

**BERTIE COUNTY BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS  
April 20, 2022 Commissioner's Meeting**

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners held its regular work session meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 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  
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston  
Finance Director William Roberson  
Human Resources/Risk Management Director Cortney Ward

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) Reconvening of the Board of Equalization and Review, Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea  
Commissioner Wesson made **MOTION** to Reconvene the Board of Equalization and Review. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED. MOTION APPROVED 5-0.**

Tax Administrator stated that there were no appeals to review.

Commissioner Wesson made **MOTION** to Close the Board of Equalization and Review. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED. MOTION APPROVED 5-0.**

(2) GREAT Grant Follow Up & Discussion, Cathy Davidson & Bo Coughlin, Roanoke Connect  
Cathy Davidson & Bo Coughlin reiterated their commitment to provide fiber to every resident and business in Bertie County. The GREAT grant is the foundation to reaching that goal. Chair Trent requested that the recap of the GREAT grant and programs be set aside as the Commissioners and staff understand this

process, but that the Commissioners had specific questions that they would like more information on. Mr. Coughlin agreed. Chair Trent asked what the entire budget for this project for Bertie County was to be. Mr. Coughlin stated \$42 million dollars. Chair Trent asked what the \$8 million-dollar figure that was being stated addressed. Ms. Davidson responded that this was the maximum amount that could be funded by the Great Grant. Ms. Davidson stated that the required match is 50%, or \$4 million dollars. The entire project for this area that they are working to complete is \$12.4 million, so Roanoke is committed to meet the entire match except for \$500,000, to which they are asking Bertie County to provide. Commissioner Wesson asked what would happen if the grant was received and the match was less? Both Ms. Davidson and Mr. Coughlin both acknowledged that if the match to the GREAT grant was less than \$500,000, Roanoke Connect would pick up the difference.

Commissioner Wesson made **MOTION** to approve the consent to moving forward with the intent of providing support to Roanoke Connect in the amount of \$250,000 per grant application. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED. MOTION APPROVED 5-0.**

(3) Animal Cruelty Investigation Update, Sheriff John Holley & Staff

Sheriff Holley stated he was there to answer any questions about PETA. Commissioner Wesson expressed the concern of the Commissioners that PETA was making statements that they were not getting satisfactory responses from the Sheriff's Office regarding recent complaints of animal cruelty issues that they had identified and where the investigations stood. Sheriff Holley stated that investigations are not immediately going to produce results as PETA expects. It takes time. Communication is being provided, but it takes time. These cases have been turned over to the State's Attorney's Office, who is ultimately responsible for trying these cases. Procedures are being followed and communications have been provided.

(4) Tornado Survivor Update by DSS Director Cindy Perry & Staff Final Distribution of Tornado Relief Funds, County Manager Juan Vaughan, II.

Director Perry and staff attended via ZOOM. Four residents remain in the Camper Trailers, and they have been informed by letter and in person that they must have found other housing by April 30<sup>th</sup>. One resident requested the opportunity of purchasing the camper, but consensus by Commissioners and Administration is that these campers are not permanent housing, and the goal is to be able pay forward these campers to other families in need if possible.

County Manager Vaughan then discussed the final distribution of the remaining Tornado Relief funds. There remains \$38,000, and County Manager Vaughan recommended to the Board that these funds be distributed evenly between the 16 families who were totally displaced by the tornado, once they have totally left the campers and found new housing. Assistant County Attorney Huddleston informed the Board that there was no legal reason why this couldn't be done. Commissioner Wesson addressed the owners of the trailer park who was uninsured and that the Board should consider assisting them as well.

Commissioner Roberson made **MOTION** to follow the County Manager's recommendation of distributing the remaining tornado relief funds to the 16 families totally displaced by the tornado once they have permanently vacated the camper trailers for new housing. Commissioner Atkins **SECONDED. MOTION APPROVED 5-0.**

(5) Bertie County On-Call Policy, Human Resources/Risk Management Director Cortney Ward

On-call policy was presented to the commissioners, and Director Ward was present to explain this policy and the differences between on-call and standby pay are to the commissioners. No decisions were made at this time.

(6) Upcoming Travel: NACo Conference, July 21-24, 2022, Aurora, Colorado

County Manager asked for confirmation on which commissioners would be attending this conference, in order to plan accordingly. Commissioner Lee stated she would be going as she was in the Board. Chair Trent made

MOTION to appoint Commissioner Wesson as the voting delegate for Bertie County at this conference. Commissioner Lee **SECONDED**. **MOTION APPROVED 5-0**.

Commissioner Roberson stated he would not be attending in order to not impact budget limitations, to which Chairman Trent concurred that he would not be attending for same reasons.

(7) Bertie County 300th Anniversary Celebration Discussion.

Commissioner Wesson encouraged staff to establish a committee and plan an event to celebrate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bertie County.

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**

**Other Items as Needed**

Chairman Trent – Dr. Riggs called last week to inform that he would be bringing a number of folks to Bertie County next week to visit TGOW and other areas of the county, and has asked that Chairman Trent and Commissioner Wesson be the hosts for this event. Making the Board aware.

Assistant County Attorney Huddleston spoke in regards to the property where Vident is located. The lease has now ended, and the property is now being conveyed back to Vidant as via the lease agreement. There is a piece of property on the tax maps that Vident is asking the County to not convey this piece of property to Vident but to convey it to the Town of Windsor that has a pump station there. Commissioner Lee made the **MOTION** that our Attorney contact the Town of Windsor and convey this piece of property to the Town if they accept it. Commissioner Roberson **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. **MOTION APPROVED 5-0**.

**Adjournment**

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