

**Windsor, North Carolina**  
**December 7, 2015**  
**Work Session**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for at Work Session at 2:00pm at 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald "Ron" Wesson, District I  
Stewart White, District II  
Tammy A. Lee, District III  
John Trent, District IV  
Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Absent: None

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer  
Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham  
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs  
Parks & Recreation Director Donna Mizelle  
Finance Officer William Roberson

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wesson called the meeting to order, and thanked those present for their attendance.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chairman Lee led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

At this time, the Board allowed for County Manager Sauer to go over various pending matters while waiting for the session's presenters to arrive.

### **In-Line Submersible Pump – Roxobel**

County Manager Sauer reported that installation was currently in progress for the temporary in-line submersible pump and that Water Superintendent, Ricky Spivey, and members of Green Engineering were overseeing that process.

The pump will be operating at 190 gallons per minute, and it will take several hours for the entire tank to reach full capacity.

Mr. Sauer also discussed the leaking fire hydrant on the Town's side of the interconnect and replacement costs, which will be covered by the Town of Roxobel.

### **Lewiston Water Customer Concerns**

County Manager Sauer reiterated the recommendation by Vice Chairman Bazemore for the County hosting a town hall meeting for the citizens of Lewiston-Woodville to discuss the transition of town to county water.

Mr. Sauer reported that a number of complaints had been received, and that it could be useful to have this be the only topic of discussion at a town hall meeting in collaboration with the Town Commissioners of Lewiston so that customers would be able to receive answers to their questions regarding the cost of water, as well as for the sewage and trash collection fees.

### **Calendar Updates**

Additionally, the Board discussed various calendar updates including a proposed date for the Lewiston-Woodville Town Hall meeting.

The date of January 5<sup>th</sup> was proposed, and the date will be fully verified upon review by the Town and when a location can be secured.

## **Bertie County Public Schools – Facility Needs Survey and Long Range Funding Plan**

Mr. Sauer reported that the County had recently received the 2015-2016 Facility Needs Survey and Long Range Funding Plan from the Bertie County Public School System. Copies were distributed to the Board.

The survey is conducted every 5 years, and NC General Statutes require approval from the County Commissioners. However, the plan does not present a funding obligation. The local governing body is only required to review and accept the survey so that it may be forwarded to the NC Department of Public Instruction.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to accept the survey as presented. Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

County Manager Sauer assured the Board that Matthew Bond, Maintenance Director with the School System, and the Board of Education would also be open to a meeting with the Commissioners to explain the needs in the survey in further detail.

## **Cooperative Extension Director – hiring procedure**

County Manger Sauer reported that he had received word from NC State University that they would like to appoint Craig Ellison of Northampton County to act as the Interim Cooperative Extension Director in Bertie County until a permanent replacement could be found.

Mr. Sauer stated that procedure is designed and implemented by NC State regarding job listings and interviewing, but that the County does have the final say in who to ultimately hire.

In addition, Mr. Sauer requested that the Board consider updating the Department Head Residency requirement policy to include the Cooperative Extension Director as an employee that must live in Bertie County to serve in a Department Head capacity.

Mr. Sauer asked the Board to consider approving that recommendation during the regular meeting at 4:00PM as it is an item on the consent agenda.

## **Board of Education – pay increase**

County Manager Sauer stated that he had received correspondence from Superintendent White's office regarding a budgeted pay increase for Board of Education members.

This increase in the monthly stipend for School Board members will be absorbed in the existing budget and would not be an extra cost to the County.

The matter was being brought forth to the Commissioners because NC General Statutes require that a change in the compensation for the Board of Education has to be approved by the local governing body.

The pay increase would give each Board of Education member an additional \$100 per month.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the request. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **Sheriff's Office – hiring report**

After several discussions with Sheriff Holley, County Manager Sauer stated that he would like the Board to consider further enhancements for the salaries of the Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Holley presented concerns that the current salaries and the starting salary for deputies does not compete with similar departments in the region, and that the County has been facing challenges with recruitment and retention.

After some discussion, the Board stated that they would like this matter to be at the forefront when beginning the upcoming job classification and salary study.

### **Salary Study**

In addition, County Manager Sauer informed the Board that he had officially rescinded his recommendation for The Mercer Group, and was therefore recommending Springsted as the firm to complete a job classification and salary study.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to continue forth with Springsted as recommended, and to have the Sheriff's Office evaluation be completed first. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **State Health Plan – update**

County Manager Sauer presented an update to the Board regarding the County's potential participation in the State Health Plan, and the concern the window of opportunity may be closing earlier than expected.

In an update sent by the State, Bertie County was advised to consider accelerating the enrollment date for the plan to either March or April 2016 instead of July 2016. The County was advised that the program may be full before the July 2016 deadline that the County originally requested.

The Board discussed its willingness to comply with the State's recommendation as the State Health Plan would present a large cost savings, and that they would prefer to hold the County's reservation until more information could be received.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to follow the State's recommendation of March 1, 2016. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

#### **Review QSCB sinking fund schedule and authorization relating to the Bertie High School construction and debt service**

Mr. Ted Cole of Davenport & Associates was present to provide a brief update to the Board as well as to answer questions the Board inquired about at a previous meeting.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to move forward with Mr. Cole's recommendation including to hire Kensington Capitol Advisors, LLC. for a cost of \$30,000 for conducting bid preparation, solicitation process and selection of investment for the 2012A Sinking Fund account in consultation with bond counsel. The process should be completed in early January 2016. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

In another project update, County Manger Sauer stated that it is important for the County to meet or correspond with Vidant-Bertie Hospital before having Davenport & Associates continue forward with their work related to refinancing the outstanding hospital loan.

#### **Parks and Recreation – playground design approval & recommendation – Donna Mizelle, Parks and Recreation Director**

Parks and Recreation Director, Donna Mizelle, was present to provide her recommendation of Landscape Structures, Inc. as the preferred firm to complete the all-inclusive and handicap accessible playground at the Recreation Complex in Windsor.

Dan McSweeney of Landscape Structures was also present to submit a new design based on the Board's feedback during his original presentation.

The new plan consists of the desired water feature mentioned, as well as additional seating, and fencing for a handicap accessible swing.

Commissioner Bazemore thanked Mr. McSweeney and Ms. Mizelle for their time dedicated to this matter, and made a **MOTION** to approve Ms. Mizelle's recommendation. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Board also discussed the possibility of another grant that could be received from Trillium Health Resources which would aid the Blue Jay community in providing funds for a renovated recreation park.

Anthony Smallwood and Columbus Williams were present to represent the local, non-profit organization of Blue Jay Recreation.

Mr. Smallwood stated that he would be thrilled if a new recreation complex could be placed in the Blue Jay Community especially a pavilion area, walking track, and a new baseball field similar to what is already in Windsor.

The Board discussed the fact that many grants require the property to be owned or controlled (leased) by a local government such as the County.

Additionally, the Board discussed that in the event of an additional grant being received that the County would need to have a lease or ownership of the property so that the improvements could be constructed and maintained by the local government.

Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to have the County Attorney prepare a 30-year lease document of the current recreation area for the cost of \$1.00 so that it could be eligible for an upgrade in the event that a grant is received. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

#### **Courthouse Renovation Project – Christmas candles**

Mr. Sauer reported that he had received a suggestion for the County to place Christmas candles in the front windows of the Courthouse.

He discussed a particular kind of candle as well as cost of the candles with batteries.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to move forward with this suggestion. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

#### **Finance Report – Finance Officer, William Roberson**

Finance Officer, William Roberson, presented the Board with a brief financial update, and also made note of various areas that are either over or under performing based on past year figures.

#### **Grant preparation and proposed agreement with Emily Miller of McAdams and Associates, LLC.**

Emily Miller of McAdams and Associates, LLC. was present to provide the Board with various options in which she could help secure needed grant funds for various County projects.

After some discussion, the Board deferred a final decision about officially hiring Ms. Miller until the regular, 4:00pm meeting.

**RECESS**

Chairman Wesson recessed the meeting until 4:00PM.

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John Trent, Chairman

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Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board