

Bertie County, North Carolina  
June 12, 2025  
COMMISSIONERS' WORK SESSION

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a Work Session on June 12, 2025 at 10:00AM inside the Commissioners Meeting Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. 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  
Finance Director, Willie Mack Carawan  
County Attorney, Lloyd C. Smith, Jr.  
Clerk to the Board, Tonya Davis  
Information Technology Director, Joseph Wilkes

**CONVENE MEETING FROM JUNE 9, 2025**

Chair Ballance asked for a motion to go into Closed Session.

**CLOSED SESSION**

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

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

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

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**DISCUSSION**

The Board reviewed various budget reduction proposals across departments, including travel expenses, overtime costs, and potential employee compensation adjustments, while also discussing

the need to explore economic development opportunities to generate new revenue streams for the county.

The Board discussed budget cuts to address a deficit of \$215,000, identifying potential savings of \$53,000 through departmental budget adjustments. Commissioner White presented findings and recommendations for budget adjustments, including reducing the lobbyist contract by \$22,000, though questions were raised about whether to discontinue the service entirely given a signed contract through December. The Board also discussed cutting the Register of Deeds travel budget from \$5,000 to \$2,000 or \$3,000 to save additional funds. The Board reviewed travel spending by the finance department staff and considered reducing its budget from \$1,000 to \$500.

The Board had concerns particularly in the Emergency Management Services department, which had \$254,000 in overtime expenses. The discussion emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate funding for Emergency Services. EMS Director, John Rawls, acknowledged that while some cuts were necessary, further reductions could impact the county's ability to respond to unexpected events, with the fund balance serving as a potential backup source.

Commissioner White identified several areas where cuts could be made, including maintenance overtime, travel expenses, and departmental supplies. The Commissioners discussed proposals reducing the maintenance overtime budget to \$15,000, cutting travel budgets in various departments, and eliminating the Strategic Development Fund. The discussion also touched on the need to review the vehicle usage policies for county employees who drive county cars to their homes outside the county. The Board emphasized the importance of monitoring overtime usage and suggested implementing a flex-time system to reduce unnecessary overtime.

The Board discussed budget balancing without pay raises, considering a 2% increase would cost \$250,000 including benefits, or a \$206,000 one-time \$1,000 bonus for 213 employees. They reviewed 14.5 budgeted vacancies across departments, with a proposal to freeze 7 positions to help fund either a 2% salary increase or bonuses, though some positions like Cooperative Extension are partially funded by state.

The board discussed budget options for county employees, with three main proposals: balancing the budget at \$81,419, implementing Commissioner Robinson's recommendation of \$330,000 plus 2% COLA, or a \$206,000 1% COLA increase. After debate, they agreed to aim for a \$1,000 one-time stipend for employees on June 30th, pulling from available funds, while acknowledging the need to address long-term budget sustainability.

Commissioner White opposed providing raises due to budget constraints, while other commissioners expressed support for giving county employees a raise comparable to state employees, who are proposed to receive a 1.25% increase. The discussion highlighted the tension between balancing the budget and supporting employee compensation in a challenging economic environment.

The Board discussed the need to update technology equipment and decided to maintain the current budget for that department. The Board agreed to reduce for the Emergency Management Services departmental supplies and travel by \$3,000 each.

## CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to enter into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3)(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 Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a 5-0 vote.

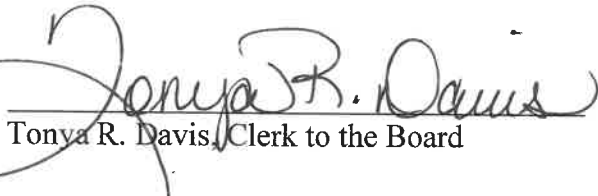
## RECESS

Commissioner Saunders made a **MOTION** to recess the meeting until June 16, 2025 at 4:00 PM. 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