

**Windsor, North Carolina  
February 5, 2018  
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  
Clerk to the Board Sarah Tinkham  
County Attorney Lloyd Smith  
Finance Officer William Roberson  
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea  
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper  
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs  
Cooperative Extension Director Billy Barrow  
Extension Agent Jarette Hurry  
Register of Deeds Annie Wilson

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bazemore called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Lee led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

Thadd White of the Bertie-Ledger Advance and Lewis Hoggard of the Windsor-Bertie Chamber of Commerce were present to seek the Board's support to host a Memorial Day (May 28<sup>th</sup>) event at the Charters of Freedom monuments. The two gentlemen also mentioned hosting a similar event for Veteran's Day and Town of Windsor birthday celebration in November.

Chair Bazemore and Vice Chairman Wesson voiced their support for the idea and Commissioner Lee offered her assistance in the planning of the event(s).

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to support and approve the request from Mr. White and Mr. Hoggard to host a Memorial Day celebration on May 28<sup>th</sup> at the Charter's of Freedom Monuments. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Bazemore called for a motion to approve the agenda as prepared. Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the agenda as prepared. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

## APPOINTMENTS

### **Better Beginnings for Bertie's Children (BBBC) update by Bobbi Holley**

Dr. Denauvo Robinson, President and CEO of Better Beginnings for Bertie's Children, was present to provide a brief update on the Pre-K initiative. Bobbi Holley also represented the program.

Dr. Robinson reported that just today, he had received word from Raleigh at the Kidanomics Forum that BBBC had received an honorable mention from NCACC President, Brenda Howerton. President Howerton's main focus during her term is pre-k and early childhood development. BBBC was highly regarded as a program to be mimicked in counties all across the State.

Additionally, Ms. Holley came before the Board to announce that 429 surveys had been distributed through Bertie County Public Schools and BBBC's other partners. The surveys are designed to find and gauge the needs of children in Bertie County who are eligible for pre-K readiness programs.

Ms. Holley also noted that there were over 25 children still on the waiting list for a spot to open up at any of the pre-K programs in the area and that most of those students were centered in the Colerain area. Parents are given the option to pick a program that is first available or one that is closer to home depending on their needs. Students are then placed as quickly as possible into open slots when they become available.

Before concluding, Vice Chair Wesson highly encouraged Dr. Robinson and Ms. Holley to consider attending the THRIVE Conference in March of this year as it is a good way to network with similar programs throughout the State.

The Board thanked BBBC for their report.

**Economic Development Report – Abrams project and review of Golden Leaf Foundation opportunity, by Economic Development Director, Steve Biggs**

Economic Development Director, Steve Biggs, introduced Kevin Wooten of Abrams Restaurants to provide a brief update on the newest location due to open soon in South Windsor.

Mr. Wooten stated that the Windsor location will be the first store in their brand with this particular look and feel, and that it will “ring in change” for the rest of the stores around Eastern North Carolina.

When asked about a possible opening date, Mr. Wooten stated that after several catering events out of state, a grand opening date would be announced for sometime in March or April 2018. He stated that he did not want to rush an opening as they want the location to be as ready as possible to do well in the Windsor area.

Additionally, Mr. Wooten discussed several items that needed to be completed at the new location including the parking lot, remaining interior details, and the completion of several job fairs to fully staff the restaurant before opening.

The Board thanked Mr. Wooten for his report and for choosing Windsor to launch the “Abrams of the future.”

Economic Development Director, Steve Biggs, returned to the podium to provide a brief update of a new opportunity received from the Golden Leaf Foundation. The program is looking for grant application submissions under their current theme of “home grown leaders” focused on three potential criteria: Health, Education, and Agriculture. Mr. Biggs indicated that Golden Leaf Foundation, Executive Director, Mr. Dan Gerlach emphasized that successful projects will be regional (multi-county).

Mr. Biggs stated that there was approximately \$11 million available with a \$2 million maximum per county, and that project submissions were needed as soon as possible.

It was the suggestion of Mr. Biggs for the Board to consider having him submit a project idea for teacher recruitment and retainment, and to hopefully inspire students today to become teachers in Bertie County after graduation.

### **Presentation of County Audit ended June 30, 2017 by Jeff Best, CPA**

For about 30 minutes, the Board briefly reviewed a draft audit submitted by Jeff Best of Jeff Best CPA, P.L.L.C.

The Board also asked questions and discussed various elements of the audit.

### **Review of upcoming projects by Jodey Sarey, President of the Bertie County Fire Association**

Jodey Sarey, newly elected President of the Bertie County Fire Association, was present to request time at the Board's upcoming planning session to discuss various projects and needs of the fire departments all across the County.

Mr. Sarey also reported that between all 12 fire departments, there had been over 750 calls in 2017 that range from fender benders to overturned tractor trailers.

Lastly, the Commissioners were invited to attend the Bertie County Fire Association's meeting at the Windsor Fire Department this Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

### **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

#### **Bertie Martin Regional Jail Board – recommendation of reappointment by BMRJ for Dianne Bazemore**

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to reappoint Dianna Bazemore to the BMRJ Jail Board. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

1. **Minutes** – Regular Session 1-22-18, Closed Session 1-22-18, Joint Session 1-22-18
2. **Fees Report** – January 2018

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes and Register of Deeds Fees Report. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

3. **CDBG/CADA** – proposed work plan and affidavit of review

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the proposed work plan and affidavit of review. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

4. **Budget Amendment** –

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve Budget Amendment #18-07 . Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The budget amendment and supporting documentation read as follows:

<b>BUDGET AMENDMENT</b>				
# 18-07				
INCREASE			INCREASE	
10-0050-4839-82	\$ 550	18-Dec	10-4950-5399-20	\$ 550
10-0050-4839-82	\$ 250	6-Nov	10-4950-5399-20	\$ 250
<b>TO INCREASE BUDGET - WELLNESS/ZUMBA REIMBURSEMENTS</b>				
INCREASE			INCREASE	
12-0025-4586-18	\$ 13,407		12-5380-5411-50	\$ 13,407
<b>TO INCREASE BUDGET TO MATCH ACTUAL LIEAP MONEY RECEIVED (LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM)</b>				
APPROVED     /     /2018				

<b>BUDGET AMENDMENT</b>				
# 18-07				
INCREASE			INCREASE	
10-0050-4839-82	\$ 550	18-Dec	10-4950-5399-20	\$ 550
10-0050-4839-82	\$ 250	6-Nov	10-4950-5399-20	\$ 250
<b>TO INCREASE BUDGET - WELLNESS/ZUMBA REIMBURSEMENTS</b>				

**BERTIE COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
**DAILY CASH COLLECTIONS/TURNOVER REPORT**

*William*

Date: 12-18-17

After filling in the date at the top of the report, enter a summary of all cash collections/turnover for the day in the column below. Adding machine tapes should be attached to the report to indicate amounts for checks and money orders.

**SUMMARY**

Checks/Money Orders (Attach Tape) \$ 550.00  
Currency \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Change \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
  
TOTAL \$ 550.00

10-0000-2110-05-----IPM Pest Management \_\_\_\_\_

10-0000-2110-09-----4H Activities \_\_\_\_\_

10-0050-4839-82-----Program Revenues \$550.00

rec# 389091 Wellness Program

*Deirdre Gaines*  
Signature of Preparer

Distribution: Original-Finance Office Duplicate-Retain  
Rev/09

*inc. #104950 to 10-4950-539920*

For William

BERTIE COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
DAILY CASH COLLECTIONS/TURNOVER REPORT

Date: November 6, 2017

After filling in the date at the top of the report, enter a summary of all cash collections/turnover for the day in the column below. Adding machine tapes should be attached to the report to indicate amounts for checks and money orders.

SUMMARY

Checks/Money Orders (Attach Tape)	\$	<u>250.00</u>
Currency	\$	<u>  /  </u>
Change	\$	<u>  /  </u>
TOTAL	\$	<u>250.00</u>

10-0000-2110-05	-----	IPM Pest Management	_____
10-0000-2110-09	-----	4H Activities	_____
10-0050-4839-82	-----	Program Revenues	<u>\$ 250.00</u>

<u>REC # 389090</u>	<u>Reimb Zumbay Food</u>
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*Alvin Powell*  
Signature of Preparer

Distribution: Original-Finance Office      Duplicate-Retain  
Rev/09

INC. to  
#10-4950-539920



**William Roberson**

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**From:** Melissa Surgeon  
**Sent:** Friday, January 26, 2018 10:31 AM  
**To:** William Roberson  
**Subject:** Adjust LIEAP Line Item  
**Attachments:** Scan FA 121517.pdf

Hi William,

I have attached a copy of the funding authorization for LIEAP. Please adjust the general ledger to read \$135,396.

Thanks,

+ 13,407.00

Melissa Surgeon  
Administrative Officer  
[melissa.surgeon@bertie.nc.gov](mailto:melissa.surgeon@bertie.nc.gov)  
Bertie County DSS  
110 Jasper Bazemore Avenue  
PO Box 627  
Windsor, NC 27983  
Telephone: (252) 794-5320, Ext. 6274  
Fax: (252) 794-5344

"Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 132, Public Records, this electronic message and any attachments hereto, as well as any electronic mail message(s) that may be sent in response to it may be considered public record and as such are subject to request and review by third parties."

BUDGET AMENDMENT				
		# 18-07		
		INCREASE		INCREASE
12-0025-4586-18	\$	13,407	12-5380-5411-50	\$ 13,407
TO INCREASE BUDGET TO MATCH ACTUAL LIEAP MONEY RECEIVED (LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM)				

**DISCUSSION AGENDA**

**Review list of proposed policies for CDBG compliance by Chris Hilbert of Holland Consulting Planners**

**a. Resolution approving Bertie County NC Disaster Recovery Act (NCDRA) Program guidelines and policies**

The Board briefly discussed this item with Chris Hilbert of Holland Consulting Planners.

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the resolution for the Bertie County NCDRA program guidelines and policies to be signed by Chair Bazemore. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

**b. CDBG-DR – Review and approval of grant agreement; and funding approval**

The Board briefly discussed this item with Chris Hilbert of Holland Consulting Planners.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the CDBG-DR grant agreement and funding approval as needed. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

**Discuss approval of Memorandum of Understanding and financial profiles for SECU  
Teacher Housing Initiative**

Vice Chairman Wesson reported that no further changes were needed. Commissioner Trent inquired if the Board would be able to further review other aspects of this item before it is approved for submittal.

The Board concurred and an additional review of this item would be conducted at the Board's upcoming planning session.

**Discuss planning session topics for February 12-13, 2018 @ Roanoke-Cashie River Center**

The Board reviewed a draft agenda for the planning session, and County Manager Sauer stated that more items could be added if needed.

**Review Business Personal Property Appeal – Mr. Ted Cherry**

Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea, discussed an appeal by Mr. Ted Cherry regarding a personal property audit for business that Mr. Cherry claims is no longer in existence..

Mr. Rhea stated that he had made several appointments to discuss this matter with Mr. Cherry, but Mr. Cherry was unable to attend the appointments.

At this time, Mr. Rhea requested that the Board grant him an additional 30-days to work closely with Mr. Cherry to address his concerns about the business property taxes that are owed, and to adjust if needed. Mr. Cherry, who was in attendance, agreed he could meet with the County's representatives within the next thirty days.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to grant Mr. Cherry and Mr. Rhea an additional 30-days to attempt to resolve the matter. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

## **Report of 2017 unpaid real property taxes and order to advertise**

The Board briefly reviewed the 2017 unpaid real property tax report.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the order to advertise 2017 tax liens for real property taxes. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

## **COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS**

Mr. Sauer requested that the Board officially approve the resolution in opposition of the judicial redistricting. Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to the resolution as requested. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The resolution reads as follows:



**BERTIE COUNTY**  
106 DUNDEE STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 530  
WINDSOR, NORTH CAROLINA 27983  
(252) 794-5300  
FAX: (252) 794-5327  
WWW.CO.BERTIE.NC.US

**BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**  
ERNESTINE (BYRD) BAZEMORE, Chair  
RONALD "RON" WESSON, Vice Chairman  
JOHN TRENT  
TAMMY A. LEE  
STEWART WHITE

**RESOLUTION ON NORTH CAROLINA  
JUDICIAL REFORM AND REDISTRICTING**

**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Constitution provides that the General Assembly shall, from time to time, divide the State into a convenient number of Superior Court districts, District Court districts, judicial divisions, and prosecutorial districts;

**WHEREAS**, after a thorough three-year study, the Bell Commission reported to the North Carolina General Assembly in 1958, and the last comprehensive reforms to the judicial and prosecutorial districts were made in the 1960s beginning in 1962, which was four years after the presentation of the report;

**WHEREAS**, current Prosecutorial District 6 comprised of Bertie, Halifax, Hertford and Northampton Counties was created in 2013 by Session Law merging former Prosecutorial District 6A (Halifax) and 6B (Bertie-Hertford-Northampton), resulting in an elimination of two (2) critical judgeships in 6B, one (1) district attorney and reductions in other critical court positions and resources causing significant challenges in court operations, understaffing and overworked judicial personnel, and a reduction in access to justice and equity for our community;

**WHEREAS**, on April 10, 2017, North Carolina Representative Justin Burr filed House Bill 717 entitled, "Judicial Redistricting & Investment Act," which is an act to revise judicial districts;

**WHEREAS**, on October 5, 2017, House Bill 717 was passed in the North Carolina House of Representatives by a vote of 69-43, mainly along partisan lines, and is currently, in the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate;

**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina General Assembly has established the House Select Committee on Judicial Redistricting, the Senate Select Committee on Judicial Reform and Redistricting, and the Joint Select Committee on Judicial Reform and Redistricting for the purpose of examining reforms to the State's judicial system, redistricting as it relates to the State's judicial districts, the present and future judicial needs of the State's population, and other judicial reform or redistricting issues;

**WHEREAS**, on October 17, 2017, North Carolina Senator Bill Rabon filed Senate Bill 698 entitled, "Increase Voter Accountability of Judges," which is an act to amend the North Carolina Constitution to allow the frequent election of judges by creating two-year terms of office for justices and judges in a special session of the North Carolina General Assembly;

**WHEREAS**, Senate Bill 698 is in the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate;

**WHEREAS**, the Senate Select Committee on Judicial Reform and Redistricting presented four judicial selection plans including the Blue Plan: Federal-style appt., Orange Plan: Missouri-style, Red Plan: SC/VA Model, and Purple Plan: Balanced judicial selection;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:**

*Resolved*, That we, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners oppose the passage of House Bill 717 and Senate Bill 698;

*Resolved*, That we, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners oppose the implementation of any of the four judicial selection plans presented by the Senate Select Committee on Judicial Reform and Redistricting before a more inclusive and comprehensive study takes place on judicial selection;

*Resolved*, That we, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners support a study allowing the collaboration of key stakeholders including members of the judiciary, the law enforcement community, and general public to review comprehensive reform of our judicial and prosecutorial districts for preserving a unified court system that will promote the most efficient allocation of judicial resources in order to serve the citizens of our State better; and

*Resolved*, That we, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners specifically request to be included in such study the following:

- (1) Cost analysis of transportation, service and treatment coordination for Superior, District, Prosecutorial and Division Judicial Districts, especially districts covering a large geographical area such as that proposed for current District 6, which adds Warren County to the four counties of current District 6 becoming newly Proposed District 8 under HB 717. Under HB 717, District 8 would consist of five counties: Bertie County, Halifax County, Hertford County, Northampton County, and Warren County, which would cover approximately 2,740 square miles. There is a version being considered in joint committee that also adds Vance County, making a six-county district that covers approximately 3,000 square miles, an extremely large district;
- (2) Cost analysis of operating Criminal and Civil courts, including drug treatment, domestic, family, juvenile, and all other court services;
- (3) Restoring judgeships for Districts harmed in previous redistricting. Bertie County is still suffering from the losses sustained in the 2013 redistricting. The workload study that was used in 2013 to determine the number of judges needed for our district suggested that District 6 needed 4.5 judges, but instead of rounding up to get 5 judges, the number was rounded down to 4 judges, which made this area underserved five years ago. In that merger of Districts 6A and 6B, we lost

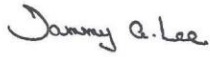
two district court judges. Before the merger we had one district court judge for every 20,000 citizens. After the merger we had one district court judge for every 30,000 citizens. Not having enough judges to handle the workload in what is a very large district has put a severe strain on the judicial system. It has led to judges having to double up on court sessions where they have to handle domestic violence court and criminal court starting at the same time in the same courthouse in limited courtroom space, which places a strain on court personnel, sheriff's office personnel, parties and witnesses. Chief District Court Judge Brenda Branch has had to do more with less. This system is already unfair to the citizens of Bertie County and if the proposed changes are implemented it will only get worse. The proposed changes by the joint committee add two more counties without adding enough judges to adequately cover that large of a geographic area.

(4) Only one of the four current District 6 judges lives in what was old District 6B (Bertie, Hertford and Northampton). This judge lives at the northernmost end of Northampton County, and the rest of the judges are residents of Halifax County. That leaves almost a three-county gap without a judge to handle emergency matters. The distance from Jackson to Windsor is 42 miles, or about a 52 minute drive. If there is a safekeeping issue involving an inmate at the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail who has a physical or mental health issue, the judge or the officers have significant travel and time expense to get the paperwork signed. The same problem exists in Bertie County for any juvenile court emergency. This area is so large that when bad weather passes through the District, some portion of it will be hard hit, and that impedes travel from one area to another. Our citizens are more inconvenienced compared to other counties. Even without redistricting, we already need two more district court judges to add to the four we have in order to properly serve current four-county District 6. Under the plan being considered in joint committee there would be six district court judges for six counties. Six district court judges for six counties is not enough given the geographic layout and populations of the six counties, and if this is forced on us the adverse effect on Bertie County could only be lessened if each county can elect its own judge who resides in that county. However, if the judges in the new plan are distributed anything like they were distributed in the last plan, it will still be unfair to Bertie County.

(5) The proposal that is in joint committee that adds Vance and Warren Counties to our current four counties would be a disaster for the District Attorney's office. It would be impossible for one district attorney's office to prosecute cases from a 3,000 square mile district. The distance from Henderson to Windsor is 104 miles, and it takes approximately two hours and 10 minutes to travel that distance. There is a backlog of cases already in District 6. Adding two more counties will cause the jails to be overcrowded as defendants wait for their case to be called, and victims and their families who are already under stress have the additional frustration of waiting even longer for prosecution.

We hereby certify that the **BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** voted to pass the above resolution.

This the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2018.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Tammy Lee



\_\_\_\_\_  
Ernestine Bazemore



\_\_\_\_\_  
John Trent



\_\_\_\_\_  
Stewart White



\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald "Ron" Wesson



Mr. Sauer reported that the County had just received correspondence from the statewide OPIOID litigation case as well as a Golden Leaf Foundation Acknowledgment and Agreement.

The OPIOID litigation item was deferred until the Board's upcoming planning session.

### **COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS**

County Attorney Lloyd Smith reported that 9 counties had joined the property tax appeal case for the solar farm property tax interpretation. The legal fees and costs would now hopefully be reduced to approximately \$2,000 per county.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. James Pugh of Indian Woods reiterated his support for the Nursing Home/Adult Care CAC Board and encouraged the Board to be on the look out for any new potential members as members were desperately needed.

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

**Chair Bazemore**

Chair Bazemore noted that she would be attending a NCACC Board of Directors meeting on Raleigh on Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. Topics of this meeting will include OPIOID legislation as well as legislative goals for the upcoming Legislative Goals Conference in Washington, D.C.

### **Commissioner Trent**

Commissioner Trent gave no remarks at this time.

### **Commissioner Lee**

Commissioner Lee forwarded along information she had received on a conference about the spotted lantern that was currently wreaking havoc in several states between Virginia and Pennsylvania. The fly is in search of grapes, pitted fruit, and black walnut trees.

### **Commissioner White**

Commissioner White gave no remarks at this time.

### **Vice Chairman Wesson**

Vice Chairman Wesson officially announced his candidacy for a seat in the N.C. House of Representatives. Bertie County was recently made a member of District 1, and Mr. Wesson stated that he was “in it to win it,” and that he looked forward to serving Bertie as well as all other counties in the district including Chowan, Camden, Perquimans, Washington, and Tyrell counties.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board about a brief Closed Session under statute number N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3). Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to go into Closed Session Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **OPEN SESSION**

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

**RECESS**

Chair Bazemore **RECESSED** the meeting until 9:00 AM, Monday, February 12th, at the Roanoke-Cashie River Center.

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Ernestine Bazemore, Chair

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Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board