. She also stated that she is against the project.

Chairman Perry stated that no vote had been scheduled and that there are more steps to follow before a vote could be conducted.

Kathy Myers of Merry Hill commented that most citizens in her community would request the special permission to have a Waste Industries employee retrieve and return their garbage containers. Ms. Myer stated that this program is just not feasible and that having the trucks turning around in people's driveways or stopping traffic on Highway 45 is a serious hazard.

James Heckstall of Merry Hill presented concerns for vehicles, school buses, and Waste Industries employees as the traffic will not be able to pass the trash trucks that often travel on two lane highways. Mr. Heckstall also stated that he wanted the Board to keep Bertie County in mind and not other counties in the area with this program.

Ann Berry Collins stated that she has dumpsters located at her chicken houses. She asked if she would still be forced to pay the tax.

Commissioners stated that she would be exempt from paying taxes on those commercial properties but that she would still be required to pay the annual fee at her residence.

Chris Cale of Old US 17 expressed that he was against closing the convenience sites because he prefers to dispose of his trash when it is convenient for him. He also voiced concerns for the

senior citizens that currently work at the convenience sites and that they would most likely not be hired by Waste Industries due to the effort it would take to move the trash containers.

Ashland Fisher stated that the Board needs to be mindful of Bertie County's citizens and not citizens of other counties. She also stated that this change would help the minority and not the majority.

Mary Simmons of Merry Hill asked the Board why this change should be made. She also inquired about the location of the two companies who responded to the request for proposals and presented concerns for additional job opportunities.

Commissioner Wesson responded by saying that it is important for the County to save money as the current debt of the County is the largest in the area. Wesson stated that the purpose of this program is to invest in the County's economic development. He also stated that this program would create more jobs than currently available in the system already in place. Commissioner Wesson concluded by saying one of the biggest reasons he serves on the Board is to increase the success of Bertie County with job opportunities, economic development, etc.

Commissioner Trent interjected that Bertie County has changed considerably in the last 25 years. He stated that many companies who once operated in the County have shutdown but that economic development is still not moving forward. Commissioner Trent announced that the County needs to reassemble and re-do the economic development plan. He stated that this required a new mind set because funding has been cut on the State level to due economic conditions.

A citizen stated that he is undecided about the proposed program but asked what items would be exempt from trash curbside trash pick-up.

Commissioner Trent stated that garbage, recycling, brown goods, white goods, appliances, and furniture would be picked up. Tree limbs and branches would not be collected through the curbside program.

Dr. Michael A. Elam, President of Roanoke-Chowan Community College, spoke of economic development in Bertie County. He stated that RCCC is anxious and excited to assist with this endeavor and requested that the County reinvest in education. Dr. Elam also expressed interest in a partnership with the County so that RCCC could assemble groups of active citizens in the Bertie County workforce to come together with economic development in mind.

Dr. Elam also reported that the vacancy on the RCCC Board of Trustees has been filled by a recent appointment by the Governor. In response to a question from Chairman Perry, Dr. Elam explained that the appointment is a Hertford County resident.

Wood Perry of Midway stated that the amount of jobs that will be deleted and added are not substantial enough to make a big difference in the local economy.

Michael Freeman voiced concerns for those land owners who have multiple properties especially in regards to homes they lease. The cost of this curbside program would not fall on the tenant but on the landlord. He stated that if you are mandated to pay for something with no option of opting out then it is a tax and not a service fee. He requested that the current system remain in place.

Larry Taylor of Merry Hill stated that he already pays a lot of taxes in this County and asked the Board to not use play on word or phrase such as “service charge” because not being able to opt out of the cost makes it a tax. Mr. Taylor concluded by saying that he thought we should keep the current system in place.

George Harden of Merry Hill stated that the proposed system would cost more than the current system. He also stated that the program would make more sense in town but not elsewhere as it would present a safety issue on local Highways.

Commissioner Wesson interjected by saying that a tax increase would happen regardless because the County would either accept the curbside solid waste & recycling proposal or they would open two new convenience sites.

Les Jones of Merry Hill asked how he would get his trash dumped if his driveway is approximately a mile long. He stated that he thought the County wanted to free up this money to play with and not because they wanted to benefit the County. He recommended that the County call Coleman Holley and that they collect this fee through car titles and not through the homeowners.

Chairman Perry concluded this section of Public Comments.

APPOINTMENTS

Watershed Ordinance Amendment and Map – Public Hearing

A public hearing was held to discuss the proposed Watershed Ordinance Amendment and Map.

County Manager Sauer introduced Planning Director, Traci White.

Mrs. White stated that the County needed to amend the current Watershed ordinance because Martin County wanted to preserve water quality for their Water Treatment facility. Martin County currently draws water from the Roanoke River which is located in Bertie County.

This amendment would limit the possibility of future development in the affected area.

Mrs. White also stated that the map being presented was approved by the State and that it meets their requirements. She requested that this map be approved in order for that amendment to be made.

Chairman Perry opened the floor to public comments.

Mary Simmons of Merry Hill requested clarification from the Board about what this ordinance means.

A citizen asked the Board if the County would need permission from Martin County to draw water from the Roanoke River.

Commissioners interjected by saying “no” due to the fact that the Roanoke River is located in Bertie County.

Mr. Joe Hoggard of Sans Souci and other citizens present raised concerns about the current private property owners. They asked if the property owners in this affected area could still develop their own property within this ordinance.

Mrs. White said that this could be a possibility but that it would be rather complicated due to the nature and type of land that this ordinance amendment would affect.

Chairman Perry concluded the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Wesson introduced a **MOTION** to accept the proposed Watershed Ordinance Amendment and Map. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CADA of NC, Inc. Report Presentation by Executive Director, Mrs. Sallie Surface

A report was presented by CADA’s Executive Director, Mrs. Sallie Surface. The report was an update of a previous 2008 report that was provided to the Commissioners. Mrs. Surface thanked the Board for their continued support and expressed her appreciation for the long lasting relationship between her organization and the County. The report explained how the sequester has impacted particular programs of CADA including Head Start, Early Head Start, Section 8, IDA, the Bertie JobLink Center in Windsor and other programs. A number of Bertie County residents have benefited from the offered programs. Mrs. Surface requested reimbursement funding for 12 new homeowners (totaling \$12,000) within the IDA program as well as to use the remaining \$13,000 balance to extend the program until June 2014. CADA also requested that the Board review their request for funding contributions during the 2013-2014 fiscal year as well as the contributions that the Bertie JobLink in Windsor has made to local economic development. Mrs. Surface also stated how the Bertie JobLink is an asset to the County and that financial support is needed from the Board in order to continue providing services at the Center.

Finance Director, William Roberson, stated that according to County records, that the County had issued \$1,000 in IDA reimbursement to CADA back in 2008.

Mrs. Surface stated that she was not aware of this transaction but that she would investigate CADA’s financial records for that year.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no Board Appointments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Harrell introduced a **MOTION** to approve all outstanding minutes from June 2013 – October 2013. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

County Manager Scott Sauer explained the Tax Administration Records Retention Schedule Amendment and recommended approval. Commissioner Smith introduced a **MOTION** to accept the Tax Administration Records Retention Amendment. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Commissioner Harrell introduced a **MOTION** to accept the Register of Deeds fees report for September 2013. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Vice Chairman Smith introduced a **MOTION** to accept the Error Ledger for August 2013 from the Bertie County Tax Department. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Commissioner Wesson introduced a **MOTION** to accept the Error Ledger for September 2013 from the Bertie County Tax Department. Commissioner Harrell **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Private Roads

Scott Emory of the North Carolina Department of Transportation presented ideas about a current statute to improve private roads in the County called “Neighborhood Public Roads.” This was to follow up from the Planning Retreat back on October 3-4, 2013. Mr. Emory recommended that the County submit a list of roads in need of attention to the local Division Engineer to see if there could be any possible funds. Mr. Emory stated that there could be no guarantees but that the County should feel free to submit a request.

Ms. White proposed that a work session be conducted with the Board so that ideas could be expressed and a list of roads could be drafted.

South Windsor Water System

County Manager Sauer presented a report received by the County’s engineering firm, McDavid Associates, Inc. The reports states that the County could acquire the water system and identification number and, additionally, could possibly qualify for grants to aid in the project.

He recommended that a transitional document be prepared by the County Attorney outlining a reasonable timeline with the County immediately assuming responsibilities for maintenance and operation of the system, but preserving the existing system identification number so that the County would still qualify for grant options.

Discussion ensued about the project among Commissioners. Commissioners also answered questions from citizens about the facility.

Consensus made to work with the County Attorney, South Windsor Water System, and the County Manager to draft a transitional document.

DRC Office Space

West Roanoke Missionary Baptist Association would like to rent out space within the DRC. County Manager Sauer requested Board assistance in developing a rental rate.

Mr. Sauer also mentioned other groups were interested in renting the space.

Consensus was reached among the Board to continue developing a rental rate.

Surplus County Property

County Manager Sauer stated he would be meeting with an auctioneer to tour various County properties in order to make recommendations to the Board for possible sale.

Request for Qualifications for engineering services

County Manager Sauer proposed dates for the County to meet with potential engineering firms and reported that the project would move forward with assistance from the County Attorney.

Courthouse – grant funding for needed repairs

County Manager Sauer stated that the RAM JACK grant application was in the works as discussed in a previous meeting in order to receive funding to renovate the historic Bertie County Courthouse.

Bertie-Martin County Jail – electronic monitoring

A handout was provided to the Board detailing a potential electronic monitoring system that could be used in the County. The system would allow low risk, pre-trial detainees to serve their time outside of jail and in the workforce while they are awaiting trial. Participants of the program would be selected by the judges and an electronic monitoring device would be in place similar to a GPS system. The cost of this system would be the responsibility of each detainee.

County Manager Sauer stated this type of technology could be an affordable option for the County and would also decrease medical costs and overcrowding within the jail facilities.

Commissioner Wesson addressed the public in attendance that this technology would be a money saver to the taxpayers due to the amount of time it takes for detainees to reach trial.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Wesson reminded the public about the new Board Appointment Policy. He stated that all Boards are now open to citizens and that they can serve. Commissioner Wesson announced that applications were available online.

Commissioner Harrell thanked the citizens present for their interest in local government. He stated that their presence is always appreciated.

Commissioner Smith had no remarks.

Commissioner Trent thanked the citizens for being present in all of the various meeting locations and for allowing the Commissioners to be in Merry Hill.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer requested an update about an alternative tire disposal location.

Commissioner Trent stated that he had been in contact with Bailey Parker of Kelford about being a possible location for tire disposal. He said that Mr. Parker would be in contact with him in the coming days to see if they could become the new tire disposal location.

Mr. Sauer also updated the Board about the Bertie DSS withdrawing their suspension of the day care subsidy program since the Federal Shutdown has ended. Those services have resumed. He stated that Linda Speller of DSS has prepared a written report but that she could not be in attendance.

Mr. Sauer informed the Board that all County employees would be participating in mandatory meetings about the Employee Wellness program through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. The Commissioners were invited to attend.

County Manager Sauer also presented a date for the Board to visit the new Bertie high school with the Board of Education. This tour will take place on Tuesday, October 29, 2013.

Lastly, County Manager Sauer reminded the Board that this year's Christmas Parade would be held on Thursday, December 5, 2013.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

The Assitant County Attorney, Jonathan Huddleston, did not have any remarks.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

Mr. Pratt discussed the County's current economic development. He stated he was not aware of any businesses that current Economic Developer, Steve Biggs, brought to the County and that he doesn't reside in Bertie County. Mr. Pratt suggested that students be encouraged to study the major trades because those are the businesses that are doing well in this economy.

A citizen stated that the Board should consider replacing the Courthouse doors during their renovation process.

Mr. Hoggard showed concern in regards to curbside solid waste & recycling pick up by saying that some citizens may abuse the right to additional services from Waste Industries. He stated that some citizens may receive a doctor's note even if they are capable of delivering their trash container to the specified location.

Mrs. Phelps requested that the Board do more to attract more retail business to the County so that she and other citizens would not have to go to other counties to spend their money. She said she would rather benefit those in Bertie and not those in other counties.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no Closed Session.

Chairman Perry adjourned the meeting at 9:42pm

ADJOURN

J. Wallace Perry, Chairman

Sarah Seredni, Clerk to the Board