

Windsor, North Carolina
November 6, 2023
WORK SESSION

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a Work Session at 10:00 AM 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
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, Jr.
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
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 White gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gail King

Mrs. King who owns a lot in Occano on Royal Way came to the Board to express her excitement over the construction of a clubhouse but concerns over the water system at Occano. She was told by a representative of Occano that they do not have permission to flush the water lines. Mrs.

King wanted to seek guidance on whose responsibility it was it to handle the water system concerns in the area and who the citizens should try to contact to resolve the situation.

Commissioner Wesson along with the other Board members explained to Mrs. King that the County wouldn't be involved with the development of the Club House.

Commissioner Wesson further explained that the county provided water to the tap at the corner of the property which was where the County liability ended.

Commissioner Trent then asked Assistant County Attorney Huddleston if the water system at Occano had been turned over to the County.

Attorney Huddleston stated that it had not.

Commissioner Trent then stated that several years ago through the previous owners the County had been asked to take over the water system and the Board voted against it because the developer had not met the requirements for turning the water system over to the County.

Commissioner Trent informed Mrs. King that the reason the residents have anything with Bertie County's name on it was because the owners at that time asked if the County would at least do the billing for the utilities.

The Board and Attorney Huddleston stated that they were not aware of any restrictions that the County had put on the developer of the Club House other than the requirements that all developers must meet when turning a water system over to the County.

Angela Irwin

Ms. Irwin of Beacon Light Church Rd. came before the Board to express her concerns with how the animals are left outside 24/7. Ms. Irwin stated that she felt like that was neglect. She wanted to know from the Board how they could change the law to help prevent animals from being left chained outside 24/7.

Ms. Irwin shared with the Board a picture of a dog named Precious and she stated that precious was left out in a crate 24/7 and even when she is crying she's still not brought inside.

Commissioner Wesson thanked Ms. Irwin for bringing her concerns to the Board. He stated they are working with PETA and citizens directly to help resolve the animal cruelty issues in the county.

Commissioner Roberson provided Ms. Irwin with contact information for PETA where she could get some assistance to help assist with any animal cruelty issues.

Commissioner Wesson stated that if you are aware of any animal being mistreated in the county bring it to the Board and it would address the concerns.

Gary Johnson-Mayor of Roxobel

Mayor Johnson came before the Board to ask about the status of the supermarket in Roxobel that went up for bid due to nonpayment of taxes. Mayor Johnson wanted to know if the County had taken ownership of the building.

Commissioner Wesson asked Attorney Huddleston to address Mayor Johnson's question.

Attorney Huddleston stated that the building was still under the ownership of the previous owners and the County has not taken ownership of the building. The County did have the opening bid. However, the County never purchased the property. Attorney Huddleston stated the proceedings were terminated.

Christopher Richardson -Roxobel Resident

Mr. Richardson asked the Board if the supermarket building was still up for sale.

Attorney Huddleston stated to Mr. Richardson that as of right now the building was not up for sale in a tax foreclosure and he would need to contact the owners if he wanted to purchase it.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Open and Closed Session Minutes 10-16-23

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to approve Open and Closed Session Minutes 10-16-23. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ballance. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

2. Approval of Register of Deeds Fees Report -October 2023

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

3. Approval of Tax Release Journal – September 2023

Commissioner Ballance made the **MOTION** to approve Tax Release Journal- September 2023. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Trent. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

4. Budget Amendment (Tower repairs-tornado damage)

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to approve the Budget Amendment. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

5. Approval of Increasing NC Forest Service Appropriation by \$21,944

Commissioner Ballance made the **MOTION** to approve Increasing NC Forest Service Appropriations by \$21,944. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Trent. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

BOARD APPOINTMENT

1. Jury Commission – Vernon Lee

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to reappointment Vernon Lee to the Jury Commission Board. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Trent. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

ELECTIONS UPDATE-ELECTIONS DIRECTOR LATOYA PEELE

Director Latoya Peele provided the Board with updates on the 2023 Municipal Election. Ms. Peele stated that the Voter Registration Deadline was October 13th at 5:00PM.

Director Peele stated that sample ballots are still available in the Elections office, online and the precincts that are open. Election Day will be 11-7-2023 and poles will be open from 6:30 AM-7:30 PM.

Director Peele stated that Canvass will be determined and finalized on 11-23-2023.

Director Peele then stated that voter photo ID is now required in order for you to vote and if you do not have a voter photo ID you will be given a voter photo ID Exception Form .

Director Peele stated that filing for the 2024 Primary Election will begin on 12-4-2023 at 12:00PM and end on 12-15-2023 at 12:00PM.

Director Peele stated that our Local Official such as Register of Deeds was up for election as well as our County Commissioners seats District I (Commissioner Wesson) and IV (Commissioner Trent). The filing fees are determined by 1% of the starting salaries.

Director Peele stated the state offices the NC Senate and NC House are also so up for election. Those fees are determined by NCGS 163 and the price for those fillings are 139.51.

Director Peele stated that there will be new district boundaries for the upcoming 2024 election year.

Director Peele asked the Board to be put on the agenda for the December meeting to discuss the upcoming 2024 Primary Elections and filing fees are only acceptable by check or money order.

WATER DEPARTMENT UPDATE-WATER SUPERINTENDENT RICKY SPIVEY

Mr. Spivey came before the Board to discuss the current issue that the department is having with the Munis upgrade and billing. Mr. Spivey stated that because of the billing issues there will be no cutoffs, late fees or penalties issued until the system is back and working properly.

Mr. Spivey then stated that they were still on schedule for the Town of Lewiston-Woodville upgrade.

Financial Summary -Assistant County Manager / Interim Finance Director David Scarborough

Mr. Scarborough stated that currently the county was doing well from a financial standpoint and he currently had no concerns with the County's finances.

RECLASSIFICATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 1 POSTION FOR DSS HR DIRECTOR-LATORIA HARRELL (AGENDA ADD-ON)

Mrs. Harrell recommended adding the position of Administrative Officer II to the county's pay scale.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to add the position of Administrative Officer II to the county's pay scale. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Trent. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

DISCUSSION OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS MEETING-COUNTY MANAGER JUAN VAUGHAN, II

County Manager Vaughan proposed having a public meeting on December 11th at 6:00 PM to discuss how the Opioid Settlement Funds the county receives should be spent. County Manager Vaughan stated that all of the towns as well as the citizens should be invited to the discussion.

The Board agreed to have a public hearing on December 11th at 6:00PM in the Community Meeting Room of the Library and Cooperative Extension building to discuss the Opioid Settlement Funds and how those funds should be spent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Patricia Ferguson

Dr. Ferguson thanked the Board for supporting the first annual Pecan Pickling Film Festival that was held on September 8th-10th, 2023.

The Board thanked Dr. Ferguson for all of her hard work and dedication. They further stated that the Pecan Pickling Film Festival was a huge success.

Dr. Ferguson stated the Film Festival was a big success and she would be submitting a proposal for support next year.

Dr. Ferguson then invited the Board and the citizens to attend the upcoming reception at Martin Community College on Saturday from 6:00 PM-7:15 PM.

Venita Thompson -Aging Services Coordinator

Ms. Venita stated that she would be retiring and this month would be the last month of her employment with Bertie County. She then thanked the Board for all that it had done for her and all the wonderful opportunities that she has had working with the county.

The Board congratulated Venita on her retirement and thanked her for all of the services she had provided to the seniors and citizens of the county.

Gail King

Mrs. King asked the Board for an update on the potentials of adding an ambulance service in Mid-way and adding another fire station to the Occano community.

Commissioner Wesson stated that the Board does have plans to help and support the other fire stations with some of the funds from a grant that the County had received.

Brad/Jamie

Brad and Jamie from Ocanno stated to the Board that they had a concern with the 911 system. They live in Occano and when the residents of Occano call 911 it goes to Edenton instead of Bertie and then goes to Windsor. This delays the response time from emergency personnel.

Commissioner Wesson stated that the direct appropriations from the State funds that the county received would help aid in addressing issues such as delayed response times in emergency situations.

CLOSED SESSION

PURSUANT TO NCCGS §143-318.11(a)(3)(5)(6)

Commissioner Trent made the **MOTION** to into closed session. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

OPEN SESSION
OTHER ITEMS AS NEEDED

Employee Appreciation Luncheon

County Manager Vaughan recommended to the Board bringing the Employee Appreciation Luncheon back and having it at Chiefs on December 7th, 2023 at 12:30 PM -2:30 PM.

The Board decided to allow the employees to have their appreciation luncheon and make it a fun-filled event for the employees.

There was no further discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned.

Ronald Wesson, Chair

ATTEST:

LaShonda Cartwright, Clerk to the Board