

**Windsor, North Carolina
December 9, 2013
Emergency Meeting**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for an Emergency Meeting at 10:00AM in the Commissioners Room located at 106 Dundee Street Windsor, NC. The following members were present or absent:

Present: J. Wallace Perry, Chairman
Charles L. Smith, Vice-Chairman
John Trent
Ronald "Ron" Wesson
Rick Harrell

Absent: None

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
Clerk to the Board Sarah Seredni
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Finance Director William Roberson
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper

First Med representatives present included Health and Safety Manager Ken Smith, EMS Director for Bertie County Matt Leicester, and Director of Business Development Jeff White.

Media members present included Thadd White of the Bertie Ledger-Advance.

Mayor of Colerain Bernie Baker was also present.

WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Chairman Perry opened the meeting, and explained that the Emergency Meeting was called in order to speak to FirstMed EMS representatives regarding weekend reports of FirstMed's plans to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

Chairman Perry introduced Bertie County Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper and asked him to provide any updates.

Mr. Cooper stated that he received notification on Saturday, December 7, 2013 that FirstMed EMS had suspended all transport services after offices in Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio had been closed. After notifying Bertie County officials, Mr. Cooper notified the State of North Carolina and other surrounding counties regarding mutual aid agreements for EMS services.

Before introducing FirstMed representatives, the Board recognized that the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance had been omitted prior to the update by Mitch Cooper.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wesson led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board sought advice from Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston about the FirstMed EMS bankruptcy and impacts on the County in Closed Session. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) the Board indicated its desire to consult with the County Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege that exists between the attorney and this public body.

Assistant County Attorney Huddleston agreed that Closed Session under N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) would be appropriate.

Commissioner Wesson introduced a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3). Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board shifts into Closed Session.

The Board required that only County staff and FirstMed representatives be present for the Closed Session.

Commissioner Harrell introduced a **MOTION** to return back to Open Session. Commissioner Trent and Vice-Chairman Smith **SECONDED** the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board shifts back into Open Session.

OPEN SESSION

Upon Closed Session discussion, the Board concluded that a County State of Emergency would be the best option at the present time until more information can be gathered.

Commissioner Harrell introduced a **MOTION** for the Board to authorize Chairman Perry to issue a proclamation for a County State of Emergency in order to preserve current operations, contingency planning, and administrative services for EMS. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The signed proclamation for a County State of Emergency reads as follows:

[insert the proclamation here?]

Chairman Perry presented an opportunity for FirstMed representatives to speak further.

First Med's EMS Director of Bertie County Matt Leicester apologized for the current situation and recognized that all 49 FirstMed employees in the County had been doing great work.

Health and Safety Manager Ken Smith offered to help the County as much as possible throughout the duration of this matter.

Commissioners requested that Mr. Smith keep the Board up to date on new information as it becomes available.

Director of Business Development Jeff White stated that there were always good intentions in regards to the partnership between Bertie County and FirstMed EMS.

The Board agreed that the current financial state of FirstMed EMS does not signify poor performance on behalf of FirstMed employees or Bertie County staff.

Commissioner Trent posed a question to Mr. White regarding EMS Consultants and the potential of any ownership.

Mr. White stated that the only thing FirstMed has in common with EMS Consultants is that they use the same billing software. To his knowledge, EMS Consultants does not have ownership in FirstMed.

Chairman Perry asked if there was any further discussion needed.

Commissioner Wesson addressed the Media members present that it was important for citizens to be assured that emergency services are still available in the County.

There was no further discussion.

ADJOURN

Chairman Perry adjourned the meeting at 11:09am.

J. Wallace Perry, Chairman

Sarah Sereдни, Clerk to the Board