

**Windsor, North Carolina**  
**February 18, 2020**  
**WORK SESSION**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a regularly scheduled **WORK SESSION** today inside the Spivey Meeting Room, Roanoke-Cashie River Center, 112 W. Water Street, Windsor. The following members were present or absent:

Present:        Ronald “Ron” Wesson, I  
                    Greg Atkins, District II  
                    Tammy A. Lee, District III  
                    John Trent, District IV  
                    Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Absent:         None

Staff Present: Interim County Manager Juan Vaughan, II.  
                    Assistant County Attorney Clif Smith  
                    Clerk to the Board Sarah Tinkham

Morning Session Only:  
                    Special Projects Consultant Scott Sauer

Afternoon Session Only:  
                    TGOW Project Manager Robin Payne  
                    Economic Development Director Steve Biggs

No media members were present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Wesson called the Work Session to order.

## **INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

He led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Wesson also gave the Invocation.

## **WORK SESSION**

### **Trillium Health Resources Annual Report - Mr. Bland Baker**

Bland Baker of Trillium Health Resources came forward to present Trillium's 2019 Annual Health Report especially as it relates to Bertie County.

He thanked Commissioner Ernestine Bazemore for her service on his Advisory Board. He stated that she has served on the Board as a very active, and enthusiastic advocate for Bertie.

Mr. Baker then began his PowerPoint presentation. The Board received a print out of the PowerPoint slides in their folders for this work session.

The presentation noted the various challenges that Trillium is currently facing including difficulty in recruiting providers to their rural health service area, Medicaid transformation, and healthy eating habits.

Some of their recent projects include Oxford Houses in Nash County, an "Eat the Rainbow" program, the availability of Peloton Bikes at various providers throughout their service area, and CHAT which is a mobile app feature available to those dealing with crisis which was made possible by a grant award.

Mr. Baker also dove more deeply into the mental health services that Trillium is working to address especially with adolescents and teens. This includes projects that will better acquaint teachers with the signs and symptoms of teens who are facing mental health challenges. He also briefly discussed crisis intervention training that is still being provided to first responders.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Baker fields questions from the Board.

Chair Wesson inquired if there were any plans in the near future for additional mental health beds to serve those in Bertie County. Commissioners Trent and Atkins also discussed their concerns with the mobile health crisis unit. They described trying to contact this unit with very little success when it comes to the response rate.

**Partnership for the Sounds "River Day: Learning In Your Own Backyard" by Carol Mizelle, and Rod Martin**

Chair Wesson noted that Commissioner Trent had to leave suddenly due to health reasons, and that it was uncertain if he would be able to return.

The Clerk to the Board distributed a one-page handout for the Board about a new field trip opportunity for 3rd-5th graders in the public-school system. The project is being dubbed "River Days," and it will provide lots of learning opportunities in the area of science, art, cultural history, recreational safety, and safe water practices.

The event would take place March 30th-April 1st. The planning team is requesting permission for the project to utilize the Tall Glass of Water property as a part of the field trip. Students will experience various educational programming at both the Roanoke-Cashie River Center, and the Tall Glass of Water property on the waterfront.

The program is designed to hit curriculum targets and provide a fun, hands on learning experience, while encouraging open minds and participation in outdoor recreation experiences.

Ecosystems, stewardship, erosion, weatherization, and many other topics will be discussed, and students will have an opportunity to get out on the water in state-of-the-art canoes provided by NC Wildlife Resources.

Mr. Martin discussed that this is a regional partnership bringing together a lot of different entities, and they were elated to start this new tradition in the County.

Commissioner Bazemore noted how excited and elated she was for this event, and that this is one of the main reasons the County purchased this property in the first place.

Chair Wesson echoed her sentiments, and suggested that Dr. Stan Riggs be involved in this project somehow, if he is available. Mr. Martin did note that they were already tapping into the resources available through Dr. Riggs, so they are in regular contact with him about the development of the curriculum.

There was consensus from the Board for the planning committee for these events to occur at the Tall Glass of Water site as requested.

It was also noted that in the event of rain, tents will be put into place if that is a concern. He also noted that the state of the road leading into the site may need some attention especially for safe bus access.

## **Bertie County CDBG-DR Housing Program - Laura Hogshead, NC Office of Recovery & Resiliency**

Laura Hogsheads of NC Offices of Recovery & Resiliency (NCORR) was present with colleagues to discuss the purpose of NCORR. NCORR is now the certified grantee for Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Florence.

She presented a PowerPoint to the audience as well.

This will be a centralized structure for processing and issuing CDBG-DR awards from the federal government.

The goal of this Office is to process requests and awarding of funds as quickly and efficiently as possible, and to serve as many people as possible.

A total of \$947.1 million in funding has been awarded to the CDBG-DR program for Hurricane Matthew and Florence recovery, and those funds will cover homeowner repair and reconstruction, manufactured home repair and replacement, infrastructure, affordable housing development, flood insurance assistance, construction trades training program, and Code Inspection Program, to name a few.

Ms. Hogshead and the NCORR staff fielded questions from the Board as needed.

Commissioner Lee asked if the NCORR team assists citizens with their intake application. Ms. Hogshead noted that a citizen could visit an intake center, or a Case Manager could travel to them to assist them with the completion and submission of their application.

The Board also expressed their desire to have local general contractors used for eligible projects throughout the County whenever possible.

Mr. Hogsheads assured the Board that for future storms, the process for applying for resiliency and recovery grants will be much easier to attain.

### **Affordable Housing Options - Scott Farmer, NC Housing Finance Agency**

Scott Farmer, Executive Director of the NC Housing Finance Agency, gave a brief presentation about his program. He discussed the resources available to potential homeowners including low cost mortgages, down payment assistance, supportive housing, housing rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes, foreclosure prevention services, and rental assistance.

Chair Wesson discussed a recent opportunity that the County could not take advantage of when it came to a moderate-income housing project. The reasoning, to his knowledge, was that there was no land available for a housing project that was within one (1) mile of a grocery store. Bertie County only has one (1) grocery store in Windsor.

Mr. Farmer fielded other questions from the Board as needed.

### **Report of Total Unpaid Taxes for Real & Personal Property FY 2018-19**

Jodie Rhea, Tax Administrator, presented several items that are normally listed on a Consent Agenda for a regular Board meeting.

The items included in the Board's agenda packet included the 2019 unpaid real tax report for 2019, the order and to advertise the 2020 tax liens.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the 2019 these items as needed. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously with the 4 out of 5 Board members being present.

Next, Mr. Rhea discussed the need for new tax software for his office. The current system in place is 39 years old, and he presented a hand out with proposed figures for the software upgrade.

Mr. Rhea also noted that all angles were considered when it comes to cutting costs including the consideration of off-site server hosting.

Chair Wesson commended Mr. Rhea for his work and willingness to stay with the current software all of these years. He would like to lean on Mr. Rhea's recommendation as far as a new vendor is concerned. More specific dollar amounts were also requested to be brought back to the Board during the 2020-2021 County budget cycle.

To conclude, Mr. Rhea discussed this year's required Board of Equalization & Review process. Since it is a revaluation year, the process is slightly different. Mr. Rhea included a hand out on the process for this year in the Board's packet for today's work session.

At this time Commissioner Atkins exited the Work Session due to a scheduling conflict.

## Budget Updates & Planning for FY 2020-2021 by William Roberson

Chair Wesson introduced this topic by recalling a conversation he recently had with Finance Officer, William Roberson. He discussed the latest state of the County's fund balance, and that our expenses will continue to outweigh our income. He noted that the County had pulled \$2.1 million from the County's fund balance over the last year, and it will take a significant amount of hard work and diligence from the entire Board to avoid a serious tax increase during the upcoming budget cycle. He encouraged the Board to "manage expenses based on the County's revenue."

At this time, Mr. Roberson began his presentation utilizing a flip chart and his written report.

<b>BERTIE COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET FORECAST</b>			
Revenue	Expense	Diff	Comments
\$ (26,014,352.00)	\$ 26,014,352.00	\$ -	Balanced Budget
<b>Rev Forecast</b>	<b>Exp Forecast</b>		
\$ (23,068,719.66)	\$ 23,667,882.99		
\$ (2,945,632.34)	\$ 2,346,469.01	\$ (599,163.32)	Shortage
\$ (1,729,650.00)			Budgeted Fund Balance
\$ (390,800.00)			Budget Amendments
\$ (2,120,450.00)		\$ (2,120,450.00)	Fund Balance Allocated
\$ (825,182.34)	\$ 2,346,469.01	\$ 1,521,286.68	Recapture Fund Balance
		\$ (599,163.32)	

## Interim County Managers Reports

At this time, Mr. Vaughan allotted some of his time to TGOW Project Consultant, Robin Payne.

She noted several budget updates and a timeline of grant deadlines in the Board's packets for today.

Ms. Payne also discussed her latest work with the Input Committee which has already met twice, and has the required Public Input meeting tonight, 6:00 PM, Bertie County Council on Aging.

She also discussed that second input meeting would also be hosted to accommodate those who were already scheduled to participate in tonight's Black History dinner. This second meeting will most likely be held in April.

The PARTF grant also requires a presentation to the County 4-H program, and to the Windsor Rotary Club.

She also proposed that the County consider working with "A Destination by Design" which is a group who can assist counties with tourism development, brand design, and marketing

awareness. The first stages would be tourism infrastructure.

The initial investment would be \$2,000 which includes a meet and greet with the team, tour of the area and all historical and sites of current and potential tourism, and then a strategy for how to move forward with information that could also be utilized for grant submission.

Chair Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the \$2,000 request made by Robin Payne to initiate the Bertie branding project. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Interim County Manager, Juan Vaughan, noted that River Days and the County event on June 6, 2020 will be taking place in the next few months. The important thing right now is addressing road concerns at the Tall Glass of Water site. Quotes will be forthcoming. Holes being used by First Colony Foundation will also need to be filled in except for one or two to be used for the River Days field trip.

There was also a recent request made by John Ed Whitehurst about disking and plowing the parking area at the TGOW site to allow for more archeological digs.

The three Board members present noted that it was simply too close to the beach event in June, and that they had no desire to disturb the much-needed grass in that area. It was the consensus of the Board present to not grant this request at this time.

Also, the Board discussed several resolutions received from other counties regarding the 2nd Amendment resolution that was presented on February 10th in Powellsville.

Chair Wesson noted that he preferred the language in the Harnett County resolution.

An alternative resolution drafted by the Clerk to the Bertie County Board of Commissioners was also included in the packet for today's meeting.

Assistant County Attorney, Cliff Smith, noted his concern with a small part of the resolution specifically naming Sheriff John Holley. He did not feel his name needed to be included and that simply noting the Sheriffs' Office would be sufficient.

Commissioner Lee echoed those comments.

Chair Wesson noted that he had conversations with now absent Commissioners Trent and Atkins. He noted that both Commissioners expressed to him that they preferred the Harnett County resolution as well.

Commissioner Bazemore requested additional time to read and review, and that she would provide her input.

The Board members encouraged each other to work more diligently in the future to discuss the

language of resolutions more internally before bringing them to a Board meeting.

At this time, Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session pursuant to Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to go into closed session to consult with the County Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege that exists between the attorney and this public body. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously, and the Board shifted into Closed Session.

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

**ADJOURN**

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to **ADJOURN**. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

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Ronald Wesson, Chairman

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Sarah Tinkham, Clerk to the Board