

**Windsor, North Carolina
May 15, 2018
REGULAR MEETING**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a special meeting today inside the Commissioners Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald "Ron" Wesson, District I
Tammy A. Lee, District III
John Trent, District IV
Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Absent: Stewart White, District II

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
Clerk to the Board Sarah Tinkham
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Finance Officer William Roberson
ICMA/NCACC Management Fellow Dominique Walker

There were no media members present.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bazemore called the **SPECIAL MEETING** to order.

In addition to those items noted in the Board Chair’s email, other current items to review included:

UPDATES

Teacher Housing Initiative—local legislation needs a sponsor

County Manager Sauer recommended that the County’s primary focus in the next few weeks should be to seek a local legislator willing to sponsor needed legislation so that the County is statutorily permitted to further pursue this project.

The County Manager also noted that the State Employees Credit Union Foundation will likely vote on the Teacher Housing Initiative financing in July.

It was discussed and agreed that Vice Chairman Wesson would contact Representative Howard Hunter and Senator Smith regarding the needed legislative sponsorship for this project.

EMS Station 1—Project tracking since TS Julia/Hurricane Matthew

County Manager Sauer reviewed the County’s recent request for a 6-month extension from FEMA and the NC Department of Public Safety regarding the EMS Station One project. In recent days, a new representative from FEMA responded requesting clarification of why the extension was requested.

Briefly, Mr. Sauer reviewed a timeline that was submitted to FEMA and the Board. The summary as outlined below:

Leased facilities for EMS Station One at Bertie Early College—beginning September 22, 2016

Lease approved May 15, 2017

Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Health Care Division—Grant # 2017-088
Grant Award: \$51,450

Purpose: Driveway improvement, lease payments and utilities
Date Approved: December 12, 2016
Progress Report: July 28, 2017
Final Report Submitted: April 6, 2018

EMS “temporary facility” construction schedule and reporting requirements for FEMA and NC Commerce grants.

Physical Address: 225 County Farm Road, Windsor, NC 27983

FEMA-4285-DR-NC

2-B0366 Emergency Protective Measures Temp Location

Applicant ID#: 015-99015-00

PW-00535(0) \$284,299.39 submitted April 11, 2017

Date Awarded: June 19, 2017 (received June 29, 2017)

Project period of performance start: 10-10-16

Project period of performance end: 04-10-17

NC Department of Commerce—Disaster Recovery Act of 2016 S.L.2016-124

Contract Ref#: 2017-144-3214-2593

Title: “EMS Station One”

Announced by Governor Cooper June 20, 2017 in Windsor, NC

Correspondence dated June 21, 2017 from Secretary Anthony Copeland (received 6-29-17)

FY 16/17 Disaster Recovery Infrastructure Award notification for \$300,000

Grant application was initially submitted to the Golden Leaf Foundation on May 1, 2017

EMS Station One--Project Timeline:

- May 1, 2017 Board of Commissioners approves engagement for Smith Engineering and Design, P.A. Per NCGS 143-64.32 “Mini Brooks” Act**
- May 9, 2017 NCDCCR-SHPO correspondence received with comments—“we do not recommend any archaeological work be conducted in association with this undertaking.”**
- July 10, 2017 Board of Commissioners authorizes preparation of bid specs and construction bids for 50’ x 100’ steel building and interior buildout by individual construction trade. Board minutes note: *County will oversee this project as an owner/general contractor***

August 4, 2017 Permitting, survey and geotechnical work begins at 225 County Farm Road.

November 1, 2017 Sealed bids received:

\$424,682	Revelle Builders
\$394,950	Kee Builders
\$386,431	Swimme & Son Co.

November 6, 2017 Board reviewed, and rejected all bids noting inconsistencies. All bidders were encouraged to review bids and resubmit proposals based on design documents

December 5, 2017 NCDEQ Wastewater collection system extension approved.
Permit No. WQ0039664

December 22, 2017 NCDEQ Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan approved per NCAC, Title 15A, Chapter 4B.0127(b) Bertie-2018-003, Acres approved 2.8

February 9, 2018 Revised bids received:

\$617,484	Revelle Builders
\$546,593	Kee Builders
\$461,092	Swimme & Son Co.

February 13, 2018 Board of Commissioners reviewed and rejected all bids due to budget constraints. Staff directed to review scope of work as originally approved. Consensus of the Board that Commissioner Trent review the scope of each project and work with staff to make adjustments to reduce costs and keep these projects in budget, including during review of subcontractor proposals and construction.

March 2018

Project bidding by trade group with
County serving as owner/contractor

Bids received for metal building structure and
concrete pad

Review period and cost analysis—30 days

\$152,509	Harrellsville Metal
\$201,128	Kee Builders
\$120,826	Alexander Builders

(April 4, 2018 funds encumbered)

Bids received for site preparation, grading, erosion
& sedimentation control

\$111,000	Phelps Construction
\$110,126	Crabb Trucking
\$ 99,950	Boyd Copeland Co

(April 25, 2018 funds encumbered)

May 10, 2018

Site work commenced

Vice Chairman Wesson stated that he was fine with the information received here, however, he was not comfortable committing funds to this without budget numbers in hand first.

Finance Officer, William Roberson, assured the Board that funding for this project was secure in a separate, stand alone account.

County Manager Sauer replied that he was confident that within the current budget supports the needs of this project, as well as the needs of the Blue Jay Recreation Park, with the existing appropriation. This included HVAC, plumbing, and walls for the interior of this new recreational community building.

As a result of this discussion, the consensus of the Board was its confidence in the project and the cost controls in place to stay within the approved budget.

Courthouse Security renovations

County Manager Sauer explained that this project was still coming in under budget, and the renovations are progressing using local contractors.

Land acquisition for library and cooperative extension

The second most pressing priority for the Board should be finding a suitable location for this joint facility for the library and cooperative extension offices.

Commissioner Trent stated that per a discussion from the last meeting, he had made contact with a land owner of the 8-acres at the intersection of King Street and Lancaster Drive. He stated that he had been asked by the Chair to make this contact. Mr. Trent said that the owners would be visiting the County from Jacksonville, NC this week for a first meeting.

Review recent property appraisals and potential transactions

County Manager Sauer discussed appraisals that have been received for the old DSS building, and a 26-acre tract that abuts the golf course on County Farm Road which was previously shared with the Board. The former DSS building was appraised at \$150,000, and the 26-acre piece near the golf course has appraised for \$30,000.

The County Manager reminded the Board of the partnership with the Town of Windsor and Martin Community College to establish a firefighter training facility, on property to be donated by the County for this project on County Farm Road behind the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Trent stated that he thought it was important for the Board to consider moving forward with the 26-acre tract and begin preliminary negotiations with the owner.

The Board agreed collectively to allow Vice Chairman Wesson to begin the negotiations with the respective owners of the County Farm Road tract with the expectation that he would bring back updates on the discussions as necessary.

Wrap-up for Spruill tract contamination

This item was very briefly discussed, and County Attorney, Lloyd Smith, advised that all necessary notifications have occurred and this matter is closed.

Animal Shelter

County Manager Sauer discussed the need for a new full-time position at the Bertie County Animal Shelter to assist in care for the animals on a more consistent basis.

The volunteers were commended for their ability to network effectively very well in securing fosters and other rescues for the animals to avoid euthanasia.

Additionally, a potential contractor has offered to assist in fixing up the shelter with the funding that was already set aside in the current budget. At the urging of Vice Chairman Wesson, it was the consensus of the Board to have this position included in the County Manager's proposed budget.

Water District III loan closing and debt service payments begin

FYI – loan closing occurred on schedule. This required substantial paper work, and the required items were hand delivered to ensure that all needed items were submitted. Finance Officer William Roberson noted that the first debt service payments is established for June 1, 2018.

Republic Services Franchise Agreement

County Attorney, Lloyd Smith, discussed his review of the latest franchise agreement, and that this process was still ongoing. No recommendation was made at this time.

The Board, however, did discuss the ramifications of extending the life of a contract based on existing volume limits and future volume of disposals. There were also concerns shared about out of state disposals being deposited into the landfill.

County Manager Sauer suggested that a work group could collaborate with the legal team to assist in furthering the discussions. He suggested Chair Bazemore sit in on this group so that this process could continue moving forward as productively as possible. Chair Bazemore requested that Vice Chairman Wesson and Commissioner Trent take the lead on this effort and report back to the Board.

The Board directed County Attorney Smith to set up a meeting with Republic Services on the afternoon of June 14th and to share information with the Board at the completion of that meeting.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Senior Center facility use and rental guidelines—proposed revisions

Mr. Sauer reported that several complaints had been received regarding events that had been hosted at the Bertie County Senior Center. Alcohol consumption outside the Center as well as noise inside the Center have been big issues in recent months. Complaints have been received from residents nearby, and the Board discussed having law enforcement notified and present for events to protect the County property. Council on Aging Director, Venita Thompson, will be preparing stricter facility rules and exploring the possibility of staff coverage at these events.

Noise Ordinances (2)

This item was deferred.

Public Safety Access for Private Roads

Item was tabled indefinitely at the February meeting. County Attorney Smith highly recommended that the Board take action in some way on this item and suggested that the Board revisit a draft the legal team had written several years back. This item could be revisited at an upcoming work session.

Credit Card payments for county services and taxes

Based on Board questions, and citizen requests, there is still strong interest in accepting credit card payments. It was discussed though that there are security concerns involved. The Board also briefly discussed a “convenience fee” that has been applied to water and tax payments if citizens choose to pay via credit card online, and how Commissioner Lee had received complaints that the amount is too high.

Vice Chairman Wesson called for the Board to express their interest once and for all so that action can be taken to move forward or table the issue entirely.

Commissioner Lee asked if research could be completed to assess whether or not another company could provide online payment services but with a smaller fee.

Latest Audit received by Jeff Best, CPA

Commissioner Trent discussed his concerns which were reviewed on the February work session agenda regarding the latest audit services completed by Jeff Best, CPA. He stated that he would hope the Board would consider bidding out the services for the Board to consider alternative firms in the future. The general consensus was that due to timing, it was not in the best interest of the County to seek a new firm at this time, and that the County will reengage with Jeff Best, CPA for the next audit cycle.

Tri-County Airport height regulation ordinance

Commissioner Lee requested that this item be discussed further. The County Attorney and County Manager stated that a public hearing would need to be hosted and additional information would need to be obtained before this measure could be ready for Board approval.

Additionally, Commissioner Lee announced that she had been nominated as chair of the Tri-County Airport Authority.

Recreation van use policy

County Manager Sauer discussed his strong concerns with “renting” vans to private groups, and the need for a County employee to complete these trips using their vacation days.

Additionally, the County Manager reminded the Board that the individual making the request been untruthful regarding his conversation with each Board member. At the suggestion of Chair Bazemore, a criminal records review was obtained from the NC Public Offender website and shared with the Board.

The Commissioners reiterated their support for action taken at the prior meeting to approve this item and no further action was taken.

FY 2018-2019 BUDGET PLANNING OUTLINE OF PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION **ITEMS**

Vice Chairman Wesson discussed his desire to see an actual budget document instead of receiving a verbal summary based on information from February. Currently the budget is still being assembled and County Manager Sauer stressed that the process is still ongoing and that it will be presented to the Board on June 1st, per statutory requirement, and that the formal budget presentation will be on June 4th at the Board's regular meeting.

Vice Chairman Wesson expressed that he felt it was difficult to set priorities at this time without seeing a written, preliminary FY2018-2019 budget document.

Finance Officer, William Roberson, noted that in past years the budget has not been available to the governing body until somewhere between the 16th and 25th of May.

Assistant County Manager (special project coordinator) proposal

County Manager, Scott Sauer, included and reviewed the agenda and actions items from the February 12th planning session, and the Board noting that the Board had discussed adding an Assistant County Manager position in the upcoming budget if funding was available.

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board that the planning session and priorities established, set the road map for the most recent ninety days of staff work leading up to the budget.

The County Manager will attempt to add this item to the budget per Board request to see if this could be affordable without a tax increase and the Board concurred. Mr. Sauer reminded the Board that there are several prior commitments approved by the Board which will limit the ability to add new expenses without funding new revenue.

Hurricane Matthew CADA workers added to County staff—100% local funding

CADA disaster recovery staff will be absorbed into the new budget as well. Those participants are currently in Maintenance, Cooperative Extension, and the Council on Aging as approved by the Board and will require full funding in the new fiscal year.

Sheriff's Office—staggered staffing for Court Security and Telecommunicator—100% funding

County Manager Sauer discussed the eight (8) new positions in FY2017-2018 which were hired on phased-in partial funding and will require full funding in FY2018-2019 and will limit the budget's expansion in other areas.

Albemarle Regional Health Services—long range funding plan

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board that since its merger with Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS), Bertie County's annual contribution remained flat at \$96,000 per year for eight years. The long-range plan proposed by ARHS is an incremental increase of approximately three percent (3%) annually.

TGOW—public access road utilizing existing farm path

County Manager Sauer discussed the efforts of Parks and Recreation Director, Donna Mizelle, who “took to heart” a discussion she had with Chair Bazemore regarding creating public access to the TGOW 137-acre tract of land by installing a two-lane gravel road from Bal Gra Road to the waterfront, including two parking areas and handicap accessibility.

It was also discussed the Mrs. Mizelle had been working with a contractor who had a good working relationship with CAMA and who was very familiar with their requirements. This is a project that would bring a two-lane road utilizing an existing farm path for not more than \$250,000 including two (2) parking lots.

After a brief discussion, the Board came to a consensus that they would like to include this project in the budget and to hear more from this contractor and receive any sort of proposals received in the Parks and Recreation Department for this project, and that they would like to see plans to move forward if the project could be completed for under \$250,000.

Schools—verify ADM, capital outlay needs, teacher supplement (recent failure of referendum on May 8th primary ballot)

Next, the Board discussed the budget proposed that was just presented by Superintendent, Dr. Catherine Edmonds, and the Board also discussed the latest ¼ cent pending sales tax referendum that just failed in the May 8th primary election.

Mr. Sauer expressed that he believes we should rely on current teachers and retirees of the school system to promote this initiative.

Vice Chairman Wesson said that he felt this item was not well promoted and referenced the eventual success of this initiative in Washington County.

Chair Bazemore reiterated her interest in hosting a Town Hall meeting to also assist in promoting this initiative on the November general election ballot.

Chair Bazemore also presented a NCACC update listing the counties that added the local option sales tax referenda to their May 2018 and the outcome:

2018 quarter-cent sales tax referenda		
County	Date on Ballot	Result
Bertie	May 2018	Unsuccessful
Clay	May 2018	Successful
Gaston	May 2018	Successful
Jones	May 2018	Successful
Lenoir	May 2018	Unsuccessful
Lincoln	May 2018	Successful
Pasquotank	May 2018	Successful
Person	May 2018	Unsuccessful
Rockingham	May 2018	Successful
Rutherford	May 2018	Successful
Washington	May 2018	Unsuccessful
Watauga	May 2018	Unsuccessful

Source: <https://www.ncacc.org/227/Local-Option-Sales-Tax-Referenda>

BCPS School Resource Officers and security recommendations

Nothing new yet, but \$100,000 in new capital is currently in the hands of the State legislature.

Forestry Service—staff increase (local match only)

The Board briefly discussed a needed staff member to serve the local area in the forestry service, which was included in the original budget request.

BMRJ—staff retention funding

It was discussed that an increased appropriation would be required and numbers are being assessed now based on the joint meeting with the Martin County Commissioners on March 26th, where there was a consensus to address jail staffing and the current vacancies.

Revaluation—added operational expenses

Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea, via County Manager Sauer, has included additional funds to address the additional need for mailings and notification about the revaluation coming up in 2020. “Drive by” evaluations are due to begin soon per the County’s selected revaluation firm.

Retiree health insurance—trend?

County Manager Sauer discussed that the cost of retiree health insurance is currently \$400,000 for about 20 retired employees, and this could rise pending any changes on healthcare costs.

Employee health insurance—estimated increase?

It is not known at this time what the exact increase would be but it is estimated at anywhere between 3 and 7% but could be higher.

Better Beginnings—status

Vice Chairman Wesson discussed that \$40,000 had been received as a “gift” for the program, and that the program would be transitioned back into the local school system.

Superintendent, Dr. Edmonds, also has interested in maintaining Bobbi Holley as Executive Director of the organization.

Commissioner Lee also stated her interest to continue having representative from Better Beginnings to share other related resources with parents and families.

Demolition—Old DSS/Health, Lawrence Memorial Library, Cooperative Extension

It was discussed that Maintenance Superintendent, Anthony Rascoe, was currently reviewing “competitive” bids for the demolition of these buildings, and more information would be brought to the Board soon.

County Manager Sauer mentioned that Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe was obtaining budget estimates for demolition costs related to the Lawrence Memorial Library facility, the former Cooperative Extension office building on Queen Street, the former DSS/Health Department buildings on the County’s Wayland Street property.

Mr. Sauer mentioned that local resident Russ Russell had expressed interest in seeing the old Granville Hotel relocated and positioned on top of the former library structure on Dundee Street which would elevate the historic building above any future flood waters that may occur.

Commissioner Trent suggested that the former library structure is not likely built to support that type of load mass. Mr. Sauer also shared a strategy for the temporary Cooperative Extension

offices (the former Sheriff's Office next to the County Administration building) when the staff are moved to the new facility (library and cooperative extension). The federal offices of the Farm Service Agency, USDA and Soil and Water Conservation could be relocated into the former Sheriff's office and housed together as a single service point for agriculture related services.

Mr. Sauer suggested that the Board of Elections staff could then occupy this space in the County Administration building and provide direct access to the Commissioners Room where election night results are posted for the public.

This would also be a convenient location for early voting stations given the available space in the current FSA office area. There was also some discussion among the Commissioners regarding the Sheriff's potential use of the current Board of Elections offices for the task force unit located in a nearby residential area.

Fire Service Evaluation—consultant study

County Manager Sauer discussed his recommendation to Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, for a fire department consultant study and the potential, long term need of consolidating some of the fire departments. A consultant could provide recommendations on how to better equip each fire department with the needed resources and equipment either via fire tax, service area tax, or overall consolidation.

Mr. Sauer also commended Jodey Sarey, President of the Bertie County Firefighters Association for his leadership and ability to bring fire chiefs from all over the County to discuss long term solutions.

Chair Bazemore also highly recommended that citizen input be solicited when the time became appropriate.

Teacher Pay Supplements

The Board discussed if they would like the ¼ cent sales tax increase on the November, general election ballot.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to petition for the referendum to be placed on the ballot for the general election in November. Vice Chairman Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Additionally, the Board expressed their desire to advertise this referendum as well as seek information on publishing an annual report. Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to move forward with both as mentioned. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Recreation Comprehensive Plan program & facility recommendations

The latest draft of the recreation comprehensive master plan has been reviewed, and the County Manager expressed his concerns with the drafted plan. The current draft plan has various areas that need to be reviewed including local area recreation photos and a better representation of Bertie County.

The County Manager also shared an aerial photo of the County's 99-acre former landfill site and recommended it be included in the comprehensive recreation plan. Commissioner Trent indicated this site would be an ideal location for an ATV park, and the consensus of the Board was to review the concept in the near future.

Site X funding commitment in partnership with Windsor

It was discussed that \$25,000 would be appropriated under Special Appropriations in the FY2018-2019 budget in keeping with the recent agreement at the joint meeting with the Town of Windsor.

JCPC Program

Vice Chairman Wesson made a **MOTION** to include the following programs into the FY2018-2019 MHFC Vocational and Educational, Second Chance Counts, Children Matters, JCPC Administration, and the Bertie County Conflict Resolution Teen Court. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Roanoke Chowan Community College—firefighter training accident

County Manager Sauer discussed his observations in the response to the accident that seriously injured a Kelford Volunteer Fire Department firefighter.

In Mr. Sauer's words, it was discovered that the "ball was dropped" by Roanoke Chowan Community College regarding communication for workers compensation, insurance coverage, and who maintains liability for the incident.

The fire training instructor at RCCC confirmed the college's responsibility for filing a claim soon after the accident since it was their training exercise. The County Manager, and Emergency

Services Director, Mitch Cooper have met with RCCC President Dr. Stanley Elliot to review the situation.

Chair Bazemore reported that a local business man that she was aware of, is contributing monthly payments to assist the firefighter and his family.

OTHER REPORTS

Commissioner Lee discussed her trip to Charleston, SC for the NACo Justice and Public Safety meeting.

Vice Chairman Wesson stated that he had just been made aware that Bertie County was the only county that had not applied for middle income housing grant that is currently available through the Mid-East Commission.

ADJOURN

Chair Bazemore **ADJOURNED** the **SPECIAL MEETING** at 12:00 Noon.

Ernestine Bazemore, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board