

Windsor, North Carolina
August 1, 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
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Sheriff John Holley
Network Administrator Joe Wilkes
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
EMS Division Chief Crystal Freeman
Deputy Richard Oliver
Deputy Lashonda Bond
Deputy Tonya Todd
Deputy Parrish Weston

Leslie Beachboard of the Bertie Ledger-Advance, and Gene Motley of the Roanoke-News Herald were 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

There were no public comments during this section.

APPOINTMENTS

Sheriff's Office Update, introduction of new staff, grant award from VIDANT and other activities

Sheriff John Holley was present to provide the Board with various updates including the introduction of 4 new deputies including: Richard Oliver, Lashonda Bond, Tonya Todd, and Parrish Weston.

The Sheriff also reported that the official Sheriff's Office move should take place by the end of August or in early September. He also stated that most of the Sheriff's items have been relocated, and that some additional connections and items needed to be in place before the Communications Office would be ready to relocate.

He also announced that the Sheriff's Office had received a \$7,500 grant from Vidant Medical Center to assist in the purchase of AED machines for the Sheriff's Office building, as well as for a mobile unit for a County patrol car.

In addition, Sheriff Holley informed the Board of a training exercise that will be conducted over Bertie County in December 2016. The Air Force provided the County with a letter of notification which was included in the Board's electronic agenda packet.

Training exercises will be conducted by the US Army, EchoCompany, 83rd Civil Affair Battalion from Fort Bragg in early December.

Sheriff Holley announced his plans to establish a substation for his officers in Western Bertie County, and that he is working with the Town of Roxobel to provide this space located in the former Southern Bank building.

Commissioner Wesson inquired about the latest crime stats in Bertie County.

Sheriff Holley responded by stating that Bertie County still has a very low crime rate even with the latest string of homicides in the area, and that the crime solving rate for these cases remains at 96%.

The Board thanked the Sheriff for his diligence and commended him for his service.

Interim School Superintendent, Julius Walker will present the Board of Education's request for a budget amendment and the appropriation of remaining Capital Outlay funds for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016.

Bertie County Public Schools Interim Superintendent, Mr. Julius Walker, was present to request a budget amendment to the current budget, as well as to forward the appropriation of remaining capital outlay funds in order for the school system to cover a roof replacement on Colerain Elementary School.

The total funding requested to be brought over into the current fiscal year is \$97,878.66.

The project was due to be completed before the end of the 2015-2016 fiscal year, but the project was unforeseeably delayed.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to carry forward the \$97,878.66 needed to complete the roof on Colerain Elementary with the preparation of a budget amendment to the School Capital Outlay for FY2016-2017 in the same amount. Vice Chairman Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

USDA Rural Development, Kim Miller, will review ambulance financing options per Board's request

County Manager Sauer reported that Kim Miller of USDA Rural Development was suddenly unable to attend tonight's meeting.

County Manager Sauer reviewed the 2 options outlined for the Board in their electronic agenda packets regarding the replacement of the entire EMS/Non-Emergency Transport fleet over a period of years.

After some discussion, the Board agreed that Option 1 would be most desirable for the County and provide financing for four (4) replacement ambulances.

The loans that would be used from USDA Rural Development would apply 2.75% interest rate for 15 years, with the first payment being delayed until 12 months (1 year) after the loan closure. Items will be funded via debt service.

Vice Chairman Bazemore made the **MOTION** to proceed forward with Option 1 with the understand that a loan in the amount of \$788,000 can be received from the USDA at a 2.75% interest rate with an age of 15 years, and with payments not beginning until 12 months (1 year) after the loan closure. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The cost breakdown is below:

BERTIE COUTNY EMERGENCY SERVICES
OPTION 1

2016	QTY	EQ	COST	TOTAL
	4	E-450	\$ 133,000.00	\$ 532,000.00
	6	MONITORS	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 192,000.00
	4	STRETCHERS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
	4	RADIOS	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 24,000.00
				\$ 788,000.00

ANNUAL
PAYMENT **\$ 64,820.00**

2017	QTY	EQ	COST	TOTAL
	2	E-450	\$ 133,000.00	\$ 266,000.00
	4	TRANSIT	\$ 68,080.00	\$ 272,320.00
	6	STRETCHERS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
	2	RADIOS	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
				\$ 610,320.00

ANNUAL
PAYMENT **\$ 50,179.00**

OPTION 2

2016	QTY	EQ	COST	TOTAL
	4	E-450	\$ 133,000.00	\$ 532,000.00
	2	TRANSIT	\$ 68,080.00	\$ 136,160.00
	6	MONITORS	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 192,000.00
	6	STRETCHERS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
	4	RADIOS	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 24,000.00
				\$ 944,160.00

ANNUAL
PAYMENT **\$ 77,654.00**

2017	QTY	EQ	COST	TOTAL
	2	E-450	\$ 133,000.00	\$ 266,000.00
	2	TRANSIT	\$ 68,080.00	\$ 136,160.00
	4	STRETCHERS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
	2	RADIOS	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
				\$ 454,160.00

ANNUAL
PAYMENT **\$ 37,347.00**

CAMA Grant Application—To receive public comment on the Albemarle Sound Public Waterfront Access and beach path improvements, including the acquisition of land (10.35-acre tract) adjoining the 137-acre tract recently acquired by the County. Ms. Emily Miller of McAdams and Associates has prepared a grant application in the amount of \$250,000 with a 10% (\$25,000) local match requirement.

Chairman Trent called for discussion on item A-4, and he asked the County Manager to bring the Board up to date on the CAMA grant.

County Manager Sauer explained that the primary purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide an opportunity for public comment on the CAMA grant application for the Albemarle Sound Public Waterfront Access and beach path improvements, including the acquisition of land (10.35 acres).

Mr. Sauer reminded the Board that a similar grant application was approved by the Board in May for the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for financial assistance with the 137 acres recently acquired by the County. He also noted that the public support demonstrated for this project was evident by the local school officials who gave a presentation about the "Sound to the Sea" program for elementary students, which could be offered in Bertie County as a result of the Board's decision to buy this property.

County Manager Sauer explained that both PARTF (\$500,000) and CAMA (\$250,000) pre-applications were submitted and approved for land acquisition funds for the 137-acre tract, and that both grants are only eligible for funding prior to the purchase of the property.

Mr. Sauer noted that Bertie County requested and was approved for a waiver of this requirement for the PARTF grant on January 25, 2016 and this waiver states "this action merely acknowledges the need to act quickly to take advantage of the opportunity to acquire the land and prevent the possibility of it being lost or used for another purpose."

The waiver is for a period of 18 months, and the PARTF announcement for a grant fund should be received following the committee's August 25th meeting.

Mr. Sauer explained that timing for submission of the CAMA application was initially in sync with the anticipated closing on the 137-acre tract which was expected in late September.

However, when the opportunity was presented to renegotiate the contract and accelerate the closing for this purchase in late June, adjustments had to be made to the CAMA application.

Mr. Sauer explained that CAMA has no waiver provision, so the County inquired about the availability of grant funds to be applied for the potential purchase of the 10.35-acre tract adjoining the 137 acres now owned by the County to improve the beach path access. Bertie County received this approval to amend its application on July 6th.

He further explained that the CAMA grant is due August 15th, and can only be submitted following a meeting where the Board of Commissioners has documented the opportunity for public comment at regularly scheduled meeting—but it is not a formal public hearing.

The Chairman asked if there were any persons desiring to speak regarding this grant project, and there was no response from the audience at that time.

County Manager Sauer explained that there is one final component for the application, which must be obtained before the application can be submitted on August 15th.

The CAMA application for the land acquisition funding must include a letter of intent to sell the 10.35-acre tract from the property owner.

The County Manager further explained that the strategy for the CAMA application is to seek grant funds, using the three appraisals (values ranging from \$75,000 to \$200,000), so that at the appropriate time, with Board approval—another presentation could be made to the owners of the 10.35-acre tract regarding the inclusion of this land for the project, which now comprises one-half of the beach path access, and is split down the middle between the two properties.

Mr. Sauer had two color photos projected on the wall, one depicting the property boundary and one with a view looking down the beach path toward the water with the Sound bridge in the background. He explained that acquiring this smaller tract is critical to development of the site because it contains one-half of the beach access path.

There was discussion among the Commissioners regarding the ability to successfully purchase the 10.35-acre tract, and the limited availability of grant funds for this effort. Mr. Sauer also noted that CAMA will likely not provide grant funding beyond the highest appraisal, or \$200,000.

County Manager Sauer requested permission to address the governing body in his role as a private citizen in order to comment on this grant application and the importance of this project.

Mr. Sauer reminded the Board of the enthusiasm that was generated when the Commissioners announced their decision to purchase the initial 137 acres of land on the Albemarle Sound. He spoke of this historic step to break down barriers in order to provide public access to these recreational waters. He noted that the Board's efforts are creating a legacy for future generations and building for a better future for our children and grandchildren.

Specifically, Mr. Sauer noted that there are barriers for persons of limited resources, and people of color for access to public waters for recreation in this County. And he noted two recent examples where children attending a birthday party were turned away from a local community beach, and where a local business owner made very disparaging remarks about efforts to provide public access to water without regard to race.

Mr. Sauer explained that with the ten days remaining for submission of the CAMA grant, there may be an opportunity to approach the property owner requesting a letter of intent to sell the land

to the County. He stated that hopefully, the property owners will share the enthusiasm and join with the County to create a long lasting legacy for Bertie County residents and this region.

Chairman Trent noted that the county manager's recommendation is to approve authorization for submittal of the grant application to the NC Coastal Management Program, subject to the securing of a letter of intent from the sellers—for Bertie County's Public Beach and Public Water Access program final application. Furthermore, the Board of Commissioners is authorizing its agent to seek the purchase of 10.35 acres to expand the beach path access for the adjoining 137 acres recently acquired by the County. Approval of this motion also allows the Chairman and the County Manager to execute all related documents to complete this grant application which is due August 15th, subject to the final condition being obtained prior to submission.

Commissioner White made a **MOTION** to accept the County Manager's recommendation. Vice Chairman Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Proposal for Comprehensive Countywide Recreation Master Plan for Bertie County to include in NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund 2017 grant application for site development at the Albemarle Sound Waterfront Recreation Area—Presented by Paige Viren, Associate Professor of Recreation & Leisure Studies at East Carolina University and J. David Hodges, Good Consulting Services, LLC.

Chairman Trent then asked Mr. Sauer to introduce the guests from East Carolina University regarding the proposal for development of the Comprehensive Countywide Recreation Master Plan for Bertie County's preparation for the next cycle of NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant applications.

Mr. Sauer introduced Mr. David Hodges, who has assisted communities assisted communities in northeastern North Carolina during a 35-year career, with extensive work in Martin County and the Town of Windsor.

Mr. Hodges spent his career with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service as the District Conservationist for Dare and Tyrrell counties and the Mideast Resources Development Council.

He also introduced Assistant Professor Paige Viren who has also assisted various communities in North Carolina with attracting economic development initiatives. This work has earned her the 2016 ECU Scholarship of Engagement Award. Viren's scholarship focus is on the development of sustainable community-based tourism.

Mr. Hodges and Dr. Viren explained that, it has been their observation that in many cases a comprehensive recreation master plan is requested simply as a means of checking a task off of a PARTF grant application. Instead of guiding priorities, the plan sits on a shelf collecting dust.

She stated that their goal is to develop a plan that provides a framework to identify goals and priorities for all areas of Bertie County. They have also been partnering on projects in eastern North Carolina since 2008 and building relationships with key stakeholders in building sustainable community based recreation and tourism in rural communities.

Dr. Viren summarized their presentation by noting that they believe that Bertie County's efforts in securing this land on the Albemarle Sound will set the "gold standard" for park development in eastern North Carolina. Commissioner Wesson noted that there may be a role for young people in the high school's cadet program to play a role in this facility once it is open to the public.

County Manager Sauer explained that they are prepared to start work immediately, to assemble a local task force and to take advantage of the fall semester to lead Bertie County through a series of public meetings and community discussions in order to identify the recreational needs of the entire County as suggested by County residents. And he noted that a copy of their proposal is enclosed which is recommended for the Boards approval.

Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the proposal for the countywide recreation master plan by ECU. Commissioner Wesson **SECONED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The proposal is below:

Comprehensive Systemwide Plan for Bertie County Parks and Recreation

Dates of Project: August 2016 - January 2017

Project Deliverables and Budget Narrative

A. Salary

Compensation for Project Deliverables -

Compile a comprehensive long-term planning document to support NCPARTF application that addresses the following: 1) a description of Bertie County's residents and their preferences for recreational activities and facilities, 2) evaluate existing recreational facilities to determine if Bertie County's current and future recreational needs are being met, 3) provide an estimate of recreational land to be acquired and the planned recreational facilities to be developed, 4) provide a detailed description documenting the Bertie Board of County Commissioners' public involvement during this planning process.

= \$24,512

Graduate Student - TBD

Assist with survey preparation, data entry, data cleaning, and analyzing survey results and report writing. 10 hours per week for one semester/6 months = \$2,400.00

Part-time Undergraduate Student – TBD

Assist with keying and questionnaire assistance. 250 hours @ \$8.00 - \$2,000.00

B. Travel

Travel will involve on-site visits to Bertie County and its surrounding communities as deemed necessary to complete an inventory of existing and potential recreation/tourism assets in the county, conduct community meetings to gather public input, and present project deliverables and reports to the board of commissions and recreation advisory board and community stakeholders. = \$2,800.00

C. Other

Consultant – Outside services rendered to provide supporting Plan documents, ex. on-site visits necessary to complete any GIS and associated mapping, engineering support, and similar professional services. = \$3,000.00

Supplies and Materials – Miscellaneous provisions necessary to encourage an inclusive public engagement process through community-wide public input meetings, applicable focus group meetings, distribution of the Parks and Recreation Needs Citizen Survey, and final compilation and printing of Plan. = \$2,400.00

Total: \$37,112.00

As submitted by:

Dr. Paige P. Viren, East Carolina University

Mr. J. David Hodges, Jr., Good Consulting Services, LLC

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no need Board Appointments.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 7-5-16, Work Session 7-14-16, Closed Session 7-14-16
2. **Fees Report** – Register of Deeds – July 2016
3. **Release Journal** – Tax Department – June 2016
4. **Resolution** – 145th anniversary of Sandy Branch Missionary Baptist Church

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Water District III USDA Rural Development – review and approve NC Local Government Commission application and the Bond Order Resolution and related documents prepared by Bond Counsel in consultation with the County Attorney.

Consider for approval the following items:

- a) Revised project cost and funding analysis**
- b) Supplement to the Preliminary Engineering report**
- c) Amended engineering agreement**
- d) Final capital budget for submission to the LGC**
- e) Bond Resolution**

The Board reviewed the NC Local Government Commission application and the Bond Order Resolution, and related documents, prepared by Bond Counsel in consultation with the County Attorney. The Board also discussed approval of the revised scope of work, and an engineering contract amendment for additional booster pump stations, and other related costs on Woodard Road.

County Manager Sauer reported that USDA Rural Development (Raleigh Office) is coordinating its review of the final project financing presentation to the NC Local Government Commission with special attention to preserving the \$1,074,000 grant funding.

Mr. Sauer also stated that the USDA requires that local funds are expended first as the project begins (design, permits, etc.) and that figure is \$264,000. The interim financing (Bond Anticipation Notes) carry the bulk of the project during construction and the loan amount is \$1,717,000. Both of those figures will remain unchanged. Once the loan funds are expended, USDA then allows for the expenditure of grant dollars.

As the Board remembered, the low bid was \$370,957 less than the next highest bidder.

Mr. Sauer reported that USDA had advised the County to revise its scope of work or the County risks losing these grant dollars from the original \$1,074,000 which would be sacrificed and sent back to the federal government.

The State Engineer for USDA has encouraged the County to improve the connection and flow of water between District III and District III to address the challenge of meeting long term water quality requirements for AVOCA's production expansion. Two key changes are proposed: a) increasing the water line size from 6" to 8" on Woodard Road (\$70,590) and b) construction of a 250 gpm booster station (\$320,000) plus soft costs for engineering of \$76,000 which is split \$30,000 for design and \$46,000 for construction inspection.

County Manager Sauer noted that the State Engineer's review will occur next week and the Board's approval will be contingent upon USDA Rural Development's concurrence, therefore I am recommending that the Board grant approval for these documents as presented today, and

allow necessary modifications based on the State Engineer's comments, as long as no additional funds are required.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** approve all of the listed items as requested:

- 1) Resolution providing for application to the Local Government Commission for approval of water system revenue bonds: requesting Local Government Commission Approval of such water system revenue bonds; and certain related matters and findings—documents attached are prepared by bond counsel.
- 2) Revised project cost and funding analysis for Bertie County Water District III
- 3) Supplement to the Preliminary Engineering Report
- 4) Amended Engineering agreement (subject to USDA concurrence)
- 5) Final Capital Budget for Water District III water system improvements
- 6) Direct staff to proceed with preparation of all documents necessary to facilitate the Board Order for consideration at a later date by the governing body.

. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Review of pending items

There were no needed items to address at this time.

Confirmation of Board meeting schedule for August and September

After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to postpone their regularly scheduled meeting for Monday, August 15 to Monday, August 22nd. The meeting will still be held at 7:00PM at the Aulander Community Building in the Town of Aulander.

No schedule changes were made to the September meeting schedule.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Commissioner White passed out a copy of an article from The News & Observer about the new archeological efforts at the Lost Colony site in Bertie County. He also alerted the Board to an article in FYI magazine about the “tall glass of water” project. Lastly, he thanked the Board for its recent decision to increase funding to the 12 County volunteer fire departments.

Commissioner Lee reported that the organization, Habitat for Humanity, was back to square one in locating an eligible family to receive a Habitat for Humanity home. Commissioner Lee encouraged citizens to contact her if they knew of any families in serious need. She also briefly updated the Board regarding the Charters of Freedom monument. A committee is now in place, but new members are welcome.

Commissioner Wesson provided new labor market information for Bertie County, and reported that Bertie County’s unemployment rate was 6.2%. He also thanked Vidant-Bertie Hospital for the \$1 million grant received to assist County organizations with health related initiatives.

Vice Chairman Bazemore announced that Dr. Dexter Peele was currently accepting donations to a scholarship program through Edgecombe Community College. This scholarship assisted him during his college career. She also noted the recent announcement of the CSX rail project in Edgecombe County and possible job opportunities for Bertie residents.

Chairman Trent reported that the Youth Development Award was presented to Kent Bazemore at the Bertie High School earlier today. The award was given in appreciation for his continued support for the basketball camp and other programs to assist our youth.

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer gave no remarks at this time.

COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORTS

County Attorney, Lloyd Smith, requested direction from the Board regarding a drafted correspondence to the community. The Board discussed and later decided that the letter would not be sent at this time, but that it could be sent at a later date, if needed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this section.

RECESS

Chairman Trent recessed the meeting until 6:00PM where the Board plans to meet at the Inn at Grey's Landing in Windsor to discuss the results of the hotel feasibility study.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board