

Windsor, North Carolina
January 10, 2022
COMMISSIONERS MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a regularly scheduled meeting today at 6:00PM inside the Commissioners Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was hosted partially in person, and partially via Zoom (conference call). The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald “Ron” Wesson, District I
Greg Atkins, District II
Tammy A. Lee, District III
Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V
John Trent, District IV

Staff Present: County Manager Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager David Scarborough
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Finance Director William Roberson

Staff Present (Zoom): HR/Risk Management Director Cortney Ward

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Ron Wesson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SPECIAL GUEST

Chairman Trent informed everyone that a special guest from Roanoke Chowan Community College was in attendance.

Ms. Williams introduced herself to the board and expressed her excitement about joining Roanoke-Chowan Community College and serving the Bertie County community.

Chairman Trent thanked Ms. Williams for coming to Roanoke-Community College and stated that she was doing a wonderful job and they were grateful to have her there.

Vice-Chairman Wesson welcomed Ms. Williams and stated that he was delighted to have her at Roanoke-Chowan Community College as well.

WATER SYSTEM ASSET INVENTORY REPORT

BY RODNEY TART, GREEN ENGINEERING

Mr. Tart informed the Board that Green Engineering was successful in bringing in approximately \$600,000.00 in grant funds to further complete assessments and inventory of Bertie County water systems.

Mr. Tart mentioned the American Rescue Plan funds and the potential for Bertie County to be given priority since it is considered to be a distressed county.

Mr. Tart advised that it would be beneficial to update the water system's Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Tart stated that Green Engineering is in pursuit of grants funds and if successful, loans won't be necessary.

Commissioner Lee asked Mr. Tart if those funds would cover fire hydrants throughout the county. Mr. Tart advised Commissioner Lee that if it's failed infrastructure, it is likely. He furthered stated that those items should be identified and included in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Vice-Chair Wesson asked Mr. Tart if the software issue was their oversight or it was totally unexpected. Mr. Tart stated that with a system as big as ours, we need to have ongoing maintenance and it could have been an oversight.

Chairman Trent asked County Manager Vaughan to find out if software maintenance is included in the budget.

Mr. Tart finalized his presentation and stated he would need a copy of the approved minutes certifying that this report was made.

Commissioner Lee made the **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Water Districts I, II, III, IV, and V Asset Assessments and Inventory Report. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

SUPPORT OF THE ANNUAL CROSSROADS MAGAZINE FOR FEBRUARY, 2022

BY ANNA PHIPPS, ROANOKE-CHOWAN PUBLICATIONS, LLC

Anna Phipps from Roanoke-Chowan Publications, LLC came before the board to discuss the Crossroads Magazine 2022 edition. Roanoke-Chowan Publication will be inserting their annual edition in the February 24th edition of their Gates County Index and their February 23rd edition of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald. Mrs. Phipps stated that this year's theme will be "All About Treasures".

Through this addition, our advertising message would reach an audience of over 7,000 readers. Extra copies will be printed and sent out to the four counties' Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development offices. Anna also stated that they would put them out at welcome centers and tourist centers outside of the Roanoke-Chowan area and various cooperate offices.

Bertie County usually launches in the prime position on page 3 of the magazine. The option of upgrading to the center spread is possible as it is available at this time. The cost of page 3 is the same \$1,515 with an additional \$100 for the web impressions that go on the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald site. The center spread is \$2,375 along with the addition of \$100 for the web impressions.

Vice-Chair Wesson asked Anna how long do they have before submitting a new ad. Anna stated they have until February 1st.

Commissioner Lee made the **MOTION** that they go with their usually page 3 ad for \$1,515. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

FISCAL YEAR 2021-FINANCIAL SUMMARY

BY FINANCE DIRECTOR WILLIAM ROBERSON

Finance Director William Roberson provided a financial summary from July through November. Mr. Roberson advised the board that December hasn't been completely closed out yet, so December is not included in this summary. Finance Director Roberson stated that our revenue is looking a little bit better than it did at this time last year.

Finance Director Roberson stated that total expenditures at this point are at 35.2% of our budget compared to 31.2% at this time last year. He advised that there were a couple of departments throughout the list on the summary that could be viewed as trouble areas based on the amount of the budget that has been expended at this point. He pointed to Elections as being one of those departments. He explained that this happens when a large part of funds have been spent out of certain line item, but then nothing is spent for several months after that. The percentage of the budget expended will gradually begin to level out since there isn't an election event every month.

Finance Director Roberson stated that some of the debt will be paid off, but remaining debt is rising (high school debt).

Mr. Roberson stated sales and services are looking pretty good for the water department, which is a lot higher than last year at this time. Expenditures were up a fraction more than last year but they are still well below the 41.6 %.

Finance Director Roberson then pointed out to the board the reimbursements shown on the summary. The first one being TGOW. There was a reimbursement submitted on December 21st. We actually received \$81,000 from DRA17 on January 3rd.

The final one was the Library & Cooperative Extension. Director Roberson stated we should expect to receive approximately \$400,000 from Golden Leaf at this point.

The Board thanked Director Roberson.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS (B)

Chairman Trent stated that a reappointment for CADA Board is needed.

1. Reappointment of James Peele

Commissioner Lee made the **MOTION** to reappoint Mr. James Peele to the CADA Board. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2. Reappointment of Dr. Chris Cordon

Chairman Trent made the **MOTION** to reappoint Dr. Chris Cordon to the CADA Board. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA (C)

1. Approve Tax Release Journal- November 2021

The **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Tax Release Journal – November 2021 was made by Vice-Chair Wesson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2. Approve Register of Deeds Fees Report – December 2021

The **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Register of Deeds Fees Report was made by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

3. Approve Budget Amendments

The **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Budget Amendments was made by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Vice-Chair Wesson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

4. Approve Modivcare Contract for Non-Emergency Transport

The **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Modivcare Contract for Non-Emergency Transport was made by Vice-Chair Wesson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

5. Approve Water Districts I, II, III & IV Asset Assessments and Inventory Report
(See page 2 for voting details)

6. Approve Resolution to improve (SR 1128) Weeping Mary Rd

A **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Resolution to improve (SR 1128) Weeping Mary Rd was made by Vice-Chair Wesson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

7. Approve Bertie County Emergency Services Fee Schedule for FY22

A **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Bertie County Emergency Services Fee Schedule for FY22 was made by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Vice-Chair Wesson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

8. Approve Quitclaim Deed for upset bid of Rashonda Norfleet

A **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Quitclaim Deed for upset bid of Rashonda Norfleet was made by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)

1. Fire Protection Service District Technical Assistance Agreement

Assistant County Manager David Scarborough explained why the contract went from \$8,000 to \$11,000. He explained that when Greg Grayson first came before the Board in August, he provided a scope of what he thought it would take to do this and the total amount for that project would have been roughly \$8,000.

Assistant County Manager Scarborough stated that once they were given the approval to move forward, a full scale of what needs to be accomplished was developed and the number of hours increased from 40 hours to 60 hours. That increase with the travel and per diem expenses put the project a little over \$10,000.

Assistant County Manager Scarborough advised the Board that the county attorneys reviewed the contracts and everyone agreed they are ready to move forward.

Assistant County Manager Scarborough stated that there will not be any additional charges unless it is approved by the board.

A **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Fire Protection Service District Technical Assistance Agreement was made by Vice-Chair Wesson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

2. COVID Action Plan Recommendations

County Manager Vaughan stated that the latest Press Release from Albemarle Regional Health Services stated that we were up to 155 cases of Covid -19 in the county. County Manager stated that we are beginning to feel the effects of that because many departments have confirmed cases of COVID-19 and employees are in isolation due to this.

County Manager Vaughan stated because of this, we have begun to implement a number of things. Those things include:

- Making our facility available to the public by appointment only.
- The board meetings are only face to face for our commissioners, key staff, and presenters. The public's primary source of participation will be via zoom.
- All Council on Aging activities as well as sports with Parks and Recreation are put on hold until further notice.
- There may be some remote working again to minimize the amount of activity in our buildings.

County Manager Vaughan then stated the next item was the CDC guidelines, which was a little controversial because quarantine and isolation days have now gone from **10 days** to **5 days**.

County Manager Vaughan stated that when it comes to this we should say a **minimum of 5 days** because some people's symptoms linger longer than others. It is important for us to treat this on a case by case basis.

Chairman Trent and Vice-Chair Wesson asked if they could be tested before returning to work.

County Manager Vaughan stated that they looked into that a while ago back and CDC advised against having employees to post-test before they come back to work.

HR/Risk Management Director Cortney Ward stated that the CDC did advise against retesting to go back to work due to the fact that you can continue to test positive for up to three months.

County Manager Vaughan did state that testing abilities were a concern.

Chair Lee asked if they were going to revisit this topic in two weeks. Manager Vaughan confirmed that the Taskforce would.

3. CADA's CSBG proposed workplan and affidavit

County Manager Vaughan stat that when CADA applies for this particular grant, they are required to submit it to the Board.

A **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the CADA's CSBG proposed workplan and affidavit was made by Vice-Chair Wesson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS (E)

Commissioner Lee

Commissioner Lee stated that she had no reports at this time.

Vice Chair Wesson

Vice-Chair Wesson stated the deadline in the redistricting and gerrymandering process was delayed. He stated that it should be the 13th which is this Thursday and that it was very important for this county.

Vice-Chair Wesson stated that our Senate districting may be impacted by this. He advised that it looks like they may have to redraw some lines.

Commissioner Atkins

Commissioner Atkins stated that at this time he did not have any reports.

Commissioner Roberson

Commissioner Roberson stated that he had one reminder: because of Covid-19, we are losing so many people. Families need to know that FEMA has a program will contribute \$9,000 towards the cost of funerals for individuals who succumb to Covid. Go to www.Fema.gov and apply.

Chairman Trent

Chairman Trent stated that the Mayors and Commissioners meeting will be held in Kelford this Thursday at 7:00 PM. He will not be able to attend because he is heading back to Kentucky soon to be with his wife and mother-in-law due to his mother-in-law having surgery and his wife being there to take care of her.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINTUES PER SPEAKER)

HR/Risk Management Director Cortney Ward stated there were no public comments at this time.

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT (F)

County Manager Vaughan stated Haywood County requested additional trailer campers from Bertie County. The board previously approved for them to receive four campers and since then they have asked to receive four more additional campers.

The **MOTION** to **APPROVE** giving Haywood County four additional campers was made by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORT (G)

Attorney Huddleston’s report was regarding the conveying of land from the Town of Windsor to Bertie County and the affordable housing for teachers and local employees.

Attorney Huddleston stated that the County, the School System, and the Town of Windsor have financially contributed to the affordable housing for teachers and local employees. Attorney Huddleston advised that the Town was the owner of the property where the project is going to be constructed.

Attorney Huddleston advised that he and Attorney Lloyd Smith are assisting partners from Bertie County Schools with closing the loan from State Employees Credit Union Foundation. He stated that they have done the title work and they are at the point where the Town Board has approved the conveyance.

Attorney Huddleston stated there will be a deed from the Town of Windsor to Bertie County and he wanted to make sure the Commissioners are willing to accept that deed. Immediately after that, Partners from Bertie County Public Schools would make an offer.

Attorney Huddleston asked if Board would approve accepting the title with the understanding that it’s going to be an offer right behind it to purchase it from the county.

Vice-Chair Wesson stated that the reason they needed to do this was because they are hoping to have those apartments up and running by the end of April 2023.

The **MOTION** to **ACCEPT** the title was made by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wesson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to NCGS § 143-318.11(a)(3) To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

RECESS

Chairman Trent stated they were going to **RECESS** the meeting until tomorrow.

A **MOTION** to **RECESS** the meeting until tomorrow at 9:00AM was made by Commissioner Lee. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.