

**Windsor, North Carolina
September 21, 2015
Regular Meeting**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00pm inside the Roxobel Community Building located at 211 E. Church Street, NC 27872. 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

Absent: Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Information Systems Administrator Joe Wilkes
Finance Officer William Roberson

Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Barry Ward of the Bertie-Ledger Advance were present from the media.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner White led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Willie Outlaw of Powellsville came before the Board to express his disappointment in the email correspondence that he had recently received between Chairman Wesson and Vice Chairman Lee.

Mr. Outlaw had submitted a public information request to County Manager Sauer to receive all email communications between Commissioners regarding the Esquires for Education organization, and the County's decision to fund the organization on August 12, 2015.

Mr. Outlaw stated that he was upset to read the emails regarding Vice Chairman Lee's concerns about the mission statement of Esquires for Education. In the emails, Vice Chairman Lee expressed that she did not believe the County should fund an organization that only focuses on assisting one particular group.

She also stated in the email correspondence that she felt the Chairman did not appropriately explain the organization's platform in the Planning Session which took place on August 12, 2015, but admitted that she did not thoroughly review the material provided at the meeting.

Mr. Outlaw gave Vice Chairman Lee the opportunity to respond.

Vice Chairman Lee stated that she stood by her comments, and she also briefly explained the contents of the email correspondence between herself and Chairman Wesson.

Chairman Wesson reiterated that the organization did not discriminate against other groups, but that it simply was founded with a special niche group in mind. The Chairman has been assured by the organization that it would not turn away members with the same needs of other ethnic groups.

There were no other public comments during this section.

APPOINTMENTS

Your Charters of Freedom presentation by NC Local Government Liaison, Ron Lewis, and Vance Patterson, Founder

Mr. Vance Patterson, Founder, and Mr. Ron Lewis, NC Local Government Liaison for Your Charters of Freedom were present to provide a brief presentation to the Board regarding their 501(3)(c) organization.

A PowerPoint was presented which explained the fundamental goals of the organization which are to bring monuments to as many local areas as possible that feature replicas of the Charters of Freedom including The Constitution, The Bill of Rights, and The Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Patterson explained the idea for this organization first struck him after visiting The National Archives in Washington, D.C. and viewing the original documents on display.

According to a short video, since the organization was founded, approximately 6 monuments have been installed in Western North Carolina, as well as in other parts of the Country.

Mr. Patterson and Mr. Lewis emphasized that these are educational projects, and not just simply monuments. They expressed the importance of adults and children having access to these documents, even if they are replicated in monument form in their local communities, as some people will not ever be able to afford to venture to Washington, D.C. themselves to view the originals.

Additionally, Mr. Lewis discussed that the process to build a monument takes times, but he discussed the steps that could be taken once the County agrees to support the project.

The first step that would be taken upon a support letter from the County would be that the Your Charters of Freedom organization would join the County Chamber of Commerce, as well as establish a "Bertie County Charters of Freedom" bank account at a local branch. A steering committee would also be appointed by the County with various local leaders.

Chairman Wesson stated on behalf of the Board that they would review this proposal carefully, and that they would submit a response as soon as possible regarding interest or disinterest in the project.

Update on the Welding program currently in development in partnership with the Board of Education and Martin Community College by Superintendent Elaine White and Interim Executive Director of the Martin-Bertie Campus, Norman Cherry

Superintendent Elaine White was present to provide the Board with an update on the newly established Welding Program (in partnership with Bertie County Schools and Martin Community College) as well as to provide the Board with the 2014-2015 BCPS Annual Report.

The annual report discussed the various achievements of the teachers, students, and staff of the public school system, as well as other valuable information.

Lastly, Superintendent White requested that the Board consider supplying funding to the Welding program for the purposes of textbooks as well as the electrical wiring needs of the Welding classroom.

Chairman Wesson requested that Superintendent White discuss the impacts, if any, of the newly passed State budget.

Superintendent White expressed that she was wary of the newly passed budget, and that she really wasn't expecting much good news especially as it related to the students of Bertie County and various Teaching Assistant positions.

The Board thanked Superintendent White for her report, and assured her that they would consider her funding request.

Agency program update by Pamela Perry, Executive Director of Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA)

Pamela Perry, Executive Director of CPTA, was in attendance to present CPTA's annual report to the Board, as well as to provide additional information about CPTA, and its bus route offerings in Halifax, Bertie, Northampton, and Hertford Counties.

There was no action needed. This report was strictly informational.

Agency program update by Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Lewis W. Hoggard

Lewis W. Hoggard, Executive Director of Bertie-Windsor Chamber of Commerce, was in attendance to update the Board on its various events that take part in each year including the Blues, Brews, and BBQ, Aulander Peanut Festival, Farmer's Annual Dinner, Windsor Christmas Parade, etc.

There was no action needed. This report was strictly informational.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Albemarle Regional Library Board

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to re-appoint Marion Lee to the Albemarle Regional Library Board. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Workforce Development Board

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to appoint John Herring to the Workforce Development Board. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

William Knight of Perdue was also submitted as a representative of Perdue to be appointed to this Board.

After some discussion, Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to appoint William Knight to the Workforce Development Board pending the submission of a completed application. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Planning Board

A last minute application was also received for the Planning Board from the current Chair, Nayland Collier.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to re-appoint Nayland Collier to the Planning Board. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the entire Consent Agenda as presented. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The following items were approved:

1. Minutes – Regular Session 9-8-15
2. Minutes – Closed Session 9-8-15
3. Tax Department Error Release Journal – August 2015
4. 2015-2016 County Cooperative Agreement with the NC Forest Service
5. Final approval of applicant resolution and authorization for execution of project documents by Chairman and County Manager for State Revolving Loan for Countywide SCADA system improvements previously approved on July 20, 2015

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Discuss 2009 NC Rural Center Grant Amendment for Water District IV system improvements and consider approval of proposed Capital Project Ordinance contingent upon NCDENR authorization to amend the grant agreement

The Kelford water system was initially merged with the County's Water District IV in the 2007-2008 timeframe and the 2009 NC Rural Economic Development Center's grant was integral to this effort to address low water pressures and replacement of undersized water lines.

In the past 12 months, the County has evaluated the area of Water District IV which serves Kelford, which is a very rural section of northern Bertie County. This hydraulic study evaluated the need for improvements to Kelford's water system (constructed in early 1960s) and its connections with the nearby communities of Lewiston-Woodville and Roxobel.

It is proposed to utilize the remaining Rural Center grant funds with a focus on meter replacement for Kelford customers, and to construct a six inch water line connecting the Town of Kelford with the Town of Roxobel along NC 308 or Governor's Road. This proposed project would allow the County to utilize the Rural Center grant funds in a separate project, and the work will be completed by June 30, 2016. This approach will require a local match of approximately \$125,458 appropriated from cash reserves in Water District IV.

Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the presented grant amendment and capital project ordinance to connect the Towns of Roxobel and Kelford and to replace meters in the Town of Kelford and establish ten water services connections on NC 308. The proposed project ordinance is contingent upon authorization from the State to move forward using remaining 2009 NC Rural Center Grant Funds. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Capital Project Ordinances reads as follows:

**Bertie County
Project Ordinance - Water District IV
2009 NC Rural Center Grant Amendment
September 2015**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Governing Board of the County of Bertie, North Carolina that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following capital project ordinance is hereby adopted:

Section I. The Governing Board of the County of Bertie, sitting as the Board of Commissioners for Water District IV unanimously accepted and approved the NC Rural Economic Development Center grant for Kelford waterline upgrades in January 2009.

Section II. Bertie County Water District IV proposes to utilize the remaining 2009 grant funds to continue to make improvements to serve Kelford area customers. Additionally, Bertie County Water District IV appropriated fund balance reserves will be provided to extend a six inch water line connecting the Towns of Kelford and Roxobel.

Section III. These improvements are consistent with the capital improvement plan for Bertie County's regional water system consisting of Water Districts I, II, III, and IV; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chairman and County Manager are directed to execute the amended grant agreement and all permit applications associated with this project.

The following revenue is anticipated to be available to complete this project:

Water District IV (local) Appropriated fund balance	\$125,458
NC Rural Economic Development	\$72,262
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Total Project Funding	\$197,720


The following amounts are appropriated for the project:

*Construction, Engineering Fees, and Easement Acquisition fees for 8,170 feet of six inch water line will total \$130,720. The following costs will also be included for a final total of \$197,720.

*Construction	130,720
Meters	59,500
Water Services	7,500
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Total Project Cost	\$197,720

Copies of this capital project ordinance shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Body, and to the County Manager and to the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

Adopted this day 21st day of September, 2015.


Ronald D. Wesson, Chairman
Board of Commissioners for Water District IV


Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board

Review first draft of update Travel Reimbursement Policy

County Manager Sauer stated that this item was purely informational, and asked that the Board be ready to take action at an upcoming meeting October as this policy was updated per the request of the County's auditor.

A "per diem" method was also suggested for consideration by the Board.

Pending work session items:

- QSCB school debt sinking fund requirements
- Actuarial costs for post-retirement health insurance

- Responses for job classification & compensation RFQ are due September 23rd
- Cooperative Extension funding formula for staff is still pending
- Sheriff Holley is seeking adjustment for hourly part-time pay, increasing to \$15 per hour
- Playground grant project update

These items were listed as purely informational. A work session time will be discussed before an upcoming meeting in October.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner White thanked the Town of Roxobel for hosting tonight's meeting and requested that the citizens of Roxobel bear with the County as they continue to follow the correct procedures to receive more grant monies to aid in the Town of Roxobel's water needs.

Vice Chairman Lee discussed some events that were due to take place this weekend including the Aulander Peanut Festival and Colerain Mobile Food Pantry.

Chairman Wesson updated the Board on the backpack nutrition program that has been in the works for the past several months. He stated that the first backpacks would be given to the neediest students beginning this Friday. The organization was able to raise enough money to feed 125 of the most in need students over the weekend for the entire length of the school year.

Commissioner Trent reported that the county's unemployment rate is down once again and that is due to new jobs coming into the area. He also announced that the Weeping Mary Road boat and fishing pier were still in progress, but that the grand opening would not take place until November. It was originally slated for October.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer requested that the Board recess tonight's meeting until Thursday, September 24 at 6:00PM inside the DSS Training Room in Windsor. That meeting will be a joint meeting between the Board and the Bertie County Planning Board.

ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

The Assistant County Attorney gave no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

A citizen of Roxobel thanked the Board for all of its hard work and requested that the audience give the Board and County staff present a round of applause.

Another citizen of Roxobel requested clarification about a letter she had received recently which stated that the Town of Roxobel would be required to purchase a booster pump for the water system.

Chairman Wesson stated that statement was not accurate and that the Town of Roxobel would not be responsible for such an expense.

Barbara Outlaw requested additional information about a proposed work session item about a \$15 per hour pay raise to part-time Sheriff's deputies.

In reply, the Chairman stated that this was proposed by the Sheriff so that the County could maintain qualified personnel, and not lose them to other local area departments.

Barbara Palmer of Roxobel reported that the joint library of the Roxobel and Kelford communities is expanding and offering events to the public including story times and other resources to area students.

There were no other public comments.

RECESS

Chairman Wesson recessed the meeting until 6:00PM at the DSS Training Room for a joint meeting with the Commissioners and the Bertie County Planning Board.

Ronald D. Wesson, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board