

Bertie County, North Carolina
June 28, 2024
COMMISSIONER MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a work session today at 10:00 AM 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
Information Technology Director Joseph Wilkes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

NONE

APPOINTMENTS & REPORTS

COUNCIL ON AGING UPDATES BY DIRECTOR REBECCA STAPLETON

Director Rebecca Stapleton shared the number of citizens served with SHIP counseling. She shared the statistics regarding citizens served through the HCCBG funding. EDTAP funding assisted with senior transportation. The SCOPE process is progressing for certification and is extensive. The senior prom is this evening from 6:00 – 9:00 PM and she welcomed commissioners to attend. She indicated that we hope to expand services. She extended her appreciation for the support.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATES BY DIRECTOR FRANKLIN WILLIAMS

Mr. Williams stated that as a result of various work sessions, a grant was applied for the E911 center for \$1.6 million, which he feels will be successful. We are also seeking funding for a wellness center. Marketing potential industrial sites remains a priority. We have identified and loaded pictures on the state website. We had three hits from the state which are Project Panama, Project Strong, and Project Optimus Prime which Bertie County is completing. He stated that he is in regional meetings with the task force regarding broadband. Most counties our size do not have the \$400,000 match and it is hopeful that the requirement will go away. There is a meeting on July 18th by the Rural Center to provide an update. ~~Regarding~~ ~~in regard to~~ the animal shelter, he suggested wrapping it into a capacity building grant or looking at more affordable plans. He continues to work with state and federal officials to seek funding. Our Tri-County Airport hopes to upfit the runway and hangers. In previous years other airports received funding, and we did not. The Economic Development Commission continues to focus on jobs. Project Sparkle is still on track and with a commitment NCDOT will proceed with improvements.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS & DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR DAVID LAFON

Mr. Lafon stated that there were 14 named systems. The peak day for hurricanes is in September. We have planned for shelter and staffing issues should storms arise in Bertie County. The purchase of fire trucks was mentioned along with the need. EMS calls were reviewed. The population is aging, and we continue to have staffing issues. We received two used ambulances, and he thanked the Manager for flexibility. He expressed the need to increase salaries.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

ABC Board, William M Freeman

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Wesson, the Board approved the reappointment of W. Michael Freeman to the ABC Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve Register of Deeds Fees Report-May 2024.

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

Approve Agreement for Transportation Services with Choanoke Public Transportation Authority

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

Approve Contractual Agreement with Interim Healthcare-Morris Group, Inc.

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

Approve Food Services Contract with Trumps Restaurant

On a motion by Commissioner Balance and seconded by Commissioner Wesson, the Board unanimously approved the contracts with additions recommended by the attorney.

Budget Amendments were presented for Board consideration.

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

Approve the FY2024-25 Budget & Schedule of Fees

Discussion continued around the need to improve salaries with emergency services and funding for the school system. Taxes can be raised, emergency transportation reduced, or adjust school funding. It was questioned if the current budget can be used as an interim and there was discussion of increasing the tax rate 6.5 cents.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Balance, the Board approved the budget as presented with an increase of 6.5 cents with a 3-2 vote.

Those voting for the motion were Commissioners Roberson, Trent, and Ballance.

Voting against the motion were Commissioners White and Wesson.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Next Meeting Date - July 8th at 6:00 pm

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board unanimously approved amending the meeting schedule from July 1st to the 8th.

Opioid Settlement Funds Meeting June 28th at 3pm, Community Meeting Room

2024 NaCo Annual Conference, July 12-15, Tampa Florida

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Roberson stated that the all-star tournament is being held and encouraged support.

Commissioner Ballance stated that the Albemarle Health System seeks another member from Bertie County.

County Manager Report

The Opioid Settlement meeting will be later today. He welcomed everyone attending as discussion around proposed services will be discussed.

CLOSED SESSION

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

ADJOURNMENT

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