

Windsor, North Carolina
February 2, 2015
Regular Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 4:00pm in the Commissioners Room located at 106 Dundee Street Windsor, NC. The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald "Ron" Wesson, District I
Stewart White, District II
Tammy A. Lee, District III
John Trent, District IV
Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Absent: None

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Information Systems Administrator Scott Pearce
Finance Director William Roberson
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Sheriff John Holley
Cooperative Extension Director Richard Rhodes

Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald was present from the media.

Chairman Wesson welcomed all of those present, and thanked them for their attendance.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Bazemore gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Richard Rhodes, Cooperative Extension Director, invited the Board to attend an informational event regarding Cooperative Extension's current programs, as well as to take a tour of the newly renovated Bertie County Cooperative Extension Office.

The Board concurred, and Mr. Rhodes stated that he would work with County Manager Sauer to schedule the event.

Rebecca Calliford approached the Board with a request to consider adding a dive team to the County's emergency response services. Ms. Calliford informed the Board of an accident involving her nephew on Highway 17 near Wakelon Rd. in Bertie County.

Ms. Calliford stated that another county's dive team had to be dispatched to the scene in order to recover the body. She stated that she hoped Bertie County would consider a dive team as it would make the County's waterways safer for all.

The Board thanked Ms. Calliford for the suggestion and offered condolences for her loss.

Chairman Wesson stated that the topic had been discussed in the past, but that he didn't see any reason for it to not be explored again.

There were no other Public Comments.

APPOINTMENTS

ABC Board Chair Miles Davis: receive update on operations for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014

Miles Davis, Chairman of the Bertie County ABC Board, provided the County with its latest audit, as well as submitted a check for \$19,191.

Mr. Davis also informed the Board that the County ABC system paid of total of \$159,893 in tax to the State of North Carolina during the last fiscal year.

Additionally, Mr. Davis explained recent upgrades to the County's ABC store including new flooring, roof repairs, and an upgrade to the cash register system.

Mr. Davis also reminded the Board the ABC Board members and employees continue to participate in various events around the County raising awareness about the dangers of both drinking and texting while driving.

Bertie County Transformation Zone program update presentation by Ms. Bobbi Holley, Implementation Coordinator and Dr. Denauvo M. Robinson, Albemarle Smart Start Partnership

Mr. Denauvo M. Robinson of the Albemarle Smart Start Partnership provided information to the Board regarding the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant. The program was designed to provide young children with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.

Mr. Robinson explained that the Transformation Zone was designed for Tier 1 counties in the northeast territory of the State, and the goals of the program to build purposeful implantation practices of the Race to the Top grant in rural settings.

The heart of the Transformation Zone includes supporting families, ensuring healthy children, strengthening of access to high quality child-care, as well as to strengthen the capacity to implement all services as effectively as possible.

Mr. Robinson also introduced Bertie Implementation Coach, Bobbi Holley, to provide the Board with a summary of all Transformation Zone programs.

Programs and services provided under the Transformation Zone programs include: Mother/Father Read, access Child Care Health Consultants, Family Connects, Reach Out and Read, Triple P, and access Healthy Social Behavior Specialists.

Superintendent Elaine White: consider property transaction for accepting Central Office building, consider allocation of \$150,000 for school capital outlay purposes, and receive an update on bus garage project

Superintendent White updated the Board regarding the current status of the school system's new transportation garage. She stated that the Board of Education had purchased the building, and Maintenance Supervisor, Matthew Bond, provided blue prints for the building.

Ms. White stated that the new building has adequate space for bus parking, bus repair bays, office space, and storage. The Board of Education will be utilizing the services of A.R. Cheeson to renovate the building for \$486,607, but the services of a Project Manager were not included in that fee.

Ms. White requested that the Board of Commissioners approve the Board of Education's request for using school fund balance reserves to hire a Project Manager, and to renovate the recently acquired facility for use as a new bus garage.

On another note, Ms. White asked for an update regarding the County's interest in purchasing the current Administrative building on County Farm Road for \$150,000.

After some additional discussion including comments from Sherriff Holley, Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to purchase the Board of Education Administrative building on County Farm Road for \$150,000. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

County Attorney Smith suggested clarification on the closing date for this transfer which will be take place in June 2015.

Additionally, Superintendent White asked for a motion to approve her request to use current capital outlay funds to renovate the old Bertie High School building as needed.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the Board of Education request to use capital outlay funds to renovate the old Bertie High School to be the new Administrative Building, and

approve approved a project estimate \$920,000 using school fund balance reserves for the school bus garage project. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no board appointments.

Chairman Wesson reminded all of those present that citizens no longer had to be recommended to different boards, and that they could simply submit an application to be considered.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve minutes for Regular Session 1-20-15

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes for Regular Session 1-20-15. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Tax Department Error Ledger – December 2014

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to accept the Tax Department Error Ledger for December 2014. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea: report to the Board of Commissioners on total unpaid 2014-2015 taxes that are lien on real property as required by N.C.G.S. 105-369(a), and review upcoming tax calendar items (e.g. publication of delinquent taxpayers, Board of Equalization schedule for April-May)

Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea, requested permission to advertise the total unpaid 2014-2015 real property tax liens as required by N.C.G.S. 105-369(a)

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to grant permission as requested by Tax Administrator Rhea. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Board also discussed meeting as the Board of Equalization and Review in April 2015.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Financial Advisor Ted Cole – review of County’s debt structure, discuss sinking fund requirements for Bertie High School QSCB financing (Qualified School Construction Bonds), receive update on the impact of US Congressional sequestration budget reductions, and examine other potential debt refinancing options

Mr. Ted Cole, with the firm Davenport & Company, provided an overview of the County’s current debt structure using a detailed summary document provided to each Commissioner.

First, Mr. Cole noted that Bertie County’s bond rating by Moody’s Investor Service is Aa3 and provided peer county comparisons noting that not all NC counties are rated.

Secondly, Mr. Cole reviewed the County’s legal debt limit and legal debt margin as reported in the latest audit report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014. He explained that the calculated debt limit for Bertie County is \$101,681,459 and that the total debt applied against the legal debt limit is \$34,169,535 which yields a legal debt margin of \$67,511,924.

Mr. Cole also reviewed the existing tax supported debt for the County using various bench mark measures comparisons with similarly rated NC counties, in addition to an analysis of General Fund balance reserves.

Mr. Cole also reviewed the most recent transactions including the Bertie high school financing, Social Services building interest rate reduction and the Water Department USDA loan refinancing which occurred in 2012.

It was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Cole would return later in the year to discuss the steps necessary to establish sinking fund parameters for the Qualified School Construction Bonds.

Chairman Wesson thanked Mr. Cole for his reported noting that this document should be available to the public by posting it on the County’s website.

CPA Bob Segal - consider proposal for revenue enhancement and expenditure reduction project proposal

Bob Segal approached the Board to inquire if the Board had considered his company’s offer to provide his financial services to the County.

Mr. Segal reiterated the County’s relationship with his firm in the past, and that no payment would be required if the firm could not find any places for financial improvement.

Vice Chairman Lee made a **MOTION** for the County to engage with Bob Segal regarding his firm’s financial services. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Vice Chairman Lee informed the Board that she had received a suggestion from a citizen regarding a County event calendar on the County's website.

Vice Chairman Lee stated that the calendar could contain local festivals, events, and other happenings around the County in one central location.

County Manager Sauer stated that he would work with Information Systems Administrator, Scott Pearce, to develop the suggested feature.

Chairman Wesson stated that he is very proud of the Board's work to address infrastructure and facility needs in Bertie County, especially as evidenced by recent repairs at the Courthouse. This effort will keep the Courthouse on a firm foundation, and he praised Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe and Register of Deeds Annie Wilson for their diligence in getting the construction work accomplished over the weekend in order to minimize the disruption for the public who need access to the land records area.

The Chairman also commended the Commissioners for their support in addressing preventive maintenance issues at the Bertie Martin Regional Jail, and for working with the Board of Education on various projects such as the new bus garage. He noted that this important work builds on the effort to renovate the office space for Cooperative Extension and the infrastructure improvements underway in our Water Department.

Lastly, Chairman Wesson thanked Commissioner Trent for taking the initiative on several of these projects, and he praised all of the Commissioners for the collaboration that we have witnessed with this new Board.

There were no other comments at this time.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board that proposals for the convenience centers are due to the County on February 3, 2015. The deadline was extended for all vendors.

Mr. Sauer also requested that the Board recess this meeting until Monday, February 9, 2015 at 7:30am. The Board will be meeting for their annual Planning Sessions at the Roanoke-Cashie River Center February 9-10, 2015.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

The County Attorney requested that the Board consider a brief Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the County Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege that exists between the attorney and this public body.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

There were no public comments in this section.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the County Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege that exists between the attorney and this public body. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

RECESS

Chairman Wesson recessed the meeting until Monday, February 9, 2015 at 7:30am. The Board will meet for their annual Planning Sessions at the Roanoke-Cashie River Center.

Ronald D. Wesson, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board