

Windsor, North Carolina
May 20, 2019
WORK SESSION

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a Work Session today at 9:00 AM 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
Clerk to the Board Sarah Tinkham
Assistant County Attorney Clif Smith (9:10 AM)
Finance Officer William Roberson
Assistant to the County Manager Dominique Walker
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
Emergency Services Chief Crystal Freeman

There were no media members present.

RECONVENE

Chairman Trent reconvened the Board and called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Lee gave the Invocation.

WORK SESSION

Attendance – Sauer, Wesson, Lee, Trent, Atkins, Bazemore, Roberson, Walker, Sauer, Tinkham, Clif Smith (in: 9:10AM, out: 9:45AM)

Presentation of bid tabulation results – Joint library/cooperative extension facility

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board the Library & Cooperative Extension bids were opened May 16th at 3:00 p.m.

At this time, the Board then review the four bids that were received on at the meeting on Thursday, May 16. The bid tabulation is below:

BID TABULATION SHEET - SINGLE PRIME SYSTEM
Project Name: Berne County Library & Cooperative-Extension Office
Berne County, North Carolina



Architect's Project Number: 17154
 Bid Date: May 15th, 2019 @ 3:00 p.m.
 Completion Date: 420 Calendar Days from NTP

Name	License #	MBE	Receipt of Add. 1	Receipt of Add. 2	Receipt of Add. 3	Base Bid (BB)	Alternate No. 1	Alternate No. 2	Alternate No. 3	Alternate No. 4	Alternate No. 5	Alternate No. 6	Alternate No. 7	Unit Price No. 1	Unit Price No. 2	Unit Price No. 3
Calvin Davenport, Inc.	4056	Y	Y	Y	Y	\$4,660,000.00	\$30,245.00	\$25,000.00	\$14,530.00	\$24,050.00	\$4,780.55	\$36,434.00	\$20,000.00	\$60.00	\$75.00	\$10.00
Winco Corp.	3478	Y	Y	Y	Y	\$4,153,000.00	\$42,200.00	\$60,500.00	\$150,200.00	\$20,700.00	\$4,600.00	\$37,500.00	\$12,300.00	\$19.00	\$17.00	\$50.00
Alexander Design Build, Inc.	73575															
Group III Mgt, Inc.	22369	Y	Y	Y	Y	\$4,543,000.00	\$28,000.00	\$67,000.00	\$33,500.00	\$35,000.00	\$4,500.00	\$21,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$25.00	\$60.00	\$5.00
A.R. Chesson Construction Company, Inc.	13940	Y	Y	Y	Y	\$3,890,000.00	\$26,730.00	\$50,805.00	\$69,947.00	\$30,379.00	\$4,405.00	\$24,252.00	\$7,314.00	\$22.00	\$21.00	\$40.00
NO BID																

I certify that the above is a true and accurate tabulation of the bids received at 3:00 P.M. on May 16, 2019.

Albrecht McLamborn
 Albrecht McLamborn, MA, NCARB
 MHAworks, P.A.

- Alternate Price No.1: Folding Partition
- Alternate Price No.2: Outdoor Maintenance Building
- Alternate Price No.3: Library Reading Loft
- Alternate Price No.4: Mezzanine Stair, Handrails, and Library Storage Room 202
- Alternate Price No.5: Dimensional Aluminum Letter Signage
- Alternate Price No.6: Reading Circle
- Alternate Price No.7: Vinyl Wall Covering, Wood Blanks, and Wood Chair Rail
- Unit Price No. 1: Unsatisfactory Soil Replacement
- Unit Price No. 2: Cable Tray
- Unit Price No. 3: Wall Covering



Albrecht McLamborn
 Approved Before
 Me On 5/17/2019
 Noted Albrecht McLamborn
 My Commission Expires 2/21/2022

A.R. Chesson Construction Company submitted the lowest Base Bid at \$3,890,000. The Contract Construction Budget is \$3,673,125. This value is approximately 6% over budget. Based on these figures, unless funding is added, Value Engineering (VE) in the amount of \$216,875 must be negotiated in order to award the contract.

In speaking with the estimators with A.R. Chesson after the bid opening was complete, they indicated that were confident in their bid and do not believe they have any scope gap. They also indicated the glass numbers seemed irregular and that their glass estimators may be carrying costs in excess of what is required by the Contract Documents.

MHAWorks is presently working with A.R. Chesson and their sub-contractors to identify possible cost savings. Those items will be presented for review no later than a week from the bid date. MHAWorks will work with Bertie County to determine which VE is appropriate.

The Board openly discussed the bids received and the various alternates, and how to address any concerns in the contract negotiation process.

Once the VE is negotiated, MHAWorks will furnish a letter of recommendation to the County with the final construction contract amount identified. Upon receipt of approval by Bertie County, MHAWorks will notify the apparent low bidder of the intent to award the construction contract.

Contracts should be available for execution by Bertie County within 1 to 3 weeks of notification.

A Pre-Construction meeting date will be established to discuss the construction. All primary sub-contractors will be present for this meeting. At or immediately following the meeting, the NTP (Notice to Proceed) can be issued.

The construction schedule estimate is roughly fourteen (14) months.

Mr. Sauer reiterated that the County would need to assume the cost of library furniture, fixtures & equipment (Albemarle Regional Library). It was also reported that the County's issuance of the notice to proceed would occur in mid-June.

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board that there are several key items for this project that are provided by the owner (Bertie County) including:

- Cooperative Extension furniture, fixtures & equipment (kitchen requirements) will be capital outlay for FY 2019-2020. The cost estimate is \$71,675.
- Underground fiber connection through Century Link is estimated at \$29,200. Data wiring and endpoint termination for all users is estimated at \$25,550.

- For security cameras, uninterrupted power supply, network switch and related costs, the cost estimate is \$23,270.

Mr. Sauer suggested that MHAworks is available to provide an update on bids Wednesday May 22, and it was the consensus of the Board that he meet with the design team to resolve any outstanding issues and report back to the Board before the contract is presented.

Draft audit for the fiscal year ended 2018 and estimated timeline for completion

At this time, County Manager Sauer distributed the County's draft audit was submitted to the Board. The LGC will need to review the audit before the County's audit firm, Jeff Best CPA., will formally present it to the Board.

According to the auditor, there were no concerns or findings noted in the document, and County Manager Sauer briefly discussed some highlights.

The Board also discussed several challenges the County faces regarding cash flow which includes new regulations being imposed by Medicaid and the impact on EMS and Non-Emergency Transport reimbursements. County Manager Sauer also reviewed the changes in fund balance for the General Fund, and the use of these reserves for capital projects and Hurricane Matthew recovery projects. It was explained that for projects such as the new EMS Station One facility, the County used local funds during construction, which will be reimbursed by FEMA through the NC Department of Public Safety and the NC Department of Commerce. Mr. Sauer referred the Board to the management discussion and analysis section of the audit report which details the capital projects in the most recent four years using local fund balance reserves. Finance Officer William Roberson provided clarity on how this is represented both in the audit, as well as in the working draft of the FY2019-2020 budget.

Next, the County Manager discussed the OPEB liability. Due to new government accounting guidelines, the new projected long-term liability for the County's retiree health insurance has increased by \$9 million. He noted that this will be an item that all cities and counties will be watching closely and trying to address as effectively as possible in the very near future.

A draft copy of the audit can be accessed online at <https://co.bertie.nc.us/>

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to move forward with a request for proposals for audit services. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

FY 2019-2020 Budget development and preview of various budget drivers, schedule of public hearing and budget work session

The Board received a print out of itemized budget requests for the special appropriations section of the budget, and the line items being requested by each organization were also submitted by the Finance Officer.

There was a brief discussion about the school system's audit, student population size, and how those items will impact the County budget. The change in leadership was also discussed. In summary, the County Manager recommended that the Board consider keeping the allocation (\$3,027,000) the same as FY2018-2019, and have capital outlay factor in as \$375,000.

The two nearby community colleges, Martin Community College and Roanoke-Chowan Community College, requests were discussed. News was also expected to be received about leadership changes at each college, respectively.

Commissioner Lee inquired about when the County would receive the results of the recent revaluation. County Manager Sauer stated that preliminary numbers would be received within 12 months, explaining the new property values (tax assessments) will be established as of January 1, 2020. This would be a component utilized during next year's budget cycle (FY2020-2021).

Commissioner Wesson encouraged the County Manager and pertinent staff to give the Board as much time as possible to review the proposed budget before budget deliberations begin.

Challenges for hiring, particularly in the Sheriff's Office, were also discussed. Certification for Basic Law Enforcement Training does make filling empty positions take longer than other types of vacancies.

Assistant County Attorney Clif Smith stepped out of the meeting at 9:45 AM.

An additional hand out was submitted to the Board about retiree health insurance and County legal fees.

Commissioner Lee and Wesson both discussed the idea of an in-house attorney whether it be someone recommended by the School of Government and/or a retired attorney that specialized in County government who is looking for part-time employment. The Board and County Manager discussed that there can be lulls in County business while waiting for legal support, and this creates a back log of various projects that can often be time sensitive. The amount being paid in legal fees was also discussed (\$175,000) and the Board shared their concerns with how County business is prioritized.

At this time, the Board took a 5-minute break.

The Board reconvened at 10:10 AM.

Bertie County's tax rate was evaluated next to surrounding counties, and how those tax rates are broken out (garbage, fire, hospital, EMS taxes, etc.) were also discussed.

The County Manager presented a hand out with tax rate comparisons for the surrounding region prepared by the Tax Administrator at the request of Chairman Trent. It was noted that Bertie County does not use separate tax districts or individual tax rates for fire department funding or solid waste services and that these costs are built into the tax rate for the General Fund. Bertie County's current tax rate of 83 cents would be approximately 76 cents if these two programs had separate tax rates or fee structures as used in many other jurisdictions. Mr. Sauer also noted that there are counties which support their EMS programs with a separate tax rate such as Pitt County at 4.6 cents and Pender County at 9.25 cents—noting that Bertie County provides net tax support for EMS of approximately \$80,000 per month through the General Fund. Mr. Sauer shared that counties also use separate tax rates for hospital districts, community buildings and recreation; noting that Cumberland County has a rural recreation tax rate of five (5) cents. There was discussion about the possibility of using separate tax rates for fire or solid waste in the FY 2020-2021 budget during the implementation of the revaluation process.

Based on discussions Chairman Trent recently had with the Tax Administrator, he would like the Board to consider using this information to possibly make some changes to how the County presents tax information, and even a flat tax rate.

Commissioner Wesson expressed that this topic had been discussed “every year since he has been on this Board,” and that he would like to see action taken to address it.

County Manager Sauer also explained that the recent salary adjustments for public safety, both EMS and the Sheriff's office will require additional funds estimated at between \$300,000 and \$400,000 depending on the number of vacant positions which will be filled in the coming months. Mr. Sauer also reminded the governing body that statutory funding requirements by the State for the local government employee retirement systems will result in an annual cost increase of \$105,000 for each of the next three fiscal years.

Mr. Sauer noted that the proposed budget will also include funding options for an across the board salary increase for other employees, and explained that the Board will likely need to consider raising property taxes in the new budget.

The County Manager provided an outline of dates for the budget schedule and the Board concurred these recommendations. The Board reviewed the budget schedule, and discussed the following dates:

- Budget submission to Board by midnight, May 31st by County Manager Sauer
- Regular meeting scheduled for June 3rd at 6:00 PM (per regular schedule)
- Budget work session is 9:00 AM June 5th, alternate date of June 6th at 9:00 AM
- Budget public hearing is June 10th at 7:00 PM
- Ready for adoption June 18th at 11:00 AM
- July 3rd regular meeting (per regular schedule)

On another note, Jail feasibility study interviews will take place on June 12th at the NC Telecenter. Time is to be determined. Commissioner attendance was requested if schedules permit.

TGOW logistics (preliminary list) for June 29th event

County Manager Sauer discussed some of the proposed logistics for this event. The event is slated to start at 9:00 AM. Parking was discussed along Ball Gra Road. It will be set up as a floating event.

The purpose of the event is to show citizens what the possibilities are for the property, as well as provide a chance for it to be seen by the public. The event will be set up similar to the Site X event.

First Colony also reached out during the meeting to establish an archeological dig at the “Tall Glass of Water” site. The Board concurred and gave permission.

Commissioners’ Reports

County Manager Sauer inquired if there were any updates regarding the SECU Housing project. The bill was recently changed on the State level, and there should be some update soon.

There was also a brief discussion about the latest fire inspections completed at two event venues in the County, both of which were found to be out of compliance with State fire code. It was reported that both establishments were currently working to address the needed changes to bring their venues up to compliance.

Commissioner Lee wanted to discuss a request from the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The organization is looking to bring back a chapter of the organization to Bertie County. Commissioner Lee was also looking for recommendations of individuals for a core committee.

Chairman Trent suggested Casey Owens of the Windsor YMCA. Laree Cherry was suggested by Commissioner Wesson.

Commissioner Wesson mentioned that local faith-based organization had an endowment from Duke University to complete home renovations in our County. The group would be in need of a place to house 17-20 people while they are here throughout the year. The group would complete roof repairs, replacement of windows, and other minor renovations at no cost to residents. The Board discussed several possible locations including a former daycare in Aulander, former law office on Highway 308, etc.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session pursuant to **N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(6)** to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of employment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

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

The Board recessed at 11:49AM until after lunch.

Reconvene – 2:00 PM

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to return to Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of employment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Adjourn

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to **ADJOURN** the meeting. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah Tinkham, Clerk to the Board