

Windsor, North Carolina
September 10, 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
4-H Extension Agent Guy Holley
Veteran Services Representative Denise Clark
Cooperative Extension Director Billy Barrow
Water Superintendent Ricky Spivey
Cooperative Extension Admin Assistant Sheila Powell
4-H Agent Guy Holley

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

Reverend Glenwood Mitchell led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this session.

APPOINTMENTS

(1) Public Hearing – proposed franchise amendment and extension of landfill host agreement, Republic Services

Chair Bazemore noted that this item was being reviewed tonight and the public would have an opportunity to speak during the public hearing.

This item, if no changes were needed based on public feedback, would be presented for approval in October.

The public hearing was advertised three times in the local newspaper (August 8th , 15th and 22nd) and a copy of the proposed amendment is in the agenda package.

At this time, Chair Bazemore opened the public hearing.

After several attempts, no citizens came forward to speak during the public hearing.

After hearing no public comments by anyone present, Chair Bazemore closed the public hearing.

This item will be presented for approval, as written, at the October meeting.

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

This item was deferred due to the impending weather.

(3) Space Camp review by Guy Holley & 4-H youth members

Guy Holley and several 4-H Youth were present to discuss their experience at space camp in Alabama this summer. The students were in grades 7 and 9. All spoke positively and vibrantly of their experience, and one described the week-long camp as “the best week of her summer break.”

Mr. Holley also played a brief highlight video of the all of 4-H’s summer activities, as well as a video that highlighted the most interesting parts of space camp.

The Board thanked the students for their reports and congratulated them on their success this summer.

The program was partly sponsored by NC A&T University and the Kent Bazemore Foundation.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no Board Appointments.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 8-6-18
2. **Fees Report** – August 2018
3. **Budget Amendments**
4. **Surplus/authorize sale** - approval to declare these units as surplus equipment, and authorize sale of this equipment using GOVdeals.com

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda in its entirety. **Vice** Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Review Board of Elections schedule and locations for early voting in upcoming General Election; and discuss recent federal subpoena for public records for prior elections since 2010

Vice Chairman Wesson discussed his concerns with the local Board of Elections' decision to recommend that the State close two of the early voting stations for the upcoming election. Under the current recommendation, only the Board of Elections Office in Windsor will be open for early voting.

There will also be only one Saturday offering for early voting.

Mr. Wesson expressed his concern about the changes and inquired if any other commissioners had the same concerns.

He also offered a **MOTION** to have the County draft and send a letter to the State Board of Elections to determine if the State Board would reconsider the decision to close two of the polling places.

At this time, the Board Chair asked to hear from the Bertie County Board of Elections on the matter.

Mr. Glenwood Mitchell, Secretary, came forward to discuss the changes. Mr. Mitchell gave a brief history of the composition of the local Board effective April 12, 2018 establishing the membership of the Board with two Democratic Party Members and two Republican Party members.

He further explained that the local Board of Elections had determined that by State law each early voting site had to have identical hours and the local Board, by unanimous vote, had decided to have one Early voting site in Windsor which would be open from 7 A.M to 7 P.M Monday through Friday and one half day on Saturday which was adopted by the State Board.
He

Vice Chairman Wesson reiterated his support for more polling places and that he still did not fully understand why the decision was made. He mentioned that data shows that voter participation is higher with more early polling places being open throughout a large County like Bertie.

There was a long discussion of this issue but no further reasons were given for the decision of the local Board which has been approved for this year by the State Board of Elections. .

After a length discussion, Vice Chairman Wesson reminded the Board of his motion on the floor.

Chair Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION FAILED** in a 3-2 vote with Commissioners Trent, White, and Lee voting against.

Commissioners Lee, White, and Trent echoed the same sentiments which were that they understood why the Vice Chairman felt the way he did on the issue, but that they did not want to interfere with a decision already made by another board and that the board was appointed for a reason and that they wanted to respect the board's decision.

In closing, Vice Chairman Wesson made it clear that he was looking out for the citizens of the County and trying to protect their right to vote in as many locations as possible.

Relocation of signage – Historic Hope Plantation from NC HWY 308 to HWY 13

A request had been received in recent weeks from the Historic Hope Foundation about potentially moving the Hope Plantation sign from NC HWY 308 to HWY 13. The move would potentially make the sign more visible to a broader audience and could potentially draw more people to site.

The new sign will be erected on the County's radio tower site, outside of the NC DOT right of way owned property.

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the moving of this sign to County property on HWY 13. Commissioners Trent and Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Review employee shared leave and possibly consider authorization for a waiver of the one-year minimum service requirement

This item is addressed under the current policy. No further discussion is needed.

**Capital Project Updates – remaining items from earlier Work Session
Water Department projects**

- **NCDEQ Division of Water Infrastructure Applications for Funding (Districts I-IV)**
 - **Resubmittals of AIA grants for remaining funds (Districts II and IV) and revised CIP**

Commissioner Trent reported that work was steadily being done on the new EMS Station One but that materials scheduled for delivery this week had been halted because of the impending hurricane. Dry wall, painting, and flooring will be started in the coming weeks.

Vice Chairman Wesson reported that as early as November, the County could have approval from the SECU to move forward with the teacher housing project.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve submittals for Water Districts I, II, III, and IV for NCDENR Division of Water Infrastructure Applications for Asset Inventory and Assessment project; and resolutions for the AIA grant for remaining, existing projects and water districts II and IV including all related documents and certifications for signature by the County Manager or Chair as necessary; and approval of the Bertie County Regional Water System Capital Improvement Plan for FY2017-2018 through FY2024-2025 including all related documents and certifications for signature by the County Manager or Chair as necessary. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Discuss updates from NCACC Annual Conference – Hickory, NC

Mr. Sauer advised that it would be pertinent to have a meeting with the DSS Board soon to discuss the State's proposal to regionalize DSS Departments.

Vice Chairman Wesson reported about the Farm Bill that is being proposed now and how it would severely impact farmers in our area. The bill would allow citizens who move into a pre-established agricultural area to file suit for odor, appeal, etc. The latest case involving hogs was the precedent for the bill.

Commissioner Lee reported on the Justice & Public Safety Committee and she also summarized the tour she participated in of furniture academy that is sponsored by the Catawba Community College.

Chair Bazemore discussed youth leadership ideas that had been shared at the conference, and wanted to see if Superintendent Edmonds would consider appointing students to a Youth County Commissioner program. The student(s) could attend Commissioners meetings alongside County Commissioners to gain a feel for working in County Government.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer reiterated for the public the County State of Emergency declaration and the various articles within it regarding a curfew, and the sale of firearms and alcohol. He also reviewed the preparations being made by the Emergency Services Department and the location of Bertie County shelters. He also discussed the County's recently approved lease with the Cashie Convention Center for a central point for staff and out of town responders.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORTS

The County Attorney had no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Board acknowledged the return of Mayor Pugh of Lewiston-Woodville. Mr. Pugh was involved in an accident during a controlled home burn.

Vivian Clarke of the Bertie County NAACP reminded all of those present about a Law Enforcement and Veteran's Banquet on October 13th at 6:00 PM in Windsor. WW2 and Korean vets would be honored.

A citizen also reported her concerns and recollection of a Bertie County Board of Elections meeting, and how the information shared tonight did not match up with the information she absorbed from the meeting where the decision in question was made.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Chair Bazemore

Chair Bazemore discussed a recent reception she had attended for historians that had been working the archeological site at the Lost Colony. She mentioned their enthusiasm for the project and that this will be an historical game changer for our area.

She also discussed an award she had received from the NCACC for Exemplary Service, and a course that she had facilitate for the NC Association of Black County Officials.

Lastly, she discussed the conference call that she participated in yesterday regarding Hurricane Florence, and encouraged citizens to prepare.

Commissioner Trent

Commissioner Trent discussed a \$150,000.00 grant received by the Town of Lewiston-Woodville for revitalization, as well as a donation of land for a community building.

He also mentioned the ongoing work on the new EMS Station One and Blue Jay Recreation Park gym, but that work was on hold until Hurricane Florence passes.

Commissioner Lee

Commissioner Lee reiterated that the 2018 Aulander Peanut Festival would be held on October 6th.

Also, the Town of Roxobel is currently looking to raise money for a playground. Citizens are encouraged to donate.

In recent weeks, Mrs. Lee and her husband also hosted a self-defense class in Roxobel that was well attended.

Lastly, she announced that she had been nominated as the Chair of the NCAJPS Committee, as well as the Vice Chair of the NACoJPS Law Enforcement Subcommittee.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White had no remarks at this time.

Vice Chairman Wesson

Vice Chairman Wesson commended Commissioner Lee on her accomplishments of the various Boards she sits on for the State and National organization. He congratulated her for her new respective titles.

He also commended Chair Bazmore on her recent awards and that she was an inspiration to him as well as others in public service.

ADJOURN

Chair Bazemore **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 7:15 PM.

Ernestine Bazemore, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board