

Bertie County, North Carolina
September 11, 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
Michael White, District II
John Trent, District IV
Ronald "Ron" Roberson, District V

Absent: Corey Ballance, Sr., District III

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 Joseph Wilkes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wesson called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Commissioners were questioned about Conflict of Interests. None were indicated.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

No speakers

APPOINTMENTS & REPORTS

FLEET MANAGEMENT UPDATE BY CHRISSY HUFF SENIOR CLIENT MANAGER, ENTERPRISE FLEET MANAGER

Ms. Huff stated that while Bertie County was one of the ^{first} to partner with us there are other options. We obtain vehicles on your behalf based upon the state contract. The maintenance program is also available and prevents sell ups which is \$6 per vehicle per month per vehicle. Another benefit is we can go directly to the manufacturer based upon warranty issues. The second benefit is the fuel program. Bertie currently is on the WEX program. If you are on our maintenance program we manage prevention maintenance and can obtain during your fueling. WEX is the state account and provides 1% back but

she felt she could save money through better prevention maintenance. If we understand a vehicle is underutilized, we can better offer suggestions for savings.

Commissioners agreed to take a closer look at additional programs.

PEANUT BELT RPO TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE BY STEPHANIE HARMON, PEANUT BELT RPO TRANSPORTATION PLANNER

Manager Vaughan indicated that it was his understanding that Ms. Harmon seeks the board to appoint someone to the RPO.

Chairman Wesson asked if anyone had interest in serving.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent, and seconded by Commissioner White Ron Roberson was appointed to the Board.

SPECIAL PROJECTS REPORT BY PROJECT CONSULTANT ROBIN PAYNE

Ms. Payne stated that the beach mat has been received and will be attached to the base of the ramp. This is our last major purchase, and we are in the process of closing grants. We may need to look at fencing to control traffic. The River Manager position needs to be posted for the Tall Glass of Water Project, and she reviewed the job description. No date yet on the controlled burn and this Friday we will submit our broadband request. We are required to do a review of the project by the State of 120 shovel tests. It will not exceed \$125,000 for the entire project. When planning structures, we do not want to dig into a sensitive area. We need to identify funding to move forward.

Strategic Planning includes strategies around housing and industry. One is a housing partnership to create a plan with ECU to determine what we can do on various housing issues like infrastructure. The fee is \$3,300 and is in the economic development budget. Industry identification is a program through Golden Leaf which will assist in determining what we need. Destination Bertie is around travel and tourism. We received two proposals and will make a recommendation to approve. It is time to begin working on the occupancy tax.

SETTLEMENT OF 2022-2023 TAXES AND CHARGES FOR THE 2023-2024 TAXES BY JODIE RHEA, TAX ADMINISTRATOR

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Trent, the Board unanimously approved the settlement agreement.

OATH OF OFFICE (4 YEAR REAPPOINTMENT) OF TAX ADMINISTRATOR JODIE RHEA

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board unanimously approved reappointment of the Tax Administrator.

THE FINANCIAL SUMMARY BY INTERIM FINANCE OFFICER, DAVID SCARBOROUGH

Mr. Scarborough provided the monthly budgetary review of August. He explained the increase from Capital Management Trust questioned at a previous meeting. This is the money that goes to DSS and sales tax. We transfer it to our bank when needed. We have spent about 11% of our budget.

INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES & RISK MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR, LATORIA HARRELL

Director Harrell expressed her delight in being with Bertie County.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Phyllis Bogen, Rivers East Workforce Development Board

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board unanimously made the appointment to the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. The Tax Release Journal for July 2023 was presented for board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Trent the board approved the Tax Release

2. The Register of Deeds Fees Report for July and August was presented for board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner White the board approved the report as presented.

3. Budget Amendments were presented for Board consideration.

Budget Amendment #24-04, establish budget within DSS budget to reflect supplement payments for energy vendors not enrolled in direct deposit.

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

4. A Project Ordinance was presented for Board consideration.

Project Ordinance #24-01, to establish project budget for the Affordable Teachers Housing Project.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Ballance the board approved the affordable teacher housing ordinance.

5. A Project Amendment was presented for the Boards consideration.

The contract was approved in March of 22 for Tall Glass of Water Shoreline Stabilization Grant Project Amendment #24-02, to amend project budget to reflect \$113,198 Shoreline Stabilization Grant award.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Roberson the board approved the amendment.

6. An agreement for transportation services between Northeastern North Carolina Transportation Services Inc. & Bertie County Council on Aging was presented for the board consideration.

The contract was previously with New Direction.

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance and seconded by Commissioner White the board approved the agreement.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Update on the County Auction

Attorney Smith reviewed the upcoming auction process. An auction sale requires a resolution. Two resolutions are presented- one is personal, and one is real property. The auction will be on November 16th and this will be a total online auction. The contracts for the auctioneers also need to be approved.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Ballance the board approved the contracts.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Ballance the board approved the Resolution.

The Board agreed to allow the Tax Administrator and County Attorney to add specific language regarding description of the property for DSS to property and resolution.

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance which was seconded by Commissioner White the board approved the review.

2. Update on County Animal Shelter

Assistant Manager Scarborough noted that he reached out to the Sheriff's Office and County Manager in Washington County regarding sharing on the project. They noted that they can't at this time.

Manager Vaughan spoke to the Sheriff Hayes in Hertford County who oversees the animal shelter. He noted that they also need a facility but couldn't commit at this time.

Assistant Manager Scarborough shared that we have \$300,000 ARPA and 208,000 from the state. We have spent \$64,000 on the architect and \$2,000 of the \$208,000. The estimate for the shelter is \$600,000-\$750,000 and will be ready by September. The soil needs to be tested as well.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Roberson the Board approved the soil testing.

3. Proposed 2024 Meeting Schedule and Holiday Schedule

Discussed 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.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent seconded by Commissioner Ballance the board approved the schedules.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner White expressed appreciation around the film festival.

Commissioner Roberson thanked a local business.

Chairman Wesson stated that he attended the Red Carpet and it was exceptional. We need to find better ways to inform the public.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORTS

911 Communications is now under the County Manager. We need to find funding to build a facility. The 911 Director indicated that we were awarded a \$5.1 million grant with \$48,000 taken out for the portable radio grant. The county contribution is \$1.3 million to go towards the grant.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Roberson the board unanimously agreed to accept the letter of intent regarding the grant.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Kenneth Williams requested information on the fire tax. He stated that we had no water and discovered that wells are not working. We need water in the tank. There is a new restaurant that has opened. A wheelchair ramp is there without a rail and his father-in-law fell off. Nobody knows who does inspections.

Chairman Wesson noted that there were many public meetings around the fire tax. We are glad to provide additional information. The towns are responsible for their jurisdiction. The first area to start regarding the ramp is the Town of Aulander.

An entity in Bertie County stated that a vehicle was totaled several years ago, and the business didn't receive payment for the bill.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORTS

None.

CLOSED SESSION

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

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner White, the Board entered closed session

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Roberson the Board entered regular session

ADJOURN

By consensus of the Board the meeting was adjourned.