

Windsor, North Carolina
April 17, 2017
Regular Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting inside the Commissioners Room located 848 Perrytown Road. 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
Finance Officer William Roberson
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
HR & Risk Management Director Carolyn Fornes
Sandra Callis IMC Supervisor II
Angie Cobb IMC II
Judy White IMC II
Shielda Forrest IMC II
Alycia Saulsbury IMC II
Lee Lawrence IMC II
Krista Jernigan IMC II
Ruth Davidson IMC III
Stefanie Bell SW II

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

Vice Chairman Bazemore led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chief Rodney “Bud” Lee thanked the Commissioners for holding their meeting Perrytown tonight as well as announced the Perrytown 4th of July Celebration and raffle sale. Raffle tickets are \$2 for 1 ticket, and \$6 for 10 tickets.

APPOINTMENTS

Presentation of Ombudsmen Annual Report by Laura Jett of the Mid-East Commission Area Agency on Aging

Laura Jett of the Mid-East Commission Area Agency on Aging was present to introduce herself, as well as present her annual report for Bertie County.

She briefly discussed a few of the most received concerns about the County’s family, nursing, and assisted living homes which included rights of residents, and their ability to check out of a facility, as well as the lack of response to call bells within the facilities.

Ms. Jett also discussed her role in mediating any concerns between patients, their families, and the care home.

In addition, she thanked the Board for promptly appointing members to the Nursing Home/Adult Care CAC Board when needed, and stated that once these members are trained, they assist in these care home visits.

She emphasized that members of this board cannot be related to any patients or staff inside the care homes, and that she would provide detailed reports to the County regarding the overall performance of each facility.

The Board also received information from Ms. Jett regarding the Meals on Wheels program not being up “on the chopping block” at this time for a reduction in funding.

Programmatic update presentation by CADA Executive Director, Sallie Surface

CADA Executive Director, Sallie Surface, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak tonight. She also introduced acting NC Works Center Manager, Olivia Taylor, and discussed various concerns.

Ms. Surface first reported that funding is expected to be cut from the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) which is a program designed to assist low-income individuals in achieving self-sufficiency. The program assists with weatherization needs such as wheelchair ramps, and home repairs, and it also is responsible for the formation of CADA's Board of Directors.

The County appoints members to the CADA Board of Directors every two years.

Ms. Surface also briefly discussed the individual poverty statistics for Bertie County, and the amount of funding gradually being cut beginning in 2014.

The Board also requested that Ms. Surface notify them in advance of new Center Managers at the Bertie Office so that they may continue to work appropriately with this individual for job fairs.

Commissioner Lee inquired about the process of the Section 8 program that is currently funded through the US Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Ms. Surface replied that the Section 8 program is a program which provide rent vouchers for low-income citizens who are not employed, or who are under employed, and the waiting list for the program is currently closed.

The program also promotes home ownership opportunities via an evening class that is offered through CADA.

Ms. Surface mentioned that as participants find adequate employment, purchase their home, pass away, or move into assisted living homes, the waiting list is then opened to allow others to apply.

HUD also reports to CADA of anyone who no longer qualifies for this rent voucher via a letter so that CADA is always aware of who remains eligible for the assistance.

EMS Update by Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, discussed the latest developments with FEMA and the project worksheets that have just been approved including one for a temporary EMS Station located on County Farm Road in Windsor.

In addition, FEMA was currently reviewing project worksheets for a new Lawrence Memorial Library, as well as a new Cooperative Extension building.

Also, Mr. Cooper thanked the Board for its commitment to replacing several of the County's aged fleet of emergency vehicles. Four new ambulances were delivered to the County recently, and Mr. Cooper reported that all of them are currently in service.

The old ambulance vehicles required \$60-65,000 in maintenance over a 1 year time span.

In another update regarding the EMS vehicle fleet, Mr. Cooper reported that he and Chief Deputy, Kenny Perry, were scheduled to take a trip to see a potential mobile crisis response unit that would belong to both EMS and the Sheriff's Office.

The unit would be used as a command center during storms, at large EMS calls, or other emergency events as needed for staff. When not in use, the unit would be in storage at the EMS warehouse.

Mr. Cooper also inquired if the 3 old ambulance vehicles that are now out of service could be donated to a non-profit organization, or if they should be saved for the next County surplus auction.

The Board had no issue with the ambulances being donated due to their advanced age and mileage, but encouraged Mr. Cooper to do his research on the non-profit before moving forward.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Voluntary Agricultural District Board

Commissioner White made a **MOTION** to reappoint Jimmy Mizelle, Harold Lawrence, Joseph Leggett, and Sid Copeland to the Voluntary Agricultural District Board for an additional 3-year term. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Advertisement - Current/Upcoming Board Vacancies – April 2017

The Board reviewed the current/upcoming Board vacancy advertisement that will run four times in the next month inside the Bertie-Ledger Advance.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 4-3-17, Work Session 4-3-17, Closed Session 4-3-17
2. **Tax Release Journal** – March 2017

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Summary of Board Sponsorships & Donations

County Manager Sauer informed the Board that there was a summary sheet of sponsorships & donations available for their review, as well as all of the special appropriations budget requests that have been submitted for the upcoming budget year.

He also reminded the Board to recess tonight's meeting until April 24th at 10:00 AM in Windsor inside the Commissioners Room.

Example Plaque – newly renovated County buildings

The Board briefly reviewed the example plaque, and did not believe this matter was urgent at this time, but they suggested that Sheriff John Holley be added to cover all Bertie County elected officials.

DSS Concerns – Petition

Each member present from Bertie County DSS briefly discussed their concerns with the Commissioners about the future of retiree healthcare benefits.

Chairman Trent assured those present that the County had only made one decision regarding this issue, and that was the elimination of retiree health insurance benefits for new employees hired after July 1, 2016.

Any other circulated information was simply “proposed” and no other changes have been made since the decision noted above.

County Manager Sauer also provided brief remarks about how well the County was able to operate during the latest flooding events especially as it relates to pay checks and health insurance benefits not lapsing during very uncertain times for some Bertie citizens. He also briefly discussed the various projects that had to be placed on hold due to the 2 flooding events, and that this recovery is not expected to be completed from another couple of years.

The Board thanked each DSS employee for bringing their concerns to tonight’s meeting, and expressed their appreciation for the work that they do every day.

Library temporary relocation – Update

County Manager Sauer informed the Board that Assistant County Attorney, Jonathan Huddleston, had completed his review of the proposed library temporary relocation lease to the Food Lion Shopping Center in Windsor.

The lease will be presented at an upcoming meeting for Board approval.

Budget review schedule -- Update

The Board will be meeting for a preliminary budget work session on Monday, April 24th at 10:00 AM inside the Commissioners Room at 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC.

The Board will also meet as the Board of Equalization and Review.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORTS

Commissioner Wesson announced that on Thursday, May 4th is Public Safety Day which will be hosted by the CADETs from the Basic Law Enforcement class at Bertie High School. The event will begin at 3:30 PM. Additionally, he discussed his latest meetings with the Tuscarora Tribe Ancestors who are looking to secure building permits for a Trading Post in the Indian Woods area. Also, on April 20th, he will be sworn in as the Treasurer of Mid-East Commission. Lastly, he announced that on Thursday, April 25th, he would be attending a meeting with NCSECU to further discuss the middle-income housing initiative for Bertie County.

Vice Chairman Bazemore discussed the “alarming things” she heard during G.K. Butterfield’s visit to Greenville which include the federal debt ceiling due to be reach in September, as well as possible cuts to various programs like Medicare/Medicaid, as well as to increased spending for military and a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

Commissioner Lee reported that ground has officially been broken for the Charters of Freedom monument at the Bertie Courthouse. In addition, she invited all of those present to attend a celebration being hosted by Habitat for Humanity. A local Bertie citizen received a brand-new home from the organization, and there will be a celebration on Friday, April 21st at noon at 803 S. King Street, Windsor.

Commissioner White encouraged all citizens to consider visiting the many events going on inside the County coming up including Lost Colony Day on April 22nd and the Town of Powellsville Awareness Day on Saturday, May 6th.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

The County Manager gave no reports at this time.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

The County Attorney gave no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this session.

RECESS

Chairman Trent **RECESSED** the meeting until Monday, April 24th at 10:00 AM inside the Commissioners Room in Windsor.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board