

Windsor, North Carolina
July 7, 2021
REGULAR SESSION

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a regularly scheduled meeting today at 10:00AM inside the Commissioners Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was hosted partially in person, and partially via Zoom (conference call). The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald “Ron” Wesson, District I
Greg Atkins, District II
Tammy A. Lee, District III
Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V
John Trent, District IV

Staff Present: County Manager Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager David Scarborough
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Finance Director William Roberson

Staff Present (Zoom): Clerk to The Board LaShonda Cartwright

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lee called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wesson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTE LIMIT PER SPEAKER)

Clerk to The Board LaShonda Cartwright read a public comment from Lee Lawrence, retired Department of Social Services employee. Ms. Lawrence wanted to know if retirees would be receiving premium pay like the rest of the current employees. She believes that it should be prorated for retirees who worked during the pandemic just like everyone else.

There were no additional public comments from the audience.

Chair Lee stated to the audience that we also have a three-minute public comment section at the end of the meeting as well and if anyone has a comment, they can send it to the Clerk to The Board, LaShonda Cartwright.

UPDATE ON TROPICAL STORM ELSA

BY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR MITCH COOPER

Director Mitch Cooper stated that we are currently expecting at least 2-3 inches of rain. He stated that flooding events for Bertie County and surge concerns for the sounds of Bertie are not expected. We are looking at about 20-25 mph wind gusts. He informed the board that we would start seeing rain late this evening and early tomorrow morning. Mitch advised that most of the event will probably be tomorrow after 5:00 PM.

Currently Bertie County is not opening an EOC, but we are in a state of readiness.

Chair Lee asked everyone to beware because the potential for tornados exists.

REPORTS & APPOINTMENTS (A)

Project Sparkle and Pursuit of Grants Update by Sarah Bernart, Economic Development Partnership of NC

Ms. Bernart, presented the board with a power point presentation on the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina for Project Sparkle.

Commissioner Wesson stated that the Board is really excited about the possibility of having Project Sparkle here in our county. Commissioner Wesson then asked about workforce housing for the people in our county.

Ms. Bernart stated that workforce housing was really not her area, but she does expect the next round of American Rescue Plan funds to include workforce housing as an allowable expense.

Chair Lee stated Project Sparkle is going to be a great thing for Bertie County.

Ms. Bernart then reiterated that this project really needs to remain confidential. She cannot have anyone announcing the companies name because that can jeopardize all of the grant money that the company could receive.

BERTIE COUNTY LIBRARY & NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION FACILITY

WRAP-UP BY AMBER IDOL & DANI HOFF, MHA

Dani Hoff stated that the ribbon cutting last month was a huge success and the County did a great job putting it together. Dani stated that at this point, the project is almost complete. They are in the process of getting the remaining items checked off the contractors list. Nearly everything is expected to be completed by the end of this month.

Dani stated they are looking at a contract completion and fully wrapping up by September. She advised that sometime next year, probably in April, they will do a walk through of the building (Warranty Walk) and anything that needs to be addressed by the contractor before that warranty expires will be taken care of.

Chair Lee stated that she noticed the parking lot had some places that needed to be taken care of before someone got hurt.

Dani expressed to Chair Lee that they did notice that. She said they took photos of that last week and the contractor is aware of it as well.

Dani then thanked the board for giving them a wonderful opportunity.

2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION PLANS BY SHEILA HOLLOMAN,

BOARD OF ELECTIONS DIRECTOR

Elections Director Sheila Holloman stated that she was there to explain some things about the municipal elections. She stated that municipal elections are held in odd numbered years and we have eight towns that participate in the municipal elections. She stated that Windsor and Powellsville may have a Primary election in October. Ms. Holloman advised the other towns will vote November 5th and the deadline to register for this election is October 8th. Director Holloman stated that the Town of Windsor will be the only town participating in early voting. She stated that early voting begins October 14th through Saturday, October 20th.

Director Holloman then provided some additional information about filing for candidacy. Then she followed up with information on her board members and their upcoming appointments.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS (B)

Chair Lee stated that there is a vacancy coming up on the ABC Board. Chair Lee stated that Mr. Michael Freeman has expressed his wishes to continue in that capacity.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to accept Mr. Michael Freeman to continue his great service on the ABC Board. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Atkins. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

CONSENT AGENDA (C)

1. Register of Deeds Fee Report – June 2021
2. Tax Release Journal – June 2021

The **MOTION** to **APPROVE** Consent Agenda items C-1 and C-2 was made by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wesson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

3. Approve Home and Community Block Grant for Older Adults County Funding Plan FY 2021-2022

Chair Lee asked Attorney Huddleston if he had the opportunity to review the funding plan. He stated he did and it looks good.

Commissioner Wesson mad the **MOTION** to **APPROVE** Consent Agenda item C-3. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

4. Approve Contractual Agreement Between Bertie County Council on Aging & C&J's Ambulette Non-Emergency Medical Transport, Inc. FY 2021-2022

Chair Lee asked Attorney Huddleston if he had the opportunity to review Consent Agenda item C-4. Attorney Huddleston advised yes and they took out a section that allowed C&J Ambulette to increase their pay and included another typical provision. Attorney Huddleston stated that they agreed to those terms.

Council on Aging Director Venita Thompson was available via phone and stated that she contacted each ambulance service in the county and asked if they wanted to submit a bid. She said she asked if they could provide services for people who were not stretcher-bound or wheelchair-bound and they could not.

The **MOTION** was made to **APPROVE** Consent Agenda item C-4 by Commissioner Wesson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Atkins. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

5. Approve Resolution Approving the MOA Between the State of NC and Local Governments on Proceeds Relating to the Settlement of Opioid Litigation

Chair Lee asked attorney Huddleston if he was comfortable with the Board signing this resolution. Attorney Huddleston stated that it was a good resolution. He also advised that he checked with our NC Council, who told him to hold off signing it. Attorney Huddleston then

stated that it was not a simple answer. He also advised that if the County wanted go ahead with the MOA, our NC Council weren't going to stop or tell them not to do that.

Commissioner Wesson recommended that they Johnathon continue to monitor the case.

Chair Lee stated that they were going to continue on pause and Attorney Huddleston will keep the Board abreast of deadlines for passing the resolution.

Commissioner Wesson stated negotiations were ongoing.

6. Budget Amendments

Finance Director William Roberson explained the purpose and use of funds for each budget amendment.

A **MOTION** was made to **APPROVE** the Budge Amendment by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wesson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)

1. Consideration of Resolution Authorizing the Bertie County Fire Inspector to Issue Permits for Pyrotechnics

The **MOTION** to **APPROVE** Discussion item D-1 and give County Manager the authority was made by Commissioner Wesson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

2. Discussion of Expanding ABC Board

Chair of the ABC Board Michael Freeman stated that there is currently they a membership of three on the ABC Board and General Statue does permit the Commissioners to expand that board from three to five if they choose to do so.

The Board advised that they didn't feel the need to expand the ABC Board at this time.

Chair Lee stated to Chairman Freeman if this is something he feels he may need later he can certainly come back and the Board can take a look at it again.

3. Confirm Date for Blue Jay Recreation Center Ribbon Cutting

The board decided to have the Ribbon Cutting on **Saturday, August 21, 2021** from **12:00pm until 1:00pm.**

4. Confirm Locations for Work Sessions scheduled for 8/2/21 & 10/4/21 and Regular Meetings on 8/16/21 & 10/18/21

Chair Lee stated that she liked having the Work Sessions here in town, preferably right here. The board decided to have the 8/16/21 meeting here in the Commissioners room and let the County Manager work on the 10/18/21 meeting and wait to see if any other town invites them there.

5. Discussion of Strategic Initiative Line Item & Maintenance of Bertie Beach

County Manager Vaughan and the board discussed the line items in the budget and the fund balance.

County Manager Vaughan strongly suggested not appropriating any fund balance at this time.

County Manager Vaughan then went on to item two and advised that there is money in the budget for grass cutting at Tall Glass of Water. However, we have not begun to budget specifically for beach maintenance.

County Manager Vaughan stated that moving forward that would be something for them to consider.

After much discussion, Chair Lee stated that that there should be a line item for Bertie Beach and maintenance in the future.

COMMISSIONERS'REPORTS (E)

Commissioner Roberson shared that he had one awesome announcement and that came from the Council on Aging. They had a community day and it was a really great day for the Council on Aging and they did a superior job.

Commissioner Atkins did not have anything to report.

Commissioner Wesson stated that he was pleased to announce to the public that all three of the community support partners including Bertie County Schools, The Town of Windsor, and Bertie County Local Government have agreed to contribute to the Teacher Housing Project. Commissioner Wesson then stated that the Town of Windsor provided the property.

Commissioner Wesson advised they are looking forward to having twenty-four, two bedrooms/two-bathroom units available to teachers and state/county local employees.

Chair Lee advised the public to please be careful with the storm coming and please don't take any unnecessary chances. If there is a warning, take heed to that warning. If you live in a low-lying area or mobile home, please get out. If there are shelters available, please go to the shelter. Do not drive through high waters.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS (F)

County Manager Vaughan stated that he had no reports at this time.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS (G)

Attorney Huddleston stated that Perdue Farms and their affiliates are defendants in the Opioid Litigation. They had over 209,000 civil lawsuits in State and Federal court against them for the marketing of oxycontin. They declared bankruptcy in attempt to gain protection.

Attorney Huddleston stated to the Board that his advice was that they indicate approval by the deadline, which is July 9th. He stated that he could do that by simply sending an email to the National Council.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** to move in support of the Attorney's recommendation that they proactively support and sign the agreement. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

Clerk to the Board LaShonda Cartwright advised that they had one comment from Mrs. Sarah Tinkham. Mrs. Tinkham wanted to thank the board and former and past staff who worked diligently on the Library & Cooperative Extension project. She stated that the building was truly a sight to behold. Congratulations to all and thank you to Dani and Amber for all of the updates.

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to NCGS § 143-318.11(a)(3) To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

Pursuant to NCGS § 143-318.11(a)(5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract.

Pursuant to NCGS § 143-318.11(a)(6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, 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.

The **MOTION** to go into Closed Session was made by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wesson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

DISCUSSION RESUMED

Chair Lee resumed the meeting and gave the floor to Commissioner Roberson.

Commissioner Roberson discussed the retired county employees receiving premium pay.

County Manager Vaughan stated that they could limit it to retirees only and the cost of that would be approximately \$4,500.

Chair Lee asked County Manager Vaughan if doing this would be within that budget that was set.

County Manager Vaughan stated, “Yes, it would.”

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** for retirees who worked during the pandemic to be included in receiving premium pay as did other employees. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

Chair Lee then asked about the status of opening the Council on Aging.

County Manager Vaughan stated that they are planning to reopen the Aging Center soon but the plans have not been finalized.

Director Thompson stated that she wanted the seniors to be safe.

A **MOTION** was made to open the Council on Aging by Commissioner Atkins. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

ADJOURNMENT

The **MOTION** to **ADJOURN** was made by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wesson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.