

**Windsor, North Carolina
November 7, 2016
Regular Meeting**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting inside 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
Finance Officer William Roberson
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
EMS Division Chief Crystal Freeman
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Planning Director Traci White
Cooperative Extension Director Billy Barrow

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order and thanked those present for their attendance.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wesson led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Carrell, Colerain Commissioner, thanked Mitch Cooper for his work during the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

There were no other public comments during this session.

APPOINTMENTS

Matthew Connolly of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will update the Board on the proposed expansion of the Roanoke River Wildlife Refuge

Matthew Connolly of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave a brief PowerPoint presentation regarding the proposed expansion of the Roanoke River Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Connolly stated that this idea was in the conceptual phases right now, and that NC Fish and Wildlife is soliciting input and ideas from local officials.

More information would be available in the coming months during the schedule Public Scoping meetings slated for January 2017.

Presentation by Jeremy McCargo of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission

Jeremy McCargo of NC Wildlife Resources gave a brief presentation on the current state of herring populations on the Eastern seaboard. He stated that populations had still not recovered significantly to warrant an open season.

Update request regarding storm shelter generators by Commissioner Bill Harrell of Colerain

Town of Colerain Commissioner, Bill Harrell, requested an update about the potential for generators at Colerain Elementary School during natural disasters. He stated that it is dangerous for town citizens to hook up generators during flooding events.

He asked the Board to consider purchasing generators for the shelter, and that he would be happy to be of assistance with labor, or any other needs that the County may have to accomplish this.

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, also responded to the concern. Mr. Cooper stated that he had discovered that the emergency shelter and Colerain Elementary School does not meet American Red Cross's standards for transfer switches.

Mr. Harrell offered Mr. Cooper his assistance in working on a proposal that would work for all involved to bring generators to Colerain Elementary during natural disasters.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Advertisement -- Current and Upcoming Board Vacancies

The Board reviewed the latest board vacancy advertisement. The advertisement will run in the Bertie-Ledger Advance and the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald in the coming days.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon review by Chairman Trent, Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda items below. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 10-24-16
2. **Fees Report** – Register of Deeds – October 2016
3. **Facility Use Agreement** – “Raising Bertie” Public Showing Event at Bertie High School Auditorium
4. **Agreement – Revised** – Regional Back-Up PSAP
5. **Release Journal** – Tax – September 2016
6. **Agreement** – General Purpose FY2016-2017 – Council on Aging
7. **Budget Amendment** - #17-03

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Review of Tax Appeals:

- a) Coastal Medical Transport by Tim Bazemore, Jr.

The Board granted Mr. Bazemore an extension of eight (8) weeks to consult with his new CPA in order to find a resolution regarding his appeal.

- b) Southern Band Tuscarora Indian Tribe by Marilyn Mejorado

Ms. Marilyn Mejorado presented her appeal to the Board regarding the federal status of the Southern Band Tuscarora Indian Tribe. Ms. Mejorado advocated that the Tribe is exempt from all taxes including Bertie County property tax.

Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea, stated that upon further inspection, he did not find evidence that the Southern Band Tuscarora Indian Tribe was exempt from paying property tax.

Ms. Mejorado referenced a decision made in Robeson County to exempt a Tuscarora affiliated tribe.

County Attorney Smith agreed with Mr. Rhea's conclusion, but that checking into the decision made by Robeson County could be a "worthy inquiry" that could help provide a resolution to this matter.

- c) Kelford Owner, LLC. - FYI only, formal appeal will be presented at a later meeting

Mr. Rhea reported that an appeal from Kelford Owner, LLC. was coming and would be presented at a later date.

Hurricane Matthew Grant – Staffing Request

County Manager Sauer informed the Board that Jennie Bowen of the Mid-East Commission was in the process of applying for a grant that could bring 26 grant funded positions to Bertie County. The areas of focus are the Department of Social Services as well as the Maintenance Department. The County will also be looking for workers to assist in cleaning up debris and roadside ditches.

NC Coastal Land Trust correspondence

Commissioner Wesson provided a brief update on this matter, and stated that the Letter of Support was received for the Ball Gray Property.

Structural Evaluation – resident near new BHS (1 of 3) received

County Manager Sauer reported that he had received letters from Matthew Bond, Maintenance Director for the Bertie County School System, where residents have reported cracking in their ceilings, walls, and other damage to their homes on Highway 13 near the new Bertie High School.

Mr. Sauer stated that he would be in contact with the contractor, WIMCO, to discuss these matters.

Blue Jay Park Trail – Grant Update

Mr. Sauer reported that he had received a visit from a Kate B. Reynolds representative who had very positive feedback regarding the grant for walking trail in the Blue Jay community. He stated that a copy of the grant application was sent to Kate B. Reynolds for their review in hope that it would fit in with the organization's healthy lifestyle grant programs.

Update on recreation master plan and site visit to Currituck County YMCA

The Board instructed County staff to seek additional dates for a Currituck County YMCA site visit to accommodate those who are unable to attend on November 17th.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Commissioner Wesson reported that the Bertie-Hertford Disaster Relief Fund approved to disperse \$10,900 to Bertie County. Mr. Wesson suggested that the funds be split in half and given to the two faith based organizations – the United Methodist Men and the Baptist Men. The Board concurred.

Commissioner White reminded the Board that the Perrytown Herring Supper was scheduled for Friday, November 18th. He also requested that the County send a sympathy card to former Register of Deeds Director, Belinda White, for the passing of her mother.

Commissioner Lee stated her concerns for County property and equipment not being properly being cared for, and stated that she wanted to see the County take better care of its material investments.

Vice Chairman Bazemore stated she would share legislative goal updates at the Board's upcoming work session on Monday, November 21.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

The County Manager gave no reports at this time.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

County Attorney Lloyd Smith requested a brief Closed Session.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this session.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to go into closed session to consult with the County Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege that exists between the attorney and this public body, and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(6) to go into closed session to consult with the County Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege that exists between the attorney and this public body. Vice Chairman Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

OPEN SESSION

Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** to return to Open Session. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Commissioner White made a **MOTION** to increase the salary of the Building Codes Inspector to \$41,500 effective November 1, 2016 with the contingency that all Level 2 certifications in each trade are completed within two (2) years. It was noted that this increase was being made to retain the current Building Codes Inspector and to become more competitive with a similar, vacant position in Hertford County. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

RECESS

Chairman Trent recessed the meeting until Monday, November 21st at 10:00 AM in this location.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board