

**Windsor, North Carolina
October 1, 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
ICMA/NCACC Management Fellow Dominique Walker
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
Building Code Enforcement Officer Chris Surgeon
Planning Director Traci White

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bazemore called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wesson led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Rhonda Henricks, Career Readiness Coordinator for the NC Department of Public Safety, was present to share a report about the recent successes of the Bertie County CADET program at Roanoke-Chowan Community College.

The program is now in its 3rd year and members of the third cohort are reportedly doing well.

Several program graduates were highlighted and had recently been accepted or are currently completing college coursework in Criminal Justice at areas universities.

Ms. Hendricks explained that the goal for these students was to expose them to as many possible careers in the field of Public Safety as possible – EMS, Fire, Police, Paramedicine, etc.

She also acknowledged Dr. Stanley Elliot, President of Roanoke-Chowan Community College for their continued partnership, and announced the Martin Community College will be adopting a similar program in the years to come.

At this time, Commissioner Trent thanked Joe Dehner of Republic Services for their donation of \$10,000 to the program, his wife, Ms. Beverly Trent, for her \$5,000 contribution, and Perdue Farms of Lewiston-Woodville for their \$2,000 commitment, respectively.

Vice Chairman Wesson inquired if NCDPS had any idea if a scholarship program could be made available to students during the “bridge” between finishing school and being employed by a local, Bertie County agency.

Commissioner Trent discussed that security guards were needed at Perdue Farms, and that the Plant Manager, Jeff Stalls, was interested in hiring on cadet graduates to serve in these positions.

Commissioner Lee acknowledged the difficult year NCDPS has had since the passing of the cadet program spear head, Ms. Gwen Norville.

Ms. Hendricks thanked the Board for their ideas and comments, and stated that a scholarship fund was in the works in honor of Ms. Norville as she truly cared a great deal about this initiative from infancy. Lastly, Ms. Henricks noted a Trunk or Treat event at the Bertie County Central Services Complex on October 31st from 5:00-7:30 PM.

Chair Bazemore concluded by thanking Ms. Hendricks for her report and stated that she knew the Board was looking forward to the continued partnership.

APPOINTMENTS

(1) Oath of Office – Commissioner Trent – Roanoke-Chowan Community College (RCCC) Board of Trustees, by Clerk of Superior Court, Vasti F. James

At this time, Chair Bazemore announced that there would be a special presentation in honor of Commissioner Trent.

In recent weeks, NC Governor, Roy Cooper, formally recommended the appointment of Mr. Trent to the RCCC Board of Trustees.

Clerk of Superior Court, Vasti F. James, came forward to administer Mr. Trent's oath. Dr. Stanley Elliot of RCCC was also present, and the Holy Bible was held by Mr. Trent's wife, Beverly.

After the oath was administered, there was a brief press photo opportunity.

(2) Revaluation Team Introductions – Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea

Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea, was unable to introduce the revaluation team at this time due to several members that are unable to be present.

However, he did update the Board on the prep work being completed for revaluation including the printing of property record cards and other required administrative tasks.

(3) Introduction of John White, Legislative Director for NC Department of Commerce

This item was deferred until the Board's November meeting.

(4) Introduction of Amtrak Passenger Rail Station in Weldon, NC by Economic Development Director, Steve Biggs

Economic Development Director, Steve Biggs, introduced an initiative that had been recently supported by several surrounding counties. The project would bring back an Amtrak passenger station to Weldon, NC in Halifax County.

The former train station would be reopened to Amtrak train passengers and a separate space of the building would also serve as Halifax County's public library.

Mr. Biggs asked that the Board formally recognize and vote to support this initiative.

Chair Bazemore requested that the County Manager read the resolution into the record:



BERTIE COUNTY

106 DUNDEE STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 530
WINDSOR, NORTH CAROLINA
27983
(252) 794-5300
FAX: (252) 794-5327
WWW.CO.BERTIE.NC.US

**BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

ERNESTINE (BYRD) BAZEMORE, Chair
RONALD WESSON, Vice Chairman
STEWART WHITE
TAMMY A. LEE
JOHN TRENT

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE LOCATION OF A PASSENGER RAIL STATION &
SERVICE IN WELDON, NC**

WHEREAS, many towns and economic centers in northeastern North Carolina were formed along railroads and continue to rely on this critical infrastructure to support economic progress; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Weldon has a rich rail history as the home of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, the longest railroad in the world at the time of completion in 1840; and

WHEREAS, railroads continue to be vital to the growth of North Carolina's economy and to the development, strength and diversity of its businesses and education, cultural, and civic institutions; and

WHEREAS, the ability for the Weldon, Halifax County and the surrounding area to compete in a global economy requires an efficient and diverse transportation network to provide stable transportation costs and to increase travel between metropolitan communities and regions; and

WHEREAS, the location of a passenger rail station in Weldon will provide access to passenger rail for approximately 122,000 residents that live more than 30 minutes from a passenger rail station; and

WHEREAS, passenger trains offer an economical mode of transportation that is usually less expensive than driving or flying and CLOSER to communities than commercial airports; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail access in Weldon, NC will connect the Northeast region to education and employment opportunities in urban areas and improve the quality of life and income levels of its residents; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail service in Weldon, NC will stimulate economic activity and spur private investment in the area around the rail station; and

WHEREAS, a passenger rail station in Weldon, NC will support commercial activity by bringing visitors into proximity of shopping, retail, tourism, and other destinations, thereby increasing business activity and tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, the location of a passenger rail station and service in Weldon, NC is the highest priority rail project in Halifax County; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Weldon, by resolution, has authorized the Weldon Library as the location of passenger rail station.

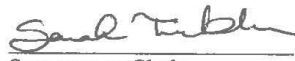
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Bertie Co. Commissioners **THAT**:

- The Board supports the NC Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) plans to construct a second Roanoke River crossing which will include approximately 10.5 miles of double track across the National Gateway Corridor.
- The Board supports the location of an Amtrak Passenger Train Station in Weldon, North Carolina.

Adopted this 1st day of October, 2018.



Chairman



Secretary or Clerk

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve and support the resolution for an Amtrak Passenger Rail Station in Weldon, NC as presented. Chair Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

In closing, Mr. Biggs thanked the Board for their support. He also announced that the State is now offering “Finish Line grants” to college students. The grants could assist students with unforeseen financial matters if they have completed at least three-quarters of their coursework. The grant was designed to keep students enrolled in college especially if they are close to graduation, but face financial challenges towards the end of their college career. The grants could assist with car repairs, rent, insurance, etc. Students are encouraged to visit the Finish Line grant website for more information, or to speak with their college directly.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Bertie County Library Board

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to reappoint Irene Walker to the Bertie County Library Board. Chair Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 9-10-18 as amended with revised text provided by the County Attorney, Work Session 9-10-18, Closed Session 9-10-18
2. **Fees Report** – September 2018
3. **Budget Amendments - #19-02** (next page)
4. **Tax Release Journal** – August 2018
5. **Ordinance** – Solid Waste Landfill Disposal Franchise – effective today

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda in its entirety. Chair Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Budget amendment #19-02 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT					
# 19-02					
INCREASE			INCREASE		
10-5860-5399-95	\$	30,312	EDTAP	10-0025-4586-03	\$ 30,312
12-5380-5399-95	\$	1,974	EDTAP	12-0025-4586-03	\$ 1,974
12-5380-5399-94	\$	-	WF	12-0025-4531-10	\$ -
10-6100-5695-20	\$	44,564	RGP	10-0025-4585-04	\$ 44,564
TO SETUP/ADJUST BUDGET FOR ROAP TRANSPORTATION MONEY FROM STATE					
INCREASE			INCREASE		
12-5310-5499-90	\$	1,500		12-0070-3981-10	\$ 1,500
10-9800-5980-12	\$	1,500		10-0090-4991-99	\$ 1,500
ALLOCATE MONEY RECEIVED NEAR THE END OF JUNE TO PURCHASE SHREDDER					
APPROVED 10/01/2018					

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Fire Code Enforcement Updates by Planning Director, Traci White

Planning Director, Traci White, provided an outline in the Board’s agenda packet on pg. 73 that highlighted upcoming changes to the NC State Fire Code. The new changes would be effective beginning January 1, 2019.

The Board asked that this item be featured on an upcoming Work Session agenda for further deliberation.

2. Discuss Public Hearing for Airport Height Ordinance

The Board asked that this item be featured on an upcoming Work Session agenda for further deliberation.

3. Local Option Use and Sales Tax public education advertising

The Board briefly reviewed a potential advertising piece for the Local Option Use and Sales Tax initiative due to be on the November 6, 2018 ballot.

Vice Chairman Wesson reported that this item was being supported by the Democratic Party and will be a selected choice on the distributed sample ballots.

In addition to placing this advertisement into local newspapers, Commissioner Lee and Chair Bazemore inquired if this item could be sent home to students with BCPS.

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** for County Administration staff to move forward with the advertising and distribution of the flyer as discussed. Commissioners Trent and Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

4. Discuss resolution submitted by Commissioner Lee – protecting NC farmers

County Manager Sauer prefaced this item by stating that the resolution being proposed was originally geared toward hog farmers, and that if the Board desired, additional work could be done to better include various types of farmers.

Vice Chairman Wesson and Commissioner Lee stated their support for the resolution as written.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the resolution in support of protecting NC farmers in Bertie, and across the state in light of the recent lawsuit that was settled in the disfavor of hog farmers in Pender County. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The resolution reads as follows:



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ERNESTINE (BYRD) BAZEMORE, Chair
RONALD "RON" WESSON, Vice Chairman
JOHN TRENT
TAMMY A. LEE
STEWART WHITE

**RESOLUTION BY THE BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS TO PROTECT NORTH CAROLINA FARMERS**

WHEREAS, agriculture is one of the most significant drivers of North Carolina's economy, creating tens of billions in economic activity, employing 17 percent of the state's workers and accounting for nearly 20 percent of the state's economy; and

WHEREAS, 26 lawsuits have been filed in North Carolina asserting nuisance allegations against Murphy-Brown, a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods; and

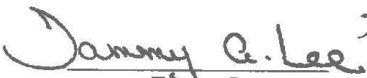
WHEREAS, while the lawsuits name Murphy-Brown as a defendant, most of the farms affected by the lawsuit are independently-owned family farms who, despite operating their farms in a law-abiding manner, stand to lose their livelihoods as result of the litigation; and

WHEREAS, during the trial phase of a recent case, the jury was denied the ability to conduct a site visit to experience first-hand the conditions complained of and after verdicts were reached, a gag order was entered preventing farmers and their neighbors from publicly discussing the conditions on their farms or the effects of the lawsuits on their farming communities.

WHEREAS, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners fear that if this verdict is not overturned, it will set a precedent with far reaching ramifications devastating to North Carolina's agricultural economy, harmful to rural farming communities and will push hardworking family farmers into bankruptcy by stymying their ability to produce fruits and vegetables, raise livestock and seafood, and grow crops and grains.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Bertie County Board of Commissioners does hereby support not only the Swine Farmers of Eastern North Carolina, but the many poultry, crop, and livestock farmers in the State who stand to face similar claims in their communities here and across the country.

Approved this the 1st day of **October**, 2018.


Tammy Lee


Ernestine Bazemore


John Trent


Stewart White


Ronald "Ron" Wesson

5. Discuss proposed Social Media Comments and Public Records Policy – Bertie County Government Facebook page

The Board asked that this item be featured on an upcoming Work Session agenda for further deliberation.

6. Set 2018 Employee Appreciation Luncheon date – Thursday, December 6, 2018

The 2018 County Employee Appreciation Luncheon date was officially set for Thursday, December 6, 2018 and will coincide with the Windsor Christmas Parade.

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORTS

The County Manager gave no remarks at this time.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORTS

The County Attorney had no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

At this time, Chair Bazemore recognized Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper.

She asked Mr. Cooper to discuss his latest travels to storm effected areas around the state including both Sampson and Jones County.

There was a brief discussion about the needs that residents still have in the wake of the storm including tarps, building materials, and monetary donations.

In closing, Mr. Cooper mentioned how lucky and proud he felt to be working for Bertie County under the Board's direction.

The Board commended Mr. Cooper for his leadership and continued dedication to Bertie County.

Also, County Manager Sauer presented a brief PowerPoint highlighting a trip that he and several Board members took to Campbell University. The Board members and Mr. Sauer were given a tour of the new Osteopathic Medicine building and were given short demonstrations of the various technology including life like robots designed to present students with real-life medical scenarios.

County Manager explained for the audience that Campbell University, located in Harnett County, has a new President, Dr. J. Bradley Creed who is seeking to develop an outreach program in eastern North Carolina. Dr. Dennis Bazemore, the Vice President for Student Life at CU has family ties to the area and he suggested Bertie County for this initiative. In August, Dr. Bazemore and two of his colleagues visited Bertie County and discussed possible collaboration with the County and the public schools in the areas of public health, community paramedicine, science and sports. It is envisioned that this effort may create educational opportunities for local students and faculty training and leadership development for the school system explained Mr. Sauer. Board Chair Bazemore, Commissioner Lee and Commissioner White attended the campus tour and football game at Campbell University on September 29th.

Monica Lassiter of Lewiston-Woodville stated to the Board to "just hang in there" as she knows the County faces many challenges at one time.

A member of the Planning Committee for the NAACP was present to remind all of those present of the NAACP Veterans and EMS Banquet to be held on Saturday, October 13th at Chief's on the River in Windsor. Tickets are \$25 each and are still available for purchase.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Chair Bazemore

Chair Bazemore reminded all of those present about several dates including the Mayors and Commissioners Dinner to be held on Thursday, October 11th at 7:00 PM. She also reminded the Board that they were invited to attend the Church of Evening Light's event on Saturday, October 20 at 7:00 PM.

Commissioner Trent

Commissioner Trent reported that the sally port in front of the courthouse had been completed, and that bullet proof glass would arrive in the coming days. The glass will enclose the ramp area that will later be used for security.

He also reported that EMS Station One's interior framing had been completed and that work was moving forward on the electrical, plumbing, and HVAC needs.

Also, Blue Jay Recreation Park's new gymnasium roof was near completion.

Lastly, he reported that the Town of Lewiston-Woodville had recently received a \$150,000 grant for demolition of old buildings, as well as for a community building, new ball parks, and other needed items.

Commissioner Lee

Commissioner Lee reminded all of those present that the Aulander Peanut Festival is this Saturday, October 3rd from 10:00AM to 7:00PM.

She also detailed a recent conference she attended at Elizabeth City State University about veterans being eligible for reduced or paid tuition. She also reported that ECSU was looking to add an aviation and unmanned drone program.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White thanked Mr. Biggs for his work in securing a new Dollar General in the Merry Hill Community. He also inquired if the Roxobel community was due to receive one as well. Mr. Biggs stated that this is being pursued but nothing concrete can be reported yet.

Vice Chairman Wesson

Vice Chairman Wesson shared his personal experience with Hurricane Florence and wanted to remind all in the County of how fortunate we were to not have received the brunt of the storm.

He also reported that he frequently speaks to citizens in other counties through his NC House campaign, and that they are always so curious to hear about what is happening in Bertie County.

RECESS

Chair Bazemore **RECESSED** the Board's meeting until Tuesday, October 16th at 9:00 AM for a Work Session.

Ernestine Bazemore, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board