

Windsor, North Carolina
August 5, 2019
WORK SESSION

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met 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
 Assistant County Manager Juan Vaughan, II
 Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
 Assistant to the County Manager Dominique Walker
 Finance Director William Roberson
 Water Superintendent Ricky Spivey
 DSS Director Cindy Perry
 Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
 Deputy Doug Jernigan
 Water Department Staff Connie Coburn
 Accountant Samantha Ellis

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

CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

WORK SESSION

Review latest updates to the BMRJ/Chowan County feasibility study and fee proposal

County Manager Scott Sauer reviewed the latest updates to the BMRJ/Chowan County feasibility study and fee proposal with the Board. He provided an overview of the March 28th Joint Special Meeting with Bertie, Martin, and Chowan counties as well as the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Commission. The Board discussed the fee proposal and potential benefits of the study. The estimated cost is \$74,750 or \$24,917 per County. The Board continued discussion regarding future construction costs and the purpose of the feasibility study. Chairman Trent expressed his concern about not being a part of the conversation related to costs with the Chowan County board. He shared that more discussion about the study and fee proposal is needed. The Board discussed scheduling another meeting with Martin and Chowan counties for a later date.

Discuss required DSS/NCDHHS salary plan compliance and implementation for existing staff

Mr. Sauer shared with the Board that several of existing DSS employee classifications are out of compliance with the state salary compliance report with the NC Department of Health and Human Services. Bertie County staff have been working with the state to provide recommendations to bring the County into compliance.

DSS Director Cindy Perry provided additional remarks regarding low salaries compared to surrounding counties. Mr. Sauer stated that the County is in violation with the Memorandum of Understanding with the state. The Board discussed next steps which include bringing the existing DSS employees into compliance with state classifications and research the regional market rate of DSS salaries and classifications.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to bring the existing DSS employees into compliance with state salary plan and research the regional market rate of DSS salaries and classifications. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

South Windsor water customers – initial rate subsidy and transition to current water system rates

County Manager Sauer gave an overview of the system consolidation with Water District III, and noted that the South Windsor Water System contributed \$56,000 as part of the consolidation which has been used to subsidize the rate differential for the past five years. Rev. Anthony Ward provided remarks about the project and shared that he would work with the County to send a notice out to customers of South Windsor that reduced rates would expire. The Board thanked Rev. Ward for his leadership on the project.

AVOCA – supplemental fire suppression water line extension

Mr. Sauer provided an overview of a supplemental fire suppression water line extension administered by County staff, Green Engineering, and AVOCA management to provide for redundant fire protection capability and construction of a fire line extension at the company's expense. Commissioner Bazemore inquired about how the extension would affect residents in the area.

First Colony Foundation

Mr. Sauer shared that the First Colony Foundation would like the Board to consider to take official action to continue archaeological work on the 31BR49 tract, the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources that covers the entire TGOW site, as evidence has been found on the site. Commissioner Wesson expressed that he was glad the Foundation found evidence on the site and that is was an advantage for the County. He shared that the Board consider asking the Foundation to put together something in writing to describe the future potential of their work. Mr. Sauer also shared with the Board that TGOW project consultant Robin Payne would like to schedule a meeting to discuss further planning for the TGOW site. The Board scheduled Tuesday, August 27th to meet with Ms. Payne at 10AM.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** that the Board approve for the First Colony Foundation continue its archaeological work on the TGOW site, noted as 31BR49, as long as there is no interference with ongoing activities. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

New Library and Cooperative Extension Building

County Manager Sauer advised the Board that following the County's approval of the construction contract with A.R. Chesson Company, a pre-construction meeting was held on August 1, and the architect (MHAworks) has issued the notice to proceed effective August 5, 2019. Mr. Sauer noted that the construction contract allows for 420 calendar days to complete the project. He also reported that Mr. Allen Castello, Windsor Town Administrator is assisting the County with the removal of several old utility poles on the site. Mr. Sauer reminded the Board that the County's local funding responsibility is \$149,695 of which \$71,675 is allocated for the Cooperative Extension furniture and teaching kitchen. The remaining \$78,020 is for technology installation, security and termination of all data connections for each computer in the building. Most critical from a scheduling standpoint is the extension of underground fiber optic cable along South King Street which will cost approximately \$29,000.

Mr. Sauer provided the Board with an update of a shed located on the new library and cooperative extension property. The Board discussed notifying the owner about the removal of the shed. Mr. Sauer suggested inviting the Golden LEAF Foundation, Governor Roy Cooper, and local legislatures to a special groundbreaking of the new building. Mr. Sauer shared construction updates with the Board.

Close Out – Contract Amendment – Jeff Best, CPA

Mr. Sauer gave the Board the corrected document related to the final contract agreement for Jeff Best, CPA to finalize the closeout process for this engagement, and noted that this document is a replacement for the related attachment on the consent agenda – item C-6.

Algae Blooms – Chowan River

Mr. Sauer informed the Board about an upcoming meeting on August 24th regarding algae bloom. Chairman Trent expressed that this information be available for the public. Mr. Sauer shared that the fecal water tests from the TGOW site came back negative. The Board discussed having Water Superintendent test the water on a monthly basis.

Reappointment of Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea

Mr. Sauer shared that the appointment of Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea runs out in November and suggested to the Board that Mr. Rhea's reappointment coincide with his November date.

The County Manager also emphasized the importance of finalizing this reappointment in advance of the revaluation process. Mr. Sauer also noted the results in the audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018 with a tax collection rate of 97.29 percent – the highest in County history.

Platform Design – Mr. Danny Jernigan

The Board discussed platform designs with Mr. Danny Jernigan. The Board votes unanimously on a platform design. Additionally, the Board discussed alternative spaces for board meetings. Construction is set to begin on August 12th. The cost for construction is \$12,000. Commissioner Wesson inquired about additionally funding for public seats.

At this time, County Manager Scott Sauer asked the Board to go into Closed Session under **N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(6)**.

John Trent, Chairman

Dominique Walker, Assistant to the County Manager