

Windsor, North Carolina
September 8, 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: Vice-Chair, Lewis Hoggard, III, District I
Ronald "Ron" Roberson, District V
Vivian Saunders, District IV
Michael White, District II

Absent: Chair, Corey Ballance, Sr., District III

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 Clak

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Lewis Hoggard, III called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Johnny Speller gave the Invocation and Vice-Chair Hoggard led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brenda Frick expressed her concerns regarding DSS supervision and mismanagement regarding the death of a child that occurred in December 2025. Mrs. Frick stated "No one is willing to take the blame and something needs to be done". "What are you going to do about it"?

Norman Cherry stated that the citizens of Bertie County would like to help but they need to understand what is going on in the county.

APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Bertie County District 7 Public Defender's Office Request by Tomeka Speller

Tomeka Speller requested more space at the Public Defender's Office to accommodate their growing staff and client needs. Currently the Public Defender's Office has seventeen staff

members and one open position. Commissioner Saunders asked the County Manager for his thoughts. County Manager Vaughan expressed concerns about providing the entire building to the public defender's office due to space constraints for county staff, but agreed to discuss options at an upcoming work session on September 22, 2025. County Manager Vaughan and Maintenance Director, Anthony Rascoe, will meet with the Public Defender's Office on Monday, September 15, 2025 at 10:00 AM to discuss office space needs and potential solutions.

2. Update and Proposal Regarding the Pecan Pickling Film Festival by Patricia Ferguson

Patricia Ferguson presented an update on the Bertie County Pickling Film Festival, highlighting its growth and potential to boost the local economy through the creative industries. Mrs. Ferguson stated that the upcoming 2026 film festival in Bertie County will feature guest speakers from the film industry and aims to position the county as a destination for low-budget films. The festival's unique model focuses on community engagement rather than solely benefiting filmmakers. Mrs. Ferguson requested support for establishing a regional film commission and coordinating cross-sector partnerships.

3. Town of Aulander's Concerns Regarding Citizens and Service Equity

Aulander Mayor, Brian Moring stated that concerns were raised by the Town of Aulander regarding fire tax accounting, foreclosures, and property maintenance. Mr. Moring stated that there is a need for a fire commission to better allocate funds and improve fire service coordination across the county. Commissioner Saunders stated that the development of the Fire Commission is being established. Mr. Moring asked if Sheriff's Deputies could be assigned to patrol Aulander. Commissioner Saunders asked Mr. Moring to include the Sheriff in his request.

4. Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Proposal to Pursue a Partnership with Chowan County by Martin County Manager, Drew Batts

Martin County Manager, Drew Batts, presented a proposal for a regional jail partnership involving Bertie, Martin, Chowan, and potentially Washington counties, highlighting potential benefits including shared funding, improved staffing, and better facilities. Bertie County Commissioners were in agreement with the proposal presented and gave County Manager Batts approval to move forward with contacting the other counties to see if they are interested.

5. Project Updates from IT Department by Joe Wilkes

Tabled until the next meeting because of the absence of the IT Director.

6. Financial Summary by Finance Director Willie Mack Carawan

Finance Director, Willie Mack Carawan, reported that revenues were running about \$1.8 million less than the previous year, with the general fund showing a revenue shortfall. Mr. Carawan discussed the challenges with the audit process, delays due to reconciliation issues, and the prior setbacks from not having adequate staff in the finance department.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. Economic Development Board (8 appointments)

Tabled until next meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the June 16, 2025, June 18, 2025 and July 7, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve the June 16, 2025, June 18, 2025 and July 7, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

2. Approve the June 16, 2025, June 17, 2025, June 18, 2025, and July 7, 2025 Closed Session Meeting Minutes

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the June 16, 2025, June 17, 2025, June 18, 2025, and July 7, 2025 Closed Session Meeting Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

3. Approve the July 2025 Tax Release Journal

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the July 2025 Tax Release Journal. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

4. Approve the July 2025 Register of Deeds Fees Report

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to approve the July 2025 Register of Deeds Fees Report. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)

1. Trailer Camper Bids

County Manager Vaughan stated that two bids have been received for the trailer campers at the EMS station. The Board held a discussion as to what the acceptable amount should be for each trailer camper. The Board agreed to set the minimum price of \$1,000.00 each.

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to set the minimum bid price at \$1,000.00 for each trailer camper. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

2. Opioid Settlement Matters

The Board approved entering into four opioid settlements: the Purdue Bankruptcy Plan, the Sackler Settlement, the Group of 8 Manufacturer Settlement, and the Sandoz Settlement.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to entering into four opioid settlements: the Purdue Bankruptcy Plan, the Sackler Settlement, the Group of 8 Manufacturer Settlement, and the Sandoz Settlement. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** for County Manager Vaughan and Assistant County Attorney, Jonathan Huddleston, to complete the opioid settlement filings by September 30, 2025. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

3. Animal Shelter Bids

Assistant County Manager, David Scarborough, stated that he had received two bids for a prefabricated building for the animal shelter from Minecraft.com and Horizon Structures. Mr. Scarborough recommended Horizon Structures since Minecraft.com failed to submit a letter of interest and client references. The Board authorized County Manager Vaughan to sign a contract with Horizon Structures for a prefabricated building.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to authorized County Manager Vaughan to sign a contract with Horizon Structures for a prefabricated building. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

4. Ordinance Regulating Ambulance Services and Ambulance Franchises Update and EMS Standby Services Contract

Emergency Management Director, John Rawls, asked the Board to approve the Ordinance Regulating Ambulance Services and Ambulance Franchises. The Board recommended changing the annual application fee from \$2,500.00 to \$3,500.00.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the Ordinance Regulating Ambulance Services and Ambulance Franchises and set the annual application fee to \$3,500.00. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

The Board discussed concerns about high overtime costs in the EMS department, particularly related to non-emergency medical transports, and considered the standby contract for EMS services at events at the rate of \$75.00 per hour.

Commissioner Saunders made the **MOTION** to implement a standby contract for EMS services at events at the rate of \$75.00 per hour. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

5. Work Session September 22, 2025 at 10:00AM, Commissioners Room

A majority of the Board members will not be able to attend the scheduled September 22, 2025 work session; therefore, the Board rescheduled the work session to be held on September 29, 2025 to discuss the inclement weather policy and budget savings initiatives.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to reschedule the September 22, 2025 work session to September 29, 2025 at 10:00 AM in the Commissioners Meeting Room. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

Commissioner White asked County Manager Vaughan, "How are you saving money for this fiscal year"? "What has been done in the last two months"?

County Manager stated that he is still considering filling vacant positions, gathering surplus property sales, leasing Cooperative Extension offices, RV campsite rentals at \$25.00 per night, and grants.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Roberson

Commissioner Roberson stated that he had attended the NCACC Conference at his own expenses and that he had been appointed to the Roanoke-Chowan Community College Board of Trustees.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White stated that he had attended the Basketball Court ceremony at the Bertie County Recreation Complex and that the Aulander Tennis Court is open.

Commissioner Saunders

Commissioner Saunders provided updates concerning the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail and the process and success of all of the board for which she serves on.

Vice-Chair Hoggard

Vice-Chair Hoggard stated that he had also attended the NCACC Conference and thanked everyone for coming to the Commissioners meeting.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT

County Manager Vaughan provided information on the county's financial state and fund balance. County Manager presented data showing that while the county's fund balance had decreased in recent years, it had improved since 2019-2020, reaching over 8% (or about \$2.3 million). County Manager Vaughan clarified that the current tax rate of .93 cents was not solely his responsibility, as previous Boards had also approved fund balance appropriations.

ATTORNEY REPORT

No report

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carl Lee stated that "I am glad that I came to tonight's meeting to see things for how it is".

Norman Cherry said "Together we prosper, divided we fall". "Do not allow the nay sayers to keep you from doing the right thing".

Lewis Dameron stated that he will be running for Commissioner for the Town of Windsor.

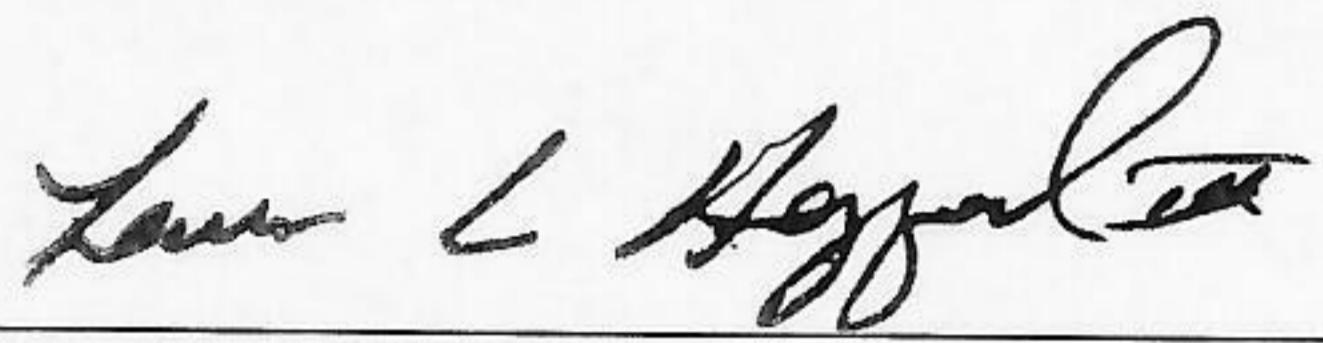
CLOSED SESSION

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 **4-0** vote.

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to re-enter into open session. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

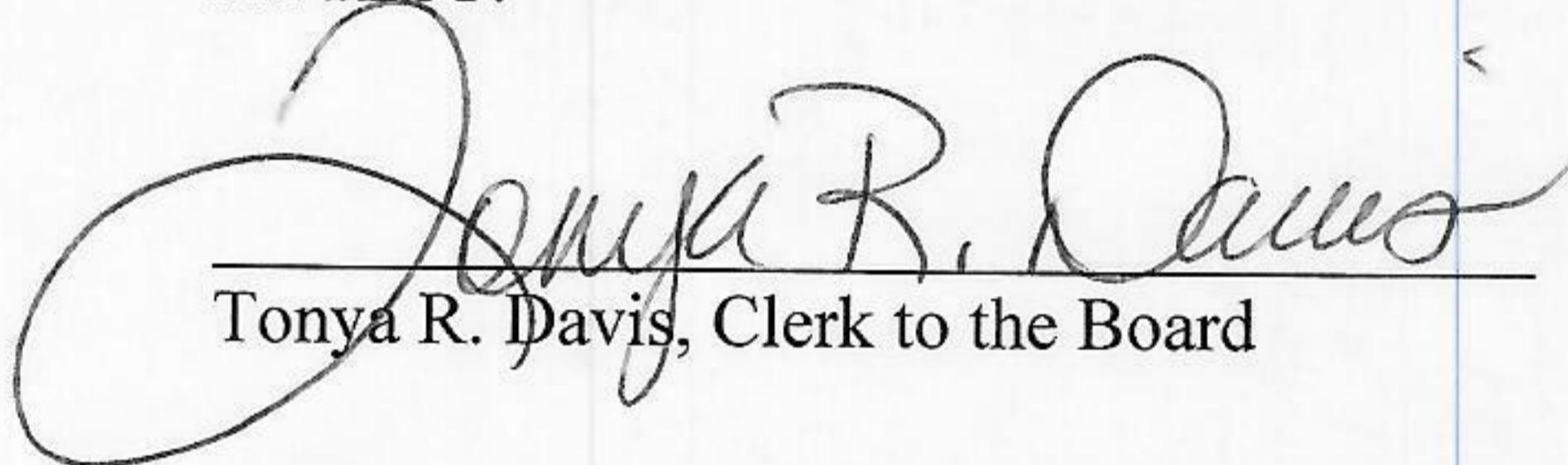
ADJOURN

Commissioner Roberson made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner White. The **MOTION PASSED** with a 4-0 vote.



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

ATTEST:



Tonya R. Davis, Clerk to the Board