

**Windsor, North Carolina  
December 2, 2019  
REGULAR MEETING**

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

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: Interim County Manager Juan Vaughan, II.  
County Attorney Lloyd Smith  
Clerk to the Board Sarah Tinkham  
Finance Director William Roberson  
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper  
Finance Officer William Roberson  
Economic Development Director Steve Biggs  
Planning & Inspections Director Traci White  
Register of Deeds Annie Wilson  
Deputy Register of Deeds Sasha Lee  
Assistant Register of Deeds Shakedia Williams  
TGOW Project Consultant Robin Payne  
Veteran Services Director Denise Clark  
Board of Elections Director Sheila Holloman  
Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe  
Administrative Assistant Sheila Powell

Gene Motley from the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Leslie Beachboard from the Bertie Ledger-Advance were present from the media.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Bazemore gave the Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance.

**OATHS OF OFFICE**

Annie Wilson, Bertie County Register of Deeds, was present to administer the oaths of office to the 2020 Junior Commissioners.

The Junior Commissioners for 2020 include: Jakhia Basnight, Alexis Parker, and Qudre' Joyner

All are currently students in the Bertie County Public School System and will be involved during Board meetings throughout their term.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN PRESIDED BY  
INTERIM COUNTY MANAGER VAUGHAN**

Interim County Manager, Juan Vaughan, II, presided over the election of the 2020 Chairman. The Board voted to elect a 2020 Vice Chairman. This process was completed in accordance with **NCGS § 153A-39**.

The full statute is listed below:

**NCGS § 153A-39**

**Selection of chairman and vice-chairman; powers and duties.** [During] its first regular meeting in December of each odd-numbered year, the board of commissioners shall choose one of its members as chairman for the ensuing year, unless the chairman is elected as such by the people or otherwise designated by law.

The board shall also at that time choose a vice-chairman to act in the absence or disability of the chairman. If the chairman and the vice-chairman are both absent from a meeting of the board, the members present may choose a temporary chairman.

The chairman is the presiding officer of the board of commissioners. Unless excused by rule of the board, the presiding officer has the duty to vote on any question before the board.

The floor was opened to nominations for the 2020 Board Chairman.

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to nominate Ronald Wesson as the 2020 Chairman of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion.

At this time, Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to close the floor to new nominations for Chairman. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Regarding the motion on the floor for Commissioner Wesson to serve as the 2020 Board Chairman, a vote was called. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

At this time, the floor was open to nominations for 2020 Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to elect Tammy Lee as the 2020 Vice Chairman. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion.

After hearing no further nominations, a motion was needed to close the floor to nominations.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to close the floor to nominations for 2020 Vice Chairman. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Regarding the motion on the floor for Commissioner Lee to serve as the 2020 Board Chairman, a vote was called. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **5-MINUTE RECESS**

At this time, the meeting was recessed for a 5-minute break. Name plates were changed and board seats were swapped per the restructure.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Trent thanked the Board for allowing him to serve as Chairman for 2019.

Commissioner Bazemore acknowledged that, although these annual meeting can be contentious, she is looking forward to continuing to serve the citizens of Bertie County and providing a “voice to the voiceless.”

Commissioner Atkins thanked the Board for allowing him to serve as Vice Chairman for 2019. He reminded all of those present that the Board’s job is to serve the citizens of Bertie County, and he congratulated the Junior Commissioners on their terms as well.

Commissioner Lee thanked the Board for their nomination making her Vice Chairman for 2020.

Commissioner Wesson also thanked the Board for “the vote of confidence” from his fellow Board members about his nomination for 2020 Chairman. He also took this time to thank Commissioner Trent for his service over the past year as Chairman. He encouraged transparency by all and for all as well as open communication.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments at this time.

## REPORTS & APPOINTMENTS

### **MHAWorks Update – Project Architects Matt Johnson & Amber Idol**

Matt Johnson and Amber Idol of MHAWorks were present to discuss the recent leadership changes made within the firm, and to assure the Board that joint facility project still underway would not be affected.

Mr. Johnson will now be the direct point of contact for the County.

Ms. Idol noted that steel would be delivered to the site somewhere around December 19<sup>th</sup>, and the Board has the option of christening the steel or “topping out” the steel in a respective ceremony.

More details on a ceremony will be announced at a later date.

### **Fire Department Study – Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper**

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, reported on an initiative recently brought to him about a fire department study that could provide new GIS maps that could be utilized by EMS, Sheriff, and local fire departments.

The Board as a whole discussed an option for this study and mentioned being in more contact with the League of Municipalities before making a final decision.

The study would cover an upgrade to the County’s GIS maps and peer review analysis.

A copy of the proposal from Enviorsafe was included in the Board’s agenda package.

Collectively, the work represents approximately 104 hours of work. The company is the North Carolina League of Municipalities sole fire service consulting provider and will honor the League’s contracted, discounted hourly rate of \$124 per hour for Bertie County.

This would place a budget cap for the project as outlined above at **\$12,896** plus reimbursement of mileage at the current federal rate.

The Board noted that they wanted to review all options, but to also respect the timeline currently proposed as it does not conflict with planting season for volunteer firefighters that farm for a living.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** for the Board to review all options and come to a decision (called meeting or electronic vote) in early 2020 Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Emergency Services Director Cooper also noted that he had just been contacted by East Carolina University. ECU has begun offering an Emergency Management curriculum, and they would like to spend an entire semester updating Bertie County's Emergency Operations Plan. According to Mr. Cooper, that plan needs updates, and he is excited about this opportunity.

The Board commended Mr. Cooper and encouraged him to keep up the good work.

### **Operation Round-Up Care Trust Grant – Veteran Services Director Denise Clark & NCCE Administrative Assistant, Shelia Powell**

Veteran Services Director, Denise Clark, and NCCE Administrative Assistant, Sheila Powell, announced a \$5,000 grant that the County has just received called the Operation Round-Care Trust grant. The grant will provide transportation to veterans so that they are better able to access their doctor's appointments in and around Eastern NC.

The grant can be reapplied for every quarter and the next cycle is in March 2020.

The Board congratulated Ms. Powell and Ms. Clark for their hard work.

Chair Wesson discussed an issue that was brought to his attention by a veteran in his district, and once the veteran contacted Ms. Clark, the issue was handled to the best outcome possible for the veteran. He encouraged Ms. Clark to continue her diligence in this position as she was making a real difference.

Commissioner Bazemore also congratulated Ms. Powell and Ms. Clark and hoped that they would continue to reapply for the grant so that more and more Bertie veterans could be assisted.

### **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

#### **Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA)**

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to appoint Denise Clark to the CPTA Board. Vice Chairman Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

#### **Nursing Home/Adult Care Home CAC**

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to conditionally appoint Caroline Young. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

#### **Mid-East Commission**

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to reappoint Chairman Wesson to the Mid-East Commission. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **Region Q Workforce Development Board**

The Board briefly discussed possible recommendations as the Labor representative for the Region Q Workforce Development Board.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Minutes:** Closed Session 10-7-19 and 11-4-19, Regular Meeting 11-4-19

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes listed above. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2. **2020 Bonds** – Tax Administrator, Sheriff, Finance Officer, Register of Deeds

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the 2020 Bonds. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

3. **Fees Report** – November 2019

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the November 2019 fees report. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

4. **2020 Meeting Schedule** – Bertie County Board of Commissioners

Vice Chair Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the 2020 Board meeting schedule with the exception of the February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting which will be moved to February 10<sup>th</sup> (or another date has specified by the Board) instead. Chair Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

5. **Budget Amendments** – #20-04

Vice Chair Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the Budget Amendment(s). Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

6. **Work Authorization #5** – Holland Consulting Planners, Hurricane Matthew NC-DRA program

Vice Chair Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the Work Authorization#5 by Holland Consulting Planners. Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

7. **Tax Release Journal** – October 2019

Vice Chair Lee made a **MOTION** to approve the October 2019 Tax Release Journal. Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

8. **Contract services agreement** - special projects and consultation with Scott Sauer

Commissioner Bazemore reiterated her concerns about the \$5,000 monthly rate for Mr. Sauer, as well as his work location (on vs. offsite).

Chair Wesson asked for Commissioner Bazemore’s concerns about the monthly rate be noted on the record, but that the Board was ready to move forward at this time.

Vice Chair Lee expressed her concern for Mr. Vaughan’s transition into the Interim County Manager role with Mr. Sauer still present onsite.

Chair Wesson acknowledged each concern, but assured the Board that Mr. Sauer’s activities would be logged on a regular basis, and that all decisions related to work schedule and location could be handled at the discretion of the Interim County Manager, Mr. Vaughan.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the contract services agreement for special project consultant, Scott Sauer. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

9. **Resolution for Special Election** – one-quarter cent County sales and use tax – March 2020 “Super Tuesday” ballot

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to approve the Work Authorization#5 by Holland Consulting Planners. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.



## **DISCUSSION**

### **Review and approval of invoice to pay David Hodges for Long Branch Community Stormwater Grantsmanship**

County Attorney, Lloyd Smith, discussed a statute prohibiting a local government from dispersing funds for any reason without a budget appropriation. For this reason, the Legal Team did not recommend that the County honor the invoice submitted by David Hodges for the Long Branch Community Grantsmanship.

Chair Wesson stated no vote was needed and that the County would take the Legal Team's recommendation.

### **DOT Petition for Road Addition – Creekside Subdivision**

Shirley Taylor, on behalf of the residents of Creekside Subdivision, has asked for the Board's support in the submission of a DOT petition for Road Addition. The subdivision is looking to have the road paved.

Bertie County must be listed as a resident since it falls out of the Windsor ETJ.

The needed Form SR-1 is enclosed in the Board's agenda packet for tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** for the residents of the Creekside Subdivision to move forward with their petition listing Bertie County. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

### **Discuss list of suggested names for an Input Committee – TGOW/Bertie Beach project**

TGOW Special Project Consultant, Robin Payne, was present for the Board to review a list of potential names for an Input Committee.

Interim County Manager Vaughan presented a memo that was included in the Board's agenda packet, and outlined that all of the firms that responded to the related RFQ deemed this committee as a beneficial piece to the project.

At this time, the Board also discussed some additional recommendations for committee members.

### **Junior Commissioners' Reports**

Junior Commissioner, Qudre Joyner, stated that it was a "pleasure & honor" to serve another year as the Junior Commissioner.

Alexis Parker and Jahkia Basnight thanked the Board for an interesting meeting and stated they were excited for the upcoming year.

### **Commissioners' Reports**

Chair Wesson noted that he had been recommended by the Governor to serve on the Martin Community College Board of Trustees, and since his swearing in, he has worked diligently with MCC to secure additional course offerings at the Bertie-Martin campus in Windsor.

He also announced that he would soon be tapped as President of the Mid-East Commission, and that Bertie was not receiving more grant opportunities than ever before.

### **Interim County Manager's Reports**

Interim County Manager Vaughan briefly discussed the response to the TGOW RFQ process. In total, 15 firms responded to the RFQ advertisement, and he outlined the top 5 firms for the Board's consideration (in no particular order): Ratio, TSW, Vines, McAdams, and Albemarle.

It was discussed that the Board would host a special meeting to hear presentations at the first available time for each firm hopefully later this month, or in early January.

### **County Attorney's Reports**

County Attorney Smith discussed that road owner, Ted Cherry, had been contacted, but had not responded to the notice of violations under the Road Safety & Maintenance Ordinance.

Mr. Smith discussed the Board's options and recommended proceeding with a suit which was authorized by the Board.

Both Chair Wesson and Vice Chair Lee echoed similar clarifications about imposing the injunction and abatement suit first which would allow the County to assess the overall cost of repairs before moving forward with imposing the \$100 per day fine.

Serious concerns were expressed for each resident on this road, and the Board did not want to see these residents lose valuable access to emergency services due to the condition of the road.

He also recommended amending the County's ordinance to allow for service of violations outside and within Bertie County by adopting the service provisions of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.

Vice Chair Lee made a **MOTION** to move forward with the amending of the ordinance as recommended, as well as about imposing the injunction and abatement suit first which would allow the County to assess the overall cost of repairs before moving forward with imposing the \$100 per day fine. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** with all Commissioners voting in support except Commissioner Bazemore.

County Attorney Smith also provided a brief update about his recent discussions with the Sawyers who are not interested in a cross easement.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to move forward with a surveying of the area so that the County is aware of where the property lines lie, and revisiting the discussions with the Sawyers after. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Board also took this time to discuss the archeological digs currently taking place at the TGOW site. There were concerns raised by Commissioner Trent about the ownership and control of any recovered artifacts. Commissioner Lee discussed a potential partnership with the Town of Windsor as well.

County Attorney Smith recommended that a contract or agreement be prepared addressing the issue as follows:

1. The County would be recognized as the owner of all artifacts found.
2. The County would control disposition, examination, and display of the artifacts.
3. The contract would contain a provision similar to a nondisclosure agreement that if any entity takes possession of an artifact for any reason and would not return it, then the parties recognize there is not an adequate monetary remedy and the County would be entitled to specific performance and to go Superior Court to get an order ordering the return of the artifacts as well as legal fees incurred immediately and the other party waives any defenses.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** for the Legal Team move forward with the above outlined contract agreement. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

**Public Comments Continued**

There were no public comments during this session.

**ADJOURN**

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** to ADJOURN the meeting. Vice Chair Lee **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

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Ronald Wesson, Chairman

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Sarah Tinkham, Clerk to the Board