

Bertie County, North Carolina
April 8, 2024
COMMISSIONER MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a work session today at 6:00 PM inside the Commissioners' Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. This meeting was hosted partially in person, and partially via Zoom (conference call). The following members were present or absent:

Present: Michael White, District II
Corey Ballance, Sr., District III
John Trent, District IV
Ronald "Ron" Roberson, District V

Absent: Ronald "Ron" Wesson, District I

Staff Present: County Manager Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager David Scarborough
County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston
Clerk to the Board LaShonda Cartwright
Information Technology Director Joseph Wilkes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

DSS Board Chair James Lee spoke regarding the DSS Director. Since she has been here, the department has changed and is better. He felt the County should increase her salary ~~to retain her in efforts of retaining her.~~

APPOINTMENTS & REPORTS

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER LEVYING ROOM OCCUPANCY TAX OF UP TO 6%

Chairman Trent called the public hearing to order and asked for public comments.

There being none, the public hearing was closed.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board unanimously approved the levying of a room occupancy tax of up to 6%.

CONVENE AS BOARD OF EQUALIZATION & REVIEW, TAX ADMINISTRATOR JODIE RHEA

Mr. Rhea stated that there are no current appeals.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson, seconded by Commissioner Ballance the Board recessed to April 22nd.

ABC BOARD UPDATES AND PRESENTATION, CHAIR MICHAEL FREEMAN

Mr. Freeman stated that Bertie County ABC Board is alive and well. He introduced other Board members in attendance along with the store manager.

Multiple Board members presented distribution checks. The profits received go to local law enforcement, education, and the general fund. Profits also assist the state of North Carolina.

The NCDOT UPDATE ON BERTIE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Ms. Amanda Killian of NCDOT stated that a Comprehensive Transportation Plan is the initial plan for improvements and allows application to future funding. We look at all modes of travel along with environmental issues. The plan assists with prioritizing projects. The steering committee has been meeting to provide recommendations for the plan. We conducted a public input survey and received recommendations. The previous plan was done in 2012 and this one will be an improvement. She highlighted a few recommendations such as roundabouts, US 13 upgrades, NC 11 widening, and bike and pedestrian upgrades.

It was suggested that the Coastal Resiliency plan be included.

THE REQUEST FOR BERTIE COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE ON THE PEANUT BELT RPO TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE, PRINCIPAL PLANNER STEPHANIE HARMON

Ms. Harmon noted that we have municipal representation along with other counties. The Board requires completion of the NC Ethics forms annually. Our next meeting is in May and we rotate to different counties. This can be a commissioner, or someone appointed by the commissioners, but they request a designation by the next meeting.

TGOW AND DESTINATION BERTIE UPDATES, PROJECT CONSULTANT ROBIN PAYNE

Ms. Payne stated that we are printing a one-page information sheet to insert in the annual tax forms regarding the occupancy tax. Work with Tall Glass of Water continues. Chronical Heritage was looking at the entire acreage and as of last week they saw nothing of concern. We will file the necessary paperwork following receipt of the report. We have been approached by horse riders requesting access and the use of their horse trailers.

She confirmed that there are no concerns. She confirmed her intent to apply for a BRIC Grant in the amount of \$125,000. Destination Bertie was a well-received video. The upcoming strategic plan will assist with developing focus areas.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve Register of Deeds Fees Report-March 2024

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance and seconded by Commissioner White, the Board approved the Register of Deeds Fees Report as presented with a 4-0 vote.

Minutes for Open Session and closed session on February 20, 2024 were presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance and seconded by Commissioner White, the Board approved the minutes as presented with a 4-0 vote.

Approve Amendments to Contract to Audit Accounts by Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board approved the resolution as presented with a 4-0 vote.

Approve NC Department of Adult Correction Lease Agreement

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board approved the lease agreement as presented with a 4-0 vote.

Budget Amendments were presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Balance, the Board approved the budget amendments as presented with a 4-0 vote.

Discussion Agenda

Recreation Complex Basketball Courts Request for Proposal

Assistant County Manager David Scarborough stated that we advertised the RFP and received no responses. He asked the Board for direction as to if it wishes to post again or reallocate money set aside

for other projects. Consensus was to delay this discussion regarding next steps until next meeting when Commissioner Wesson was present.

Animal Shelter Update

Mr. Scarborough stated that we received a bid for \$1.3 million from A.R. Chesson. Our options are to approve the contract and allocate the difference of \$900,000 or we can ask the contractor to hold the price to determine if we get additional funding from the State. We can also reject all bids and hope to get bids at a lower price later.

On a motion by Commissioner Trent and seconded by Commissioner Ballance, the Board suggested value engineering the project.

April 22nd Work Session, Community Meeting Room 10am

The work session will include an update from Cooperative Extension.

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Roberson asked the DSS Director to approach and provide insight on Medicaid Expansion. On March 19th an event was held in Washington County and we continue to hold events to apply for coverage. The Good Shepherd Food Pantry held a good session on CPR certification. He stated he has called Raleigh about SPAM calls. Dial 888-832-2022 and you will register for no telemarketers calling.

County Manager Reports

County Manager Vaughan made a recommendation for Franklin Williams, Economic Development to serve on the RPO.

The Strategic Project Coordinator, Kelley Chesson was introduced. Kelly assisted with an \$8,000 grant for the animal shelter.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Joseph Powell of Trailer Park Road noted that he enjoys his job with Bertie County. He stated that he is concerned about people speeding around children in his neighborhood and the conditions of the road.

The Board noted that this is within the Town City Limits. It is the responsibility of the trailer park to pave the road.

Ms. Rachel Bellis representing PETA stated she offered to pay for equipment that would increase the temperature at the current shelter but her offer was denied. She noted that the ordinance that they are requesting improves animal welfare in the community. She referenced a case regarding a dog Princess. The property owners no longer allow PETA to visit the property. She questioned what happened to Princess and the puppies.

County Attorney Reports

No Report

CLOSED SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Ballance and seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board entered closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3)(4)(6).

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Balance, the Board returned to open session.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Ballance, the Board voted to transfer ownership of the old library and the old cooperative extension building to the Town of Windsor.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson seconded by Commissioner Ballance the meeting was adjourned.