

Bertie County, North Carolina
February 5, 2024
COMMISSIONER MEETING

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for a work session today at 10:00AM inside the Commissioners' Room, 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. 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

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

Rachel Bellis (Virtual), PETA said that on Saturday January 20th while delivering straw, PETA helpers identified dogs left outside on a property that was unoccupied. Helpers identified puppies, one injured dog, and some tethered dogs were identified. Dispatch was called and advised that the shelter was too full to house additional dogs, which is unacceptable. Sheriff Deputies responded and several dogs were picked up by the owners, others were not. She noted that several communities have initiated tethering bans.

Commissioner White questioned what was it that PETA/Ms. Bellis was asking of the County?

Ms. Bellis replied that the desire is to ban unattended chaining of dogs and implementation of basic standards of care for animals through an ordinance. Bertie currently follows the state statute.

Commissioner White noted that tonight she references dogs that are not tethered, so what is sought this evening?

Ms. Bellis replied that while most dogs are generally tethered, and others broke free in this case there is no ordinance for standards of care. She noted that her intent is to remind Commissioners of who is in the community and needs help.

Commissioner Wesson questioned the intent of the billboard. He noted that residents are not conveying that they want the same type of ordinance PETA requests. We can't regulate morality.

Ms. Bellis replied that ordinances prevent cruelty and suffering.

Commissioner Roberson praised the work and stated that we are working to build a shelter. We need to be aware that ordinances require enforcement and enforcement requires manpower.

APPOINTMENTS & REPORTS

Introduction of Digital Skills Coordinator/Educator Valencia White by Director William Barrow, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Bertie Center

Director Barrow noted that the position is funded through NC State. We were one of ten counties receiving funding. This is a new position, and we will be fine tuning as we go along.

Ms. White stated that she is currently partnering with the Council on Aging to assist the aging population. She noted that she will work with the churches and the community organizations to share information about the program.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the program.

2024 Primary Election Updates

Clerk to the Board LaShondra Cartwright presented on behalf of Director LaToya Peele. She reviewed the date for the elections along with the dates and times for voting. Dates and the process for absentee ballots was shared along with types of ID accepted.

Financial Summary by Interim Finance Director David Scarborough

Financial summary for first 6 months of revenues & expenditures reviewed by Mr. Scarborough, with no concerns noted.

The approval of the Register of Deeds Fees Report was presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson, seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board approved the report as presented.

The FY2024 Bertie Portable Radio Grant Agreement was presented for Board consideration.

On a motion by Commissioner Wesson seconded by Commissioner Roberson, the Board approved the grant agreement as presented.

OTHER ITEMS

The Recreation Complex Basketball Courts Request for Proposals Update

Mr. Scarborough noted that the proposals will be out this month with proposals received in March and results back to commissioners in April.

Bertie County Location for Public Defenders Office

County Manager Vaughan stated that we need a location, and the Public Defender has requested to use the former sheriff's office. She is open to sharing the conference room with others. The administrative office of the courts will need to evaluate before finalization.

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson, seconded by Commissioner Wesson the board unanimously allowed the utilization of the old sheriff's building for the Public Defender.

Chairman Trent shared several upcoming dates for Commissioner awareness.

The Bertie County Schools NEEDS Based Grant Presentation by Senator Hanig, February 7, 2024 at 2pm at the Community Building.

The Commissioners Work Session February 20th at 10am at the Commissioners Room.

The 2024 NACo Legislative Conference is February 10-13, 2024 in Washington DC.

The NC Cooperative Extension Meet and Greet is February 20, 2024 from 4pm-7pm at the Community Meeting Room.

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Roberson noted the importance of supporting schools.

Commissioner Wesson noted work on teacher housing continues for mid-April and we are under budget which is a good thing. Ten units are available. We are planning a joint session regarding Medicaid expansion for March 19th with all agencies involved.

Commissioner Trent stated we have a new company coming to town, PSSI. They are an investment company.

County Manager Reports

On January 23rd NCACC held the district 2 meeting in Williamston. Counties from our district attended and representatives shared accomplishments and challenges. Many counties in our district have similar challenges.

County Attorney Reports

No Report

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3)(4)(6)

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson seconded by Commissioner Wesson the Board entered closed session

On a motion by Commissioner Roberson, seconded by Commissioner Wesson, the Board came out of closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

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