

Windsor, North Carolina
July 21, 2014
Regular Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for its regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00PM in the Wellness Center Conference Room at the Lewiston Perdue Plant located at 3539 Governors Road in Lewiston-Woodville, NC. The following members were present or absent:

Present: J. Wallace Perry, Chairman
Charles L. Smith, Vice-Chairman
John Trent
Ronald "Ron" Wesson

Absent: Rick Harrell

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Network Administrator Joe Wilkes
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
EMS Division Chief Matt Leicester
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Economic Development Steve Biggs

Media members present included Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald.

Chairman Perry opened the meeting and thanked all of those present for their attendance, and thanked the Town of Lewiston for hosting this Community Meeting.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Smith led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board thanked Jeff Stalls, Plant Manager, for making the location available, as well as all County staff for attending the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Monica Lassiter of Lewiston thanked the Board for visiting the Lewiston-Woodville area.

Norman Cherry of Lewiston thanked the Board for its dedication to the Bertie County Board of Education, and for providing the school system with additional funding while still keeping the County tax rate the same as the previous fiscal year.

Courtney Lassiter of Lewiston inquired about the potential establishment of a Boys and Girls Club in the West Bertie area so that area children could have a safe place to be after school.

Commissioner Wesson responded by stating that the Boys and Girls Club of America is a great organization, but that it is very expensive to fund, and would require partnerships with the closest existing chapter which was located in Edenton, NC.

Mr. Wesson stated that the licensing alone for a chapter of the Boys and Girls Club in Bertie would cost approximately \$75,000. He also stated that he would not discourage the idea, but felt that the County could achieve something similar which would be more cost effective.

Commissioner Trent interjected by stating that a “community based recreation” initiative is currently in the works, and that it could be something that each township could implement in their communities.

Velma Baldwin of Lewiston stated that she wasn’t sure if the County was responsible for this, but that she was grateful that inmates had been assigned to clean parts of her neighborhood, as well as surrounding areas.

Norman Cherry re-approached the Board regarding the John Bond School, and how it is currently being maintained by the Men’s Ministry at his church. Mr. Cherry suggested that this site could be used to provide recreational activities to area children as mentioned previously by Commissioners Trent and Wesson.

Annie Wilson, Bertie County Register of Deeds, approached the Board regarding a flyer that is currently being circulated in the County. The flyer claims that citizens may send a payment of \$83 to a particular company, and that this company will then send the citizen their deeds, and other documents. Ms. Wilson informed all of those present that those same documents can be retrieved for a smaller fee at her office, and can also be ordered online at no charge. She encouraged the public, and all Board members, to be sure to pass this message along to other communities.

APPOINTMENTS

Mid-East Commission (MEC) request to host a meeting in Bertie County – presentation by MEC Executive Director Timothy Baynes

Timothy Baynes, Executive Director of the MEC, approached the Board with an opportunity for the County to co-host a meeting with MEC that would be held in Bertie County this fall.

Mr. Baynes stated that this meeting would be for citizens and elected officials to voice their concerns and requests, and would allow Mid-East Commission to remind elected officials of the services that they can provide. He stated that he would like this meeting to become an annual one.

Mr. Baynes also informed the Board that MEC would front any costs related to this meeting, and that any location fees would be paid by MEC, and that a dinner will also be provided at the meeting.

Mr. Baynes requested that if the County were to move forward, that he would just need cooperation from County staff in regards to contacting the County's elected officials, suggestions on locations, as well as options on a local meal vendor. County staff would also provide assistance with the logistics of the meeting including registration, programs, and other duties.

County Manager Sauer asked if the Board had any recommendations for locations at this time.

The Board concurred that the Cashie Convention Center would be the best option.

Commissioner Wesson stated that it was important for all of the County's elected officials to know and understand the services that can be provided by the MEC, and that this would be a good opportunity to provide information that is relevant to each community.

Mr. Baynes agreed, and asked the Board if they would be willing to move forward with the planning of this event.

The Board concurred, and Chairman Perry recommended that Mr. Baynes be in contact with County Manager Sauer to arrange the event further.

Black Rock Water Line Project Update – Charles Joyner

This item was deferred as Mr. Joyner was not able to attend tonight's meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Bertie County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office - nomination recommendations

The Board was informed of a vacancy on the the Bertie County Farm Service Agency Committee, and that recommendations were needed to fill an open spot in LAA-2 (Colerain, Whites, Merry Hill).

Chairman Perry opened the floor to recommendations and nominations, and when there were no recommendations, the Chairman provided the name of James "Jim" B. Morris of the desired district.

The Board had no objections.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to appoint James "Jim" B. Morris to the Bertie County Farm Service Agency Committee. Vice Chairman Smith **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve minutes for Regular Session 7-7-14

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes for Regular Sessions 7-7-14. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Tax Department Error Ledger – June 2014

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Trent and Vice Chairman Smith made a **MOTION** to accept the Tax Department Error Ledger for June 2014 as recommended by the County Manager. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Tax Settlement Report for FY 2013-2014

The Board received a detailed Tax Settlement Report for FY2013-2014 as required by NC General Statute 105-373.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the report. Vice Chairman Smith **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2013-2014 Insolvent Tax Resolution

After some discussion, Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to declare no one as insolvent, and that all taxes that have not been collected under FY2013-2014 are considered “delinquent.” Vice Chairman Smith **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Charge of Tax Administrator for the collection of FY2014-2015 Tax Levy

After some discussion, Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to charge the Tax Administrator for the collection of FY2014-2015 Tax Levy. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

FYI – CDBG Monthly Performance Status Reports

County Manager Sauer presented this item as FYI only as required by the CDBG regulations.

No action was needed on this item.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

e-Recording Memorandum of Understanding for the Register of Deeds Office

Bertie County Register of Deeds, Annie Wilson, was present to introduce the Board to a new initiative for the Register of Deeds Office.

Ms. Wilson stated that this new system called INTTEK is currently in use in other counties in the State, and that it would allow the Register of Deeds Office to begin recording documents electronically.

Ms. Wilson assured the Board that the Register of Deeds Office would begin using this product only for Certificates of Satisfaction at first, and then a gradual shift will take place towards other documents such as deeds, and other documents. She also assured the Board that the County would not face any liability in regards to fees incurred with the use of the system.

Ms. Wilson requested that the Board sign a Memorandum of Understanding that would allow the initiative to move forward.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to accept the Memorandum of Understanding with INTTEK which would allow the Register of Deeds Office to move forward with the electronic recording initiative. Both Vice Chairman Smith and Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Review amendment verbally approved at last Board meeting re: Road Name Change Policy

County Manager Sauer reminded the Board of a verbally approved change in policy of the current protocol in place for road name changes in the County.

The Board verbally agreed upon changing the policy in a previous meeting, but County Manager Sauer requested clarity of the Board's specific needs for the new policy.

County Manager Sauer recommended that the statements regarding deadlines of applications be omitted, and that the application for a change in road name could be submitted at any time.

Mr. Sauer also suggested that all road name changes could be considered as soon as they are received versus only at the second monthly Commissioners meeting.

The current Road Name Change Policy also required approval from the nearest area Fire Department, and the Board reached a consensus that this would still be the case for the new policy.

County Manager Sauer stated that the Board would receive a draft of the new policy at the next Board of Commissioners meeting.

EMS Update and Non-Emergency Transport start-up for August 1st

Emergency Medical Services Division Chief Matt Leicester updated the Board regarding current call times, chute time averages, and other data regarding 9-11 services.

Commissioner Trent inquired about a recent incident involving an ambulance vehicle becoming stuck on a private road due to excessive pot holes.

Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, informed the Board that the incident did take place on Farm Road (located off of Woodard Road in Windsor), and that another ambulance vehicle was called to assist in the incident, and that no patients suffered due to the unforeseen circumstances.

Mr. Leicester also informed that Board of the current hiring progression for the non-emergency transport program, and that 8 out 10 employees needed for these have been hired.

Mr. Leicester stated that he was still confident that the County would be ready to begin non-emergency transport operations as of August 1st, and that the non-emergency ambulance vehicles are currently being stocked with all needed medical supplies, as well as with other needed equipment.

Employees will also be trained in the coming weeks on the new computer system that will be used for billing of non-emergency transport services.

The Board was also informed that Non-Emergency Transport Coordinator, Kim Campbell, was currently reaching out to various facilities in the area to inform them of the County's new initiative, and to secure non-emergency transport contracts.

Mr. Leicester stated that the non-emergency transport division would have a total of 3 non-emergency ambulance vehicles: 2 would be in use during the day, and 1 will be in use at night. The ambulance vehicles would be in service 24/7.

Commissioner Trent assured the Board, and all of those present, that these ambulance vehicles are in addition to the current fleet of emergency transport vehicles, and that no emergency related vehicles or equipment has been re-assigned to non-emergency transports. Emergency transport services, and non-emergency transport services, also fall into two different divisions, and therefore require different licensing.

The Board also assured the public that these non-emergency transport vehicles could be used for emergencies, if needed, but that the same could not be said for the emergency vehicles being used for non-emergency transport services.

Mr. Cooper also informed the Board that with the new billing company, Colleton, the County would be made aware of what they are currently billing out for payment. Mr. Cooper also stated that after the non-emergency operations have begun that Colleton could also come before the Board to update the County on the current status of revenues.

After some discussion, the Board inquired about the process of review for each service that is billed out.

Mr. Leicester stated that the new system would not allow any personnel to submit billing claims unless the claim was entered correctly. In the event that a claim comes back and delays the revenue process, the staff would be able to review the claim's rejection code, and adjust as needed in order for it to be resubmitted for payment.

Commissioner Trent emphasized the importance of having monthly profit and loss statements for the Board to review after the first 45 days of operation for the new Transport Service.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Commissioner Wesson announced that Claire Bell had just passed away the night before this missing. He informed all of those present that Mrs. Bell has been ill, and that she had been a very involved in local politics.

Mr. Wesson also thanked the Board for allowing him to represent the County at the 2014 Annual NaCo Conference, and informed them of next year's location as Charlotte, NC.

Commissioner Wesson also announced that he would be in attendance at the 107th Annual NCACC Annual Conference in Asheville, NC from August 14-17th.

Commissioner Trent informed all of those present of current and recent stability projects that have been taking place around the County including the renovation of both the DRC Building, and the Old Elections Building (new Cooperative Extension Office), as well as the current roof replacement of the Council on Aging building. He also mentioned the next phase of RAMJACK work to address the Clerk of Court's office.

Mr. Trent encouraged all citizens to stop by and witness these latest improvements.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer reported on the status of the Water Department's CDBG grant application to the State Water Infrastructure Authority that was prepared by Green Engineering and submitted in May.

He reported that 63 applications were submitted and ranked based on a state rating system for consideration of the \$16.4 million in available funding. The County's application was ranked

eleventh (11th) out of 63 applications, and as the funds were allocated, there was only enough grant money for the top 9 projects.

Mr. Sauer shared that he had been at a Mid-East Commission meeting last week, and that Mayor Vaughan of Lewiston was also in attendance.

During the meeting Ms. Julie Cubeta, the CDBG infrastructure grant supervisor presented an overview of the grant process, emphasizing how applications could be improved for additional scoring in the next cycle.

Specifically, Mr. Sauer reported that based on Ms. Cubeta's recommendation, Bertie County should proceed with an asset management plan for inclusion in the next grant application which is due September 2, 2014.

Mr. Sauer indicated that under this engagement, Green Engineering would be working to provide an inventory of each section of pipe in the entire water system. The asset management plan is becoming a more and more important part of grant funding applications. The asset management plan will provide an additional four points in the rating process.

Mr. Sauer also informed the Board that the County would need to conduct two public hearings as part of the application process which could be held on August 4th and 18th which are both regular meetings of the Board.

Mr. Sauer asked for permission to advertise the public hearing, and it was the consensus of the Board to take steps necessary to submit the grant application for the next cycle.

Mr. Sauer also reminded the Board that a Water Department Work Session has been scheduled for August 6th, and that Ricky Spivey is making progress on seeking capital equipment through NCDOT's surplus sale to acquire a dump truck, trailer, and backhoe.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

The County Attorney had no remarks.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

John Davis of Merry Hill suggested that the Board contact the NCACC about finding additional ways for the County to collect delinquent taxes.

Norman Cherry of Lewiston asked Emergency Services Director, Mitch Cooper, about an occurrence that has been widely noticed in the Mount Olive area regarding an ambulance being parked at Mount Olive Church.

Mr. Cooper responded by stating that the County stages ambulance vehicles strategically so that when an ambulance is dispatched to one area, other ambulance vehicles will “stage” themselves into other locations in order to bridge any gaps in area coverage. Mr. Cooper assured all those present that this practice allows for emergency crews to respond more quickly and efficiently.

Lewiston Mayor Vaughan informed the Board that during her experience of securing a location for the Commissioners within the Town of Lewiston, she had contacted Bertie County Superintendent Elaine White about a potential location. Mayor Vaughan reported that Superintendent White had offered the West Bertie Elementary School as a possible location for the meeting if no other alternative was secured in time for tonight’s community meeting.

A citizen thanked the Board for coming to the area, and encouraged them to consider funding the Northeast Human Development Center if there is any funding left available.

Commissioner Trent also made one last report regarding a boat ramp that will be installed in the Lewiston-Woodville area. He stated that the digging of this boat ramp would begin as early November 2014 on Weeping Mary Road in Lewiston.

ADJOURN

Chairman Perry adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.