

Windsor, North Carolina
March 28, 2019
JOINT SPECIAL MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a special meeting today inside the Department of Social Services Building Training Room, 101 Jasper Bazemore Avenue, Windsor, NC. The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald "Ron" Wesson, District I
Vice-Chairman Greg Atkins, District II
Chairman John Trent, District IV
Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V
County Manager Scott Sauer
Assistant to the County Manager Dominique Walker
Finance Director William Roberson
Bertie County Sheriff John Holley

Chowan County Delegation: Chair Patti Kersey
Vice-Chairman Ron Cummings
County Commissioner Bob Kirby
County Commissioner Don Faircloth
County Commissioner Ellis Lawrence
County Manager Kevin Howard
Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin
Chief Deputy Andy Bunch
County Clerk Susanne Stallings

Martin County Delegation: Chairman Tommy Bowen
Vice-Chairman Dempsey Bond, Jr.
County Commissioner Elmo "Butch" Lilley
County Commissioner Ronnie Smith
County Manager David Bone
County Clerk Jessica Godard

Bertie-Martin Regional Jail
Commission: Chairman Dempsey Bond, Jr.
Commissioner John Trent,
John MacDonald
William Stalls
Lawrence Carter, Jr.
Jail Administrator Terrence Whitehurst
Deputy Administrator/Secretary Lydra Freeman
Bertie County Sheriff John Holley

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

WELCOME

Chairman Trent opened the meeting and greeted guests in attendance. Martin County Chairman Tommy Bowen gave the Martin County call to order. Chowan County Chair Patti Kersey gave the Chowan County call to order. Chairman Trent introduced Dempsey Bond, Jr., Chair of the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Commission (BMRJ). Chair Bond called the Jail Commission to order.

INVOCATION

Bertie County Commissioner, Ron Wesson, gave the invocation before the meal.

DISCUSSION

Dempsey Bond, Jr., Chair of the BMRJ Commission, gave the statement of purpose for the joint meeting and where the BMRJ. He discussed that in October of last year, the County Managers of the Bertie, Martin, and Chowan counties came together to discuss a request the Chowan County Manager made of the other two counties to consider the feasibility of Chowan County joining the BMRJ. Later that same month, the BMRJ Commission met to further discuss the possible addition. An inter-local agreement was drafted which desired that the Board of Commissioners of the three counties would receive the study and evaluate the matter. In addition to the agreement, a request for qualifications were documented for a consultant to conduct a study to consider an expansion of the BMRJ facility in Windsor. Such an expansion would be necessary to accommodate the additional influx of inmates from Chowan County. Two proposals for the study were received after requests for a consultant were made public in January 2019. The two received were: Moseley Architects in Virginia and Hemphill-Randel Associates in Charlotte. Both the Chowan and Martin counties' Boards of Commissioners passed the inter-local agreement while Bertie County has not yet done so. Bertie County suggested the three county Boards gather to discuss the request before moving forward. Chair Bond stated that the goal for the meeting was to get more insight into Chowan County's situation with its jail and its desire to join the Bertie-Martin jail partnership. He suggested that if all three counties were comfortable moving forward with a study, then a consultant could be chosen to then submit a proposal.

At this time, dinner was served. Discussion resumed following dinner. Chowan County Manager, Kevin Howard, shared Chowan's interest in joining the BMRJ facility. Chowan County Sheriff, Dwayne Goodwin gave an overview of the Chowan County Detention Facility. The facility opened in 1979 and is 40 years old. It contains 25 beds, two single cells, an isolation cell, and 20 beds in the general inmate population. Only male inmates are housed at CCDF; female detainees are housed in Elizabeth City at ADJ. The facility has nine full-time employees and four part-time employees. The detention facility averages 31 inmates over a 12-month period and have recorded just one escape over the past three years. There have been no jail suicides since 1992. Meals at the facility are contracted with Bertie Correctional Institute in Windsor. They also have separate contracts for medical and mental health services. Currently they have a 2018-2019 operating budget of \$749,171 with 2017-18 expenditures of \$862,484.

Bertie County Commissioner Ernestine Bazemore inquired about voting on the feasibility study and subsequent questions regarding the study. BMRJ Chair, Dempsey Bond stated that the study would show what each county is expected to do and what questions would be identified and reviewed in the study. Commissioner Bazemore made a motion for the Bertie Commissioners to move forward in supporting the feasibility study. Before a vote was taken, Bertie County Commissioner Atkins asked for more specifics regarding the feasibility study. Bertie County Manager Scott Sauer explained the first steps of the agreement process. The first step would be an examination of the two consultant proposals, a request for interviews, and select one as one to hire. He explained that both Chowan and Martin counties have suggested and pledged by resolution to share in the cost of the consultant study, while Bertie has not yet taken action. Bertie County Commissioner Wesson asked if the cost would be a three-way split. County Manager Scott Sauer confirmed that there would be a suggested three-way split for the feasibility study and stated part of (the consultant's) actions would be to look at all three counties' long-term needs. Commissioner Wesson expressed his support for the study.

Martin County Commissioner Ronnie Smith shared the expectation of the joint meeting stating that the feasibility study would assess all three counties' position on the jail population and resources. He stated that the takeaway from the meeting should be whether or not the three boards are in agreement on a feasibility study. He shared that there are resources available for regionalization, and that there's growing competition for areas to regionalize on several fronts. Commissioner Atkins expressed that he'd be more comfortable with cost. County Manager Scott Sauer reiterated the first steps of the agreement. Martin County Manager David Bone added that there is no financial commitment until a price is presented.

Commissioner Bazemore made a **MOTION** for the Bertie County Commissioners to move forward in adopting the inter-local agreement evaluating the addition of Chowan County to the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Partnership. Commissioner Wesson then **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin expressed his opinion of regionalization. Martin County Chairman Tommy Bowen added that Bertie and Martin counties have worked well together in partnership for the jail and believes that Chowan would be an added plus to the partnership. Chowan County Commissioner Bob Kirby inquired about the two firm proposals. Commissioner Trent reiterated the first steps of the agreement and purpose of the meeting.

Martin County Manager David Bone said interviews would be conducted by members of the BMRJ Commission and select individuals from Chowan County. Chowan Board Chair Patti

Kersey said they have already selected fellow Commissioners Greg Bonner and Larry McLaughlin. Chair Dempsey Bond, Jr. thanked all the boards for attending the meeting.

Chair Trent made a **MOTION** for the Bertie County Commissioners to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously. Chair Dempsey Bond, Jr. made a **MOTION** for the BMRJ Commission to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously. Chowan and Martin counties voted individually to adjourn.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

John Trent, Chair

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board

INTER-LOCAL AGREEMENT

Bertie County, Martin County and Chowan County

Evaluation of Addition of Chowan County to the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Partnership

WHEREAS, the NC General Assembly passed Session Law 1981-269 allowing Bertie and Martin Counties to operate a regional jail; and

WHEREAS, the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail (BMRJ) has been beneficial to the citizens of Bertie and Martin County since its inception; and

WHEREAS, the NC General Assembly passed Session Law 1983-269 allowing nearby counties to join in the BMRJ; and

WHEREAS, Chowan County has expressed an interest in joining the BMRJ partnership;

NOW THEREFORE, as an exercise in regional collaboration and efficient use of local resources, the Boards of Commissioners of Bertie County, Martin County and Chowan County do hereby agree to a joint study to evaluate the opportunity to add Chowan County to join the BMRJ partnership.

FURTHERMORE, the Board of Commissioners of Bertie County, Martin County and Chowan County do hereby agree to undertake and fund an equal share of the costs of a Planning, Design and Engineering Study, said cost of which is subject to final approval by the Board of Commissioners of each county, to consider expansion of the BMRJ facility to accommodate the addition of Chowan County Jail inmates and operations at the current BMRJ facility in Windsor, NC to include, but not limited to, the following parameters:

- Operations planning;
- Space needs analysis;
- Personnel needs analysis;
- Analysis of the capital needs of the existing jail facility and potential renovation costs;
- Construction of needed additions to the existing jail facilities;
- Integration of existing staffs;
- Financial analysis of the value of Bertie County and Martin County investments in BMRJ and reserve funds and an appropriate “buy-in” investment to be made by Chowan County if all parties agree for Chowan County to join the BMRJ partnership;
- Actuarial study of the retirement liabilities of the current staffs of BMRJ and Chowan County Jail; and
- Potential timetable for the construction and renovation, as well as integration of staff and operations.

FURTHERMORE, the cost of the Study will be negotiated by the three County Managers after qualifications-based selection process and must be approved by the Boards of

Commissioners of Bertie County, Martin County and Chowan County before the contract is awarded.

Each party to this Agreement shall sign a signature page to constitute valid execution of this Agreement.

Attest:

Bertie County Clerk to the Board

Chairman
Bertie County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Martin County Clerk to the Board

Chairman
Martin County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Chowan County Clerk to the Board

Chairman
Chowan County Board of Commissioners