

Windsor, North Carolina
March 6, 2017
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
Assistant/County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Finance Officer William Roberson
Network Administrator Joe Wilkes
Sheriff John Holley
Chief Deputy Kenneth "Kenny" Perry
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs

Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Leslie Beachboard of the Bertie-Ledger Advance 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 White led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments during this section.

APPOINTMENTS

“Public Safety Day” presentation by Law Enforcement CADET Program Instructor, Stephanie Cottle

Stephanie Cottle, Advisor to the Law Enforcement CADET Program at Bertie STEM High School was present to introduce some of her students that are current CADET program participants including: Aniya Williams, Eboney Slade, and Germika Parker.

Gwen Norville of the NC Department of Public Safety, Sheriff John Holley, and Law Enforcement CADET Program Instructor, Karen Bell of RCCC were present to show their support for the program, and provide encouragement to students and the public to continue to support the program that also provides students with college credits.

The cadets briefly discussed the upcoming Public Safety Day event that will take place on May 4th from 3:30 – 7:00 PM at Bertie High School.

The goal of the event is about strengthening the relationship between citizens and law enforcement officials, and will features booths, face painting, drone flying lessons, and other activities for the public to enjoy.

Members of the Bertie County Sheriff’s Office, NC State Highway Patrol, NC Department of Public Safety, Bertie County Corrections, and other organizations will participate in the event.

The event will be advertised in local media as well as through various school visits between April 24th and 28th where Bertie DPS Cadet Pioneers will discuss the event with students and staff.

The Board thanked the cadets for their presentation, and encouraged them to reach out to the Board, if needed.

Presentation of 2017 American Red Cross Month resolution by Executive Director of the Northeast NC Region, Cally Edwards

Cally Edwards, the Northeast NC Region Executive Director of the American Red Cross was present to announce that the organization is celebrating 100 years in North Carolina in 2017.

She also discussed the American Red Cross' response to the recent Tropical Storm Julia and Hurricane Matthew. She wanted to remind the public that the Red Cross is not just about "blood and floods," and also about disaster recovery, homes damaged by fire, support for families who have been displaced from their homes for any reason, etc.

Lastly, she asked if the Board would approve the proclamation in the Board's electronic agenda packet that proclaims March 2017 as American Red Cross Month.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the proclamation. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2017 Relay for Life presentation by Jo Ann Jordan

Jo Ann Jordan of Bertie County's Relay for Life was present to announce the date of May 19 as this year's Relay for Life event date from 6:00 PM – Midnight.

Ms. Jordan also presented two additional awards to the Board. One award just received was the "Impact Award" which was presented to the citizens of Bertie County.

Additionally, Bertie County received an award for being in the Top 10 in the nation for Relay for Life fundraising.

Lastly, Ms. Jordan presented a resolution proclaiming the above date of May 19, 2017 as "Relay for Life Day" in Bertie County.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the resolution. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Presentation of audit report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016 by Jeff Best of Carr, Riggs, & Ingram

Jeff Best of Carr, Riggs, and Ingram was present to distribute and discuss the County's latest audit for fiscal year ended June 30, 2016.

Upon reviewing the "Management's Analysis" on pages 4-23, County Manager Sauer noted some historical information especially as it relates to EMS, Non-Emergency Transport, as well as the excess water loss that was discovered in recent years that required the Board's immediate attention at that time. This year's audit is the first to show the effect of those decisions on the County's financial health.

Mr. Best continued to discuss each section, and the Commissioners asked questions as necessary.

County Manager Sauer noted that the County's expected use of appropriated fund balance was lower than originally budgeted.

Mr. Sauer also noted some highlights on page 6 for local media to show the four (4) largest capital projects that required budgeted funds from the County's fund balance. The projects included renovations to the exterior and interior of the County courthouse, Bertie-Martin Jail improvements, and replacement of the Administration Building HVAC system.

Additionally, Mr. Sauer noted that on page 108, there is some detail about Water District II with a repayment of prior year costs of \$855,000 back to the General Fund.

County Attorney, Lloyd Smith, inquired about three deficiencies found throughout the audit process. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Best to address those now for the record to ensure that County management has taken appropriate action.

Mr. Best stated that the County sales tax was a factor, as well as the County's travel policy, and payroll liabilities which he attributed to a probable misunderstanding.

The Board commended the County Manager, Finance Officer, and Auditor Jeff Best for their dedication to the audit process each year.

After some additional discussion, Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to re-engage with Carr, Riggs, & Ingram for the next audit for FY 2017-2018, to approve the amended audit contract, as well as to submit the current audit to the Local Government Commission. Chairman Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

As a reminder, all recent County audits are available on the County's website which is <https://co.bertie.nc.us>.

Addressing of complaints received for convenience sites by Josephine Aiken, and Joe Dehner of Republic Services

Josephine Aiken and Joe Dehner of Republic Services were present to respond to various complaints that have been received from citizens regarding the County's solid waste convenience sites.

Mr. Dehner discussed the latest management changes that have taken effect in recent weeks which could be attributed to the delay in service to convenience sites.

Additionally, Mr. Dehner and Ms. Aiken assured the Board that they are working as diligently as possible to fill the vacant management positions, and they believed that with new processes that have already been put in place on the dispatch level that positive changes were on the way.

In the meantime, Mr. Dehner encouraged the Board to reach out to him as often as possible when they receive calls about the convenience sites not being emptied as promptly as needed.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no Board Appointments.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 2-20-17, Work Session 2-20-17, Closed Session 2-20-17
2. **Fees Report** – Register of Deeds – February 2017
4. **Conditional bid acceptance** – 603 Holley Avenue in Windsor, pending 10-day advertisement period for upset bids
5. **Bid acceptance** – 813 Meadow Road in Colerain

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Discuss approval of three (3) ordinances

a. Smoking Policy

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the Smoking Policy ordinance as presented. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

b. Dangerous Weapons on County property

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the Dangerous Weapons on County property ordinance as drafted. Vice Chairman Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

c. Private Roads

After a lengthy discussion, the Board decided to table this matter until letters can be drafted and sent to homeowners that would be impacted by this ordinance. The Board also asked that the County Attorney provide an additional draft of this ordinance to further specify its terms.

The Board agreed that an ordinance was needed, but that they didn't feel this version of the ordinance was ready for adoption.

The Board will discuss this matter at an upcoming Work Session on Monday, March 13th.

**Commissioners present reports from 2017 NACo Legislative Conference in
Washington, D.C. – Feb. 25th-March 1st**

Chairman Trent announced that Commissioners had very productive meetings with Congressman Butterfield, Senator Burr, and Senator Tillis in Washington, D.C. during the 2017 NACo Legislative Conference about grant funds that could be available to Bertie County for a feasibility study following the flooding events from Hurricane Matthew.

Vice Chairman Bazemore reported that North Carolina had the strongest participation at the conference with over 160 representatives present from the state. There were 1700 County representatives from various areas all over the Country. She distributed a flyer regarding the NCACC's Advocacy Goals that were decided collaboratively earlier this year.

Commissioner Lee stated that the 2017 NACo Legislative Conference was a great event, and that it provided very important opportunities for Commissioners to meet and discuss important issues with their federal legislators. She also discussed the Steering Committees she currently serves on which address Veterans and Public Safety.

Commissioner Wesson thanked the citizens of Bertie County for allowing the Board to attend this conference, and that it is always extremely informative. He also noted that during his Resilient Counties Panel meeting, Bertie County received a large acknowledgement from Michael Sprayberry, Director of the NC Division of Emergency Management regarding the County's adoption of the EMS system back in 2013. Bertie County was noted as a trailblazer for that endeavor, and that it serves as an example of how EMS should be run in times of crisis.

Preliminary FY 2017-2018 Budget Calendar

County Manager Sauer reported that Budget Kick Off is officially underway, and that as of March 1, when he met with Department Heads. Departmental budgets are due at the end of March. The Public Hearing to discuss the FY2017-2018 budget was also set for June 12th at 7:00 PM.

Additionally, he mentioned that the School System's audit was received just over a week ago, and that the Chair and Vice Chair just completed a meeting with Dr. Steve Hill, Bertie County Public Schools Superintendent which was prior to today's meeting.

The Board of Education Chair and Vice Chair outlined their fiscal priorities for the upcoming year, and County Manager Sauer noted that the School System has been very "forthcoming," and "forthright with the numbers," and about their "significant challenges ahead."

He reported that members from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the NC Local Government Commission have been invited to meet with the Board on March 20th to discuss these issues, and how the County may or may not be able to assist.

Mr. Sauer also discussed having a Work Session on Monday, March 13th to further discuss these issues as well prior to the Joint Meeting on March 20th.

Lastly, County Manager Sauer requested a brief Closed Session before the end of this meeting.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Commissioner Lee reported that Victor Locklear of Bertie Corrections was looking to use the Bertie County Recreation baseball fields for a softball, “combined campaign” fundraiser. He had requested that the Board agree to waive the rental fee for the fields.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to waive the rental fee as requested by Mr. Locklear. Chairman Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Commissioner White mentioned that he had met with some of the pioneer, founding members of Bertie Rescue. He also reported that there would be a planning meeting tomorrow, March 7th, at 6:00 PM in the Commissioners Room to discuss an event for the founding members.

Vice Chairman Bazemore suggested that the County consider some kind of satellite offices or locations for a “Meals on Wheels” program in some of the underserved towns within the County. She stated that after contacting “Meals on Wheels,” she discovered that the program cannot deliver meals to these areas due to distance.

County Manager Sauer mentioned a report was forthcoming from Council on Aging Director, Venita Thompson, about the congregate meals program, and funding still available to assist with a meals program.

Commissioner Wesson announced that the prison would be hosting a volunteer banquet on April 6th from 6:30 – 8:30 PM.

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 section.

CLOSED SESSION

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

RECESS

Chairman Trent **RECESSED** this meeting until Monday, March 13th at 11:00 AM in the same location. The Board will meet for a Work Session.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board