

Windsor, North Carolina
October 16, 2023
WORK SESSION

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a Work Session today at 10:00 AM inside the Community 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
Michael White, District II
Corey Ballance, Sr., District III
Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V
John Trent, District IV

Absent:

Staff Present: County Manager Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager David Scarborough
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Clerk to the Board LaShonda Cartwright

Staff Present (Zoom): Information Technology Joseph Wilkes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wesson called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Register of Deeds Fees Report -September 2023

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to approve the Register of Deeds Fees Report – September 2023. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ballance. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

2. Approval of Open and Closed Session Minutes 10-2-23

Commissioner Ballance made the **MOTION** to approve the Open and Closed Session Minutes for 10-2-23. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

3. Approval of NC Dept of Commerce Rural Economic Development Grant - \$200,000

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to approve and accept the NC Dept of Commerce Rural Economic Development Grant. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

4. Approval of Project Amendment for Rural Economic Development Grant

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to approve the Project Amendment for the Rural Economic Development Grant. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

5. Approval of Planning Service Agreement with Destination by Design Studios

Commissioner Ballance made the **MOTION** to approve the Planning Service Agreement with Destination by Design Studios. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Trent. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

6. Approval of Interlocal Agreements with Martin and Hertford County to provide Inspection Services

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to approve the Interlocal Agreements with Martin and Hertford County to provide Inspection Services. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

SPECIAL PROJECTS UPDATE, NATURAL HERITAGE DESIGNATION & ARDWOOD FOREST AWARD BY PROJECT CONSULTANT ROBIN PAYNE

Project Consultant Robin Payne provided the Board with [an](#) update of the progress being made at Tall Glass of Water.

Robin stated that Bertie County Emergency Management Services had received a 5.5-million-dollar appropriation to expand fire response and evacuation capabilities throughout Bertie County.

Robin asked the Board to approve a Letter of Intent and Agreement for the Hardwood Forest Award.

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to approve the Letter of Intent and Agreement for the Hardwood Forest Award. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ballance. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

Robin then asked the Board to consider being part of the Old Growth Forest Network.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve the County being a part of the Old Growth Forest Network. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ballance. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

LOBBYING EFFORTS UPDATE BY LOBBYIST BOB STEINBURG

Lobbyist Bob Steinburg came before the Board to provide updates on his lobbying efforts.

Mr. Steinburg stated that he felt that he had a good working relationship with the County. He then stated that he was very pleased that they were able to secure the \$6.49 million dollar grant for the building of a new Communications center.

Mr. Steinburg then stated that it was very vital for the Board to make themselves present in Raleigh. This would help put a face to the County when it comes to seeking funding from the state.

Mr. Steinburg stated that the County needed to determine by late January what the County's priorities in reference to funding were going to be in order for them to be presented at the state level.

DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY EVENT BY CHAIR WESSON

Chairman Wesson discussed his thoughts of having an annual event for the County.

The Board discussed the idea of a County event and formed the **CONSENSUS** that it would be a good idea to possibly have a community event in the spring and make the event an annual event.

This event would include all municipalities getting together to make the event a big event and possibly rotating the event from each municipality each year.

PRIORITIZING ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN CURRENT BUDGET

County Manager Vaughan led the discussion on prioritizing items that were not included in the current budget.

The Board then began a discussion on other items to be included for consideration. Those items included the following:

- 2 vehicles for EMS (this has already been voted on)
- ADA friendly vehicles with wheelchair access for county usage
- Upgrading the Recreation Department Facility
- Providing Forestry with \$22,000 for operational cost
- Basketball Court (Hard surface, bleachers, lights, full court)

- TGOW extras
- A possible rainy-day fund
- Upgrading the Website
- Repairing the Southwestern Gym bathrooms/roof
- Community Event for the county
- A sum toward the 911 Grant match

The Board decided to continue their discussion on these priority items at the next Work Session on November 6th.

RECESS – LUNCH

The Board recessed for 5 minutes.

The Board then continue the Work Session while having a working lunch break.

ASSESSMENT OF COUNTY OFFICE SPACE BY MANAGER JUAN VAUGHAN, II

County Manager Vaughan provided the Board with his recommendations from his assessment of the county office spaces.

County Manager Vaughan stated that at this time he didn't feel that consolidating office spaces would be beneficial for the County. Mr. Vaughan stated that he felt that the County needed more space in order to operate.

Mr. Vaughan recommended that the Board of Elections get usage of the entire building located at 210 W Watson St.. This was due to the fact that the Elections staff are very limited on space and are running out of room for storing their equipment.

The Board formed the **CONSENSUS** to give the entire building to Elections to provide them with more space.

Mr. Vaughan stated that FSA and Soil and Water Conservation hopefully would be moving to the old Sheriff Department building soon. This would provide more office space for other County offices to utilize.

The Board decided that they would continue looking into more ways to consolidate spaces within all County buildings including possibly moving the Recreation Department to the Old Southwestern Middle School.

DISCUSS PROCESS FOR MANAGER'S EVALUATION

The Board discussed building a specific process to evaluate the County Manager. Commissioner White suggested tying the County Managers evaluation to the Strategic Planning process. The Board also discussed having the County Manager evaluated the first week of the Fiscal Year every year in July.

The Board made the decision to do County Manager Vaughan's evaluation at the November 6th meeting. Changing the meeting from a regular Commissioners Meeting to a Work Session starting at 10:00 AM.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to amend the Commissioners Meeting Schedule to reflect the change of the regular scheduled Commissioners Meeting on November 6th at 6:00PM to a Work Session at 10:00 AM on November 6th. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Trent. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

CLOSED SESSION
PURSUANT TO NCGS §143-318.11(a)(3)(5)(6)

Commissioner Wesson made the **MOTION** to go into Closed Session. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with **5-0** vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ballance made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Trent. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

The meeting adjourned.

Ronald Wesson, Chairman

ATTEST:

LaShonda Cartwright, Clerk to the Board