Windsor, North Carolina
January 5, 2026
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 (via Zoom) Ronald "Ron" Roberson, District V Vivian Saunders, District IV Michael White, District II
Staff Present:	County Manager, Juan Vaughan, II Assistant County Attorney, Jonathan Huddleston Clerk to the Board, Tonya Davis Information Technology Director, Joe Wilkes Network Administrator, Dashawn Clark

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Corey Ballance, Sr. called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Vivian Saunders gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mildred Bond praised the Bertie County Sheriff's Department and encouraged community mindfulness regarding safety.

APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. **Introduction of the new Parks & Recreation Director Emily Jernigan by County Manager Vaughan**

County Manager Vaughan introduced Emily Jernigan as the new Parks and Recreation Director. Ms. Jernigan has 21 years of experience with the department. The Board congratulated Ms. Jernigan and wished her well in her new role with the Parks and Recreation Department.

2. **Presentation of Newly Hired Bertie County Deputies by Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin**

Sheriff Tyrone Ruffin presented several new deputies, including Michael Cartwright, Douglas Lane, Dexter Jordan, Tiffany Lawrence, Jalexia Grimes, Markel Freeman, William Taylor, and Elizabeth Topless, all of whom have recently joined the Bertie County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Ruffin stated that he was pleased to announce that the Sheriff's Department is currently fully staffed.

3. **Presentation by Medex Transport Inc.**

Gregory Brooks, representing Medex Medical Transport, presented a request for the company to be granted a franchise to operate in Bertie County. Mr. Brooks provided an overview of Medex Medical Transport, highlighting the company's non-emergency medical transport background, operational experience, and the range of medical transportation services offered. He discussed how Medex's services could enhance access to reliable transportation for county residents who require medical care. Mr. Brooks also outlined the potential economic benefits to Bertie County, noting opportunities for local job creation as well as increased county revenue through vehicle registration, inspections, and ongoing vehicle maintenance conducted within the county.

4. **Project Updates by Project Consultant Robin Payne**

Robin Payne provided an update on the TGOW Phase 2 project, during which she discussed current project progress and addressed concerns related to cost overruns. Mrs. Payne explained that projected costs have exceeded the original estimates and outlined potential options to bring the project back within budget. One option discussed was reducing the scope of the project by eliminating the additional parking spaces. Mrs. Payne noted that this adjustment could help ensure the project remains within the available funding allocation of $550,000 while still allowing the core elements of the project to move forward.

5. **Financial Summary by Finance Director, Willie Mack Carawan**

Finance Director, Willie Mack Carawan, reported that the trial balance was submitted to auditors, with progress made on audits for December 31, 2025. Financial statements showed a decrease of about $1.475 million because of grants being spent down. Revenues exceeded expenditures by $4.35 million, with some lines appearing over budget due to maintenance agreements and grant expenditures. The county's general fund budget was $25 million, with $10.73 million spent year-to-date and $8.68 million encumbered. The social services budget showed expenditures exceeding revenues by $982,000, and the water department's revenues exceeded expenditures by $352,856.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

No appointments

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Approve the September 29, 2025 Work Session Open and Closed Session Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the September 29, 2025 Work Session Open and Closed Meeting Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commission Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

2. **Approve the November 3, 2025 and December 15, 2025 Open and Closed Regular Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the November 3, 2025 and December 15, 2025 Open and Closed Regular Meeting Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commission Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

3. **Approve the November 19, 2025 Public Hearing Open and Closed Session Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the November 19, 2025 Public Hearing Open and Closed Meeting Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commission Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

4. **Approve the December 4, 2025 Special Meeting Open and Closed Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the December 4, 2025 Special Meeting Open and Closed Meeting Minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Saunders. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

5. **Approve the November 2025 Register of Deeds Fees Report**

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

OTHER ITEMS
DISCUSSION AGENDA (D)

1. **Review of Overtime**

County Manager Vaughan provided the Board with an overview of overtime expenditures by department and reviewed the current overtime budgets. During the presentation, he noted concerns regarding emergency services departments exceeding their allotted overtime budgets. Mr. Vaughan explained contributing factors to the increased overtime usage and discussed the potential financial impact on the overall county budget. The Board engaged in discussion regarding possible strategies to address the issue. County Manager Vaughan stated that the possibility of revenue generated from non-emergency transport services could help offset a portion of the overtime-related costs associated with emergency services.

The Board suggested scheduling a special meeting to address the overtime issue in detail with John Rawls, Emergency Services Director.

2. **Update on Construction of Animal Shelter**

County Manager Vaughn stated that Horizon Structures has received the initial payment for the prefabricated structure for the Animal Shelter. He reported that the draft drawings for the structure have been received and are currently under review by the County. Once the draft drawings are approved and returned to Horizon Structures, it is anticipated that it will take approximately four to six weeks for the final drawings to be completed. Following the County's final review and approval of the completed drawings, and once they are returned to Horizon Structures, construction and delivery of the prefabricated structure is expected to take an additional four to eight weeks. Mr. Vaughn also noted that the County will be responsible for installing the concrete slabs on which the structure will be placed.

3. **Approve Bid for Ambulance Remount**

County Manager Vaughan informed the Board that four bids had been received for the ambulance remount project. He reported that John Rawls, Emergency Services Director, reviewed the proposals and recommended awarding the bid to Carolina Remount in the amount of $152,093.00. Mr. Vaughan noted that the anticipated delivery timeframe for the remounted ambulance is approximately 90 to 120 days. He also stated that the cost of the project is included in the current fiscal year's budget.

Commissioner White made the **MOTION** to approve the bid from Carolina Remount at the cost of $152,093.00. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Roberson. The **MOTION PASSED** with a **4-0** vote.

4. **Mayor's and Commissioner's Dinner – January 8, 2026 in Kelford**

Chair Ballance reminded the Board of the Mayor's and Commissioner's Dinner will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026 in Kelford starting at 7:00PM.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Roberson

Commissioner Roberson reported on plans to place an Animal Ordinance on the November ballot to allow citizens to vote on the tethering law. He explained that the proposed ballot item would give voters the opportunity to express their position on the matter during the November election.

Commissioner White

Commissioner White wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Saunders

Commissioner Saunders provided updates on various county boards and commissions, including the Housing Authority, Economic Development Board, and the upcoming Care for Youth Commission meeting on January 20, 2026.

Chair Ballance

Chair Ballance stated that he had been contacted on several occasions by concerned citizens regarding the Assistant County Manager position remaining unfilled.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT

County Manager Vaughan reported on the annual opioid meeting held in December, during which feedback was received regarding the allocation of approximately $400,000 in opioid settlement funds. He stated that he would like to hold additional Opioid Settlement meetings to gather further input and insight from county residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to ensure the funds are used effectively.

ATTORNEY REPORT

No report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jacques Turner made recommendations regarding emergency services staffing and overtime, with a discussion on potentially changing from 24/7 to 12-hour shifts to reduce costs.

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

Chair, Corey Ballance, Sr.
Bertie County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Tonya R. Davis, Clerk to the Board