

**Windsor, North Carolina**  
**December 5, 2022**  
**COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a regularly scheduled meeting today at 6:00 P.M. inside the Superior Courtroom, 108 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  
Michael White, District II  
Tammy Lee, District III  
Corey Ballance, Sr., District III  
Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V  
John Trent, District IV

Absent: Greg Atkins, District II

Staff Present: County Manager Juan Vaughan, II  
Assistant County Manager David Scarborough  
County Attorney Lloyd C. Smith, Jr.  
Finance Director William Roberson

Staff Present (Zoom): Clerk to the Board LaShonda Cartwright

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Wesson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OF OFFICE**

**BY REGISTER OF DEEDS ANNIE WILSON**

Register of Deeds, Annie Wilson administered the Oaths of Office to the following.

- Corey Balance, Sr., Commissioner
- Michael White, Commissioner

- Ronald “Ron” Roberson

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN PRESIDED BY  
COUNTY MANAGER JUAN VAUGHAN, II**

Chairman Trent turned over the gavel to County Manager Vaughan.

County Manager Vaughan opened the floor for nominations of Chair for the Bertie County Board of Commissioners 2023.

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to nominate Ronald Wesson to be Chairman of the Board.

County Manager Vaughan asked if there were any other nominations at this time.

Commissioner Roberson stated to the County Manager that he would like to close the nominations at this time.

County Manager Vaughan did a roll call vote for Commissioner Wesson to become Chair.

Commissioner Ronald Roberson – Yes

Commissioner Corey, Ballance, Sr. – Yes

Commissioner John Trent – Yes

Commissioner Ronald Wesson – Yes

Commissioner Michael White – Yes

Commissioner Wesson was selected to be the 2023 Bertie County Board of Commissioners Chair with a **5-0 vote**.

County Manager Vaughan then congratulated Commissioner Wesson on being the Board Chair for 2023.

**ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN PRESIDED BY  
COUNTY MANAGER JUAN VAUGHAN, II**

County Manager Vaughan opened the floor for nominations of Vice-Chair for the Bertie County Board of Commissioners 2023.

Chairman Wesson nominated Commissioner Michael White for Vice-Chair for the Bertie County Board of Commissioners 2023.

There were no other nominations for Vice-Chair.

County Manager Vaughan did a roll call vote for Commissioner Michael White to become 2023 Bertie County Board of Commissioners Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Ronald Roberson – Yes

Commissioner Corey Balance, Sr. – Yes

Commissioner John Trent – Yes

Commissioner Ronald Wesson – Yes

Commissioner Michael White – Yes

Commissioner Michael White was selected to be the 2023 Bertie County Board of Commissioners Vice-Chair with a **5-0 vote**.

County Manager Vaughan then congratulated Commissioner White on being the Bertie County Board of Commissioners Vice-Chair for 2023.

#### **5-MINUTE RECESS**

County Manager Vaughan called for a 5-Minute Recess.

#### **MEETING RECONVENE**

Commissioner Wesson called the meeting back to order at 6:19 P.M.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

##### Commissioner Roberson

Commissioner Roberson thanked everyone for attending and congratulated the newly elected Commissioners.

##### Commissioner Trent

Commissioner Trent welcomed and thanked the two new Commissioners Michael White and Corey , Sr for being elected and joining the Bertie County Board of Commissioners.

##### Commissioner White

Commissioner White thanked everyone that voted for him and thanked everyone for allowing him the opportunity to serve as a Bertie County Commissioner.

##### Commissioner Balance

Commissioner Ballance thanked his family, friends, and the citizens of Bertie County for allowing him the opportunity to serve as a Bertie County Commissioner.

Commissioner Wesson

Commissioner Wesson thanked all of the Board members for giving him the honor to serve as Chair of the Bertie County Commissioners for 2023.

Commissioner Wesson stated that as the new Chair he looked forward to leading the effort in improving the quality of life for all of the Bertie County citizens.

Commissioner Wesson then thanked Commissioner Trent for his service over the prior year and his leadership.

Commissioner Wesson thanked former Commissioners Tammy Lee and Greg Atkins for their service.

Commissioner Wesson then stated that the Board was blessed to have two new Commissioners to bring new perspectives and a strong mandate from the citizens who elected them.

Commissioner Wesson state that the Board was very fortunate to have a very strong administrative team behind them.

Commissioner Wesson closed his remarks with a statement saying that what the Board of Commissioners need now more than ever is for every citizen in this County to be fully engaged with Commissioners.

Commissioner Wesson further stated that he wanted to make sure that the Board hears from the citizens and their desires are brought before them in a constructive way. Commissioner stated that citizens need to hold the Board accountable for their expectations and most importantly he wants the citizens of Bertie County to work with them to help the Board of Commissioners achieve their goals.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)**

Patricia Ferguson

Mrs. Ferguson started off by congratulating Commissioner Wesson for being elected Chair and Commissioner Michael White for being elected Vice-Chair. Mrs. Ferguson congratulated the two new members of the Board Commissioner Michael White and Corey Ballance, Sr. Mrs. Ferguson then congratulated Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin.

Mrs. Ferguson then spoke briefly on her project the Pecan Pickling Short- Film Festival and asked the Board to consider partnering to create a Regional Film Commission.

Mrs. Ferguson stated that when she comes back to present before the Board at the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting she will have two asks of the Board.

1. To provide letters of support for grant opportunities for the Film Festival.
2. A Commissioner to volunteer and to meet with her and follow the process of the Film Festival and vote on establishing a Film Commission.

Commissioner Wesson thanked Mrs. Ferguson for coming before the Board and putting them all on notice about the Film-Festival.

Commissioner Wesson asked the Clerk to the Board if there were any comments coming from Zoom.

The Clerk to the Board stated there were no public comments at this time.

## REPORTS & APPOINTMENTS

### 1. Presentation of offer to purchase property by Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea

Tax Administrator, Jodie Rhea presented to the Board an offer to purchase the property located on King Street, Windsor N.C. 27983 Mr. Rhea stated that the county's end liability was \$11,052.85 including taxes, attorney fees and court cost. Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea stated that they had an offer of \$11,920.

Commissioner Wesson then opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Wesson asked Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea if he knew what the intentions for the property were.

Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea stated that the offer came from a family member who lived out of state and the family member would like to keep the property in the family but did not specifically state what would be done with the property.

Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea stated that the property is in a state of disrepair.

Commissioner asked Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea if the offer included the attorney fees?

Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea stated "yes".

Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea then stated that if the Board voted to accept the offer it would be advertised for a period of 10 days for an upset period.

Commissioner Wesson stated that the property was located on King St. across the bridge going towards Heritage House on the corner and the property is in disrepair. He also stated that the property had been affected by flooding on more than one occasion.

Commissioner Wesson stated that if someone wants to do something with the property he thought it would be a good thing.

Commissioner Wesson then asked what was the pleasure of the Board.?Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to accept the offer. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous vote.

### 2. Presentation by Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin

Sheriff Ruffin came before the Board to introduce the new members of the Sheriff Department and to share the promotions received in their department.

Sheriff Ruffin called the new members of the Sheriff Department up to be introduced to the Board. They were Rochelle Gaskins, Cody Garland, Michael Conwell and Chantel Coates.

Sheriff Ruffin then stated that Deputy Timothy Hardy was promoted to Chief Deputy, Sargent. Bonnie Powell was promoted to the position of Captain., Corporal Roger Blount was promoted to the position of Sargent.

Sheriff Ruffin stated that the Sheriff Department was looking forward to serving the citizens of Bertie County and working with the Board of Commissioners.

Sheriff Ruffin then stated that he had one request of the Board and that request was to remove the position of Corporal from his command staff and implement the position of Captain.

Sheriff Ruffin then asked the Board for a vote to implement the position of Captain to his command staff.

Commissioner Wesson stated to Sheriff Ruffin that his understanding is that the change in the codes does not impact any immediate change in salary levels for anyone, but is simply a change in the classification codes..

Sheriff Ruffin stated “that was correct”.

Commissioner Wesson asked what was the pleasure of the Board.

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to move forward with the suggestions that the Sheriff had made. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous vote.

### 3. Financial Summary by Finance Director William Roberson

Finance Director William Roberson presented to the Board a Financial Summary. Finance Director William Roberson explained to the Board the line items on the handouts that he had provided them.

Finance Director William Roberson pointed out to the Board that in the section titled “Expenses” the area for Soil Conservation showed 50.9% YTD expenses, and explained it was because the County received a grant to do some work in the Long Branch community and that work was done and expensed out so it made that percentage look a little high. However, without that they would be right around 29% which is the normal area.

Finance Director William Roberson pointed out the section for Cash in the bank. He stated that area showed they were a little higher then what they were a year ago, about 2 million dollars.

Finance Director William Roberson then spoke on the Utility Fund (Water Department) and an internal fund for the telephone.

Finance Director William Roberson then stated that he knew was a lot to look over and he was aware that they have two new Commissioners. He then provided them with the location of his office and stated that if they ever needed to talk with him or had any questions his door is always open.

Commissioner Wesson stated that was a great suggestion and that Finance Director William Roberson plays a very vital role in management in terms of the County's finances.

Commissioner Wesson then highlighted the fact that the County is now 2 million dollars ahead.

Commissioner Wesson then thanked Finance Director William Roberson.

### **BOARD APPOINTMENTS (B)**

There were none.

### **CONSENT AGENDA (C)**

1. Register of Deeds Fees Report – September & October 2022

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to pass the Register of Deeds Fees Reports. Commissioner Ballance **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous vote.

2. Tax Release Journal – September & October 2022

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve the Tax Release Journals. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous vote.

3. Approve Bonds held for Bertie County Officials

County Manager Vaughan stated that the Bond previously approved for the Sheriff was for a 5-day period and now recommended the Board to approve the Bond for his full term as well as all other members who are bonded at this time.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve the Bonds for the Elected Officials. Commissioner Ballance **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous vote.

### **DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)**

1. Essentials of County Government for Newly – Elected County Commissioners
  - Dec. 15-16-Asheville
  - Jan. 12-13-Cary

- Jan. 18-20-Online

Commissioner Wesson stated that there was an Essentials of County Government training class for Newly-Elected County Commissioners and he provided the new Commissioners with the options available for training and further stated that they can discuss their preference with the County Manager who would assist them with registering for the training.

2. Next Board of Commissioners Meeting Scheduled Jan. 9, 6:00 PM

Commissioner Wesson stated that he had a scheduling conflict with the upcoming meeting that he could not change and he asked his fellow Board members if they could move the meeting to the next week.

Commissioner Wesson then stated that Project Consultant Robin Payne has indicated that she would like to come back before the Board and continue the planning session that they had gotten about half way through the last time.

Commissioner Wesson stated that the County Manager has also indicated that he would like to do some orientation with the new Commissioners at that time.

Commissioner Wesson then stated that since this will be a full agenda, rather than have a regular meeting his suggestion is that the Board make it a Work Session instead.

Commissioner Wesson suggested having the Work Session on January 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM until around 1:00 PM

Commissioner Wesson then asked if that date and time worked for everyone.

County Manager Vaughan asked the Board to vote on amending the Commissioners Meeting Schedule to reflect the change of the regular scheduled meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM to being a Work Session on January 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 A.M. to approximately 1:00 PM instead.

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** to amend the Commissioners Meeting Schedule to reflect the change of the regular scheduled meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 A.M. to being a Work Session on January 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 A.M. to approximately 1:00 P.M. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS (E)**

Commissioner Roberson

No reports.

Commissioner Trent

Commissioner Trent reiterated welcoming the two new Commissioners to the Bertie County Board of Commissioners and welcoming Commissioner Wesson to filling the seat as Chairman



of the Board of Bertie County Commissioners. Commissioner stated that he wanted the Board to come together as a team.

Commissioner White

No reports.

Commissioner Ballance

Commissioners Ballance thanked the citizens of Bertie County and the existing Commissioners again.

Commissioner Wesson

Commissioner Wesson stated that he was looking forward to this year and he thinks we have a good Board with a good amount of balance. He further stated that he thought the Board was going to work great together for the good of the citizens.

Commissioner Wesson stated that all the Board needed was the input of the citizens and to make sure the citizens stay involved, are engaged with them, and keep them on track.

Commissioner Wesson stated that the Board was going to work really hard to continue to improve the quality of life here in Bertie County.

**COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORTS (F)**

County Manager Vaughan stated that he enjoyed working with former Chairman Trent last year. He then congratulated our new Chair Commissioner Wesson and Vice-Chair Commissioner White.

County Manger Vaughan then congratulated Commissioner Roberson, Vice-Chair White and Commissioner Balance on their first full term as Bertie County Commissioners. He then stated that he looks forward to working with each of them.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORTS (G)**

No Reports.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)**

The Clerk to the Board stated there was one public comment from Zoom.

The Clerk read the comment that came from a citizen stating congratulations to the new Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin and all of his new crew. God got this! Love you all. Bertie County Sheriff’s Department is definitely moving in the direction. It is time for all of us to come together, when we come together we are Bertie strong. Thank you!

There were no other comments.

**ADJOURN**

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to adjourn. Commissioner White **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION PASSED** with a unanimous decision.

The meeting adjourned.

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Ronald Wesson, Chair

ATTEST:

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LaShonda Cartwright, Clerk to the Board