

Bertie County, North Carolina
August 7, 2023
COMMISSIONER MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met today at 6:00PM inside the Commissioners' Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald "Ron" Wesson, District I, Chairman
Michael White, District II
Corey Ballance, Sr., District III
John Trent, District IV
Ronald "Ron" Roberson, District V

Staff Present: County Manager Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager David Scarborough
County Attorney Lloyd C. Smith Jr
Clerk to the Board LaShonda Cartwright
Information Technology Director Joseph Wilkes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wesson called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Commissioners were questioned about Conflict of Interests. None indicated.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

No speakers

SPECIAL PROJECTS UPDATE BY PROJECT CONSULTANT, ROBIN PAYNE

Ms. Payne shared pictures of the recent event and signs of the shoreline stabilization projects. Representatives from the state and several public officials stopped by. Projects are nearly complete, and we are working towards final project reconciliation. We hope to be completed by the end of August. Tall Glass of Water is a historic property so from here forward we will need approval for construction activity. We recently received a \$500,000 Parks Grant which will also need approval from the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure we are not negatively impacting the area. There is a list of contract firms that work with the State Preservation Office to complete the required documentation.

A concern was noted about restrictions based upon further testing and artifacts discovered and if additional money is available to assist with the road.

Ms. Payne replied that a state person could better answer the question, but the initial need is to understand what is there first. We continue to seek grant funding for phase 2 and will follow up regarding the road.

Ms. Payne noted that she will proceed with the proposal that is covered under current grant funds.

The funding Bertie received proceeds. George Wood is working on the engineering and it is due by the end of August.

Golden Leaf has an on-site program for economically distressed communities. They have it broken into three categories. Golden Leaf would create a plan with infrastructure mapped. The letter of intent for the funding is due September 15th.

Regarding travel and tourism this month the RFP for producing the master plan. We received funding to move forward.

We discussed researching occupancy tax. NC legislation was approved allowing Bertie County to enact an occupancy tax if the board chooses. Magellan suggests forming a committee and developing a meeting to determine what a tourism development authority will look like. Outreach to the community must occur to ensure they support.

PUBLIC OFFICIAL UPDATES BY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR MITCH COOPER

Mr. Cooper stated that he does this report annually. He shared an overview of named storms and how his office can be contacted. We are a central distribution point which is ready for disasters. Bertie High School is our primary shelter along with several other schools. He shared information on the Bertie Hyper-Reach Program which is where information will be shared. He reviewed projects that he is currently working on which includes the emergency operations plan. He noted that the closing of Martin General will affect Bertie County. We are working with the hospital regarding transportation and expect an increase in use.

Commissioners noted that we may need to begin looking at land near our hospital for future expansion needed to serve the area.

REQUEST FOR NEW POSITIONS BY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR CORTNEY WARD

Ms. Ward that Medicaid expansion has been discussed for a while. It is requested to allocate two additional positions-Income Maintenance Caseworker II using Medicaid Expansion funds. Part of the funding is hold harmless. The county received over \$100,000 in state funding to support the positions.

There was discussion around the start date of October 1st and the time it takes to get people trained.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson which was seconded by Commissioner Trent, the Board unanimously approved the positions.

Ms. Ward distributed information regarding the salary schedule for the Sheriff. We need to add an unarmed bailiff that will assist a regular armed deputy. She requested the addition of a Grade 60 be added to the salary schedule. The Sheriff plans to hire a part-time position using existing funding.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson which was seconded by Commissioner Trent, the Board unanimously approved the position.

THE FINANCIAL SUMMARY BY INTERIM FINANCE OFFICER, DAVID SCARBOROUGH

Mr. Scarborough updated Commissioners on status of departmental budgets as of July 31, 2024. As this is the first month of the fiscal year, no concerns were noted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE BY DIRECTOR FRANKLIN WILLIAMS

Director Williams shared that our CAB Grant application was submitted on September 6th. The NCGS created legislation that eliminated the local match. The House has approved and now must go the Senate and Governor. The BEAD process has begun and will assist with Broadband access. The survey went well and designates sites to determine if they truly have been served. We have industries that are dealing with failed wells, and we immediately contacted our legislature to assist. We need a water line installed. The initial cost is \$4 million, and we are working with an engineering firm to update. Housing continues to be an issue. The developers have requested to work directly with landowners without county assistance.

He shared that the grant for the 911 Center had a small window. He originally indicated that it was 100% done which it is not.

The Tri-County Airport purchased a tractor and Commissioner Ballance plans to attend the next meeting.

The Mideast COG received funding to assist Counties with Broadband. Instead of paying for mapping we worked with the Rural Center for initial mapping in all five counties. We will need to do the exceptions. The same firm that worked with the Rural Center will be available for a fee.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

ABC Board

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson which was seconded by Commissioner Ballance, the Board unanimously made the appointment to the board.

Rivers East Workforce Development Board

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance which was seconded by Commissioner Robinson, the Board unanimously made the appointment to the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Tax Release Journal for August 2023 was presented for board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson which was seconded by Commissioner Balance, the board approved the Tax Release

The minutes for open and closed minutes for July 17, 2023 were presented for board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Robinson which was seconded by Commissioner Balance the board approved the minutes as presented.

Budget Amendments were presented for Board consideration.

- Budget Amendment #240-2, to accept grant award of \$2,530 to Cooperative Extension.
- Budget Amendment #24-03, to revise the HCCBG budget by \$19,054.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent which was seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the board approved the budget amendments.

A Proclamation in support of August being Child Support Awareness Month was presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson was seconded by Commissioner Balance, the board approved the proclamation.

The Home and Community Care Block Grant for Older Adults Agreement for Provisions of County Based Aging Services was presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson which was seconded by Commissioner Trent, the board approved the resolution.

The MOU for the Regional Film Commission was presented for the Boards consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance which was seconded by Commissioner Trent, the board approved the resolution.

The NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (AFP) Project Agreement was presented for the board's consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent which was seconded by Commissioner Roberson the board approved the resolution.

OTHER ITEMS

Update on the County Surplus Sale

Manager Vaughan shared the schedule for documents needed by the end of the month.

Attorney Smith noted that the contract sale items are received, and we are finalizing the terms.

Update on County Animal Shelter

Assistant Manager Scarborough noted that he reached out to multiple surrounding counties regarding shelters. Some agreed to work with us if space is available and some are in similar situations. Taking our animals to another shelter long term is not an option as all surrounding have capacity issues.

Discussion evolved regarding working with surrounding counties to build a facility to benefit multiple counties.

Update on Basketball Court at the Recreation Complex

Assistant Manager Scarborough stated that we have not completed the RFP. He noted that he has been working in Finance with the loss of the position. We currently have \$57,000 budgeted and offered to share the RFP for review.

Concern around a concrete slab versus the composite surface was mentioned. We need to be sure our scope is clear.

Update on Funding to Cover Increases for Probationary Employees

Chairman Wesson stated that the Board asked the administrative team to suggest how we find \$20,700 to fund.

Manager Vaughan noted that the DSS Director stated there is a position in her budget that she doesn't intend to fill. We can use the money from the position.

Discussion of the board participation in Community Forum at Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church on August 12, at 10am

This will be a discussion with a moderator with the hope of finding solutions. Chairman Wesson questioned an avenue to honor G.K. Butterfield.

Discussion of the proposed 2024 Meeting Schedule for the Board of Commissioners and the 2024 Holiday Schedule

The Manager asked the Board to review and approve at an upcoming meeting.

Discussion regarding the process for the Manager's Evaluation

Questions arose around if the Manager could be reviewed in June and create goals for July or if a better time is more appropriate. There was consensus to conduct the manager's evaluation at the close of the fiscal year.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Roberson asked everyone to be mindful of sharing information regarding things we have accomplished.

Commissioner Trent expressed a positive meeting with people from Perdue.

Chairman Wesson mentioned the need to figure out what we do with our opioid funding. He also noted that all should complete the broadband survey.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORTS

No Report

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORTS

The attorney provided an overview of the auction sale.

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson, the Board unanimously approved proceeding with the auctioning off of the Askewville Preschool property.

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3)(4)(6)

On a motion by Commissioner Trent which was seconded by Commissioner Roberson the Board entered closed session

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson which was seconded by Commissioner Balance the Board entered regular session

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson which was seconded by Commissioner Ballance, the Board unanimously approved amending the residency requirements for department heads to live within a 60-mile radius of Windsor, NC.

ADJOURN

By consensus of the Board the meeting was adjourned.