

Windsor, North Carolina
March 16, 2015
Regular Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00pm inside the Askewville Town Hall located at 105 S. Railroad Street, Askewville, 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
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Network Administrator Joe Wilkes
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Planning Director Traci White
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
Civil Processing Officer Vernon Lee

Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Thadd White of the Bertie Ledger-Advance were present from the media.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wesson welcomed all of those present and thanked them for their attendance. He thanked the Town of Askewville for hosting tonight's meeting.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Brother Kennedy Barber of St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church in Windsor gave the Invocation. Commissioner White led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Askeville Mayor Gloria Bryant thanked the Board for visiting the Town of Askeville for a meeting and encouraged the Board to remember them during budget season regarding a new community building.

There were no other public comments in this section.

APPOINTMENTS

SunEnergy1 presentation by Heath McLaughlin

Heath McLaughlin of SunEnergy1 was present to inform the Board as well as citizens about all of the latest solar projects in Bertie County.

Mr. McLaughlin fielded questions from the Board as well as the public concerning how the energy produced with the solar panels is utilized, employment opportunities, effect of solar energy on current electric providers, and the impact on local energy costs for residents.

Economic Development Report by Steve Biggs regarding upcoming visit by NC Secretary of Commerce

Mr. Biggs reported that Secretary John Skvarla will be in Bertie County on March 26th to meet with business leaders and elected officials as part of his orientation to his new role in the Department of Commerce.

The Secretary will tour the Bertie Peanut Company, AVOCA and the Department of Correction prison facility to view the available training and manufacturing space.

Mr. Biggs also reported that the Assistant Commerce Secretary, Mr. Will Collins, recently met with the local Mideast Commission Workforce Development Board and staff to discuss job recruiting and training needs in Bertie County.

Lastly, Mr. Biggs shared efforts to secure a new business prospect through the North Carolina Partnership. A joint proposal was prepared with the Town of Windsor to offer two downtown incubator buildings for the client.

Non-Emergency Transport (NET) update by Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, presented a report to the public that was similar to the one presented at a special meeting that took place on Tuesday, March 10, 2015.

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, and his staff provided a detailed overview of the Non-Emergency Transport Service which was initiated on August 1, 2014.

The Board was briefed regarding the original operating assumptions and the 24 hours per day, 7 days a week scheduling that was established to cover the projected transport demand at Bertie Vidant hospital in Windsor.

Mr. Cooper also explained the call volume and related operating costs for the first four months, and the decision to eliminate the 12 hour night shift, reduce staff and decrease operations to eight (8) hours per day Monday through Friday.

It is anticipated that the non-emergency transport service will reach a break-even point within 120 days according to estimates provided by Mr. Cooper.

There were several questions from members of the audience, and the Board assured them that this program will be monitored very closely.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Three River's Healthy Carolinians – Commissioner Board Appointment

The Board requested to review more information about this board before considering the appointment of a Commissioner.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve minutes for Regular Session 3-2-15

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes for Regular Session 3-2-15. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Approve minutes for Regular Session 3-10-15

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes for Regular Session 3-10-15. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Approve minutes for Regular Session 3-10-15

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes for Closed Session 3-10-15. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Accept Register of Deeds Fees Report – February 2015

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to accept the Register of Deeds Fees Report for February 2015. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

**Consider Memorandum of Agreement Contract between the County and Town of Kelford
– Council on Aging Nutrition Site**

The Board discussed the meaning of this service to the County and agreed that it was a valuable and successful one.

Vice Chairman Lee inquired about the possibility of additional funding from Perdue to continue the program.

Finance Officer William Roberson interjected and stated that Perdue had recently contributed funds to the County to continue the nutrition site for an additional year.

After some additional discussion, the Board came to a consensus to continue the agreement between the County and the Town of Kelford so that the Council on Aging will continue to operate the Town's community building as a Nutrition Site.

It was also suggested and highly supported among the entire Board to draft a Letter of Appreciation to the family of the late Carolyn F. Jernigan, the spearhead of this particular project.

The letter will be presented at the Monday, April 20, 2015 meeting at the Kelford Community Building in the Town of Kelford.

Review February 2015 Monthly Collections Report

The Board reviewed this report. No action was needed.

Receive report of Current Ad Valorem Collections as of February 28, 2015

The Board reviewed this report. No action was needed.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Discuss dates for Board of Equalization and Review – Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea

After some discussion, the Board decided that it would meet as the Board of Equalization and Review at their April 20, 2015 and May 2, 2015 regular meetings in order to comply with North Carolina General Statutes.

Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Board project funding – project estimate of \$400,000 is recommended with a 50 percent cost share contribution from each county

The Board informed the public about the current state of the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail and a proposed renovation project to be shared between both Bertie and Martin Counties.

The Board assured the public that this project had been put off long enough and that renovations were desperately needed in various areas of the facility.

A total of \$400,000 is needed to make priority repairs with each County providing 50% or \$200,000 of funding to begin work. The Board also clarified that since this work was not originally budgeted that the County would appropriate fund balance reserves to cover the contribution.

After some additional discussion, Commissioner White made a **MOTION** to provide half of the requested funds (\$200,000) from the County's fund balance reserves. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Discussion of final negotiations and contract development with Republic Services for operation of solid waste and recycling convenience sites

The Board informed all of those present that the County had recently entered into negotiations with Republic Services regarding the County's five (5) solid waste and recycling convenience centers.

Chairman Wesson shared the contract elements which have been negotiated and committed to by Republic Services as outlined below.

- 1) Equipment—in addition to the equipment listed in the initial proposal, Republic will provide:
 - a. an additional compactor at the Windsor site and one other site (if dictated by volume) for MSW-trash
 - b. 12 yard roll off container for tires at each site
 - c. Closed container for e-waste at two sites (Lewiston and Windsor)
 - d. Pallet at each site to accept batteries
 - e. Container to accept used oil at each site

- 2) Monthly rate—flat fee of \$36,859 for thirty-six (36) months with no inflation factor, fuel escalator, or other increase; and beginning in year 4 of the agreement, annual adjustment will be a fixed rate of two percent (2%) per annum.
- 3) Service hours and days of operation will remain consistent with the present operational schedule currently posted at each site, which varies with the daylight savings time calendar change.
- 4) Existing staff—Republic will make all reasonable efforts to assist Waste Industries site attendants with filing job applications, and other accommodations necessary to ease the transition for qualified personnel.
- 5) Employees will be provided with uniforms (laundry service), safety shoes and hearing/eye protection as per company policy.
- 6) Free weekly container service (8yard box) at courthouse, DSS and Council on Aging senior center, once the current service agreement has expired.
- 7) Free container service for community festivals.
- 8) “performance clause” or liquidated damages in the event that the sites are not operational by July 1, 2015 (\$1,000 per day)

The public was also informed that the County Attorney was reviewing a contract to be approved at an upcoming Board meeting.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Vice Chairman Lee informed the Board and citizens present about the Teddy Bear training program she attended at the Department of Social Services, and its relevance for other departments who serve children and families.

Commissioner White indicated that several citizens had inquired about the ownership of the ball fields in Askewville, and asked if the County would consider transferring ownership to the Town of Askewville.

It was his understanding that the Town installed the lights and maintains the fields for the benefit of the community.

Chairman Wesson reiterated the Board's gratitude to all County staff during the recent winter weather and made a special acknowledgement to County Manager Sauer for his dedication to communication during those events.

Chairman Wesson also announced the Historic Hope Foundation's 50th Anniversary Gala to take place on Friday, April 24, 2015 at the Roanoke-Chowan Heritage Center, and asked the Board to consider a sponsorship donation of \$500.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to provide a sponsorship of \$500 to the Historic Hope Foundation's 50th Anniversary Gala. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer updated the Board on several matters including ongoing projects.

The County "shred event" will be held Saturday, March 21st at the Department of Social Services parking lot from 10 am to 1 pm.

Mr. Sauer explained that this service is provided by the Local Government Federal Credit Union and is free to all citizens and businesses in the County.

He explained to the audience that this is an excellent opportunity to destroy personal files and tax records which may contain information that could be used to steal a person's identity.

Mr. Sauer presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding for consideration by Bertie and Martin Boards of County Commissioners in conjunction with the regional jail commission which addresses outstanding invoices from 2002 for unpaid safekeeper services.

He explained that this information was just brought to his attention late last week, and the amount due exceeds \$106,000 of which nearly \$90,000 is the obligation of Martin County.

After further discussion, Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Martin County Board of Commissioners regarding the outstanding balance for safekeeping services. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Memorandum of Understanding reads as follows:

Memorandum with Bertie County and BMRJ Jail Board
Concerning Old Safekeeper Debt Owed to the State of North Carolina

March 18, 2015

Summary:

The NC Division of Prisons cooperate with county jails through the Safekeeper Program to assist with the housing of prisoners when the prisoners require medical or mental health treatment or in other scenarios, such as when situations require a higher level of supervision.

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners and Martin County Board of Commissioners entered into an agreement on December 7, 1981 to construct, finance and operate a regional jail under the

authority of NC General Statutes, Section 153A-219 and the 1981 Session Laws of NC, Chapter 269 (House Bill 541).

Bertie County, Martin County and Bertie-Martin Regional Jail utilize the Safekeeper services provided by the NC Department of Public Safety and pays for current Safekeeping services. There is approximately \$16,360.35 in outstanding Safekeeper charges attributed to Bertie County from 2002 – 2003. There is approximately \$89,980.00 in outstanding Safekeeper charges attributed to Martin County from 2002 – 2003. \$81,661.93 of the approximately \$89,980.00 in outstanding Safekeeper charges attributed to Martin County are from one case. Bertie County, Martin County and Bertie-Martin Regional Jail have paid all Safekeeping charges since 2003.

Since the debt from the Safekeeping Program is 12-13 years old and paying the debt would create a burden for Bertie and Martin County, the attached Memorandum of Understanding formalizes a request for the State of North Carolina to forgive the debt.

If all three boards approve the MOU, the MOU and request would be sent to Governor Pat McCrory for consideration by the State.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**BETWEEN THE BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

WHEREAS, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners and Martin County Board of Commissioners entered into an agreement on December 7, 1981 to construct, finance and operate a regional jail under the authority of NC General Statutes, Section 153A-219 and the 1981 Session Laws of NC, Chapter 269 (House Bill 541) ; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County and Martin County have jointly operated the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail (BMRJ) through the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Commission; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County and Martin County jointly fund the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail (BMRJ) on a pro rata basis, based on population; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County, Martin County and Bertie-Martin Regional Jail utilize the Safekeeper services provided by the NC Department of Public Safety and pays for current Safekeeper services; and

WHEREAS, there is approximately \$16,360.35 in outstanding Safekeeper charges attributed to Bertie County from 2002 – 2003; and

WHEREAS, there is approximately \$89,980.00 in outstanding Safekeeper charges attributed to Martin County from 2002 – 2003; and

WHEREAS, \$81,661.93 of the approximately \$89,980.00 in outstanding Safekeeper charges attributed to Martin County are from one case; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County, Martin County and Bertie-Martin Regional Jail have paid all Safekeeper charges since 2003; and

WHEREAS, Bertie and Martin Counties are both Tier-1 Counties; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County is the most economically-distressed county in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Martin County is the 13th most economically-distressed county in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Bertie and Martin Counties are about to make a significant capital investment of approximately \$400,000 in renovations at the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail; and

WHEREAS, this sizeable investment in the jail facility will put a substantial financial strain on Bertie County and Martin County;

THEREFORE, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners, Martin County Board of Commissioners and Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Board agree to humbly ask the State of North Carolina to forgive the Safekeeper debts of Bertie County and Martin County that date back to the 2002-2003 timeframe and which total approximately \$106,340.35.

Mr. Sauer also reported to the Board on the status of the Courthouse foundation reinforcement project which is under contract with RAMJACK of Raleigh, NC.

County Manager Sauer provided background information for the audience and explained that both additional sections, or wings of the Courthouse, have started to shear away from the main part of the building and that this work is necessary to prevent further damage to the structures.

Mr. Sauer reported to the Board that the actual project costs will exceed the original estimate of \$85,000 by approximately \$24,000 as calculated by the Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe.

Mr. Rascoe described some of the unexpected subsurface work in the records vault area in the Register of Deeds Office which required additional brick work, steel reinforcement, and painting and sheet rock repairs at a cost of \$6,277. RAMJACK's final invoice is \$39,100 which brings RAMJACK's total charges for this phase of work to \$96,900 which is primarily attributable to the installation of forty-seven (47) helicon piers, many of which exceeded the projected depth of 25 feet. Due to the unstable soil materials, the average depth for the pier installation was 57 feet, and one pier required a depth of 69 feet in order to achieve the required measurement of 3,000 pounds per square inch (PSI).

Mr. Rascoe estimates that the remaining concrete and brick work will not exceed \$6,000 and the final total for this entire project is estimated at \$109,177 and the County Manager reported that the additional \$24,177 in expenses will be absorbed within the existing appropriation for the Maintenance Department budget.

The County Manager reminded the Board of the upcoming Mayors and Commissioners meeting on April 9th in Askewville and noted for the audience, that the next regular meeting of the Board has been rescheduled to April 7th in order to avoid having a meeting on Easter Monday.

ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

The Assistant County Attorney gave no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

Barbara Outlaw of Powellsville thanked the Board for their recent efforts to remain transparent with all decisions regarding County dollars.

Mike Baker, Town of Askewville Commissioner, stated that he supported the work being doing by SunEnergy1 and asked for the Board to keep the Town of Askeville in mind during the upcoming budget season.

Kay Brantley, Town of Askewville Commissioner, inquired about various matters including the costs involved in maintaining no longer utilized school buildings in the County as well as the current operational costs at the new Bertie High School, as well as the amount of revenue paid to the land owner per acre with each solar farm.

Chairman Wesson recommended that Ms. Brantley visit an upcoming Board of Education meeting to voice her concerns regarding any Bertie County Public School matters as the County does not have control over the school system's assets.

ADJOURN

Chairman Wesson adjourned the meeting at 9:10pm.

Ronald D. Wesson, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board