

Windsor, North Carolina
June 5, 2017
Regular Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting inside the Commissioners Room 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
Finance Officer William Roberson
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
EMS Division Chief Crystal Freeman
Paramedic Victoria Hoggard
Human Resources/Risk Mgmt. Carolyn Fornes
Water Superintendent Ricky Spivey
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs
Register of Deeds Annie Wilson
Clerk of Superior Court Vasti F. James
Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe

Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Leslie Beachboard of the Bertie-Ledger Advance were 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

Commissioner Lee led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during this section.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Henry Lancaster, Governor Cooper’s Region One Liaison for Hurricane Matthew covering Edgecombe, Nash, Wilson, Martin, Pitt and Bertie counties will provide a brief introductory report to the Board

Mr. Henry Lancaster of Governor Cooper’s Office, was present to introduce himself, and thanked the County Manager, and Emergency Services staff for all of their recent communications on behalf of the EMS Station One replacement initiative.

Mr. Lancaster stated that the EMS Station One “matter” should be “resolved favorably” by the end of this month.

The Board thanked Mr. Lancaster for all of his assistance.

Public Hearing #1 – CDBG Broadband Grant

Mr. Kevin _____ from the Mid-East Commission was present to assist in the first of two public hearings for the CDBG Broadband Grant.

Mr. _____ stated that this first public hearing was being held to provide information to the public and the Board about the programs offered by CDBG. Nothing grant specific will be submitted until the second public hearing.

Chairman Trent then opened the public hearing for citizen comments.

Besides receiving a general question about CDBG, there were no citizen comments regarding the future Bertie County application for a CDBG Broadband Grant.

Chairman Trent closed the public hearing, and thanked Mr. _____ for his time.

Public Hearing #2 – Northeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, was present to answer questions from the public or the Board about the County's intent to join the Northeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

He stated that it is now time to finalize the updates and adopt the final plan that will be in place for 5 years.

This plan has been approved by the State Office of Emergency Management, as well as FEMA, and is ready for implementation July 1.

Mr. Cooper affirmed that this is very important document and partnership as it will ensure proper compliance for federal funding from after natural disasters.

In this new regional hazard mitigation plan, five (5) counties would be involved including Bertie, Martin, Washington, Tyrell, and Edgecombe.

Chairman Trent opened the public hearing for citizen comments.

There were no public comments.

Chairman Trent closed the public hearing, and thanked Mr. Cooper for his presentation.

Introduction by newly appointed John Sapper, Director of Bertie Correctional Institute

John Sapper, new Director of Bertie Correctional Institute, was present to introduce himself, as well as to provide a brief update about the State prison.

Mr. Sapper mentioned that the Prison was still working through the notions of an incident involving a Correctional Officer, and assured the Board that new changes were in the pipeline for added safety and security for all officers to prevent another tragedy.

He then discussed the 107 current vacancies at the State Prison, and that the Board should be aware that newspaper and radio advertisements were being used to recruit new prospective candidates for various positions.

The Board asked various questions of Mr. Sapper regarding the current hiring process, and whether or not paper applications could be used in reaching more of Bertie County's lower income citizens. Due to the fact that the local library was a total loss in Hurricane Matthew, it is even harder for citizens to have adequate access to internet service to complete the State Prison's online application process.

There was a brief discussion regarding the entire hiring process, including the physical agility test where candidates are required to “stair step” a particular number of stairs within a time limit. It was noted that this was a test the tended to screen out otherwise qualified candidates.

The Board also briefly discussed with Mr. Sapper about ways to promote the submission of applications even with the inherent risks of working in this type of field.

Commissioner Lee inquired if the rumors she had heard about the prison looking to “re up” former public safety or military personnel on a contract basis were true, and he confirmed that those rumors were true.

The Board thanked Mr. Sapper for his presence this evening, and assured him that he had their full support.

Presentation of the proposed FY2017-2018 County budget by County Manager, Scott Sauer

Four years ago, this month (May 2013), interim County Manager Mr. John Ed Whitehurst presented the FY 2013-2014 Budget Proposal, including but not limited to observations for the governing body to consider:

- Board of Education: The County has recently received the financial audit for the year ended June 30, 2011. The County was informed that the financial audit for the year ended June 30, 2012 was incomplete, but being performed.
- Water Department: The countywide water system is in need of extensive repair for the water tanks. Increased demand has placed a burden on some facilities and we are in need of expansion. However, the system must pay for the expansion with adequate revenues.
- Emergency Medical Services: The increasing demand upon the volunteer rescue squads and paid rescue squads has jeopardized the quality of services being delivered to the citizens.
- Public Buildings Maintenance and Grounds: Facilities upkeep has been neglected for several years and now the needed repairs are extensive.

Vehicle Leasing Program

Viper Radios for Volunteer Fire Departments and other first responders

Public Buildings and Grounds—special projects

Water Department System Improvements—projects previously approved

Emergency Services (EMS Paramedic and Non-Emergency Transport) and Emergency Management

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

ABC Board

Chairman Trent made a **MOTION** to re-appoint James Pugh to the ABC Board. Vice Chairman Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Vidant Bertie Hospital Director’s Council

Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** to appoint Dr. Steven Hill and Annie Wilson to the Vidant Bertie Hospital Director’s Council. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon review by Chairman Trent, Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda in its entirety. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 5-15-17
2. **Fees Report** – May 2017
3. **Budget Amendments** – CPTA, Council on Aging
4. **Resolution** – adopting the Northeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Review latest version and updates for library lease temporary space

The County Manager deferred to the County Attorney for this item.

County Attorney, Lloyd Smith, stated that the latest copy of the library lease for the temporary space in the Food Lion Shopping Center had been completed, and the revisions were discussed.

The Board stated their readiness to approve the lease.

Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** for the Board to approve and accept the lease and its terms and conditions so that the official paperwork can be submitted for signatures. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Discuss Non-Smoking implementation and location of signage for installation

The County Manager requested guidance from the Board regarding their thoughts on the installation of each non-smoking sign at the entrances and exits of every County building, and whether or not secure them to each building, or to use poles instead.

Commissioner Lee volunteered to assist Maintenance Director, Anthony Rascoe, with the logistics of the implementation before the July 1st deadline.

The Board and public also were able to see one of the signs on a table against the wall inside the Board Room.

Additional discussion – H.B. 867 – Coastal counties opposing ban on commercial fishing and shrimp trawling as heard on May 15th in Blue Jay

There was a brief discussion regarding the latest on H.B. 867. The Board was told that the bill was currently “dying” in the House, but that additional resources could be secured to present to the Board to give them all sides of the bill.

This item will be revisited at an upcoming meeting.

Discuss DRAFT resolution for piece of highway named after Kent Bazemore

This item was submitted to the Board for a first reading, and the Board expressed their readiness to approve it.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the draft resolution for a piece of highway to be named after Bertie native, Kent Bazemore. Vice Chairman Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Review Employee Shared Leave Policy and consider proposed revisions

The Board reviewed the latest draft of the Employee Shared Leave Policy.

There was no action taken.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Commissioner Wesson

Commissioner Wesson reported that he and Vice Chairman Bazemore had just returned from an NCACC Board of Director's meeting in Asheville. Mr. Wesson announced various pieces of legislation being considered by the Taxation and Finance Board on which he is the Chair. The legislations include a bill regarding a high depreciation value for business owners with farming or large-scale equipment, age of juveniles and offenses being handled in juvenile court (with the exception of felony charges), and a pre-emptive call for 2020 Census preparations.

Vice Chairman Bazemore

Vice Chairman Bazemore discussed that she had attended the Public Safety CADET program graduation celebration on May 23rd.

She also reported that she had spoken with a representative from Walgreens regarding the closure of the Windsor location. It was mentioned to her that the employees inside the Windsor location were being given the opportunity to transfer to other local area stores, and that Walgreens would still maintain the building until a new tenant was secured.

She also discussed a grant opportunity she had recently learned about for helping those recover from opioid addiction, as well as encouraged the Board to seriously consider more funding being allotted for local Pre-K and educational programs in the area.

She also reiterated what Commissioner Wesson said about early preparations for the 2020 Census, and there was a brief discussion among the Board at finding local leaders in each community to assist in the surveying of Bertie citizens. The Board felt that having familiar faces knocking on doors that more people would be receptive to completing the Census than the numbers received in 2010.

Chairman Trent

Chairman Trent gave no remarks at this time.

Commissioner Lee

Commissioner Lee provided a brief update to all of those present about the Charters of Freedom Monuments. She mentioned that there was a lull in work currently since the County was waiting for the brick layers so that work could continue.

She also thanked Maintenance Director, Anthony Rascoe, for assisting her in completing the various flower beds around the exterior of the courthouse.

Lastly, she stated that he was honored to be present at the Public Safety CADET program luncheon, and mentioned that there is “remarkable youth in this County,” and encouraged all of those present to go out this Saturday and support the new Bertie High School graduates.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White thanked County Administration staff for all of their hard work in preparing this year’s proposed budget, and thanked the County Manager for doing “such an amazing job.”

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer reminded all present about the Pound the Sound Event this Saturday, June 10th.

Also, he confirmed that Governor Roy Cooper would be visiting Bertie on Wednesday, June 20th to discuss the latest resiliency and recovery efforts after Hurricane Matthew.

COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORTS

The County Attorney gave no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

James Pugh of Indian Woods was present to pass along concerns he had received from citizens in the Lewiston-Woodville area. The concerns stemmed from the amount of accidents at the Lewiston/308 intersection. Chairman Trent informed Mr. Pugh that NCDOT had investigated that intersection, and found the most feasible approach to take in order to prevent further accidents. NCDOT plans to install a 4-way stop, and 2 red signals in advance of this intersection.

Veronica Williams of 104 Joyner Street in Windsor presented her concern to the Board regarding the Methodist Men organization. Ms. Williams stated that she and her husband were told that work being completed by the Methodist Men on her home would be ceased if they did not agree to sign documents for a \$40,000 loan. The Board thanked Ms. Williams for bringing her concerns to them, as if she had not done so, the Board would not be aware of this. Ms. Williams was asked to leave her contact information with the County Manager so that the matter could be looked into, and the County would then follow up with her.

Terry Pratt of Merry Hill reported that he had recently heard H.B. 867 was consider “dying” or “dead” in the House, and that even if it made it through the House, the Senate would most likely block it. Mr. Pratt stated he would bring new information to the Board if any is received.

There were no other public comments.

CLOSED SESSION

Vice Chairman Bazemore made a **MOTION** to go back into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of employment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

RECESS

Chairman Trent **RECESSED** this meeting until Thursday, June 8th at 9:00 AM in the same location.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board