

**Windsor, North Carolina
July 7, 2025
REGULAR SESSION**

The Bertie County Commissioners met in Regular Session 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: Chair, Corey Ballance, Sr., District III
Vice-Chair, Lewis Hoggard, III, District I
Ronald “Ron” Roberson, District V
Vivian Saunders, District IV
Michael White, District II

Staff Present: County Manager, Juan Vaughan, II
Assistant County Manager, David Scarborough
Assistant County Attorney, Jonathan Huddleston
Clerk to the Board, Tonya Davis
Network Administrator, Dashawn Clark

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ballance called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-chair Hoggard gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Rachel Bellis from PETA spoke about the plight of tethered dogs in the county during hot weather, highlighting specific cases and advocating for improved animal welfare regulations.

Jerry Cowand stated the he would like to praise the NCDOT staff and crew who came out to clean up the area and road from where two one hundred-year-old very large oak trees fell down across the road in Merry Hill after a serve storm.

APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Introduction of It’s Your Move by Deeneka Phelps

Deeneka Phelps introduced her integrated health services company, which she is looking to expand into Bertie County. Ms. Phelps mentioned to the Board that she is interested in receiving some of the Opioid funds that Bertie County has received.

2. Performance Contracting by Dr. Otis Smallwood

Dr. Otis Small presented an update on energy-saving initiatives from Graham Electric for Bertie County Schools. Dr. Smallwood stated that by upgrading and/or replacing some of the HVAC systems it would defer cost and energy savings which could save over \$5 million over the next five years. There will be no extra request for funding on this project. Dr. Smallwood asked the Board for approval to move to the next phase of the project to seek RFPs.

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to approve Dr. Smallwood to move forward with the next phase with Graham Electric and to start seeking RFPs. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Vice-Chair Hoggard. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

3. Municipal Election Candidate Filing by LaToya Peele

Elections Director, LaToya Peele, updated the Board on municipal election candidate filings stating that filing started on July 7, 2025 and ends July 18, 2025 at 12:00PM. The filing fee for candidates is \$5.00.

4. Windsor Township Development Update and Recommendations by Ronald Wesson

Ronald Wesson asked the Board to approve his recommendations of Gloria Bryant, Lewis Hoggard, III, Ricky Clough, and Lewis Dameron to the Windsor Township Development Board.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve the recommendations for Board members of the Windsor Township Development Board. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote

5. Presentation of NCDOT Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Amanda Killian from the North Carolina Department of Transportation shared the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) with the Board which outlines transportation needs over the next 25-35 years. The plan includes recommendations for highways, bike paths, and pedestrian routes, developed through collaboration with local governments, stakeholders, and the public. The Board discussed ongoing road maintenance projects, including full-depth patching and resurfacing, and addressed questions about specific highway improvements and accessibility concerns at Bertie Beach. Ms. Killian asked the Board to approve the adoption of the NCDOT Comprehensive Draft Plan.

6. Approve Issuance of RFQ for Design and Architectural Services for Phase II of TGOW by Robin Payne

Robin Payne asked the Board to approve the issuance of RFQ's for design and architectural services for phase II of Tall Glass of Water project.

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to approve the issuance of RFQ's for design and architectural services for phase II of Tall Glass of Water project. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Vice-Chair Hoggard. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote

7. Discussion of County Structure in Aulander and Approval to Submit Grant for Demo by Robin Payne

Robin Payne stated that the County-owned buildings located at 103–109 East Main Street in Aulander, NC, need to either be demolished or renovated with reinforcement of the structural walls. The estimated cost for demolition is \$100,000 plus an additional \$75,000 to have engineering involved while demolishing the buildings due there being 2 units on each side of the structure and the walls will need to be braced for security. Mrs. Payne stated that it is a \$1.8 million project to renovate the buildings.

The Board decided to table this for further discussion.

8. Request to Submit a Grant for the Cashie Drainage Project by Robin Payne

Robin Payne asked the Board to table this request until the next meeting. Mrs. Payne stated that there is a match requirement for the grant and the County has part of the matching fund but she needs to find additional funding.

The Board tabled this until the next meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

No Board Appointments

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve May 5, 2025 and June 5, 2025 Closed Session Minutes, May 19, 2025, May 22, 2025, June 5, 2025, and June 16, 2025 Work Session Minutes

Vice -Chair Hoggard made the **MOTION** to approve the May 5, 2025 and June 5, 2025 Closed Session Minutes, May 19, 2025, May 22, 2025, June 5, 2025, and June 16, 2025 Work Session Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

2. Approve the June 2025 Register of Deeds Fees Reports

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the June 2025 Register of Deeds Fees Reports. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

3. Approve the May 2025 Tax Release Journal

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the May 2025 Tax Release Journal. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

4. Approve HCCBG Funding Packet for FY2025-2026

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to approve the HCCBG Funding Packet for FY 2025-2026. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

5. Approve Adoption of the NCDOT CTP Draft Plan

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve the adoption of the NCDOT CTP Draft Plan. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote

*****OTHER ITEMS*****
DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)

1. Inclement Weather Policy Options

Human Resources Director, Nicole Boone, presented three different options for the Boards consideration for the Inclement Weather Policy which included employees using personal leave, administrative leave, or implementing weather leave days (3 days). Ms. Boone stated that she contacted surrounding counties to see what their Inclement Weather Policies are. Bladen, Edgecomb, and Hertford counties require their employees to use their leave for inclement weather days. Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, Halifax, Martin, Northampton, Washington, Wayne, and Wilson counties give their employees paid leave. Gates County provides their employees 3 days of inclement weather leave. Pitt County provides their employees 40 hours of inclement weather leave. The estimated cost to Bertie County for providing one day of paid leave is \$18,359 to non-essential employees for inclement weather which excludes the Sheriff's Department, EMS, and Communications.

Ms. Boone also provided the Board with information that she gathered from other counties concerning employee paid benefits. Bertie County pays \$674.62 toward employee's health insurance along with providing Dental and Vision at no cost to the employee, Life Insurance, 401K providing 3% of the employee's salary, 5% for LEO, and \$200 for flexible spending accounts. Chowan county provides Health, Dental, and Life Insurance. Hertford County provides Health and Life Insurance. Martin County provides Health, Dental, Life Insurance, along with 5% towards their 401K and 5% for LEO. Washington County provided Dental, Vision, Life Insurance, and 401K providing 3% only if their employees contribute \$20 or more.

2. Project Updates – David Scarborough

Assistant County Manager, David Scarborough, gave an update on County projects.

1) 911-Communications Center Grant (PSAP)

Total Grant Amount: \$6,490,427

County Match: \$1,361,427 (\$400,000 by June 30th, 2026 for construction costs)
Grant amounts currently expended: \$276,878. (Mission Critical Partners & Schrader Group)

Commissioner White asked if the \$400,000 needed by County for match in this fiscal year had been funded. When he was informed it had not been, he questioned why. Administration's response was that there was still the anticipation that the federal appropriations bill funding request submitted by Representative Don Davis would be received in time to address this need, otherwise other options would need to be considered.

2) **Emergency Management Department of Public Safety Grant**

To purchase fire suppression and technical rescue support vehicles to be placed near residential development areas that are in close proximity to agricultural industries to properly mitigate potential release of hazardous materials. Emergency response facilities will be renovated or replaced to house both fire suppression equipment and EMS response personnel, in order to decrease response time to emergencies.

Total Grant Award: \$5,500,000

County Match: \$0

Grant amounts currently expended: \$1,452,673 (Windsor Fire Truck \$1,000,000, Lewiston-Woodville Fire Truck \$452,673)

All fire trucks have been ordered and funds encumbered.

Construction projects:

Lewiston-Woodville working to secure property to build new station (EMS/fire station)

Development / design of that station cannot be started until site secured.

Merry Hill / Midway construction documents have been received for renovation to current station. Next steps to complete bid process for cost estimates on station. No timeline established yet.

Secondary station site plans and construction plans to be addressed next. No timeline established yet.

3) **Animal Shelter**

Total Funding Available: \$368,700

Mr. Scarborough provided a history of the plans to build a new animal shelter, and how project was placed on hold after construction bids came in between \$1.3 – \$2.9 million. Recent developments have identified an opportunity to secure a prefabricated commercial animal shelter whose costs would range from \$300,000-\$400,000. Procurement policies require formal bid process, and bid documents will have to be created and posted. Anticipated posting of RFP by July 21,2025. Time frame of RFP process, selection and construction of a prefabricated shelter estimated at 6 months.

Group)

4) **Basketball Court**

Initial funding: \$58,613 (OSBM funding)

Other funding: \$41,387 (Funds transferred from animal shelter funding by Commissioners to complete project)

Total Cost of Court: \$100,000

Construction of outdoor basketball court broke ground 6/18/2024, concrete pad has been poured, composite flooring ordered, estimated time of completion first week of August.

3. **Plans for Increasing Revenue and Decreasing Expenditures for Future Budgets**

County Manager Vaughan discussed Bertie County's financial challenges and potential solutions. The County Manager discussed plans to reduce expenditures and increase revenues, including considering partnerships, outsourcing services, selling property, leasing rooms at the Cooperative Extension office and applying for grants.

4. Discuss Plans for the Sheriff's Department by Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin

Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin proposed cutting 3 Deputy positions and an administrative position to fund a 15% raise increase for Deputies and the Sheriff only.

Commissioners debated the merits of the Sheriff's request, with some expressing concerns about setting precedents for other departments.

Commissioner White asked for a salary structure to be conducted to better understand compensation in surrounding counties.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve cutting 3 deputy positions and an administrative position to fund a 15% raise increase for deputies and the sheriff. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-1** vote. Commissioner White voting nay.

5. Republic Service Contract

The Board discussed the Republic Service Contract in closed session.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Vice-Chair Hoggard

Vice-Chair Hoggard reminded everyone of the Juneteenth Celebration in Windsor along with Making Music behind the Windsor Town Hall Center.

Commissioner Roberson

No report

Commissioner White

No report

Commissioner Saunders

No report

Chair Balance

No report

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT

County Manager Vaughan informed the Board that the County does not pay for Cobra when employees leave.

ATTORNEY REPORT

No report

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to enter into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3)(4)(6). The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to re-enter into open session. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **5-0** vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

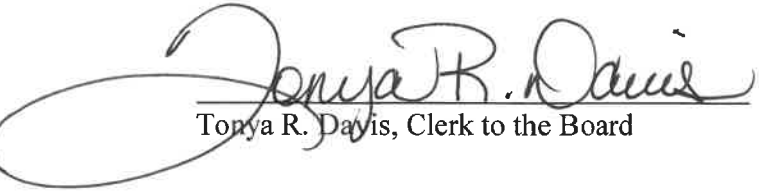
ADJOURN

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



Lewis Hoggard, III, Vice Chair
Bertie County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Tonya R. Davis, Clerk to the Board