

Windsor, North Carolina
December 15, 2014
Department Head/Commissioners Meet & Greet

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met with County Department Heads on Monday, December 15, 2014 inside the Roanoke Cashie River Center located at 112 W. Water Street, Windsor, NC. The following Department Heads and Board members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald D. Wesson, Chairman
Tammy A. Lee, Vice-Chairman
John Trent
Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore
Stewart White

Absent: None

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Information Systems Administrator Scott Pearce
Finance Director William Roberson
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
USDA NRSC Director Diane Cowand
Department of Social Services Director Linda Speller
Cooperative Extension Director Richard Rhodes
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Planning Director Traci White
Water Department Superintendent Ricky Spivey
Utility Customer Service Manager Connie Coburn
Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe
Register of Deeds Annie Wilson
Board of Elections Director Sheila Holloman
Parks and Recreation Director Donna Mizelle
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Sheriff John Holley

Chairman Wesson welcomed all of those present, and stated that this meeting was being held to hear feedback, comments, and concerns from County Department Heads regarding each of their respective areas.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wesson gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES AND DISCUSSION

Chairman Wesson opened the meeting by emphasizing the importance of communication and dialogue between the Board, the County Manager, and Department Heads.

The County Manager provided an updated outline of strategic initiatives and pending items under review by the Board, plus general governance items to discuss in the coming months in preparation for the FY 15-16 budget process.

There was a general, brief discussion about the current state of various departments, and the Board addressed any concerns as they were brought forth.

Dinner was also provided.

RECESS

Chairman Wesson recessed the meeting until 7:00pm in the Commissioners Room located at 106 Dundee Street in Windsor.

Ronald D. Wesson, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board

**Windsor, North Carolina
December 15, 2014
Regular Meeting**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners reconvened for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00pm on Monday, December 15, 2014 inside the Commissioners Room located at 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. The following Board members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald D. Wesson, Chairman
 Tammy A. Lee, Vice-Chairman
 John Trent
 Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore
 Stewart White

Absent: None

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
 Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham
 Information Systems Administrator Scott Pearce
 Network Administrator Joe Wilkes
 Finance Director William Roberson
 Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
 Department of Social Services Director Linda Speller
 Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
 Register of Deeds Annie Wilson

Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Thadd White of Bertie Ledger-Advance were both present from the media.

Chairman Wesson welcomed all of those present, and thanked them for their attendance.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Trent gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments during this section.

APPOINTMENTS

Board of Education report – Strategic Priorities for BCPS – Superintendent Elaine White

Due to technical difficulties, Chairman Wesson deferred this item until later in the meeting.

CONSENT

Regular Session minutes from 12-1-14

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the Regular Session minutes from 12-1-14. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Closed Session minutes from 12-1-14

After a brief discussion, Vice Chairman Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the Closed Session minutes from 12-1-14. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Community Meeting Schedule for 2015

County Manager Sauer informed the Board that a proposed Community Meeting Schedule was located in their agenda packet. Mr. Sauer requested that the Board review it, and if there were no changes to be made, approval would be needed to inform the public.

Mr. Sauer also reiterated that the Board was at liberty to modify dates and times of the regular session meetings in 2015, if desired.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the proposed 2015 Community Meeting schedule. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

After some discussion, Commissioner White proposed a new start time of 4:00 pm for meetings on the first Monday of each month. Meetings on the third Monday would remain unchanged with a start time of 7:00 pm.

Commissioner White made a **MOTION** for a new start time of 4:00pm for all meetings held on the first Monday of each month. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The newly approved Community Meeting schedule and meeting times read as follows:

2015 MEETING SCHEDULE - BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS			
Meeting Date	Time	Meeting Area	Meeting Location
1/5/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
TUESDAY 1/20/2015*	7:00 PM	Aulander	Aulander Community Building, 116 S. Commerce Street, Aulander, NC
2/2/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
2/16/15	7:00 PM	Powellsville	Powellsville Town Hall, 106 E. Main Street, Powellsville, NC
3/2/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
3/16/15	7:00PM	Askeville	Askeville Town Hall, 105 S. Railroad Street, Askeville, NC
4/6/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
4/20/15	7:00 PM	Kelford	Kelford Community Building, 107 Broadway Street, Kelford, NC
5/4/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
5/18/15	7:00 PM	Colerain	Colerain Volunteer Fire Department Training Room, 106 N. Main Street, Colerain, NC
6/1/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
6/15/15	7:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
7/6/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
7/20/15	7:00 PM	Indian Woods	Blue Jay Fire Department, 1351 Indian Woods Road, Windsor, NC
8/3/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
8/17/15	7:00 PM	Midway	Midway Community Building, 112 NC 45 N, Merry Hill
TUESDAY 9/8/2015*	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
9/21/15	7:00 PM	Roxobel	Roxobel Community Building, 211 E. Church Street, Roxobel, NC
10/5/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
10/19/15	7:00 PM	Lewiston-Woodville	Perdue Farms, Lewiston-Woodville, 3539 Governors Road Lewiston-Woodville, 27849
11/2/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
11/16/15	7:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
12/7/15	4:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC
12/21/15	7:00 PM	Commissioners Room	106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC

If there are any questions regarding this calendar, please call Clerk to the Board, Sarah S. Tinkham, at (252) 794-6110.
This schedule is subject to change. Please visit the County website (<http://co.bertie.nc.us>) to receive information about cancellations or meeting location changes. All meetings are scheduled on Mondays unless denoted with an asterick (*).

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the Register of Deeds Fees Report for November 2014. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Tax Department Error Ledger – November 2014

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the Tax Department Error Ledger for November 2014. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Board of Education report – Strategic Priorities for BCPS – Superintendent Elaine White

Superintendent of Bertie County Public Schools, Elaine White, acknowledged members of the Board of Education in attendance, as well as the County Commissioners.

Bertie County Schools Superintendent Elaine White provided the Board of Commissioners with a power point presentation of strategic priorities entitled Vision 2020.

First, the Superintendent reminded the Commissioners of the December 2013 correspondence from the Board of Education offering the 3.26 acre property at 222 County Farm Road for what has been determined to be a fair market price of \$300,000.

Mrs. White explained that any time the Board of Education disposes of school property, the NC General Statutes require that the County has the first right of refusal.

Mrs. White reported that the Board of Education is prepared to reduce the sale price to \$150,000 with payments over multiple fiscal years.

Superintendent White further explained that the short term goal is to move the Central Administration offices from the current County Farm Road location to the campus of the former high school, which will be designated the Bertie County Central Services Complex.

The school board's vision also encompasses several uses of this facility including: automotive technical classes, construction trades training, a culinary, hospitality and tourism curriculum, HVAC certification, the newly established Emergency Medical Technician cadet program in conjunction with Bertie County EMS and Roanoke Chowan Community College, Albemarle Smart Start and its Transformation Zone initiative, a Professional Development Center, leased space for the Open Door Community Church in the little theatre, exceptional children classroom space, and a community health center and fitness program.

Mrs. White also updated the Board regarding the recent acquisition of the former Builders Discount Warehouse and the conversion of this facility to a vehicle maintenance and bus garage. Due to budget concerns this project will be developed in phases and the target cost for renovations is \$300,000.

Superintendent White closed her remarks by emphasizing that the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education must continue to collaborate and work together for a “better Bertie.” Chairman Wesson commented that the two boards have more opportunities to work together than issues to divide them.

Chairman Wesson suggested that the bus garage be considered as a joint venture to maintain both county and school vehicles. He also encouraged Mrs. White to be prepared to answer questions from the community about the need for the new high school, while we are planning to continue to use the former high school campus for various activities.

The Superintendent responded by reminding the Board that conditions at the former high school campus were not able to serve the large number of students, but the facility can accommodate programming with small numbers of students and other participants.

Chairman Wesson concurred stating that the County’s future development should be based on using current assets that we currently have, just as the Superintendent has described for the former high school.

Commissioner Bazemore stated that the Superintendent’s proposal was a great idea, and Commissioner Trent commented that the improvements by Mr. Bond and his staff were excellent work.

Commissioner Lee commented that the proposed central services complex is a wonderful idea, and Commissioner White commended Mrs. White for having a great vision for her effort to train our future workforce.

Chairman Wesson noted that he felt it was appropriate to move forward with considering the acquisition of the schools board’s central administrative building and the relocation of the Sheriff’s Department to this location.

After some additional discussion, Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to enter into negotiations for the purchase of this building. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

DISCUSSION

Economic Development – discuss local business opportunities and the proposed Regional Partnership

Economic Development Director, Steve Biggs, approached the Board with an opportunity to join the Northeast Commission.

The Commission is responsible for providing Economic Development opportunities as well as to discuss strategies on attracting new businesses to the region.

Mr. Steve Biggs, Economic Development Director, reviewed the legislative history of State funding for regional economic development partnerships and described Bertie County's participation in the entity known as North Carolina's Northeast Commission comprised sixteen counties.

Mr. Biggs also explained the recent efforts of the Northeast Commission to reconfigure itself in light of the North Carolina General Assembly's elimination of state funding.

Mr. Biggs described the discussions among the county economic developers in the region and reported that two counties, Halifax and Hertford, had approved resolutions declining to participate in the proposed Northeast Alliance.

Mr. Biggs shared handouts describing the region's geographic makeup and discussed options being considered in various counties.

After the Board's discussion, Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to support the proposed resolution declining to participate in the new Northeast Alliance configuration and to seek the return of funds earmarked for Bertie County and to review what authority these funds were reallocated without approval from the County. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Mr. Biggs also reported on the local employment opportunities for Bertie residents seeking jobs that provide benefits. Perdue Farms, Inc. in Lewiston is hiring and the Bertie Correctional facility has in excess of seventy current openings.

Mr. Biggs emphasized the continued importance of the local employment office, now listed as NC Works, which will assist employers with marketing and screening applications.

The Board also discussed the local workforce in Bertie County that has been utilized by the contractors building solar farm projects, and that these projects will continue in the future.

Review and consider the Bertie County Child Support Services Amendment currently under review by the County Attorney

Chairman Wesson recognized County Attorney Lloyd Smith to discuss his thoughts about this item.

County Attorney Smith stated that this contract amendment places a large burden on the County specifically regarding sensitive federal tax information.

Mr. Smith recommended that additional wording be added to the contract to state that YoungWilliams must take as many precautions as possible to safe guard such sensitive information in their electronic system.

Ultimately, Mr. Smith stated that he did not feel this document was ready for approval, but that it was a work in progress. He also said he and County manager Saurer would be contacting other counties to learn what they were doing regarding this amendment.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Commissioner Trent informed all of those present that work on the boat ramp on Weeping Mary Road was due to start on January 1, 2015.

Commissioners had no further remarks at this time.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer thanked the Board for their time at the Department Head and Commissioners meeting to discuss program opportunities and priorities for next year's budget.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

The County Attorney gave no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments during this section.

ADJOURN

Chairman Wesson adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.