

**Windsor, North Carolina
December 30, 2019
SPECIAL MEETING**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a SPECIAL 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, II (~10:20am)
Tammy A. Lee, District III
John Trent, District IV
Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Absent: None

Staff Present: Interim County Manager Juan Vaughan, II.
Clerk to the Board Sarah Tinkham
TGOW Project Consultant Robin Payne
Parks & Recreation Director Donna Mizelle

There were no members of the media present at today's meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wesson called the meeting to order. He stated the purpose of today's meeting which is to hear from the respondent firms about future development of the Tall Glass of Water/Bertie Beach site.

A total of four (4) firms will present to the Board today.

INVOCATION

Chair Wesson gave the Invocation.

FIRM#1: VINES

Representatives from VINES included: Victor Vines, Jolie Thomas, Jeff Shroeder, and Emily McCoy.

The firm presented a short presentation as an addendum to their submittal

At the end of the presentation, the Board and Interim County Manager inquired about several different items including the firm's familiarity with the PARTF grant requirements, their experience in securing other funding sources for projects,

Mr. Vines mentioned that most projects begin as soon as they are hired, and there is trust involved that the government entity will be working in a separate capacity to secure the needed grants. He also stated that it is never a problem to design site plans based upon grant requirements.

The firm ensured that they would work at the same pace as the County, especially if the Board is efficient in their ability to make decisions, and keep momentum.

They also briefly discussed their relationships with private investors and the Conservation Fund based in Washington, D.C. The firm has had success in the past in securing additional funding, as well as even tax credits for some historical or recreational sites being developed by local governments.

Commissioner Trent discussed "oversight" that will be provided by Dave Hardin for this project, and Mr. Vines discussed that Mr. Hardin is extremely capable and responsive. It was reported that the County would receive 25% oversight _____.

Interim County Manager, Juan Vaughan, inquired if VINES would be willing to work under a Memorandum of Understanding for a brief time to discuss all aspects of the project moving forward, construction schedules, and a general timeline of the project.

Community outreach workshops were also discussed, and Mr. Shroeder noted that they were very familiar with bringing the community onboard and received their input about new projects.

Each member of VINES also discussed how enthusiastic they are about the project, and how this could be such an incredible draw for Bertie and beyond. Mr. Vines also noted that his firm is selective in the projects that they submit to do, and that they share the same underlying values as a firm.

Chair Wesson stated that all of those things do resonate with him, but he did express a reservation about VINES' lack of experience with coastal properties. Mr. Vines noted that in past projects, they have encountered that same sort of reservation, but that they have a staff full of experts all over the East Coast that can provide needed input for hurricane planning, habitat conservation, etc.

Commissioner Trent stated the importance for consultants that they hire to utilize local contractors.

Ms. McCoy noted that she is trained in this area and so many factors are "layered together" when it comes to potential projects, and that they have studied every facet of the County demographics and topography.

The firm was asked how they planned to have "history meet adventure" through this project development. Mr. Vines discussed that they are enthusiastic about completing this project alongside the Board, and that the site itself provides such an unbelievable opportunity for long term growth. He stated the firm has "unshakeable commitment," and that they were grateful for the opportunity to be apart of this selection process.

FIRM#2: ALBEMARLE & ASSOCIATED, LTD.

Representatives from Albemarle included but not limited to: James L. Overton, Bill Hamilton, Alisha Curwin, and George Wood.

This firm brings a wealth of experience in parks and recreation venues including Kitty Hawk Park, Jockey's Ridge State Park, and various campground, event site, and waterfront access points in and around the Outer Banks.

Albemarle also has completed projects as far south as Wilmington.

Throughout this experience, they do have familiarity with PARTF grants. They are aware of how stringent the timeline and requirements are, and that the County is off to a great start with the work Robin Payne has already completed.

They also briefly listed a timeline of the project which would begin with input sessions next week.

At this time the Board began the questions and answer portion of the presentation. The firm was asked to discuss their experience in securing other grant sources outside of PARTF.

Chair Wesson discuss his desire to balance history, economic development, citizen participation, community partnerships, and a lot of different needs that the County is currently lacking. He asked how Albemarle could assist with this endeavor.

Commissioner Lee wanted to make sure the firm understood that grants were going to be the primary source of funding, and that any potential timelines would need to be adjusted to allow time for grants to be received before sitework can continue.

A Memorandum of Understanding was permissible for the firm to participate in order for the project to continue moving forward until a formal contract was ready for execution. The firm was also able to participate in the Input Committee process.

At this time, they discussed their experience with community input sessions. The term “community buy in” was used, and they noted a couple of different techniques that they use to draw out input from members of the community that otherwise would not participate.

Information for references was also requested.

Chair Wesson was curious about Goose Creek which is one of Albemarle’s projects. No set budget was available before the first set of plans were drafted. A design for that park was brainstormed with the thought in mind that things could be cut at any time to fit a custom budget. This stood as an example of how adaptable Albemarle can be with each of their clients.

RECESS

The Board briefly recessed for lunch from 11:20 to 11:45am.

DELIBERATION

The Board, Interim County Manager Vaughan, and Robin Payne all deliberated about the firms that have already presented today.

There was a strong emphasis on the various grant cycles coming up and how important it will be for the selected firm to be ready to hit the ground running in providing various pieces that will be needed for grant submittals.

FIRM#3 McADAMS

Representatives present from McAdams included: Rachel Cotter, Daniel Wiebke, and Mon Peng Yueh.

Rachel Cotter, the assigned Project Manager, facilitated the presentation. She discussed the various services her firm can provide on an “in house” basis, and briefly discussed the relevant work experience that the McAdams firm can bring to the project.

As part of the question and answer session, Ms. Cotter fielded questions about how McAdams can assist the County in maximizing their grant application points, as well as broadening the horizon for additional grant opportunities especially as it relates to storm water management.

McAdams discussed their experience with working on the coast, as well as all of their in-house service capabilities from administration, design all the way to construction. All tasks of a project are handled within the firm from beginning to end.

Chair Wesson inquired about the firm’s availability, and how this project could fit in with their current slate of projects. It is a strong desire for the Board to receive one on one attention for this project especially as it relates to PARTF grant submission.

FIRM#4: RATIO

Representatives from RATIO included John Jackson.

The firm presented a brief presentation, and the Board participated in an exercise involving cards of various recreational opportunities, landscapes, and the Board was asked to choose a card that they identified with the most. They were then asked to relate it back to the TGOW property so that RATIO could hear more from them about each of their personal visions for the site.

After, the question and answer session began, and the firm fielded questions about the PARTF grant submission deadline in early April.

The firm discussed a Memorandum of Understanding being in place in advance of funding. Mr. Jackson discussed that the firm was willing and able to do. They would simply need to discuss with their consultants about how the funding will be received later under a formal contract.

It was also discussed that there are some programs that can reimburse the County for the costs of consultants and firms like RATIO.

RATIO has cleared their calendar for being able to participate in the first Input Committee on January 7th.

Chair Wesson inquired about the experience RATIO had in the past with CAMA, and it was noted noted a certified planner with experience in this capacity was already on staff. There was no doubt that RATIO could guide the County towards compliance with CAMA and any other related entities.

RATIO also presented a mock up of a 2025 edition of “Travel & Leisure” Magazine.

DELIBERATIONS

Chair Wesson asked for Commissioners to give their thoughts on each firm. It was his desire to have the Board decide on a firm today.

Commissioner Trent is in support of hiring VINES. He discussed the diversity of the firm make up itself, and how they were prepared for today’s presentation with a lot of different bases covered.

Commissioner Lee discussed written proposals of the various firms, and how they presented today. She appreciated the experience that Albemarle would bring to the project.

Commissioner Atkins was not able to hear the presentation from VINES, but he is aware that they are a popular option. He was impressed by McAdams today.

Commissioner Bazemore discussed her support for VINES, and how she appreciated how much homework the firm had completed on the demographics and general make up of the County when it came to sculpting and preparing their RFQ and today's presentation.

TGOW Project Consultant, Robin Payne, discussed the grant piece and how important it was to receive a well-done site plan to go along with the grant submission to make it more likely for approval. She emphasized how important it was to utilize all potential pieces of funding for the project instead of solely focusing on grants.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to hire VINES. Commissioner Bazemore **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Chair Wesson highly encouraged the Interim County Manager to work quickly with the Legal Team to draft a Memorandum of Understanding so that work could begin immediately on this project.

ADJOURN

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

The Chair **ADJOURNED** the meeting at approximately 3:00pm.

Ron Wesson, Chair

Sarah Tinkham, Clerk to the Board