

Bertie County, North Carolina
March 4, 2024
COMMISSIONER MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a work session today at 6:00 PM inside the Commissioners' Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. 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
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 Jonathan Huddleston
Clerk to the Board LaShonda Cartwright
Information Technology Director Joseph Wilkes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

Sandra Hassell, whose address is 111 Blackbeards Lane, noted that grants were awarded to several communities. It was suggested that Bertie partner with Washington County. Washington County received a grant. The grant is due March 1st. Bertie has not submitted reports since 2018. Without the report the shelter can't apply for grants. The grant is awarded by the NC Department of Agriculture, Animal Welfare section. All the information is located on the NC Department of Agriculture website.

Rachel Bellis, a representative of PETA, shared pictures of dogs living outside without food or water. Bertie County has no ordinance or standards of care regarding basic necessities of animals.

NC Forestry shared an update on the work going on with Forest Services in Bertie County including, statistics, equipment used, services available to citizens, and the desire to hire additional staff.

APPOINTMENTS & REPORTS

POCCUPANCY TAX UPDATE BY PROJECT CONSULTANT ROBIN PAYNE

Ms. Payne indicated that a public notice is ready to go out. On April 22nd the Board of Commissioners can vote on the vacationer's tax.

FYBE'S FIBER EXPANSION UPDATE BY SARAH TINKHAM, COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Ms. Tinkham provided an update on the expansion project in Bertie County related to fiber. We currently serve over 21,000 homes with the goal of serving over 100,000 and being a premier provider. Our network exceeds the legacy networks in the area. She shared a background on the company and expressed interest in working with community partners.

Commissioner Wesson stated that mapping is needed to determine areas underserved.

Ms. Tinkham replied that she will share the request presented by Commissioner Wesson regarding ensuring all residents in underserved areas are being serviced with their engineers.

SCHEDULE 2024 DATES TO CONVENE AS BOARD OF EQUALIZATION & REVIEW BY TAX ADMINISTRATOR JODIE RHEA

Mr. Rhea shared the statutory requirements of the Board of Equalization and Review, which will convene on April 8th and April 22nd.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT BY DIRECTOR FRANKLIN WILLIAMS

Mr. Williams overviewed the CAB grant. We were contacted by the NC Economic Development Partnership regarding a project. He shared information on several other grants he plans to pursue. We continue to work to identify industrial sites. Downtown Revitalization remains important and directly assists small business owners. The Tri-County Airport Authority continues to meet and hope to have access to additional funding in the future. Affordable housing continues to be an issue for Bertie County. Mr. Merrill with ECU is assisting us with the process along with others in the consortium.

The approval of the Register of Deeds Fees Report for February 2024 was presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson, seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board unanimously approved the report as presented.

The Tax Release Journal was presented for Board consideration

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Balance, the Board unanimously approved the tax journal as presented.

Minutes for Open Session on January 8, 2024 were presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Wesson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes as presented.

Minutes for Closed Session on January 8, 2024 were presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes as presented.

Resolutions Accepting ARPA Funds for Lewiston-Woodville Community AIA was presented for Board considerations.

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson seconded by Commissioner Roberson the Board approved the resolution as presented.

Budget Amendments were presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Wesson, the Board unanimously approved the budget amendments as presented.

OTHER ITEMS

Animal Shelter Bid Update

Assistant County Manager David Scarborough updated the Board on the three bids received regarding the animal shelter RFP.

More information will be shared at the upcoming work session.

Grant Report Update for Construction of 911 Communications Facility

Mr. Scarborough stated that we received a grant for \$5,154,000 and we are responsible for the match. Once the contractor is selected, we will need to incur the entire construction cost. As the invoices arrive, we will submit reimbursements. We will need to determine where the remaining funds will come from.

The 2024 Budget Calendar was presented for Board consideration.

Commissioners work session is March 18th at 10:00 am.

Commissioners Reports

Commissioner Roberson stated that he attended an economic development session.

Commissioner Wesson noted that on March 19th, we will have a Bertie and Washington County Medicaid Expansion session. We are bringing the agencies together that touch this population along with other community partners. Many residents will qualify.

Chairman Trent stated that he met with a representative from the community college. He referenced the benefits of trade careers and the positive job market.

County Manager Reports

No Report

County Attorney Reports

No Report

CLOSED SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board unanimously moved to enter closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3)(4)(6).

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Wesson, the Board unanimously moved to enter open session.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Wesson, the meeting was adjourned.