

Windsor, North Carolina
October 6, 2016
Regular Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting inside the Commissioners Room located 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
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Finance Officer William Roberson
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
EMS Division Chief Crystal Freeman
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Planning Director Traci White
Cooperative Extension Director Billy Barrow

Leslie Beachboard of the Bertie Ledger-Advance was present from the media.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Bazemore led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this session.

APPOINTMENTS

Presentation by John Gerber of North Carolina Emergency Management and the National Flood Insurance Program

John Gerber of the North Carolina Emergency Management National Flood Insurance Program was present to review the latest information on federal and state financing for flood recovery.

He reminded the Board, as well as those present, that the Small Business Administration (SBA) would be in the area beginning Tuesday, October 11th. The SBA will have a mobile unit to assist local businesses and residents with flood recovery loans and grants.

Storm Update by Mitch Cooper, Emergency Services Director

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, updated the board on the recovery efforts from Tropical Storm Julia, as well as provided a presentation regarding the impending Hurricane Matthew.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no Board Appointments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon review by Chairman Trent, Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda items below. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 9-6-16, Work Session 9-6-16 and 9-14-16, Closed Session 9-6-16, Emergency Meeting 9-25-16, Joint Meeting 9-26-16
2. **Fees Report** – Register of Deeds – September 2016

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Discuss draft of 2017 Board of Commissioners meeting schedule

The Board reviewed the latest draft of the 2017 Board of Commissioners meeting schedule. No action was taken.

Set date for 2016 Employee Appreciation Luncheon – proposed date of Thursday, December 8th

There was a consensus to set the date for the 2016 Employee Appreciation Luncheon on Thursday, December 8th, 2016.

Review of Tax Appeals: a) Estate of Queenie Bond by Barbara Evans, b) Coastal Medical Transport by Tim Bazemore, Jr., c) Southern Band Tuscarora Indian Tribe by Marilyn Mejorado

These appeal presentations were tabled until Monday, November 7, 2016 at 4:00PM.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Commissioner Lee thanked all of the faith based community for their flood recovery assistance. She stated that the Baptist Men organization is looking for volunteer to assist in removing damaged duct work under various homes. She also encouraged other churches to reach out to her if they would like to help. Lastly, she thanked the Woman's Congregation of Windsor, VA for their donations of cleaning supplies and Food Lion grocery gift cards.

Chairman Trent commended all of the first responders as well as the Town of Windsor and all of the various volunteers for their dedication and willingness to help during the area's time of need in both Windsor and Colerain.

Vice Chairman Bazemore reported that she and Commissioner Wesson had met with Bertie County's NC Representatives and Senate leaders to discuss the possibility of a federal disaster declaration, as well as about CDBG Disaster Recovery funding for local area residents and business owners.

Commissioner White thanked his fellow Board members, as well as Commissioner Wesson, and Vice Chairman Bazemore for their support both on the ground in Windsor, as well as in Washington, D.C. He stated that he always "sees the best of Bertie during our times of trouble." He also thanked Cal Bryant of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald for his editorial in support of additional funding from the State for flood recovery and future prevention. Additionally, Commissioner White thanked the Bertie-Ledger and the TV media outlets for covering the events in Windsor.

Chairman Trent recalled the visit made to Windsor by Congressman G.K. Butterfield, and he commended Congressman Butterfield for making Windsor a priority.

Commissioner Wesson thanked all of those who participated in the flood evacuation and recovery efforts, and stated that he "was grateful to those who are passionate about helping Bertie County."

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer updated the Board regarding USDA ambulance financing. He stated that the application for financing four new ambulances has been approved by USDA Rural Development in follow up to the Board's action on August 22nd in Aulander. The next step in acquiring these vehicles and equipment is the development of specifications for the request for proposals, which is currently being coordinated by Mr. Cooper and Mr. Roberson. The application is moving forward, and looks promising for Bertie County.

Also, he noted that the Bond Anticipation Note sale for Water District III in the amount of \$1,717,000 is now complete.

Lastly, Mr. Sauer updated the Board on the latest discussions surrounding the Board of Education, and estimated \$500,000 budget shortfall.

County Manager Sauer shared that as he has reflected on the recent joint meeting with the school board, and the reported \$500,000 budget shortfall, in addition to the school system's fund balance which has dropped to less than \$85,000, he indicated that it is incumbent upon the governing body to be proactive regarding the current financial condition of the school system.

Mr. Sauer reported that he had a couple of conversations with the County Attorney this morning regarding the County's fiduciary responsibilities for school finances and a copy of the pertinent General Statute has been distributed to the Board, noting that the Board of Commissioners has the full authority to review all aspects of the school system's fiscal operations.

As we have heard from the Interim Superintendent, with the Board of Education during the joint meeting on September 26, Mr. Walker indicated that he had been misled and been lied to regarding the financial condition of the school system prior to accepting the position as interim superintendent, explained Mr. Sauer.

County Manager Sauer presented a recommendation that the Board of Commissioners consider a motion to request an immediate meeting with the school system's auditors, and contact the NC Department of Public Instruction and the NC Local Government Commission in the State Treasurer's Office for assistance.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** for the County Manager to move forward with a letter to the Board of Education, the NC Local Government Commission, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, as well BCPS Attorney Rod Malone, regarding the budget shortfall regarding the budget shortfall and the next steps. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

County Attorney Lloyd Smith requested a brief Closed Session.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this session.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to go into closed session to consult with the County Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege that exists between the attorney and this public body. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

OPEN SESSION

Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** to return to Open Session. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

ADJOURN

Chairman Trent adjourned the meeting at 7:45PM.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board