

Windsor, North Carolina
December 3, 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
Greg Atkins, District II
Tammy A. Lee, District III
John Trent, District IV
Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Absent: None

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Finance Officer William Roberson
Water Superintendent Ricky Spivey
Maintenance Superintendent Anthony Rascoe
Cooperative Extension Director Billy Barrow
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
Sheriff John Holley
Deputy Doug Jernigan
Planning Director Traci White
Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe
Cooperative Extension Admin Assistant Sheila Powell
Junior Commissioner Qudre Joyner
Junior Alternate Commissioner Najella Williams

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bazemore called the meeting to order.

She also gave a special welcome to the two Junior Commissioners that would also be sworn in tonight.

INVOCATION

Reverend Ward led the Invocation.

INTRODUCTION OF HONORABLE CY GRANT, SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE BY FORMER SUPERIOR COURT CLERK, JOHN TYLER

Former Superior Court Clerk, John Tyler, took a few moments to briefly introduce the Honorable Cy Grant.

Mr. Tyler announced that this would be the last swearing in of the day for Judge Grant, and that he had been all over his district at various Board meetings swearing in new and re-elected Commissioners, as well as participating in a normal court schedule.

Without further ado, the Honorable Cy Grant came forward to administer the oaths.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OF OFFICE BY HON. CY GRANT

At this time, Greg Atkins, Ernestine Bazemore, and Tammy Lee came forward to receive their oaths of office.

After, two Junior Commissioners, Qudre Joyner, and alternate Najaella Williams also came forward to receive their oaths of office.

The press and family members took a few moments to take commemorative photos with Judge Grant and their families.

RECEPTION

The Board, families, and public participated in a short, celebratory reception for approximately 30 minutes.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wesson gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF JUNIOR COMMISSIONERS PROGRAM – Dr. Catherine Edmonds, Superintendent, Bertie County Public Schools

At this time Dr. Edmonds was asked to come forward to briefly discuss the Junior Commissioners program.

Dr. Edmonds thanked the Board for the opportunity and recognized several members of her staff, Board, and other individuals who were instrumental in ensuring this program would come to fruition.

She specifically thanked Commissioner Bazemore for her suggestion to start this program among not only the Board of Commissioners, but for the Board of Education as well.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Bazemore called for Public Comments.

Michael Freeman congratulated the Board on their successful elections, and reported his concerns about Ted Cherry Lane. He noted that students are unable to access their school bus without standing or walking through the mud. Mr. Freeman also mentioned the safety hazards the road presents to emergency vehicles, and asked if the County could intervene.

Commissioner Wesson discussed how the County has limited power when it comes to State roads in the County, and the NC General Statutes don't give local boards much freedom to address concerns like this.

Commissioner Trent noted that the County had discussed a "Life Safety Ordinance" encompassing private roads especially if their condition hinders emergency vehicle access. Even with such ordinance, it may not be legally enforceable.

The Board thanked Mr. Freeman for sharing his concerns and agreed that there were many roads within the County that were in a similar condition.

Alfreda Joyner, Vice Chair of the Colerain II voting precinct, discussed her concerns about recent Election Day logistics.

Mike Kavanaugh of Republic Services was present to inform the Board that the Hardentown Convenience Site would be closed beginning tomorrow, Tuesday, and would not reopen until

Thursday due to site upgrades. Commissioner Wesson requested that the Clerk to the Board posted a reminder on the County's Facebook page about the closure. He also requested that Republic take a look at the driveway of the South Windsor convenience site as it is in need of attention as well. Commissioner Trent thanked Republic Services for their generous contributions to Bertie County organizations.

James Pugh came forward to remind the Board to "let everybody be somebody."

Reverend Gary Corden offered words of counsel, wisdom, and advice to the Board for another successful year.

Since there were no more public comments, Chair Bazemore handed the meeting over to County Manager Sauer for the Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN --- COUNTY MANAGER SAUER

At this time, County Manager Sauer oversaw the election of the 2019 Chairman. The Board will also vote to elect a 2019 Vice Chairman. This process is being completed in accordance with **NCGS § 153A-39**.

The full statute is listed below:

NCGS § 153A-39

Selection of chairman and vice-chairman; powers and duties. [During] its first regular meeting in December of each odd-numbered year, the board of commissioners shall choose one of its members as chairman for the ensuing year, unless the chairman is elected as such by the people or otherwise designated by law.

The board shall also at that time choose a vice-chairman to act in the absence or disability of the chairman. If the chairman and the vice-chairman are both absent from a meeting of the board, the members present may choose a temporary chairman.

The chairman is the presiding officer of the board of commissioners. Unless excused by rule of the board, the presiding officer has the duty to vote on any question before the board.

As such, Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to re-elect Commissioner Bazemore as the 2019 Chair of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion.

To continue the nominations, Commissioner Atkins nominated John Trent as the 2019 Chair of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion.

With two nominations already on the floor, County Manager Sauer asked for a motion by the Board to close the floor to new nominations. Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** as requested. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

At this time, the motions were addressed in the order they were made.

Regarding the nomination on the floor for Commissioner Bazemore serving as the 2019 Chairman, a vote was called. The **MOTION FAILED** in a 3-2 vote with Commissioners Wesson and Bazemore voting in favor and Commissioners Trent, Lee, and Atkins voting against.

Regarding the nomination on the floor for Commissioner Trent serving as the 2019 Chairman, a vote was called. The **MOTION PASSED** in a 3-2 vote with Commissioners Wesson and Bazemore voting against, and Commissioners Trent, Lee, and Atkin voting in favor.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

At this time, newly appointed Chair, John Trent, presided over the election of the 2019 Vice Chairman.

As such, Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to nominate Commissioners Atkins as the 2019 Vice Chairman of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners. Chairman Trent **SECONDED** the motion.

To continue the nominations, Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to nominate Commissioner Wesson as the 2019 Vice Chairman of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Wesson declined the nomination.

Regarding the nomination on the floor for Commissioner Atkins as the 2019 Vice Chairman, Chairman Trent called for a vote. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously either through audible “aye” votes or no verbal response indicating a “aye” vote per Parliamentary Procedure.

RECESS

The Board recessed for a quick 5-minute break to change seats and name plates.

APPOINTMENTS

(1) Introduction of Junior Commissioner program by BCPS Superintendent Dr. Catherine Edmonds

Dr. Edmonds came before the Board to further elaborate and give each Junior Commissioner the opportunity to speak directly to the Board and audience.

Dr. Edmonds asked that each Junior Commissioner give a brief statement about why they wanted to serve as Junior Commissioners.

Qudre Joyner, Junior Commissioner, stated that he believed that change should be with him and that he was looking forward to serving not only for himself but for generations to follow.

Najella Williams, Junior Alternate Commissioner, stated that she was looking forward to seeing County government up close and hopes the community can “come together” to make this County a better and fairer place for everyone.

After some confusion about the night’s agenda, the Board returned to the “Commissioner’s Comments” section of the agenda.

COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

Commissioner Lee thanked those present for the opportunity to serve as Commissioner again. She stated that she had learned so much already in the last four years, and that she was grateful to have so many new contacts now in the State that she could call upon for help.

Commissioner Wesson opened his comments by saying that after having served on the Board of Commissioners for the last six years that this election of Board officers for 2019 was the most disappointing and troublesome that he had witnessed.

Commissioner Bazemore thanked the citizens for supporting her during her recent campaign and for the faith citizens have in her. She did express displeasure in the Board’s decisions tonight for the 2019 Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Vice Chairman Atkins thanked the citizens for electing him and that this seat he is serving in is not “his seat, but the citizen’s seat.” He wanted citizens to know that he was there to serve them.

Chairman Trent stated that he has always strived to be fair to all people and has always kept the advancement of the County as his top priority.

(1) Presentation of historical marker effort for the 2nd Carolina Colored Infantry by Dr. Earl L. Ijames, Curator, NC Museum of History

Patricia Ferguson, Interim Chair of the Poverty Commission, and Dominique Walker ICMA/NCACC Management Fellow introduced Dr. Early Ijames to the Board. Dr. Ijames is currently serving as the Curator of the NC Museum of History.

Dr. Ijames briefly discussed the historical highway project that will be sent for approval in the coming weeks. He also asked for the Board to approve a resolution in support of the project.

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

Chairman Trent read the resolution into the record:

Resolution

Commemorating the 2nd North Carolina Colored Volunteers, 36th United States Colored Troops for a Historical Highway Marker and Recognizing Bertie County as the Hub of Northeastern North Carolina Heritage Tourism

WHEREAS, originally named the 2nd North Carolina Colored Volunteers (2NCCV) it became the 36th United States Colored Infantry Regiment. The 2nd NCCV was formed in June 1863 and mustered into service in New Bern, NC on October 28, 1863, shortly after the formation of troops of color were allowed. Some of its men enlisted as early as the previous June 4; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina soldiers enlisted in New Bern, Plymouth and Roanoke Island and they ranged from ages 18 to 45 years. Most enlistees were formerly enslaved; and

WHEREAS, enlisted men came from the following counties: Bertie, Beaufort, Bladen, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Granville, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Orange, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell, Wake, Washington, Wayne and Wilson; and

WHEREAS, they escaped slavery and the oppression meted out to freeborn men of color; they were African –descent, mixed and Indian. Between June 24 and August 3, 1863, 43 men from Bertie County enlisted with 33 Bertie men enlisting on July 13; and

WHEREAS, in February 1864, the 2NCCV became the 36th Regiment, Infantry, United States Colored; the regiment served as labor and garrison duty at Norfolk and Portsmouth and raids into northeastern North Carolina until April 1864. Because of the raids, about 2,500 enslaved people were freed. The 36th next assignment was to guard prisoners at the Point Lookout, MD prison until July 1864. Two North Carolina soldiers drowned there. During that time, detachments took part in raids across the Potomac River into eastern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the 36th continued their part of the Richmond/Petersburg Siege until March 27, 1865 and was brought forward as part of the Appomattox Campaign from March 27 to April 9; it is reported that the 36th was the first regiment to enter Richmond on April 3, 1865; and

WHEREAS, weeks after the regiment entered Richmond, it was on its way to Brazos Santiago to solidify the Confederate surrender, enforce the Emancipation Proclamation and all federal laws, and to provide potential support to Mexican republicans who were battling a European-imposed monarchy. This last reason was to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. From June 1865 to October 1866, the 36th Regiment endured heat, lack of water, food, shelter, pestilence and snipers. Despite the hardships, in the summer of 1866, the inspection report of the 36th's discipline was cited as "excellent". The regiment was mustered out on October 28, 1866; and

WHEREAS, the hospitals that treated those who were ill and wounded, were located in Portsmouth VA, Point of Rocks VA, Alexandria VA, Point Lookout MD, Philadelphia, New York City, Rhode Island, Baltimore, New Orleans and Brazos Santiago, Texas; and

WHEREAS, the 36th had one of the fullest range of experiences in the war: as laborers, garrison duty guards, war prison guards, raiders; as the defeated and victors in battle; they served in four states (North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and Texas), took part in the victory over their enslavement and Robert E. Lee's army, helped re-unite the nation; being the first Union regiment to enter Richmond and upholding the Monroe Doctrine in an international crisis; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THE BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS DO HEREBY express their support for the historical highway marker and its proposed location in front of the Bertie High School, signifying the legacy, history, and cultural significance of the 36th United States Colored Troops, also known as the 2nd North Carolina Colored Infantry, for Bertie County citizens today and forevermore. The 36th United States Colored Troops Historic Highway Marker will also be a destination for Civil War enthusiasts and cultural/historical tourism in general. Bertie County can serve as the hub in northeastern North Carolina which can always use additional cultural and historical assets like this marker that will contribute toward the local and state economy residually.

This the 3rd day of **December**, 2018.

- (2) **Holland Consulting Planners' Chris Hilbert will provide an update for NCDRA-17 projects (Rehabilitation at 526 US 13-17 South; and Rehabilitation/Elevation scope of work at 514 US 13-17 South), and submit surveying and legal procurement recommendations for Board approval.**

Mr. Hilbert reported that the tow applications on the agenda need to be deferred because there was only one bid received. These two projects will be rebid and brought back to the Board for consideration in January. Mr. Hilbert also reported that 45 applications are under review for the HMGP program, and that the Town of Windsor has received approvals for SARF – State Acquisition Relocation Funds which will assist several applicants.

Lastly, Mr. Hilbert provided a brief summary of the bids received for the Hurricane Matthew DRA programs regarding surveying and legal services. All of which are outlined on page 15 of the Board's agenda packet. A motion was needed to move forward with those items.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to accept Mr. Hilbert's recommendation of Sorrell Land Surveying for survey services and Pritchett & Burch for legal services for the Hurricane Matthew DRA program. Commissioner Atkins **SECONED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Latest Vacancy advertisement

This item was purely informational. No action was needed.

Vidant-Bertie Director's Council

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to appoint Jo Ann Jordan to the Vidant-Bertie Director's Council. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Planning Board

This item was deferred until January.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 11-13-18, Work Session 11-13-18
2. **Bonds** – Sheriff, Tax Administrator, Finance Officer, Register of Deeds
3. **Fees Report** – November 2018
4. **Resolution** – compliance for State Fire Prevention Code minimum inspection requirements
5. **Contract amendment** – Jeff Best, CPA. to extend the audit review completion until 1-31-19
6. **Expenditure Report** – ABC Restricted Funds report for June 30, 2018 submitted by Bland Baker, NE Region Director, Trillium Health Resources
7. **Contract Award** – CDBG-DR and NCDRA 2017 program – RFP process, selection of Holland Consulting Planners

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice Chairman Atkins **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. **Review and consider NC Department of Health and Human Services modification agreement for the memorandum of understanding (MOU) covering Fiscal Year 2018-2019.**

These modifications have been made by the NC Department of Health and Human Services in response to feedback from counties following the execution of the MOU's ongoing analysis of performance data.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to amend as necessary. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2. Review Planning Board recommendation for increased “freeboard” requirement in “Special Hazard Areas,” from one foot to five feet, as an amendment to the Bertie County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance following Public Hearing in January

The Board reached a consensus on this item. The necessary public hearings will take place in January 2019.

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer distributed the latest information from the NC Department of Commerce County Distress Rankings as it related to Bertie County. He reported that the County has worked diligently to improve their ranking on this list, and per the latest information, Bertie County is now the 5th most impoverished county in the State. The County was ranked 1st back in 2015.

The County Manager noted that this can be directly correlated with this Board’s leadership in keeping Bertie moving forward.

COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORTS

County Attorney Lloyd Smith reported that the North Carolina Court of Appeals ruled against the 9 counties involved with the solar company tax exemption case. At this time, County Attorney Smith asked for the Board’s guidance on whether or not to file a petition along with the other pertinent counties to move toward a discretionary review.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carolyn Askew asked for clarification from the Board about how much input the Junior Commissioners would have during meetings. The Board stated that their role was to actively observe and provide their perspective on various issues, but that they would not have a “vote” in the process.

Vernon Lee thanked the Commissioners for what they do and made other comments.

Ishmael Muldrow of Lewiston-Woodville asked that the Board work as hard as possible to always “work together.”

COMMISSIONER’S REPORTS

Commissioner Lee updated the Board on his meeting with the new Executive Director of The United Way, Brian White. Funding has been designated for Bertie County. She also announced that she had been appointed to the NC Sentencing and Policy Committee through the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Commissioner Wesson wanted to clarify his thoughts from earlier by stating that it is not what the Board does to move the County forward that presents concerns, it is how the County does things internally that concerns him.

Chairman Trent briefly discussed his experience at the recent Rural Day. Many counties came forward to discuss the continued damage from Hurricane Florence, the challenges of finding affordable housing, and broadband access.

Commissioner Atkins assured those present that he did not “run on a platform of change,” and that he was looking forward to moving the County even further into the future. He commended his fellow Commissioners for their work that has already been completed thus far.

RECESS

Chairman Trent **RECESSED** the meeting until Tuesday, December 13th at 3:00 PM.

John Trent, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board