

**Windsor, North Carolina
April 7, 2025
REGULAR SESSION**

The Bertie County Commissioners met in Regular Session 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: Chair, Corey Ballance, Sr., District III
Vice-Chair, Lewis Hoggard, III, District I
Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V
Vivian Saunders, District IV
Michael White, District II

Staff Present: County Manager, Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager, David Scarborough
County Attorney, Lloyd C. Smith, Jr.
Finance Director, Willie Mack Carawan
Clerk to the Board, Tonya Davis
Information Technology Director, Joe Wilkes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ballance called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chair Hoggard gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jean Kozachuk stated while attending the Commissioner meeting via Zoom, people can not hear what is being said during the meetings. The audio is very low and the sound keeps cutting out. Mrs. Kozachuk asked for an update on the Emergency Services for the Merry Hill area.

APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Oath of Office for Board of Equalization and Review

An oath of office was administered to the Board of Commissioners by Clerk to the Board, Tonya Davis, who were sworn in as members of the Board of Equalization and Review.

2. Convening of Board of Equalization and Review

Vice-Chair Hoggard made the **MOTION** to convene the Board of Equalization and Review. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

There were no appeals to be heard. The Board of Equalization and Review will recess until April 21, 2025.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to recess the Board of Equalization and Review until April 21, 2025. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

The Board entered back into Regular Session.

3. NCDOT Presentation of Final Draft of Bertie Count Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Amanda Killian from NCDOT presented the final draft of the Bertie County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The plan, which updates the 2013 version, covers all modes of transportation and was developed with input from local stakeholders. The CTP includes recommendations for highway improvements, including upgrading US 17 to interstate standards and adding a roundabout at NC 11 and NC 308. Bike and pedestrian recommendations are also included, with sidewalk expansions in several towns. The Commissioners expressed concerns about the proposed roundabout due to heavy truck traffic. Amanda suggests tabling the adoption of the plan until the next meeting to allow for further discussion and potential changes.

4. Solar Project in Bertie County by TED Renewables

Rory Huntly with TED Renewables stated that they are based out of Kansas City, Kansas and they are currently developing 32 solar projects in 13 states. Mr. Huntly stated that TED Renewables believes in engaging and supporting the communities that host our projects, “We know that true long-term value is created through collaboration and working together. Our dedication is responsible land development and a thoughtful approach to delivering renewable project benefits to local communities.” Mr. Huntly provided a brief description of the development timeline for the project up to 6 years, site surveys and due diligence, solar design standards, project opportunity, benefits of the solar project, and the clean energy plan.

5. Windsor Township development Update by Ronald Wesson

Ronald Wesson informed the Board that the Windsor Township Development Commission was established in 1963 and manages a revolving loan fund for businesses in the Windsor Townships I and II. Mr. Wesson, the current chair, is resigning effective June 2, 2025. The commission currently has over \$200,000 in cash available for loans and needs at least three board members to operate. Mr. Wesson urges the County Commissioners to appoint new members quickly to continue supporting local businesses and prevent the funds from reverting to the state legislature.

6. Remote Control Car Drag Racing by Brittany Riddick

Brittany Riddick presented a proposal for bringing remote control car drag racing to Bertie County. She highlighted the achievements of a local driver and outlined the potential benefits for the community, including tourism and revenue. Riddick suggested using the Bertie Recreational Complex parking lot as a possible venue and emphasized the educational value for youth, including STEM activities and life skills. The Commissioners expressed an interest in the idea, particularly for its potential to engage at-risk youth.

7. ABC Distribution of Funds by Mike Freeman

ABC Board Chair, Mike Freeman presented the Board with an ABC Distribution of Funds check in the amount of \$36,990.00.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. Bertie Attainment Coalition Executive Board

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to appoint Commissioner Vivian Saunders to the Bertie Attainment Coalition Executive Board. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

2. Martin Community College Board of Trustees

The Board tabled this item until further information was available.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve Resolution to apply for the NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program – CAMA Land Use Plan Update Grant and the Letter of Intent

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to approve the Resolution to apply for the NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program – CAMA Land Use Plan Update Grant and the Letter of Intent. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

2. Approve February 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Vice-Chair Hoggard made the **MOTION** to approve the February 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

*****OTHER ITEMS*****
DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)

1. Discussion of Aulander Elementary School Property with Aulander Commissioners, Mayor, and Finance Officer

The County Commissioners discussed the potential transfer of a school property to the Town of Aulander. They clarified that the County only recently voted to acquire the property and has not yet taken ownership. The Mayor of Aulander presented ideas for using the property, including as a town hall, senior center, and emergency shelter. The Commissioners expressed support for Aulander's plans but note they need to make a decision that benefits all county taxpayers. They discussed including conditions in any transfer agreement to ensure the property is used as intended or title would revert to the County. The Commissioners emphasized the importance of determining if Aulander can afford to maintain the property before moving forward.

2. TGOW Discussion by Robin Payne

The Commissioners discussed two proposals for the Bertie Beach project. First, they discussed the relocation of the stage and pavilion to new positions, with the stage facing away from the setting sun. Second, they discussed applying for an \$80,000 grant from the Coastal Area Management Authority to improve the beach walkway and plant cypress trees. The Commissioners also plan to finalize the official name for Bertie Beach at a future meeting.

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to approve the relocation of the stage and pavilion at Bertie Beach. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to allow Robin Payne to submit a grant application for the \$80,000 grant from the Coastal Area Management Authority to improve the beach walkway and plant cypress trees. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

3. Basketball Court Update by David Scarborough

David Scarborough provided the Board with the most recent cost to construct the basketball court. The Board discussed moving forward with negotiations to complete the basketball court project, reallocating \$41,387 from the animal shelter fund to cover the increased cost of \$41,387.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to allow Mr. Scarborough to move forward with the negotiations and a contract with the lowest bidder to complete the basketball court project. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

4. Non-Emergency Transport Discussion

County Manager Vaughan provided an overview of the profit and loss trend for Non-Emergency Transport Services since 2015, showing consistent losses in most years. Based on this financial data, County Manager Vaughan recommended ending Non-Emergency Transport as a standalone department and transitioning employees to existing vacant EMS positions. The Board discussed the recommendation, with Commissioners expressing concern about the ongoing financial losses but also the need to ensure continued services for dialysis patients and job security for employees. After deliberation, the Board unanimously decided to end Non-Emergency Transport Services

effective June 30, 2025, with plans to reevaluate the budget and potential employee transitions during upcoming budget sessions.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to end Non-Emergency Transport Services effective June 30, 2025. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a 5-0 vote.

COMMISSIONERS’ REPORTS

Commissioner Roberson

Commissioner Roberson stated that the reasons behind the county's financial struggles, attributing it to the loss of non-emergency transport services and the subsequent increase in costs. He also mentioned the need to protect citizens and provide better services.

Vice-Chair Hoggard

Vice-Chair Hoggard reminded the Board that the Mid-East Commission’s Banquet will be held on April 17, 2025 in the Cooperative Extension Meeting Room.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White reminded the Board that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction will be at Windsor Elementary School on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 from 11:00AM until 1:00PM.

Commissioner Saunders

Commissioner Saunders thanked the EMS and NET staff for their hard work.

Chair Ballance

Chair Ballance thanked the Sheriff’s Department for their service during the over-dose incident. Chair Balance applauded their performance and quick response.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT

County Manager echoed Commissioner Saunders thoughts on thanking the EMS and NET staff.

ATTORNEY REPORT

County Attorney Smith had no report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ronald Wesson stated that he feels that the Board is making a mistake by ending the Non-Emergency Transport Service.

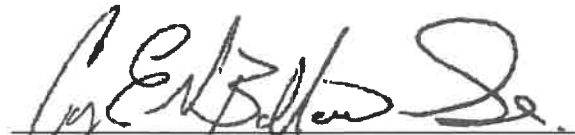
CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to enter into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3)(4)(6). The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Vice-Chair Hoggard. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.


Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to re-enter into open session. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.


Chair Corey Ballance, Sr.
Bertie County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:


Tonya R. Davis, Clerk to the Board