

**Windsor, North Carolina
May 5, 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
Assistant County Attorney, Jonathan Huddleston
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

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Laura Orsini raised an important question about the availability of a County Calendar for events in Bertie County. Mrs. Orsini highlighted that there are numerous events overlapping due to the absence of a centralized calendar. Mrs. Orsini proposed that the creation of such a calendar, where all events could be listed, would prevent scheduling conflicts. She expressed her willingness to lead the development and management of the calendar if necessary.

Chair Ballance asked the Board to make a motion to add TED Renewables to the agenda under Appointments and Reports.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to revise the agenda adding TED Renewables to Appointments and Reports. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Convene as the Board of Equalization and Review

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

The board convened as the Board of Equalization and Review but adjourned with no appeals to consider.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to adjourn as the Board of Equalization and Review. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

The Board entered back into Regular Session.

2. Introduction of the new Assistant Finance Director, Joseph Wallace

Finance Director, Willie Mack Carawan, introduced the new Assistant Finance Officer, Joseph Wallace, to the Board and staff present. The Board welcomed Mr. Wallace to Bertie County.

3. Update on the Historic Hope Plantation Activities by Turner Sutton

Turner Sutton provided an update of the activities and events that the Historic Hope Plantation services. Mr. Sutton stated that the Historic Hope has 4,000 Facebook followers and 250 on Instagram to date. Mr. Sutton informed the Board that all programs at the Historic Hope are free of charge to all Bertie County students. The Historic Hope has 3.2 miles of trails, a picnic area, an annual yard sale, in February is the annual Black History month program, and a haunted forest in October.

4. Presentation of the JCPC Funding Plan by David Nunnery

David Nunnery presented the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) funding plan for fiscal year 2025-26, with \$110,000 in state funding and \$10,400 in county funding. Mr. Nunnery informed the Board that Annie Wilson, Bertie County Register of Deeds, is the newly appointed Chair to the JCPC Board. Ms. Wilson stated that the JCPC Board has an open position and asked the Board for nominations.

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

5. Presentation of Educational Update on Roanoke-Chowan Community College by Dr. Murray Williams

Dr. Williams provided a presentation to the Board that included FY2022 through FY2024 percentages of RCCC graduates from Bertie County. In two of the last three years, Bertie County students exceeded the college's overall transfer performance rate. In 2024, Bertie County students exceeded the college's overall first year progression rate. In 2023, Bertie County students exceeded the college's overall completion (graduation) rates. Dr. Williams stated that since FY2019, Bertie County has contributed \$55,000 to the college's county budget annually, which represents 3.93% of the total budget. Dr. Williams asked if Bertie County would consider increasing its contribution to the community college in next year's budget to equal the percentage of students served.

The RCCC FY2025-2026 budget request for the three counties (Bertie, Hertford, and Northampton) is \$1,924,600. In FY2023-2024, Bertie County students made up 17% of the college's enrollment. A 17% contribution to the college's budget would be \$237,836. Dr. Williams also asked the Board for a contribution to the Roanoke-Chowan Community College Foundation for scholarships for Bertie County students in the amount of \$25,000.

6. Presentation of the 2024 Trillium Annual Report by Bobbie Lowe

Bobby Lowe, the Regional Vice President of Trillium, presentation provided an update on Trillium Health Resources, a public health plan serving 46 counties in North Carolina. Mr. Lowe reports that Trillium is the largest of four tailored plans in terms of county coverage, though not in population. From July to December, 80,000 people received services across their counties, primarily for mental health, totaling about \$802 million in behavioral health services. Mr. Lowe highlighted Trillium's local connections, regional operations, and community engagement efforts, including upcoming town halls to gather feedback. In Bertie County specifically, 491 people are managed by Trillium under the tailored plan, with nearly 502 people receiving services from July to December.

7. Sheriff's Office Updates by Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin

Sheriff Tyrone Ruff provided an update on the Bertie County Sheriff's Office, introducing new staff members Lieutenant Jacob Parker and Lieutenant Brian Soria. Deputy Danielle Milton was presented with a life-saving certificate for her actions in saving an unresponsive person. The Sheriff reports a decrease in violent crimes, overdose calls, and breaking and entering incidents in the county. He also discusses efforts to shut down illegal gaming machines and target tobacco stores selling counterfeit items to children. The sheriff mentioned the acquisition of a new K-9 unit for the department.

8. TED Renewables

Tom Terrell, Attorney with Fox Rothschild, representing Sumac Solar thanked the Board for adding TED Renewables to the agenda. Mr. Terrell stated that Sumac is an eighty-watt solar farm and is located at the corner of Morning and Woodard Road in Windsor, NC. This is a Dominion Energy project that has been under development for eight years and has a tentative completion date of 2027. The project has been approved by the North Carolina Utility Commission. It is fully leased with five Bertie County property owners that have been receiving regular lease payments for eight years. The property size is around 1,000 acres. Dominion Energy has now given consent to start purchasing equipment and will be entering into

contracts. Mr. Terrell stated that he will now be contacting Traci White, Bertie County Planning and Inspections Director, for a simple letter that acknowledges Common Law Vested Rights.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. Martin Community College Board of Trustees

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to appoint Commissioner Michael White and Vice-Chair Lewis Hoggard, III to the Martin Community College Board of Trustees. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Proclamation Recognizing May 4 through May 10, 2025 as Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners Week

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to approve the Proclamation recognizing May 4 through May 10, 2025 as Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners Week. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

2. Approve February 24, 2025 Work Session Minutes

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the February 24, 2025 Work Session Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

3. Approve March 17, 2025 Work Session Minutes

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the March 17, 2025 Work Session Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Vice-Chair Hoggard. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

4. Approve the March 2025 Register of Deeds Fees Report

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the March 2025 Register of Deeds Report. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

5. Approve the Basketball Court Construction Contract

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to approve the Basketball Court Construction Contract with Sports Court Carolina Inc. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

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

1. Discussion of Meeting Dates

The Board of Commissioners discussed and approved changes to several upcoming meeting dates. They moved the May 19th work session to May 14th at 10:00 AM, changed the June 2nd meeting and budget public hearing to June 9th at 6:00 PM, and reschedule the July 14th meeting to July 7th at 6:00 PM. The board also noted that additional budget work sessions will be scheduled after the budget presentation on May 14th, 2025.

Vice-Chair Hoggard made the **MOTION** to approve the meeting date changes and times. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

2. Status of Bid Process for Property – 1008 N. King Street, Windsor, NC 27983

County Manager Vaughan discussed the status of the bid process with the Board for the property at 1008 North King Street, Windsor. County Manager reminded the Board that an offer of \$75,000 had been received. After placing an advertisement of Notice of Negotiated Offer to Purchase Property in the Bertie Ledger and Roanoke Chowan News Herald, no upset bids were received by the May 5, 2025 deadline.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to accept the \$75,000 offer to purchase the property at 1008 N. King Street, Windsor, NC 27983. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

3. Animal Shelter Update

David Scarborough informed the Board that the contract with Bill Daggett ended in December 2024. Mr. Scarborough asked the Board if they wished to renew the contract or do they prefer to not move forward with the construction of a new animal shelter at this time until more funds become available. Mr. Scarborough informed the Board that there is another option that they could consider, a prefab commercial kennel. The proposal would include a concrete slab, water, and electrical connections. The cost for this project was estimated to be around \$250,000 to \$300,000. The Board asked Mr. Scarborough to get some bid proposals for a prefab commercial kennel.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Roberson

Commissioner Roberson stated that Chief Justice, Paul Newby made an appearance at the launching of E-Courts in Bertie County that was held on April 28, 2025.

Vice-Chair Hoggard

Vice-Chair Hoggard stated that the former building of Grandma's Kitchen in Roxobel is available if anyone is interested in opening a small restaurant. Vice-Chair Hoggard expressed his concerns of the amount of trash along Francis Mill Road and Republican Road.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White reminded the Board of Bertie High School's Commencement exercise that will be held on Saturday, May 31, 2025.

Commissioner Saunders

Commissioner Saunders stated that she had the honor of speaking at the old St. Frances Methodist Church in Woodville for its last service. The church has not had a service in 35 years. Commissioner Saunders stated that the church is listed on the national registry which was built in 1842 and a couple has purchased the church and cemetery and will begin renovations of the church to turn it into a house.

Chair Ballance

Chair Ballance congratulated Barry Anderson on his retirement from Bertie County as he served 21 years.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT

County Manager Vaughan provided information on some community events in Bertie County. First, the Mid-East Commission held their Annual Meeting at the Community Meeting Room on April 17, 2025 and Mayor of Askewville, Gloria Bryant was nominated President to the Mid-East Commission. Bertie County Special Olympics was held on April 29, 2025 and the NAACP Freedom Banquet was held on Saturday, April 24, 2025.

ATTORNEY REPORT

Assistant County Attorney Huddleston had no report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Tabitha Miller, President of Martin Community College, stated that she would like to be added to a future agenda so that she may provide the Board with some updates from Martin Community College.

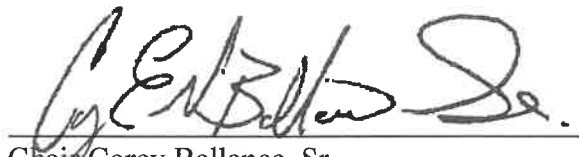
CLOSED SESSION

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 Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

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

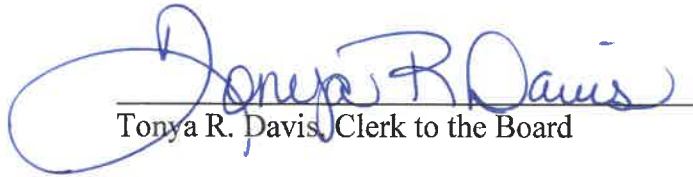
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. 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