

**BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS
March 21, 2022**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners held its regular meeting on Monday, March 21, 2022 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 John Trent, District IV Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V
Staff Present:	County Manager Juan Vaughan, II Assistant County Manager David Scarborough Finance Director William Roberson
Staff Present (Zoom):	Clerk to the Board LaShonda Cartwright

Call to Order

Chairman Trent called meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Lee.

Agenda

- (1) Request to Partner with Bertie County in Pursuit of NC GREAT Grant for Broadband Services by Roanoke Connect Holdings, LLC - Bo Coughlin, Angela Washington & Cathy Davidson.
“The commitment is to provide high speed fiber to everyone in this county. Period.” Mr. Coughlin shared a presentation demonstrating Roanoke Connects current coverage area and the expansion to the entire county over the next two years. Their goal is to deliver the service the citizens deserve, at a cost they can afford, and do it as fast as they can. The commitment was made that unless there is an act of God or other major incident, if a customer loses service it would be restored within 24 hours. The goal is to do this with or without a match. The Great Grant has a tier match of up to 50%, we are looking for a 20% - 50% match based on the scoring provided by the Great Grant. Chairman Trent restated Roanoke Electric and Roanoke Connect intentions to be that, by 2025, Bertie County should be set. The hope is that Bertie County would match 20% of the grant. Commissioner Roberson asked for verification that there is no obligation for match by the County. Mr. Coughlin and Ms. Davidson both confirmed this to be true.

- (2) Request to Partner with Bertie County in Pursuit of NC GREAT Grant for Broadband Services by LUMEN – Ted Hankins. Mr. Hankins joined via ZOOM, and shared an update on the merger of several companies to

become Bright Speed, and its headquarters will be based in North Carolina. Bright Speed will be investing \$2 billion dollars into the 20 states they cover to bring fiber into the home, and North Carolina will be one of the larger states to which they invest. In regards to the Great Grants, they have identified one project build area in Bertie County, a \$6.3 million-dollar project, includes 1,459 locations and 89 miles of fiber deployment, with the anticipation that Bertie County would provide a match of \$500,000.

(3) ABC Board Audit Update by Wade Green, CPA.

Mr. Green joined via ZOOM to explain more fully why the revenues on the income statement didn't match the distribution payable on the balance sheet. He referred to page 15 of the 2020 Audit, Bertie County 95%, \$27,691 was the current distribution payable for June 30, 2020. Below this figure was the Bertie County refunds, at \$12,003. This is the amount that the ABC Board forgave in 2019. That amount needed to be placed somewhere, and the net was \$15,688. After this discussion, the Board thanked Mr. Green and moved forward.

(4) Update on Animal Shelter Project by David Scarborough, Assistant County Manager

Assistant County Manager Scarborough updated the Commissioners on the RFP process for the architectural and design management project for the Animal Shelter. Bertie County received 2 proposals. The selected firm will be tasked with assessing the needs of the County in regards to the new animal shelter, and will then develop architectural designs for the project. If the Board elects to go forward with the project, this firm would then develop an RFP for construction, and manage the project throughout the process until built. Interviews will be held by both firms on Wednesday, March 23, with the goal of selecting a firm by the end of the month.

(5) Financial Projection for End of Fiscal Year 2021-2022 by William Roberson, Finance Officer

Finance Director Roberson presented his projections for fiscal year 2021-2022, and provided a report for the Commissioners to review.

(6) Use of Community Room in Library & Cooperative Extension Facility

County Manager Vaughan provided information on how the Senior Center facility is used as information. Commissioner Wesson would like Bertie County to open this facility to the public for legitimate citizens activities, groups and/or family activities. The Board discussed such areas as cost of using facility, staffing, insurance, damage fees, timing and other areas. A consensus was that Administration and the County Attorney bring back more information regarding these issues so that the Board could address this more fully.

(7) Strategic Planning

County Manager Vaughan handed out several pieces of information for the Board to consider in regards to strategic planning. The first piece of information was a portion of minutes from October 3-4, 2013 that identified areas of strategic planning to include recruitment of a fertilizer plant operations, a bio-mass facility, focus on wildlife tourism, and promotion of investment projects, such as Scotch Hall. A second handout was the 2018-2028 Bertie County Recreational Plan. A third handout was the Bertie County Economic Development Plan of 2014. It is important to identify these initiatives and where Bertie County stands in meeting these goals. Having a plan and a direction is a positive aspect of grant applications. Robin Payne, TGOW Project Administrator, shared with the commissioners how establishing a strategic plan in place is essential and beneficial to securing funding for the plans identified.

Commissioner Wesson made **MOTION** to go into closed session. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED**. **MOTION APPROVED** 5-0.

Closed Session

Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)(5)(6)

(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. General policy matters may not be discussed in a closed session and nothing herein shall be construed to permit a public body to close a meeting that otherwise would be open merely because an attorney employed or retained by the public body is a participant.

(5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract.

(6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.

Return to Open Session

Commissioner Wesson made **MOTION** to return to open session. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED**. **MOTION APPROVED 5-0**.

Other Items as Needed

Commissioner Lee made **MOTION** to appoint Rodney Wayne Lee to the NCSFA Relief Board for Perrytown Fire Department. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED**. **MOTION APPROVED 5-0**.

Budget Calendar

County Manager Vaughan provided budget calendar to Commissioners for their review. From May 24-June 3rd, the budget work sessions need to be scheduled. May 23rd at 10:00 a.m., after the budget presentation, and on May 24th if necessary were the dates decided upon for the work sessions.

Upcoming Meetings

County Manager updated the Board on upcoming meetings, specifically the NAACO conference in Colorado.

Commissioner Lee made the **MOTION** to Adjourn. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. **MOTION APPROVED 5-0**.