

**Windsor, North Carolina
December 18, 2017
REGULAR MEETING**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regular meeting today inside the Commissioners Room, 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
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Finance Officer William Roberson
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Communications Supervisor JW Stalls
Planning & Inspections Director Traci White

Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald was present from the media.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bazemore called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Wesson led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Bazemore called for a motion to adopt the Board's agenda for tonight, December 18, 2017. Vice Chairman Wesson made the requested **MOTION**. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Approximately 30 hunters were present at tonight's meeting to show their opposition of the newly proposed hunting regulations that were drafted by the NC Wildlife Association. The Board recognized each member present, and thanked them for their participation.

Chair Bazemore clarified that public hearings would be hosted by NC Wildlife Resources, and that the public comment period was currently open until February 1, 2018. Comments can be submitted via phone or email. She distributed a flyer with further information so that it could be copied and dispersed to other hunters who were interested in the new regulations.

The Chair also recommended that County Manager Sauer work with administrative staff to draft a resolution in opposition of the newly proposed regulations.

Additionally, various members of the Board shared their concerns about the newly proposed regulations, and assured those present that that Board was not in support of the new regulations.

The Board encouraged all of those concerned about the regulations to consider attending our district's public hearing on January 23rd in Edenton at John A. Holmes High School. Bertie County is a part of District I.

Commissioner Wesson also strongly encouraged each hunter present to submit their comments online or make their voices heard in person in Edenton at the public hearing.

The Board clarified that this cannot be halted by the County Commissioners, and that if the law does pass, it will be a State measure which would have to be enforced on the local level.

NOTE – A section of the Bertie County website has been dedicated to the newly proposed regulations, and all information the County currently has about the public comment period is available via a link on the main webpage. For more information, visit <https://co.bertie.nc.us>.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** for County Administrative staff to draft a resolution in opposition of the new regulations. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

A resolution for Board approval will be submitted in January 2018.

There were no other public comments at this time.

APPOINTMENTS

(1) Introductions of new President and Chief Financial Officer of Roanoke-Chowan Community College

Representatives from Roanoke-Chowan Community College (RCCC) were present to introduce the new RCCC President, Dr. Stanley Elliot. Due to scheduling conflicts, the new Chief Financial Officer was unable to attend, but they sent their regards and hoped to be before the Board in the near future.

The Board welcomed Dr. Elliot and expressed their desire for a stronger working relationship with RCCC in the future, and that it was “imperative” for their “relationship to grow” to better benefit Bertie students who attend.

Dr. Elliot shared his thoughts for the new year and stated he was looking forward to working with the Board more closely in 2018.

(2) Board of Education update presented by Interim Superintendent Dr. Del Burns

At this time, Bertie County Public Schools (BCPS) Interim Superintendent, Dr. Del Burns, was present to provide an update to the Board about the school system’s fiscal standing, overall academic performance, and to briefly discuss his experience working with the newly hired Superintendent, Dr. Catherine Edmonds.

Dr. Del Burns discussed that they had not yet received the 2017 Financial Statements, but that they had been made aware of 50 separate findings that would need to be addressed. Currently the reports are under review of the NC Local Government Commission, and could be presented to the Board of Education as early as mid-January 2018.

However, the Interim Superintendent announced that after the continuous hard work of the Board of Education, the current debt level is down to \$290,728 according to the latest figures. It was also reported that this debt “could be retired by the end of the fiscal year.”

Lastly, Dr. Del Burns discussed the various strategies that Board had been using over the past several months to ensure the fiscal soundness of the school system was returned to a desirable state including the securing of a School Improvement Grant of \$2 million. The grant is designated for teacher development.

The Board of Commissioners commended Dr. Del Burns as well as the Board of Education for a job well done in moving as swiftly as possible to address the needs of the school system during difficult times.

Chair Bazemore stated her desire and willingness to work with the Board of Education on offering teacher supplements to allow for better recruitment of qualified teachers.

This would allow Bertie County to better compete with surrounding counties.

Commissioner Lee reported that several counties were considering resolutions concerning the K-3 class size reduction, and suggested the Board discuss this issue in January via resolution.

(3) Elderly exemption applications received by Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea

Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea, was present to inform the Board of approximately 10 late application requests for elderly exemptions. The Tax Office sends two separate notices each year for those who qualify for elderly exemptions, but if no response is received, tax bills are adjusted at a higher rate. At this time, 10 applications have been received, and each citizen is seeking the elderly exemption, and were not aware that action needed to be taken in order to still receive said exemption.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to allow the late applications be accepted for the 10 individuals seeking the elderly exemption. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Poverty Commission

This matter was tabled, but the Board did ask that the Clerk to the Board advertise these vacant positions to meet the Board's policy of inclusion adopted in 2013.

CADA Board (update)

County Manager Sauer informed the Board that Curt Kedley of the Good Shepherd Food Pantry had already been appointed on behalf of the food pantry to serve on the CADA Board, and that another individual would need to be appointed to represent the County of Bertie. James Peele, Mayor of Powellsville, was recommended for appointment to the Board, which would still leave an additional position for Bertie resident on the CADA Board.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to appoint James Peele to the CADA Board per the recommendation of CADA. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Bazemore briefly reviewed the following items, and called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda in its entirety. Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 12-4-17
2. **Release Journal** – October 2017
3. **Memorandum of Understanding** – RPO discussed by Commissioner Lee

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Review and consideration of proposed Hurricane Matthew workers for transfer to new positions in various departments – and costs to be absorbed by existing budgets, which will be partially offset by NCWorks OJT worker training funds

At this time, County Manager Sauer recognized Olivia Taylor and Veronica Clark of CADA.

In summary, Mr. Sauer discussed the positions being recommended for approval, and after conferring with the Finance Officer, it was possible to absorb the costs of filling these positions in the current budget. Additionally, for the first two months, up to 60% of the salaries would be reimbursed through the NCWorks OJT program which would provide additional savings to the County.

A vote from the Board would be needed, as well as contracts executed to officially hire the individuals on an OJT basis at first, before being the full responsibility of the County.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the 9 additional positions in the various departments (Water, Maintenance, Cooperative Extension, Aging), and to receive the assistance from the OJT program in its entirety before the financial responsibility would be transferred to the County. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Board thanked Ms. Taylor and Ms. Clark for their hard work, and asked for them to extend a welcome to the new members of the County.

Review and consideration of Town of Lewiston-Woodville's request for inspection services in its ETJ

Planning & Inspections Director, Traci White, was present for this portion of the meeting.

This matter was briefly discussed, including the specific code that the Town of Lewiston-Woodville would like to be enforced by the County which was the State Building Code.

Ms. White stated that it would be helpful to all involved to have each town renew or submit a new interlocal agreement to the County so that if the County is needed to enforce the State Building Code, perform condemnations within town limits, and so on, the paperwork would already be in place.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to accept the resolution submitted by the Town of Lewiston-Woodville for the County Building Code Inspector to work on an as needed basis to implement the State Building Code within the town limits. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Albemarle Regional Health Services proposed long range appropriation plan beginning FY 2018-2019

This item was purely informational, and no action was needed.

Calendar Reminders/Event Updates:

January 8, 2018 – 2:00 PM – launch of Bertie County Poverty Commission

January 8, 2018 - 4:00 PM – Regular Board meeting

Review of January 2018 meeting dates and discussion of Planning Session

These reminders were discussed, and the Board was encouraged to monitor their schedules for 2018 so that the regular meeting schedule could be discussed as necessary. Also, the Board was encouraged to brainstorm a date for the annual planning that usually takes place within the first 1-3 months of each year.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

The County Manager has no reports at this time.

ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

The Assistant County Attorney had no reports at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this section.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Chair Bazemore

Chair Bazemore inquired if a formal answer had been received by the Town of Windsor about a joint meeting in January. County Manager Sauer stated that no written confirmation had been received, but that he had received a phone call from the Mayor of Windsor confirming that the date (January 22, 2018) the County proposed should not be an issue for the Windsor Town Board.

Additionally, the Chair requested that the Board of Commissioners and Board of Education schedule a joint meeting as soon as possible to discuss a recruiting supplement for new Bertie teachers.

Commissioner Trent

Commissioner Trent had no reports at this time.

Commissioner Lee

Commissioner Lee reported that a permanent location had been secured at Colerain Methodist Church for a stand-alone food bank location. The food bank location would be open on the 4th Saturday of each month. In addition, the mobile food pantry would continue until grant funding for the project was exhausted.

Additionally, she encouraged all of those interested to contact Reverend Earley in Colerain to volunteer or provide monetary assistance so that the food pantry could maintain the ability to offer the food pantry.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White wished all of those present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Vice Chairman Wesson

Vice Chairman Wesson commended the Hope Foundation for a very successful Christmas Open House held earlier in the month, and that 450 citizens attended from all over North Carolina.

ADJOURN

Chair Bazemore **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Ernestine Bazemore, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board