

**BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 19, 2022
WORK SESSION**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners held their Work Session on Monday, September, 2022 inside the Community Room, 102 Lancaster Ave., 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 (Zoom)
John Trent, District IV
Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V

Staff Present: County Manager Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager David Scarborough
County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Finance Director William Roberson
Human Resources and Risk Management Director

Cortney Ward

Bertie Soil & Water Conservation Technician Vic

Thompson

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

Call to Order

Chairman Trent called meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Ron Wesson.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
(3 MINUTE LIMIT PER SPEAKER)

Rosemary Collier from 105 Hamlin Ln, Windsor, NC stated to the Board that she did not receive the last disbursement of funds from the Tornado Relief Fund. Rosemary Collier stated that she had received previous funds. However, this time she was not issued a payment. Rosemary Collier further stated that she needs the additional funds to help with the renovation process of her trailer that she had purchased. Rosemary Collier stated that her floors, windows and doors needed to be repaired.

Chairman Trent asked the County Manager if he had any information on Ms. Rosemary Collier's claims.

County Manager Vaughan stated that Ms., Rosemary Collier was impacted by the tornado and she did receive items from the Early College, Red Cross provided Ms. Rosemary Collier with a stay at the Holiday Inn hotel until the County was able to place her in a trailer camper.

Chairman Trent asked County Manger Vaughan if the services received by Ms. Rosemary Collier were paid for.

County Manager Vaughan stated that the services provided were paid for.

County Manager Vaughan stated that Ms. Rosemary Collier also received money from the State in the amount of \$29,342. County Manager Vaughan stated that Ms. Rosemary Collier also received money from the Tornado Relief Fund that was collected by the County.

County Manager Vaughan stated that Ms. Rosemary Collier did not receive money from the last disbursement because those funds were for people that totally lost everything; their homes that were destroyed and could not be repaired.

Commissioner Wesson stated to Ms. Rosemary Collier that the money for the disbursements were not county funds. Commissioner Wesson stated the he and his wife started the account for the Tornado Relief Fund with their own money and they received a lot of donations. They only asked the County to get involved to help disburse the money.

Commissioner Wesson stated to Ms. Rosemary Collier that they have exceeded what they could do with the funds and they do not have any additional money in the Tornado Relief Fund.

Ms. Rosemary Collier then asked the Board if there any other programs that could help her with the repairs to her home.

Commissioner Trent stated that CADA has a housing financing agency and they were allocated some money. Commissioner Trent further explained the rules for CADA.

Commissioner Roberson provided Ms. Rosemary Collier with information on the USDA Program and the contact person for the USDA Program which was Mr. Calvin Askew.

Commissioner Roberson stated that all of the Commissioners have done a wonderful job with helping all the Tornado victims.

Commissioner Trent provided Ms. Rosemary Collier with a contact number for Mr. Calvin Askew with the USDA program.

There were no additional public comments.

REPORTS & APPOINTMENTS (A)

1. NC Spay & Neuter Program by Deborah Tayloe & Beth Northcott

Ms. Deborah Tayloe came before the Board to present their interest in Bertie County participating in the NC Spay & Neuter Program.

Ms. Deborah Tayloe provided the Board with an update of the progression of the committee that she and Ms. Beth Northcott have formed. Ms. Deborah Tayloe stated to the Board that they have named their newly formed committee Companion Animal Advocates of Bertie.

Ms. Deborah Tayloe provided the Board with the website address for their committee www.caabertie.org. She also stated that they have set up a Facebook and YouTube site.

Ms. Deborah Tayloe stated that they are now in the process of starting a pet pantry project where people can give what they can and take what they need.

Commissioner Wesson applauded the work that Ms. Deborah Tayloe and Ms. Beth Northcott were doing and he then then offered his help with assisting them with establishing a non-profit organization.

Commissioner Wesson then invited Ms. Deborah Tayloe and Ms. Beth Northcott to be a part of the Bertie County 300th Anniversary Celebration that will be held on November 5th.

Ms. Beth Northcott and Ms. Deborah Tayloe stated that LaShonda has them taken care of and they already have a spot for the 300th Anniversary Celebration.

Commissioner Roberson personally thanked Ms. Beth Northcott and Ms. Deborah Taylor for all of their efforts.

Commissioner Trent stated that he would also donate a pet pantry for the committee.

2. FY 2021-22 Settlement Reports, Report of Delinquent Taxes, Insolvent Tax Resolution & Charge of 2022-23 Tax Levy by Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea

Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea presented the Board with the FY 2021-22 Settlement and the Insolvent Report.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** to **ACCEPT** the Insolvent report and to allow Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea to collect the delinquent taxes. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** to support the charge of collections for the 2022-23 Tax Levy by Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea. Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

3. Position Additions to the Bertie County Pay and Classification Schedule by Human Resources & Risk Management Director Cortney Ward

Human Resources & Risk Management Director Cortney Ward came before the Board to present them with two new salary schedules.

Human Resources & Risk Management Director Courtney Ward recommended that the Non-Emergency Transport Captain position be added to the Bertie County EMS Salary schedule under Grade 59 with the starting salary of \$17 an hour.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** that the Board support the assignment of the new EMS position \$17 an hour as assigned by the Human Resources & Risk Management Director Courtney Ward. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

Human Resources & Risk Management Director Courtney Ward recommended to the Board that they add a Social Work Program Manager position to Social Services. Human Resources & Risk Management Director Courtney Ward stated this position has already be submitted and approved by the office of Human Resources which is the standard procedure for adding a position to an agency.

Human Resources & Risk Management Director Courtney Ward stated that her recommendation is to add the Social Work Program Manager position to the Salary Schedule under Grade 74 with a starting salary of \$44,304 and a maximum salary of \$68,671.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the new position of Social Work Program Manager under Grade 74 in the Salary Schedule with information provided by Human Resources & Risk Management Director Courtney Ward. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

4. Financial Summary and Audit Update by Finance Officer William Roberson

Finance Officer William Roberson provided the Board with a Financial Summary through August.

Finance Officer William Roberson explained to the Board why some of the items on the Finance Summary were highlighted.

Finance Officer William Roberson stated that the line item for the Water Department under Sales and Services is at 20%, and the County was at 19% last year so the Water Department is still doing good.

Commissioner Wesson asked Finance Officer William Roberson regarding the items that he had highlighted in yellow if these were covered in the existing budget but just out of sync.

Finance Officer William Roberson stated that they were covered in the budget but when it happens during the first part of the year it seems like it distorts the numbers a bit.

Commissioner Trent asked Finance Officer William Roberson what did the parenthesis around the numbers stand for.

Finance Officer William Roberson stated to Commissioner Trent that the parenthesis indicated revenues.

A discussion was then had between Commissioner Wesson and Finance Officer William Roberson about looking at projecting a budget monthly or quarterly.

Finance Officer William Roberson provided the Board with an update on the Audit. Finance Officer William Roberson stated that the Auditors came in and spent a couple of days in his office and provided them with most of what was requested.

Finance Officer William Roberson stated that one of the things that that the Auditors were requesting were the minutes so once they are approved he will be able to give the minutes to the Auditors.

Finance Officer William Roberson stated that the only thing that he has left to give to the Auditors on his end is his fixed assets which should be out the end of this week.

Finance Officer William Roberson stated that the Auditors informed him that starting in October they would be contacting the County Manager with updates and reviews so at this moment as far as he is aware of everything with the audit process is still on track.

The Board then thanked Finance Officer William Roberson.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS (B)

There were no Board Appointments.

CONSENT AGENDA (C)

1. Approve Tax Release Journal – August 2022

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION to Approve Tax Release Journal – August 2022**. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

2. Approve Register of Deeds Fees Report – August 2022

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION to Approve Register of Deeds Fees Report – August 2022**. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes – 8/2/21, 8/16/21, 8/25/21, 9/7/21, 10/4/21, 10/18/21, 11/1/21, 11/10/21, 12/6/21, 1/11/22, 3/7/22, 3/21/22, 4/20/22, 5/2/22, 5/23/22, 6/16/22, 6/21/22

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION to Approve Meeting Minutes – 8/2/21, 8/16/21, 8/25/21, 9/7/21, 10/4/21, 10/18/21, 11/1/21, 11/10/21, 12/6/21, 1/11/22, 3/7/22, 3/21/22, 4/20/22, 5/2/22, 5/23/22, 6/16/22, 6/21/22**. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the **MOTION** to approve the above minutes with the suggestions made by the County Attorney, County Manager and Assistant County Manager. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

4. Approve Budget Amendment

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION to approve Budget Amendment**. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

5. Approve ROAP Application & Certification Statement

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION to Approve ROAP Application & Certification Statement**. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

6. Approve FY 2022-23 Senior Center General Funding Application

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION to Approve FY 2022-23 Senior Center General Funding Application**. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

7. Contract for Aging Services Provided Through the Older Americans Act & State Appropriated Funds from the NC Division of Aging

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION to Approve the Contract for Aging Services Provided Through the Older Americans Act & State Appropriated Funds**. Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

8. Long Branch Community Debris Removal Contract & Budget Amendment

Commissioner Wesson asked the Assistant County Manager David Scarborough if this was related to the other grant that they had received about the clean-up.

Assistant County Manager David Scarborough stated that this was the grant that they had received from STRAP and not the State.

Assistant County Manager David Scarborough stated that they had five contractors who applied and they interviewed two of the contractors and they selected Phelps & White.

Assistant County Manger David Scarborough went on record and stated this was due to the help of the Soil and Water Director, Vic Thompson and Vic Thompson will be the Project Manager.

Commissioner Wesson went on record to say that any funds associated with this project that are not used are to be repositioned for this County or the funds would have to be returned. That request needs to be made through the state.

Commissioner Roberson thanked Mr. Vic Thompson for all of his work with the Long Branch Project.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION to Approve the Long Branch Community Debris Removal Contract & Budget Amendment**. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

9. Award of Tall Glass of Water Project Phase I to A. R. Chesson Construction Company, Inc.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to Award the Tall Glass of Water Project Phase I to A. R. Chesson Construction Company, Inc. Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

10. Memorandum of Understanding Between Bertie County Emergency Services & Martin Community College.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the **Memorandum of Understanding Between Bertie County Emergency Services & Martin Community College**. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

CLOSED SESSION
Pursuant to NGS § 143-318.11(a)(3)

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to go in to **Closed Session**. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)

1. Facility Use Agreement for the Community Meeting Room

County Manager Vaughan stated that Commissioner Wesson had mentioned in a previous meeting the Golden Leaf Grant and the fact that it was a Community room so we the County needed to give the public access to the room.

County Manager Vaughan confirmed the statement used in the grant was “Community Meeting Room”.

Commissioner Wesson stated that our citizens are going to other Counties and using their Venues when we have a space in our County that is not being used after hours. So, it would make sense to him that the County would allow our citizens to use the Community room for functions after hours.

Commissioner Trent stated that after hearing the definition of the usage of the Community Meeting Room, his stance is that the Community Room is a Community Facility with the intentions for community use.

Commissioner Trent asked if there was a legal disadvantage to using the Community Room.

County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston stated that the County was insured. County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston stated that the County had both Sovereign immunity and insurance protection.

County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston stated that whenever you start charging a fee you have to be careful. County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston stated the Sovereign immunity is lost when a County starts making a profit, so there should be an attempt by the County management to set the usage fee at an amount that simply covers the County’s costs.

County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston stated to the Board they can use the Community Room for citizen usage. However, the County would need to have a nicely typed Facility Usage Agreement, a set of written rules that would be handed to the person using the facility and signed by the person using the facility.

Commissioner Trent asked the County Manager what his feelings were in reference to having individuals to open and close the facility.

County Manager Vaughan stated that when it comes to the scheduling of the facility Cooperative Extension could continue doing the schedule but when it comes to the setup the County would have to have someone on staff to handle the setup process.

County Manager Vaughan stated the County would have to have someone to clean the facility before and after the event.

County Manager Vaughan stated that it was also asked that someone be at the facility for the duration of the event.

County Manager Vaughan stated depending on the type of event we would have to have security provided.

County Manager Vaughan stated that they would have to have someone to collect the fees and deposits but that's something that the Finance Department could do.

Commissioner Trent asked County Manager Vaughan when it came to the technology portion could one of the County's IT staff be hired.

County Manager Vaughan stated that we only have two IT staff members.

Further discussion was had about staffing for the Community Room.

County Manager Vaughan stated that they could get together and have a draft available to be looked at by the October 3rd meeting.

The Board made a **CONSENSUS** that on the October 3rd meeting they will look at the draft and vote on the usage of the Community Room by citizens.

2. 2023 Holiday Schedule and Commissioners Meeting Schedule

County Manager Vaughan presented the Board with the 2023 Holiday Schedule and the proposed Commissioners Meeting Schedule. County Manger Vaughan asked the Board to look at it and provide him with any feedback they may have.

There was no further discussion on this item.

3. 300th Anniversary Celebration Update

County Manger Vaughan provided the Board with an update on the progress that was being made with the planning of the 300th Anniversary Celebration. County Manager Vaughan stated they were very excited about this event.

Commissioner Wesson stated that he attended the last committee meeting and he thought that everyone was doing a great job and he thought some great suggestions were made.

Commissioner Wesson also provided an update on the progress being made by the committee.

ADDED AGENDA ITEM

Commissioner Trent stated that everyone received an email in reference to the Infrastructure Authority. Commissioner Trent asked the Board if they had any objection to him bringing this up.

The Board did not have any objections.

Commissioner Trent read the email and asked why have they not been involved with this.

County Manger Vaughan stated that the initial dates did not work for him and since then he hadn't heard of anything else until one of the Commissioners forwarded it to him.

County Manger Vaughan stated that they would get a head count and they would be there for the date scheduled in October.

There was no further discussion on this item.

DISCUSSION AGENDA (D) **CONTINUED...**

4. Strategic Planning Session

The Strategic Planning Session was led by Project Consultant Robin Payne.

Project Consultant Robin Payne stated that their target for this Strategic Planning Session is Action items and they will spend a couple of hours discussing issues and needs.

Project Consultant Robin Payne stated that in the next session they will move into discussing projects.

Project Consultant Robin Payne stated that they needed to identify who their partners might be, what kind of funding do they need and where do they get this funding.

Project Consultant Robin Payne stated that they have to establish benchmarks and establish targets.

Project Consultant Robin Payne stated having an Action plan in place would allow the County to better target specific grants.

Commissioner Trent stated that the first need was housing.

The Board then discussed the importance of housing for Bertie County and the need for Workforce housing, Senior housing and low-income housing.

The Board and Project Consultant Robin Payne then begin discussing ways to address the housing issues.

The Board and Project Consultant Robin Payne then begin discussing the need for broadband in the County and the funding to have this project completed.

The Board then discussed the upgrading of the utility and sewer systems.

The Board then begin discussing the GREAT Grant, Housing Authority needs and the properties owned by the County.

The Board and Project Consultant Robin Payne discussed small businesses briefly.

The Board stated they wanted to attract more small business because small businesses help make the communities.

Commissioner Roberson asked the Board how do they use to utilize the event “Bucks for Bertie” and how was the money raised used to help with funding the schools?

The Board then discussed the Occupancy taxes and if the County was still receiving money from these industries.

The Board and Project Consultant Robin Payne further the discussion by discussing hunting and fishing in the County.

Project Consultant Robin stated at the next Strategic Planning Session they would get into visioning.

Project Consultant Robin stated that they were off to a good start with the first Strategic Planning Session and they will probably end up with a five-year plan.

The Board stated that the next Strategic Planning Session will be October 17th at 10:00 AM.

The Board thanked Project Consultant Robin Payne.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/OTHER ITEMS AS NEEDED/ADJOURNMENT

County Manager Vaughan gave the Board an update on Spectrum and the GREAT Grant.

Commissioner Trent stated that they needed in writing from Spectrum that they are not going to do the job because they cannot do the match that the County is requesting and they can move from there.

A discussion was then had about the matching of the funds by the County.

Commissioner Wesson made the point there every company that comes to the County is going to want a match.

County Manager Vaughan stated that the next applicant in line would be Roanoke Connect if the County says no to Spectrum because they only had two applicants for Bertie County.

County Manager Vaughan stated that he would provide an update to the Board once he speaks to Spectrum and the State.

There were no other Public Comments.

County Manger Vaughan stated that he went back and took a look at the Viable Utility Program and they needed to get back with them this week in terms of who will be joining. He then provided the Board with the options available.

The Board decided to attend the virtual option on October 17th from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM. The three Elected officials that chose to participate were Chairman Trent , Vice-Chair Wesson and Commissioner Roberson.

County Manager Vaughan stated that Commissioner Trent and Commissioner Wesson attended the Rural Partners Network meeting with Executive Director Reginald Speight with USDA last week.

County Manager Vaughan stated that they were sent an email as well as the municipalities requesting that they identify rural issues as well as unmet needs. They were asked to submit a Letter of Interest including what the top three priorities would be for the Counties.

The Board suggested Infrastructure (which includes Broadband), Housing and Economic Development be submitted.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to **ADJOURN** the meeting. Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

The meeting **ADJOURNED**.

John Trent, Chairman

ATTEST:

LaShonda Cartwright, Clerk to the Board