

Windsor, North Carolina
January 22, 2018
REGULAR MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regular meeting today inside the Commissioners Room, 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 Tinkham
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Finance Officer William Roberson
Sheriff John Holley
Chief Deputy Kenny Perry
Detective Ronald Rascoe
Patrol Deputy Tykelli Perry
Patrol Deputy Malcolm Cherry
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Register of Deeds Annie Wilson
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
EMS Division Chief Crystal Freeman
Compliance Officer Stephanie Wiggins
Clerk of Court Vasti F. James

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bazemore called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Bazemore led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several members of the Bertie County Board of Education were present to introduce the newly sworn in Superintendent, Dr. Catherine Edmonds. The members present from the Board of Education included Chair, Bobby Oceana, Vice Chair Barry McGlone, Emma Johnson, and JoAnn “JoJo” Davis Johnson.

Dr. Edmonds introduced herself to the Commissioners, and stated that she was excited to begin work on February 1st.

Chair Bazemore welcomed Dr. Edmonds, and thanked her for choosing Bertie County.

Vernon Lee of Colerain was present to express his concerns about an NC Wildlife Commission study that will most likely lead to proposed regulations allowing Sunday hunting for migratory birds. Mr. Lee asked that the Board of Commissioners express their opposition to any change in the regulations that would allow Sunday hunting of migratory birds. The study is going to be presented to the state legislature no later than March 1st.

Michael Freeman of Merry Hill inquired if special assistance was available for low income citizens during the latest cold weather snaps and increased water bill costs associated with burst pipes. County Manager Sauer responded that the County has a “leak policy” in place covering winter weather causing pipes to burst or other water pipe failures. Each customer is given a reduction in their water bill if pipes do burst and paperwork can be submitted to verify the water loss. This policy can be put into effect one time, per year, per customer.

Commissioner Wesson discussed his experience with this policy as it related to a burst pipe at his church, and Commissioner Lee also mentioned that emergency heating funds were available during certain times of the year to help citizens with those costs as well.

APPOINTMENTS

Presentation by Anna Phipps of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald – 2018 Crossroads Magazine

Anna Phipps of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald was present to gauge the Board's interest in running another advertisement in the 2018 Crossroads Magazine. The Board agreed to purchase page 3 last year, and Ms. Phipps offered the same ad position at the same price as last year.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the same ad position for the same price as offered last year (\$1,515). Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Introduction of new deputies by Sheriff John Holley

Sheriff John Holley and Chief Deputy, Kenny Perry, were present to introduce three new members of the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Holley introduced Detective Ronald Rascoe, Patrol Deputy Malcom Cherry, and Patrol Deputy Tykelli Perry.

Additionally, the Sheriff briefly updated the Board on various projects including: satellite patrol offices within the County, remote tracking computer monitoring in deputy vehicles, and discussed the recent success of hiring new deputies since the salary increase, and sign on bonus policy was enacted.

Commissioner Trent and Vice Chair Wesson also inquired about an update on the Bertie County Drug Task Force. The Sheriff stated that the task force has done very well since it was created.

Lastly, Chief Deputy Perry discussed the County's vehicle leasing program that was enacted during the last budget year. Mr. Perry reported that approximately 13 vehicles had been leased, 5 of which were currently on the road, and the remaining vehicles were due to the County soon and once appropriately marked would be in service as well.

Presentation of contract amendment and Audit Report (if available) ended June 30, 2017

Jeff Best, formerly of Carr, Riggs, and Ingram, came before the Board requesting a contract amendment reflecting the name of his own company, Jeff Best, CPA. No other changes were made to the contract, and the contract would expire on January 31, 2018.

County Manager Sauer mentioned that Mr. Best had been working closely with the County in completing the audit ended June 30, 2017 and that it had been through several drafts thus far.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the contract amendment reflecting the business name of Jeff Best, CPA effective until January 31, 2018. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Copy of Poverty Commission Advertisement – 12/27/17

The Board briefly reviewed the Poverty Commission advertisement that ran just after Christmas. There was no action needed on this item, but Vice Chair Wesson reiterated that any citizens with an interest in any board could “throw their name in the hat,” at any time.

Chair Bazemore encouraged those interested to visit the County website for an application or contact Clerk to the Board, Sarah Tinkham with any questions on how to apply, available vacancies, etc.

The County Manager reminded the Board of the schedule change for the launch date of the Poverty Commission is now scheduled for Monday, April 16, 2018.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 12-18-17
2. **Fees Report** – December 2017
3. **Resolution** – Water District II Asset Inventory Grant Acceptance Resolution in the amount of \$84,000 from the NC Department of Environmental Quality and approval of project ordinance

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the items listed above (#1-3). Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

4. **Grant Funding & Budget Amendment** – approval of \$13,798 grant funding and budget amendment for the Bertie County Soil and Water District to remove debris from Hurricane Matthew in an area of need for clearing and snagging on the upper Salmon Creek, approximately 1.9 miles

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the item above (#4). Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

5. **Tax Release Journal** – December 2017

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the item above (#5). Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

6. **Land Acquisition Transaction** – Approval to complete land acquisition transaction for Spruill tract (6.33 acres) for the library and cooperative extension facility which is currently under option in the amount of \$60,000

Item#6 above was **DEFERRED** until the Board confers in Closed Session.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Teacher Housing Initiative Memorandum of Understanding for all cooperating partners

County Manager Sauer discussed that the Memorandum of Understanding found in their agenda packets was in draft form only, and input was needed from the Board, and from other stakeholders before it should be considered for approval.

Commissioner Wesson commended County Manager Sauer on a “great job capturing important elements” and that this Memorandum of Understanding is a “vital piece of th[e] project.”

Chair Bazemore asked the Board the board hold off on approving this item to allow adequate time for the Board of Education and other partners to review it and provide their feedback.

Poverty Commission – review internship proposed in cooperation with the NCACC and VISTA

County Manager Sauer summarized that the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) could provide up to \$25,000 toward the internship compensation package, and with the VISTA program support available, there will be adequate funds to meet the \$35,000 figure that the County discussed with Ms. Walker in December.

If the Board approved the internship, a start date of February 26, 2018 would be put into place for a 12-month period.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the internship with a term of 12-months, start date of February 26, 2018, and for the individual listed in the Board’s agenda packet. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Review and consider for approval:
Resolution in opposition of newly proposed hunting regulations for white tailed deer season
Resolution in opposition of the K-3 class size reduction legislation
Resolution extending property tax deadline to January 12, 2018
Resolution in opposition of newly proposed Sunday hunting regulations for migratory birds

The three resolutions were read into the record and are shown below.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the resolution in opposition of newly proposed hunting regulations for white tailed deer season. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.



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RONALD WESSON, Vice Chairman
STEWART WHITE
TAMMY A. LEE
JOHN TRENT

**RESOLUTION
OPPOSING PROPOSED RULE AMENDMENTS TO 15A NCAC 10B .0203 SHORTENING
THE SEASON FOR WHITE TAILED DEER HUNTING**

WHEREAS, the lands of northeastern North Carolina, and more specifically, Bertie County are desirable for the hunting of white tailed deer.

WHEREAS, the hunting of white tailed deer is a treasured part of the life, culture, and heritage of this area.

WHEREAS, the hunting of white tailed deer is vital to the local economy promoting tourism.

WHEREAS, Bertie County has a population of 18,967 people and is ranked in the top four of the most economically distressed counties in the state since 2015, more specifically¹:

- 2015- #1
- 2016- #2
- 2017- #3
- 2018- #4

WHEREAS, according to the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, the following statistics apply for 2011 to the State of North Carolina:

1. There are 335,000 resident and non-resident hunters
2. These hunters hunted a total of 7,608,000 days
3. Total expenditures related to hunting of \$525,281,000
 - a. Trip related expenditures for hunting of \$224,550,000
 - b. Equipment and other expenditures for hunting of \$300,726,000
4. Average cost per hunter \$1,507.00

WHEREAS, the most recent economic statistics available to the County are those show above from 2011, but all empirical data indicates that the amount spent by hunters in Bertie County has increased since 2011.

WHEREAS, many landowners and hunters in Northeastern North Carolina, and specifically Bertie County, lease land for the sole purpose of White-Tailed deer hunting, or rent land for the purpose of guiding tourists/hunters in pursuit of white tailed deer.

WHEREAS, White-Tailed deer hunting generates income in Northeastern North Carolina including Bertie County, for an already economically stressed population and community.

¹ The Rankings range from 1 to 100 with 1 being the most economically distressed.

WHEREAS, the proposed rule changes to the current White-Tailed deer hunting regulations would decrease the number of days for black powder hunting during the 2018-2019 season by a minimum seven (7) days.

WHEREAS, the proposed rule changes to the current White-Tailed deer hunting regulations would decrease the number of days of regular gun season by nine (9) days in 2018-2019 season.

WHEREAS, it is suggested by the proposed rule changes that there will be no local economic costs as a result of the rule changes which is contrary to the economic reality to places such as Bertie County, North Carolina.

WHEREAS, the reduction in the number of legal days for White-Tailed deer hunting would have a significant impact on the local economy of Northeastern North Carolina specifically including Bertie County.

WHEREAS, the proposed rule changes do not account for the economic loss to the local economy, more specifically, the loss in income brought about by a reduction of the number of days available for guiding, lodging, and other tourism related to hunting White-Tailed deer.


WHEREAS, the proposed rule changes state it will provide a better deer herd for hunters, however no empirical evidence is shown to substantiate said claim, and no study or evidence is referenced detailing a decline in quality of the deer population in Northeastern North Carolina or Bertie County.

WHEREAS, implementation of the proposed rule changes will have a significant detrimental effect on the local economy of both Northeastern North Carolina and Bertie County, and jeopardize future efforts to improve economic activity in the area based upon its valuable and vast natural resources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Bertie County opposes any rule change, policy, or legislation that reduces the number of days allowed for the hunting of White-Tailed deer and a copy of this resolution is to be served upon the North Carolina Wildlife Commission by the Bertie County manager as soon as possible.

The foregoing Resolution was introduced by Commissioner TRENT, seconded by Commissioner LEE, and adopted by the Bertie County Board of Commissioners by a unanimous vote.

This the 22nd day of January, 2018.


Tammy Lee


Ernestine Bazemore


John Trent


Stewart White


Ronald "Ron" Wesson

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the resolution in opposition of the K-3 class size reduction legislation. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.



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STEWART WHITE

**RESOLUTION REGARDING K-3 CLASS SIZE REDUCTION IMPLEMENTATION BY
BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

WHEREAS, pursuant to S.L. 2017-9, local school districts in 2018-19 are required to set class size averages in grades K-3 that equal the State classroom teacher funding ratios and will have to meet more restrictive individual class size maximums across those grade levels; and

WHEREAS, an immediate reduction in the K-3 class size maximum will worsen an already very difficult environment for LEAs in finding licensed and qualified teachers to fill classrooms, most likely leading to more classrooms taught by long-term substitutes or lateral-entry teachers, who do not have the pedagogy and classroom management training necessary; and

WHEREAS, equalizing the average and funded K-3 class size ratios will result in the loss of flexibility to generate State funding for teaching positions in program enhancement courses like art, music, physical education; and

WHEREAS, in Section 2.1 of S.L. 2017-197, the General Assembly declared its intent to create a new funding stream for program enhancement teachers starting in 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, separate, additional funding allotments for program enhancement teachers like art, music, and physical education are essential to provide each student in North Carolina a sound and basic education, and

WHEREAS, even when this funding is provided, there are still classroom space and staffing challenges in implementing the new K-3 class size requirements which are outlined below; and

WHEREAS, the immediate reduction in individual class size maximums in grades K-3 would in turn increase the number of physical classrooms required at these grade levels, adding to already \$___ million in unmet school capital needs in Bertie; and

WHEREAS, Durham Public Schools estimates that in order to comply, Durham Public Schools would need to build 63 new classrooms and hire 90 additional teachers for 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County Public Schools does not have capital funding to build new classrooms or purchase additional modular classrooms and a new modular unit requires approximately one year to bring online; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County Public Schools lacks space to implement the class size reductions; and

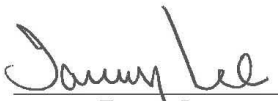
WHEREAS, County Commissioners and Local Boards of Education are already working together to budget and plan for the 2018-19 academic year and this issue requires immediate attention by the NCGA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the members of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners respectfully request that the General Assembly fully fund small classes and slow implementation of the K-3 class size reductions outlined in S.L. 2017-9 through a multi-year phase-in that allows time for the legislature and school districts to address the challenges delineated above, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NCGA provide full funding for all enhancement teachers, and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the NCGA approve HB 866: Public School Building Bond Act of 2017, so that districts across North Carolina are better able to meet their school facility needs associated with class size reduction and growth

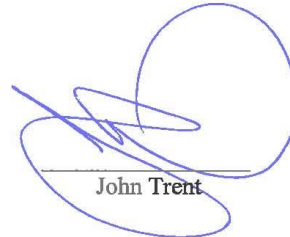
Adopted this 22nd day of January, 2018.



Tammy Lee



Ernestine Bazamore



John Trent



Stewart White



Ronald "Ron" Wesson

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the resolution extending property tax deadline to January 12, 2018. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.



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RESOLUTION EXTENDING DATE BY WHICH BERTIE COUNTY TAXES MAY BE PAID WITHOUT INTEREST

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statutes 105-395.1 sets a date of January 5 for the payment of county property taxes without interest; and

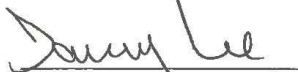
WHEREAS, that date may be extended when county offices are closed for weekends of holidays; and

WHEREAS, Bertie County experienced significant snowfall and ice beginning Wednesday, January 3, 2018 necessitating partial closure of Bertie County Offices on January 3, 2018, all day closures from January 4, 2018 through January 8, 2018 and a delayed opening on January 9, 2018; and

WHEREAS, it is fair and reasonable under these circumstances to extend the deadline by which taxpayers may pay county property taxes without interest until 5:00 PM on January 12, 2018; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the January 5, 2018 deadline to pay Bertie County property taxes without interest is extending until 5:00 PM on January 12, 2018 due to inclement weather.

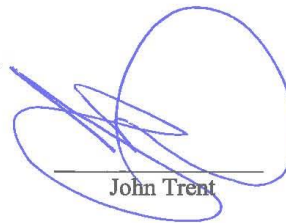
Adopted this 27th day of January, 2018.



Tammy Lee



Ernestine Bazemore



John Trent



Stewart White



Ronald "Ron" Wesson

Additionally, Commissioner Lee asked that the Board approve a similar resolution as the one passed in opposition of NC Wildlife's newly proposed hunting regulations for white-tailed deer season. The additional resolution discussed the migratory bird season and Sunday hunting which is also being considered for additional regulation.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve a resolution in opposition of newly proposed hunting regulations for migratory bird on Sundays. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.



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**RESOLUTION
OPPOSING RULE AMENDMENTS ALLOWING THE HUNTING OF
MIGRATORY BIRDS ON SUNDAY**

WHEREAS, the lands of northeastern North Carolina, and more specifically, Bertie County are desirable for the hunting of migratory birds.

WHEREAS, the hunting of migratory birds is a treasured part of the life, culture, and heritage of this area.

WHEREAS, the hunting of migratory birds is vital to the local economy promoting tourism.

WHEREAS, Bertie County has a population of 18,967 people and is ranked in the top four of the most economically distressed counties in the state since 2015, more specifically¹:

- 2015- #1
- 2016- #2
- 2017- #3
- 2018- #4

WHEREAS, according to the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, the following statistics apply for 2011 to the State of North Carolina:

1. There are 335,000 resident and non-resident hunters
2. These hunters hunted a total of 7,608,000 days
3. Total expenditures related to hunting of \$525,281,000
 - a. Trip related expenditures for hunting of \$224,550,000
 - b. Equipment and other expenditures for hunting of \$300,726,000
4. Average cost per hunter \$1,507.00

WHEREAS, the most recent economic statistics available to the County are those show above from 2011, but all empirical data indicates that the amount spent by hunters in Bertie County has increased since 2011.

WHEREAS, many landowners and hunters in Northeastern North Carolina, and specifically Bertie County, lease land and maintain impoundments solely for the purpose of hunting migratory birds, or rent land for the purpose of guiding tourists/hunters in pursuit of migratory birds.

¹ The Rankings range from 1 to 100 with 1 being the most economically distressed.

WHEREAS, the hunting of migratory birds generates income in Northeastern North Carolina including, Bertie County, for an already economically stressed population and community.

WHEREAS, recent legislation gave authority to the North Carolina Wildlife Commission to institute rules allowing the hunting of migratory birds on Sunday, and further directed the North Carolina Wildlife Commission to research the issue of Sunday hunting for migratory birds, and report these findings by March 1, 2018.

WHEREAS, the hunting of migratory birds on Sunday would have a detrimental effect on the quality of the migratory bird population in Northeastern North Carolina.

WHEREAS, a revised hunting season including Sundays would place undue hardship and a greater economic strain on individuals who manage and maintain migratory bird impoundments.

WHEREAS, a revised hunting season including Sundays would effectively reduce the number of days available for the hunting of migratory birds.

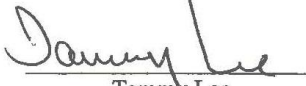
WHEREAS, a revised hunting season including Sundays would no longer provide local hunters with the benefit of federal compensatory days, extra days of hunting that replace those Sundays upon which hunting is not allowed.

WHEREAS, implementation of the proposed rule changes would have a significant detrimental effect on the local economy of both Northeastern North Carolina and Bertie County, and jeopardize future efforts to improve economic activity in the area based upon its valuable and vast natural resources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Bertie County opposes any rule change, policy, or legislation that allows for the hunting of migratory birds on Sunday, a copy of this resolution is to be served upon the North Carolina Wildlife Commission by the Bertie County manager as soon as possible.

The foregoing Resolution was introduced by Commissioner LEE, seconded by Commissioner TRENT, and adopted by the Bertie County Board of Commissioners by a unanimous vote.

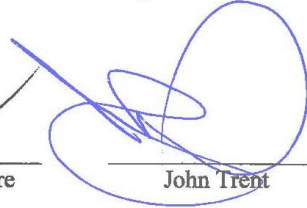
This the 22nd day of January, 2018.



Tammy Lee



Ernestine Bazemore



John Trent



Stewart White



Ronald "Ron" Wesson

**Discuss the renewal of Central Carolina Holdings scrap tire disposal contract approved in
January 2013**

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the renewal of Central Carolina Holdings scrap tire disposal contract and rated listed therein for an additional 3-years. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

**Consider dates to schedule planning session to review projects and priorities for the new
year**

After some discussion, the Board tentatively set their planning session for Monday, February 12, 2018 from 9:00 AM until needed with a possible second day on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at the Roanoke-Cashie River Center, if available.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

The County Manager gave no remarks 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 section.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Chair Bazemore

Chair Bazemore advised that preparations for the 2020 Census were currently underway and that participation is crucial from all Bertie County citizens.

The Chair also discussed the swearing in event that she attended for the new Superintendent, Dr. Catherine Edmonds.

Commissioner Trent

Commissioner Trent reminded all of those present about the public hearing scheduled for tomorrow, January 24th in Edenton at John Holmes High School. The public hearing will address the newly proposed hunting regulations for migratory birds, white tailed deer, etc.

Commissioner Lee

Commissioner Lee briefly reviewed her trip to Memphis, TN to attend the NACo Justice and Public Safety meeting that discussed challenges facing former inmates from the prison system. She thanked the citizens of Bertie for allowing her to attend such an informative and eye-opening conference.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White gave no reports at this time.

Vice Chairman Wesson

Vice Chairman Wesson briefly discussed the latest trainings he had recently attended including the 2018 Leadership for County Board Chairs and Vice Chairs, as well as discussed, the Martin Luther King, Jr. and NAACP Jubilee Day celebrations that took place within the past week.

He also made all of those present aware that the Hope Foundation would be hosting its annual African American Celebration on February 10th from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Heritage Center. This year's theme centers are the important role African Americans played during the Reconstruction period of American History.

CLOSED SESSION

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board about a brief Closed Session under statute number N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3).

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session pursuant to **N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3)**. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

OPEN SESSION

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

Before recessing the meeting, Chair Bazemore asked for the Board's concurrence on drafting and submitting a celebratory resolution for a Bertie citizen turning 100 years old this month. The Board concurred.

RECESS

Chair Bazemore **RECESSED** the meeting until 6:00 PM, today, at the Roanoke-Cashie River Center.

Ernestine Bazemore, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board