

Perrytown, North Carolina
September 22, 2014
Minutes

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00pm at the Perrytown Community Building located at 848 Perrytown Road, Colerain, NC 27924. 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
Finance Director William Roberson
EMS Division Chief Matt Leicester
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
Network Administrator Joe Wilkes
Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston

Media members present included Gene Motley of the Roanoke Chowan News Herald, as well as Barry Ward of the Bertie Ledger-Advance.

Chairman Perry opened the meeting and thanked all of those present for their attendance. He stated that tonight's meeting is making history as it is the first Board of Commissioner meeting ever to be held in Perrytown.

Chairman Perry recognized Perrytown Fire Department Chief, Bud Lee, and asked him to say a few words.

Chief Lee thanked all of those present for their attendance and announced that tours of the newly renovated Fire Department next door were to take place after the meeting.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Reverend David Baker of Perrytown Baptist Church gave the Invocation. Chairman Perry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Michael Elam, President of Roanoke-Chowan Community College, approached the Board and reminded the Board of his annual report that he will present to the Board on Monday, October 22nd. He also announced that on Thursday, September 25th the College will be participating in a Robotics competition at Bertie Middle School. In the process, members of the RCCC student body will be serving as mentors for the students at the middle school.

Dr. Elam also distributed a brochure detailing a new partnership between RCCC and Chowan University. The partnership is to encourage the transition from the community college into a 4 year university environment.

Dr. Elam stated that he will be bringing more information in his annual report during the 2nd meeting in October.

Norman Simmons of Colerain asked the Board about the County's current \$50 transfer fee in regards to a resident moving to a different home within the County, and resuming their water service. Mr. Simmons stated that this fee was just a chance for the County to receive additional funding, and that it wasn't necessary.

County Manager Sauer replied by stating the transfer fee is a standard practice amongst many surrounding counties, and that it is necessary to have in place to cover affiliated costs.

Terry Pratt of Merry Hill approached the Board with an update regarding the state of the Division of Inland Fisheries. Mr. Pratt stated that the group is currently working diligently to be considered a part of the Department of Agriculture, as this would lift certain restrictions on the County waterways.

The Board inquired about any help they could provide to expedite the process. Mr. Pratt stated that he was working closely with the Division and their attorneys in drafting a Resolution of Support for the transition. Mr. Pratt stated that he would bring the Resolution forth as soon as it is available.

The Board agreed that this initiative was very important and they would sign the Resolution once it is ready.

Wood Farless of Merry Hill spoke on the Board's consideration of a proposed curbside recycling and garbage pickup program. Mr. Farless stated that he is a farmer in both Tyrell and Hyde Counties, where both counties currently have curbside programs. He stated that the trash containers used present a hazard on the road for larger vehicles and farming equipment. He stated that Bertie County is just "too rural of a County" for this type of program. He also stated that he was not in favor of the change especially because it would be a mandatory tax even to those that do not wish to participate, and that things may return to years past with excessive amounts of trash being dumped in wooded areas.

APPOINTMENTS

Recognition of David Clint Connor, 2014 NCACC Youth Delegate, by Commissioner Wesson

Commissioner Wesson introduced the public to David Clint Connor, the 2014 NCACC Youth Delegate that participated in the Youth summit at this year's NCACC Conference in Asheville, NC.

Mr. Connor gave a brief speech thanking the entire Board for allowing him to represent the County, and he discussed what he learned during his participation at the Conference.

He also especially thanked Commissioner Wesson for taking the time to be interviewed for his presentation, and stated that he was not envious of the challenges that Commissioners face every day in their communities.

Commissioner Wesson concluded by saying that Mr. Connor received high praise for his presentation at the Conference, and that he represented his County well.

Community Report – VIDANT Bertie Hospital by Jeff Dial, Vice President for Operations

Mr. Jeff Dial presented a handout to the Board regarding recent changes to VIDANT Bertie Hospital. The hand out listed the hospitals "five pillars," as well as the changes occurring under each.

Mr. Dial also explained the impact of the Affordable Care Act on VIDANT Health as a whole, and explained upcoming organizational changes for the hospital.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Perry solicited any individuals interested in joining the Planning Board in an at-large position, as well as for the Merry Hill/Whites District.

Terry Pratt of the Merry Hill/Whites District volunteered to serve, and Mr. Pratt was ensured that the Clerk to the Board, Sarah S. Tinkham, would be in contact with him about the application process.

Chairman Perry reiterated that an additional volunteer was needed to serve in the at-large position, and that anyone interested could contact the County for more information.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve minutes for Regular Session 9-8-14

These minutes were deferred in order to receive feedback from the County Attorney.

Approve minutes for Closed Session 9-8-14

These minutes were deferred in order to receive feedback from the County Attorney.

Consider and approve contract for non-emergency transport services for the Brian Center in Windsor

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Chairman Perry noted to the public that this particular contract is not exclusive, and that it is simply a part of the Brian Center's procedure when approving partnerships with any non-emergency transport provider.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve this contract for non-emergency transport services for the Brian Center. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Consider and approve transition documents for South Windsor Water Association (Bill of Sale; Asset Purchase Agreement)

County Manager Sauer informed the Board that these documents were being presented to fully close out the South Windsor Water Association transition as recommended by the County Attorney.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the Bill of Sale and Asset Purchase Agreement for the South Windsor Water Association. Vice Chairman Smith and Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Review of proposed contract extension for the Waste Industries' operation of convenience centers (2006 and 2001 contracts)

County Manager Sauer began by stating that all of these documents that the Board was about to discuss were available on the County's website. He stated that all minutes, electronic agenda packets, and recordings were all available to the public simply by logging on to the County website.

The Board came to a consensus that item should be discussed in a work session, and also reiterated that a Public Hearing would be held on this topic on Monday, October 16th at 7:00pm in the 2nd floor Courtroom of the Bertie County Courthouse.

Review of proposed Emergency Medical Services Personnel Handbook and 2014 Standard Operating Guidelines

After some discussion, the Board came to the consensus that a work session would need to be held on this matter in order to proceed forward effectively.

Review and discuss Emergency Medical Services use of vehicle warning lights and sirens

County Manager Sauer began by soliciting feedback from the Assistant County Attorney regarding a request that was received from the Town of Windsor regarding lights and sirens being used in the early hours of the morning.

Assistant County Attorney, Jonathan Huddleston, explained that according to N.C.G.S. § 20-157, "...when [an emergency vehicle is] traveling in response to a fire alarm or other emergency response purpose, giving warning signal by appropriate light and by audible bell, siren or exhaust whistle, audible under normal conditions from a distance not less than 1000 feet, the driver of every other vehicle shall immediately drive the same to a position as near as possible and parallel to the right-hand edge or curb, clear of any intersection of streets or highways, and shall stop and remain in such position unless otherwise directed by a law enforcement or traffic officer until the law enforcement or fire department vehicle, or the vehicle operated by the Division of Marine Fisheries, or the Division of Parks and Recreation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, or the North Carolina Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, or the public or private ambulance or rescue squad emergency service vehicle shall have passed."

Mr. Huddleston stated that after thorough review of the statutes, as well as County Manager Sauer's findings in State training material given to EMS personnel, he advised the County that discontinuing the use of lights and sirens, even in the early hours of the morning, would present a significant liability risk for the County if an accident were to occur.

The Board stated that it is very concerned and understanding of the request by the Town, but at this time, they could not accommodate it, given the advice from the Assistant County Attorney.

The Board informed all of those present that in the future, the County would like to train current Emergency Dispatch personnel to provide Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD), and this would allow the dispatcher to receive pertinent information from each caller regarding the severity of any injuries on scene, as well as the true nature of the emergency.

Mr. Huddleston stated that an EMD component would allow the EMS personnel to use more discretion when extra medical information is given before responding to a call. In this case, if any non-life threatening injuries are known, then there would not necessarily be a need for both lights and sirens to those calls.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** that the County continue to abide by the State statutes utilizing the advice given by Assistant County Attorney Jonathan Huddleston. Vice Chairman Smith **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Update on the Town of Lewiston's request to transfer water distribution system to the County

County Manager Sauer updated the Board on the current state of the Town of Lewiston and its desire to transfer its water system to the County.

Mr. Sauer stated that he had recently met with Mayor Vaughan, and he reported that she would like to see the transfer take place around January 1, 2015. Mr. Sauer stated that Mayor Vaughan would appreciate the next few months to notify their customers, and be sure that they understand the change.

Mr. Sauer also reported that Mayor Vaughan had extended an invitation to the County to visit and inspect the Lewiston water tanks, and the Board agreed that this visit should also include representatives of Green Engineering.

Discuss and consider Town of Aulander's request for Peanut Festival Sponsorship

The Board discussed a request received from the Town of Aulander to sponsor their first annual Peanut Festival.

After some discussion, Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** for the County to sponsor the first annual Aulander Peanut Festival at the \$500 (Gold Sponsor). Vice Chairman Smith **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

The Commissioners had no remarks at this time.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer announced that a referendum will be placed on the November 2014 General Election ballot in regards to a ¼ cent sales tax increase for the County.

Mr. Sauer stated that this increase would bring the sales tax to 7% and this would generate approximately \$160,000 for the County.

County Manager Sauer also reported that he had recently met with Bertie County Public Schools Superintendent Elaine White, as well as Maintenance Director, Matthew Bond, regarding recently discovered equipment issues and mechanical problems at the new Bertie High School.

Mr. Sauer reported that both the contractor and the architect for the school building, Hite Associates and WIMCO, were working diligently with the Board of Education to remedy these problems, and that they are currently very responsive to the needs of the new building.

Additionally, Mr. Sauer stated that he had been in contact with Hertford County Manager, Loria Williams, about the temporary agreement regarding building inspections. Mr. Sauer stated that Hertford County was very appreciative of the assistance that Bertie County has provided in their time of need in allowing them to contract out Mr. G.T. Pittman for building inspections.

Mr. Sauer informed the Board that Hertford County had secured a new building inspector, and that they do not need to extend the temporary agreement with the County.

On another note, Mr. Sauer reported that Hertford County will also be taking applications for non-emergency services franchises, at the request of the hospital in Ahoskie. Mr. Sauer requested permission from the Board to gather the required materials to submit an application.

Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** for County Manager Sauer and the Emergency Services Department to proceed with completing an application for non-emergency transport services in Hertford County. Vice Chairman Smith and Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Lastly, County Manager Sauer reminded Chairman Perry to recess tonight's meeting as the Board is scheduled to meet with the Town of Windsor on Thursday, September 25, at 10:00am regarding the watershed management plan.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

The Assistant County Attorney had no remarks at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

Terry Pratt approached the Board regarding his feelings that the Board needed to update its Land Use Management Plan every 5 years, and that an update was currently due.

Wood Farless re-approached the Board regarding the future of the old Bertie High School building now that the new high school has opened for students.

County Manager Sauer responded by stating that the old 900 building was being considered by the Board of Education to replace the Administration building on County Farm Road, as well as using the old 100 building for professional development, and training purposes.

Mr. Farless stated that he was not in favor of moving students from one building to the new high school building without ceasing to operate the previous building on the taxpayers dollar. He

stated that if the old Bertie High School was as unsuitable for students as described, then it should not be converted for other uses.

Chairman Perry encouraged Mr. Farless to speak directly to the Board of Education regarding this matter as it is not a decision the County is considering.

Mr. Farless also expressed concerns regarding local businesses moving out of the County in favor of other surrounding counties, and inquired about the current state of Economic Development in the County.

Commissioner Trent detailed the expansion of Valley Protein, as well as the addition of multiple solar farms in the area.

Commissioner Wesson announced the addition of a McDonalds in Windsor, as well as announced that the County was currently talking with a hotel provider, and methane extraction providers.

In conclusion, Perrytown Fire Chief, Bud Lee, reminded all of those present that he appreciated their attendance, and encouraged the Board to host another meeting in Perrytown in the future.

There were no other Public Comments.

RECESS

Chairman Perry recessed the meeting until Thursday, September 25th, 2014 at 10:00am in the Town of Windsor at the Town Hall.

J. Wallace Perry, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board