

Windsor, North Carolina
February 21, 2019
SPECIAL MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a special meeting today inside the Cashie Convention Center, 118 Country Farm Road, 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
County Manager Scott Sauer
ICMA/NCACC Management Fellow Dominique Walker

Town of Windsor: Town Administrator Allen Castello

Martin County Delegation: Williamston Town Administrator John O'Daniel
Williamston Town Commissioner William Coffield
Michael Bryant
Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown
County Manager David Bone
County Commissioner Elmo "Butch" Lilley
County Commissioner Ronnie Smith

Northampton County Delegation: County Commissioner Joyce Buffaloe
EM Coordinator Ronnie Storey, Jr.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Bob Keistler
Michael Womack
Greg Williams

N.C. House of Representatives: Representative Ed Goodwin

N.C. Senate: Senator Erica Smith
Senator Bob Steinburg

United States Senate: Betty Jo Shepherd – Senator Richard Burr

U.S. House of Representatives: Christina Piard – Congressman G.K. Butterfield

AgCarolina Farm Credit: Anna Uzzell
Tony Taylor

Austin Britton

N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality: Fred Tarver

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Jean Richter
Matt Connolly

N.C. Land of Water: Dr. Stanley Riggs

AVOCA Farms: Tim Smith

Southern Bank: Susan Lewis
Barbara

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

INVOCATION

Martin County Commissioner, Ronnie Smith, gave the invocation before the meal.

WELCOME

Chairman Trent opened the meeting thanking and introducing dignitaries in attendance. He discussed flooding issues affecting Bertie County and surrounding counties. Senator Erica Smith gave remarks to the group and thanked Bertie County Commissioners and Bertie County staff. Senator Bob Steinburg gave remarks on Raleigh's concern on flooding issues and being proactive on addressing issues. Senator Smith recognized other county commissioners, and mayors from Bertie, Halifax, Martin, and Northampton, Washington. She gave the purpose of the meeting and thanked each attendee for participating in today's meeting.

DISCUSSION

Bertie County EMS Director, Mitch Cooper, gave a presentation showing drone footage and pictures of the Roanoke River Basin flooding into land, farms, and roads between 2017 and the spring/fall 2018 in Bertie County and surrounding counties. The North Carolina Department of Transportation has incurred over \$200,000 in maintenance costs of the flooded roads. He referenced the economic impact of flooding issues on local farms, and businesses.

Members of the audience were given an opportunity to provide remarks on flooding issues affecting agriculture, forestry and timber farms/industry. Economic issues and the loss of revenue, road conditions and additional costs, and adjustments to the Roanoke River Basin release rates were among the topics discussed. Impacted property owners and farms represented Bertie, Halifax, and Martin, counties, and Virginia.

Senator Smith discussed some of the goals of the Storm Water Control Committee regarding preemptive releases of storm water. She referenced the Galloway report and recommendations to the group. She addressed how the group should have a response plan to pre-emptive release of storm water.

Colonel Rob Clark, 55th Commander of Wilmington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, introduced his Corps team and presented background information on the Corps of Engineers and the storm water management protocol within the system. Colonel Clark discussed reservoir and release rates, and the degree of reducing flooding. He stressed that local stakeholders should continue discussions between community stakeholders and local officials. He shared that high rain levels in North Carolina has affected reservoir and that the Corps of Engineers acts when water hits the ground. Colonel Clark stated that the current plan will not satisfy 100% of

stakeholders and that private partners, local/state government partners, and community stakeholders should work together with Corps of Engineers.

Dr. Stanley Riggs from East Carolina University gave a special presentation of Bertie's Water Crescent. He explained that storm patterns and high rain levels are the main cause for floods specifically tropical storms and nor'easters. He introduced data on water/rain levels and strongly advised to not wait until rain is on the ground to act. Dr. Riggs gave suggestions for next steps: (1) proceed in conversations with the Corps on a consistent, daily schedule; (2) keep weather patterns in daily conversations; and (3) work in gradations to help minimize the problem.

Colonel Clark gave a final takeaway to the group. He stated that the group should continue discussions and give more data and information to the Corps to figure out what is the most optimal plan. He also shared that the group look at other solutions to mitigate flooding including comprehensive risk flood programs across the state.

Senator Smith gave the next steps: First, local level leadership is to delegate someone to compile an impact report including but not limited to a financial analysis report, pictures, and losses in crops and livestock. The report should be sent to Senator Smith by April 5th. Second, Representatives and Senators will form a delegation to put together policy to assist appropriations of funds for the local delegation. Third, at the federal level, Colonel Clark is tasked to find changes from the 2016 study and provide an update on the metric results regarding water releases and prepare a plan moving forward. Senator Smith announced a subsequent meeting will be held during the third week of April with community stakeholders addressing the comprehensive report. Information from today's meeting will be compiled and EMS Director Mitch Cooper is to send out information to group.

ADJOURN

Senator Erica Smith **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 3:30pm.

John Trent, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board