

**Windsor, North Carolina
September 16, 2013
Regular Meeting**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a regular meeting at 7:00 PM in the Commissioners Room with the following members present or absent:

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 John E. Whitehurst Finance Director William Roberson County Attorney Lloyd Smith

Chairman Perry opened the meeting.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Ron Wesson led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Perry opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending the meeting and, on behalf of the board, expressed appreciation to the Town of Aulander for hosting the meeting. Aulander Mayor, Larry Drew, thanked the board for coming to Aulander to conduct the meeting. Chairman Perry introduced each commissioner and the staff members attending the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Perry opened the floor for public comments.

A citizen spoke against the termination of funding to Roanoke-Chowan Community College in the current county budget. She stated that the community college provided education for the elderly and that was her special interest. Chairman Perry informed her that the county was operating on a very tight budget and the community college was not the only organization for which the board terminated funding. He further stated that even after all of the budget cuts, the board had to raise property taxes. Hopefully, funds can be restored in the future.

Ms. Joyce Tyler asked about the status of a Mid East housing grant that she and her husband had applied for. Further discussion revealed that the grant was a Bertie County CDBG Housing grant being administered by McDavid & Associates. Chairman Perry informed her that he would have staff check on the status of the grant.

Ms. Emma Johnson wanted to know the status of efforts to locate industry for the county.

Commissioner Trent gave some details of current efforts with a nitrogen company, an effort to help locate a power conversion company that had acquired a power purchase agreement. Commissioner Wesson talked about the need for industry and the things that an industry looks for when locating. He

stated that the county has to be competitive and that most areas are offering financial incentives to lure businesses and industries to their areas. He said our county has limited dollars for such ventures but we try to be competitive.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Venita Thompson, Director of Aging Services gave a presentation on the proposed Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) application to be submitted to NC DOT. The application is for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 and is for \$125,801 in funding. Program areas include Elderly & Disabled Transportation Assistance, Employment Transportation Assistance and Rural General Public.

Chairman Perry opened the public hearing on the ROAP application and asked for any comments or questions from the public. There were no comments or questions from the audience of approximately 47 individuals.

Hearing no questions or comments, Chairman Perry declared the public hearing closed.

Commissioner Wesson introduced a motion to approve the ROAP application for \$125,801 for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Trent and approved unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Michael Elam, President of Roanoke-Chowan Community College spoke about the lack of communications by the community college and agreed that it played a major part in the board's decision to not fund RCCC this year. He assured the board that this would not happen again. He introduced his board chairperson, Ms. Wendy Ruffin Barnes. Ms. Barnes opened by saying that she grew up in Aulander and presently owns property in Bertie County, paying taxes here but not residing in the county. As a Bertie County taxpayer, she felt that education was a major part of economic development and attracting industry. She stated that 24% of the students at RCCC are Bertie County residents. Ms. Barnes said that the governor appoints to the position on the Board of Directors and the community college was not involved in that process. There was a lengthy discussion between Ms. Barnes and various commissioners as to the appointment process and why the county was not notified of the resignation of the only Bertie County representative. Ms. Barnes maintained that it was not the responsibility of the community college to notify the board. Chairman Perry ended by stating that the group would not be there, even now, if the county had funded them in the current year. Dr. Elam took the floor and introduced two students from Bertie County that are officers in the student government association. Each student gave a presentation of their personal history and asked for consideration by the board to fund RCCC. Next Dr. Elam introduced several of his staff members that were involved in EMT education.

Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper presented a lease for 90 days temporary use of the Coulbourn Lumber Company office for the purpose of temporarily housing the First Med EMS Windsor base. The lease cost will be \$1,200 paid at the beginning of the lease. The present Windsor Rescue Squad facility is not available until sometime in December. Commissioner Harrell was opposed to approving the lease because it was presented at the meeting and he had not had the opportunity to read it. After discussion, Commissioner Trent made a motion to approve the lease and the funding of \$1,200 from the General Fund Contingency. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith. Commissioners Perry, Smith, Wesson and Trent voted to approve the lease and Commissioner Harrell voted "NO" because he was not afforded the opportunity to read the lease agreement.

Jeff White, First Med EMS Director of Business Development informed the board that the Aulander EMS base was ready for operation. Those individuals that would like to visit were welcome to walk across the street after the meeting and view the facility. He introduced Matt Leicester as the newly hired Director of Operations for Bertie County-First Med EMS. Mr. Leicester gave his background information which consisted of over twelve years of EMS experience in several counties. He was raised in Perquimans County. First Med EMS interviewed over 60 applicants, seventeen of which were Bertie County residents. Of the seventeen, they have hired thirteen and all thirteen passed the medical clearance phase. The company has an ambulance at the Colerain EMS base and Aulander base, which is complete. There are two more ambulances due to be delivered at the Windsor base. They are now stocking supplies.

Commissioner Wesson thanked the company for hiring Bertie County residents as they had promised they would do during their interviews with the board. He encouraged them to continue to do business in Bertie County. Commissioner Trent thanked the Town of Aulander citizens and town council for their welcome and work on fixing the Aulander EMS base.

Jerry Lecato, First Med EMS Vice President expressed thanks to RCCC for their work in training the EMT applicants. He promised RCCC that the firm would be forwarding a donation as a thank you for their hard work.

Tom Potter, Program Manager for Market Based Conservation Initiative (MBCI) and Chester Lowder, NC Farm Bureau Federation, Livestock Director, explained the goals of the pilot program. The program utilizes voluntary long term landowner contracts containing development restrictions. Funding is provided by the US Department of Defense to establish the market price of air and development rights in an established military flight path across 18 counties in the state. Commissioner Trent noted that the Soil & Water Conservation was receiving \$150 for each application. He asked if they were asking the Board of Commissioners to approve the program. The response was that the presentation was for information only. Commissioner Wesson asked why do this program since the military was already using the flight path? Chester Lowder said that the program was offered as sort of a thank you because during BRAC (Base Realignment) North Carolina was a winner by gaining military facilities and personnel. The US Marine Corps wanted to say thank you. He stated that there were 54 landowners eligible to participate and there would be a meeting in the Commissioners Room on September 24th.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The board considered an appointment to the Tri-County Airport Board for a position with the term ending September 30, 2013. Mr. Thomas E. Asbell currently serves in that position and he is the only applicant for the position. Commissioner Trent made a motion to reappoint Mr. Asbell to the position and the 3 year term would be from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wesson and unanimously approved.

The Bertie ABC Board position vacancy was created due to the death of member Eddie Watford whose term would normally end June 30, 2014. The board has three applicants; Lewis Hoggard III, Thomas E. Asbell and James S. Pugh. Commissioner Harrell asked that the board delay the appointment until the next meeting because Wood Perry had asked him for an application last Friday. Mr. Perry was informed that he could get an application from the county website and submit it to the county. The board agreed to have the item delayed until the next meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Harrell made a motion to accept the Register of Deeds fees report for the month of August. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Wesson and unanimously approved.

The request to approve the decision not to participate in the Cooperative Extension Special Leave Award was questioned by Commissioner Harrell who stated that he had not responded to the email originated by County Manager Sauer asking about approval or denial of the request. Commissioner Harrell said he did not respond because past practice had been to have telephone contact for approvals and he was not aware that his email response was needed. Commissioner Trent made a motion to approve the action of notifying the state that Bertie County would not participate. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved, but with Commissioner Harrell voting "No".

The minutes for 8-19-13 were approved subject to the County Attorney changes. Commissioner Wesson made the motion to approve and Commissioner Trent seconded the motion. All members voted in the affirmative.

Commissioner Wesson made a motion to approve the Closed Session minutes for June 19, 20 and 21, 2013. Commissioner Trent seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wesson made a motion to approve the changes in the Register of Deeds record retention schedule as listed in the report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

The request for funds from the Caswell Center for a Christmas Fund was discussed during budget preparation and was one of the many items eliminated. Their current request was denied, however Commissioner Trent volunteered to make a private donation in the amount of \$200.

The County Manager stated that he had met with the Supt. White and the Board of Education would be responsible for the operating costs of the outdoor lighting contract for the new high school. Chairman Perry was authorized to sign the Roanoke Electric Cooperative rental agreement form upon a motion by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Trent and unanimously approved.

The County Manager stated that the Board of Commissioners had not made a decision on the solid waste door to door program. The next step in the process will be a public hearing on October 10, 2013 at 7:00 PM in the Courthouse Superior Courtroom. At that time the board will hear public input, listen to comments but take no vote on the program at that time. The board will vote on the proposal after the public hearing. Staff has compared the proposals received from Waste Industries and Republic. Based on the comparisons it appears that Waste Industries is the most favorable provider, but that is not intended to be a recommendation. Staff has also prepared a draft ordinance entitled "Bertie County Solid Waste Availability Fee Ordinance Regulating and Imposing the Assessment and Collection of Solid Waste Availability Fees With Property Taxes." Mr. Whitehurst stated that he had three changes in the draft and that would be changed prior to the draft being posted on the Bertie County website for public viewing. There was no objection to the above action and the board asked the newspaper press to give as much advertising as possible to the website posting.

County Manager Sauer requested that the board approve securing information from the NC Association of County Commissioners Risk Management for providing liability insurance for the Windsor Township Development Commission buildings. The Chairman has asked for a listing of the

members of the township board. Sauer reported that the present members are Bob Spivey, Ron Wesson, Lawrence Carter, Willie Outlaw and a vacant seat formerly occupied by Dancy White. Therefore there is a vacancy on the commission board.

County Attorney Smith informed the board that he recommends that the board conduct a public hearing before adopting the map delineating the area subject to the Watershed Ordinance. The adoption of the map is considered an amendment to the ordinance. The board agreed and the public hearing is set for the next night meeting which will be held at the Midway/Merry Hill Community Building. The advertisement for the notice must be advertised twice and no less than 10 days and no more than 25 days before the public hearing is held. The date was erroneously mentioned as October 19, 2013 and is actually October 21, 2013.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Wesson reminded the audience that now all citizens are encouraged to complete an online application and volunteer to serve on any of the county boards and committees. All applications for each position vacancy will be considered.

Commissioner Trent advised that the problem of failing to dispatch the Blue Jay Fire Department to fires within their defined territory still exists and something has to be done to correct the problem. Chairman Perry said he had talked to the Sheriff and asked him to call the Fire Chief and resolve the problem. Finance Director William Roberson, former IT Director informed the board that the last incident involved a car that was moving and the occupant called in the fire on their cell phone. The cell phone location actually showed that it was in another fire territory at the time the call was placed.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

The County Manager updated the information on a Golden Leaf Foundation offer to the area counties to submit grant applications. The grant awards would require a 20% cash match and cash would carry more emphasis than a 20% inkind match. The letter of intent deadline is October 15, 2013 and applications are due March 7, 2014.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

County Attorney Smith reminded the board that he had not received responses on his changes to the Bertie County water districts service request checklist. It was stated that the checklist would be considered at the commissioners retreat scheduled for October 3 and 4 at the Roanoke-Cashie River Center in Windsor. Starting time will be 9:00 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

Kelly Wiggins asked that the board keep RCCC in mind for future funding.

Dr. Elam said that the community college was collaborating with the Bertie Board of Education on the Golden Leaf grant and he would be glad to do the same with the county.

Town of Aulander Mayor Drew thanked the board for conducting the meeting in Aulander.

Philip Thomas, Aulander Councilman asked why there was no oversight of the dollars spent with the community college and no followup. He asked why the board had made no offer to help the citizens of Aulander with the cost of providing the EMS facility and why not pay rent like they were doing in Windsor. Chairman Perry explained to Mr. Thomas that the rental was for time before the Windsor facility would be available because the Bertie Rescue Squad would not vacate the building until late

December. He also informed him that the Town of Windsor was proving the facility, once occupied by EMS, at no cost. Mayor Drew informed everyone that the Aulander Town Council had discussed the arrangement and the board had agreed to no charge for the facility. Mr. Thomas then questioned why there were no efforts for locating a grocery store and that driving long distances to shop was expensive. Commissioner Trent informed Mr. Thomas that he had written letters to several stores and was communicating with them. Commissioner Wesson informed him that most businesses will look at statistics of an area before locating. One vital component is vehicular traffic. As an example the addition of the US 13/17 Bypass in Windsor has altered traffic and the count now puts it in the low end of being acceptable for consideration by motels.

RECESS

Chairman Perry recessed the meeting until the next meeting October 3, 2013, 9:00 AM at the Roanoke-Cashie River Center.

J. Wallace Perry, Chairman

John E. Whitehurst, Clerk to the Board