

Windsor, North Carolina
June 2, 2014
Regular Meeting

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 10:00AM in the Commissioners Room located at 106 Dundee Street Windsor, NC. The following members were present or absent:

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham
County Attorney Lloyd Smith
Network Administrator Scott Pearce
Finance Director William Roberson
Emergency Services Director Mitch Cooper
Emergency Medical Services Director Matt Leicester
Utility Customer Service Manager Connie Coburn
Water Department Director Ricky Spivey
Tax Administrator Jodie Rhea
Cooperative Extension Director Richard Rhodes
Board of Elections Director Sheila Holloman
Register of Deeds Annie Wilson
Planning Developer Traci White
Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe
Economic Development Steve Biggs
Department of Social Services Linda Speller

Media members present included Gene Motley of the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald and Thadd White of the Bertie-Ledger Advance.

Chairman Perry opened the meeting and thanked all of those present for their attendance.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wesson led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments during this section.

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

The Board convened as the Board of Equalization and Review as directed by Chairman Perry.

Members of the public that were present had no appeals to submit.

Chairman Perry adjourned as the Board of Equalization and Review.

PRESENTATION OF APPRECIATION TO RICHARD RHODES AND MAYOR JAMES HOGGARD

Chairman Perry presented plaques of appreciation to both Bertie County Cooperative Extension's Richard Rhodes, and Windsor, NC Mayor James Hoggard for their participation and partnership on the Fallen Officers Memorial Dedication that took place on Sunday, May 18, 2014.

Mr. Rhodes and Mayor Hoggard were commended for their diligence on the event and were congratulated on planning and hosting a "First Class program."

APPOINTMENTS

JCPC Continuum Plan presentation by JCPC Chair Laree Cherry

JCPC Board Chairman Ms. Laree Cherry came before the Board to present the County Funding Allocation, as well as the JCPC Board's plans for FY 2014-2015.

The approved allocation will then be forward to the State of NC.

The only change that would need to be made by the Board would be to correct the County Designee from former Interim County Manager John Whitehurst to current County Manager Scott Sauer.

After some discussion, Vice Chairman Smith made a **MOTION** to approve the JCPC Continuum Plan as presented by Board Chairman Laree Cherry. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Black Rock water line construction update by McDavid & Associates

Charles Joyner of McDavid & Associates provided an update to the Board regarding the Black Rock water line construction project.

He stated that the construction has been completed and now the project is ready to be turned over to the County.

Mr. Joyner informed the Board that the Homeowner's Association would be present for the final inspection to provide their approval of the water line construction and clean up.

Mr. Joyner also invited any and all members of the Board to be present for the final inspection that will be scheduled at the Board's earliest convenience.

Lastly, Mr. Joyner assured the Board that he would be back after the final inspection to report on the results to present a final adjusting change order and turn over the water line to the County.

Scattered Site Housing bid awards and related Resolution by McDavid and Associates

This item was temporarily deferred until the presenter arrived to the meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

ABC Board

After some discussion, Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to appoint James S. Pugh to the ABC Board for a full, 3 year term. Vice Chairman Smith and Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Nursing Home/CAC Board

Commissioner Harrell made a **MOTION** to re-appoint Rev. Gail McNeil and Mary Davis to the Nursing Home/CAC Board's Joint Community Advisory Committee. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA) Board

Commissioner Harrell made a **MOTION** to re-appoint Morris Rascoe and Lewis C. Hoggard, III to the CPTA Board. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Planning Board

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to appoint Gregory Hughes to the Planning Board. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve minutes for Regular Session 5-19-2014

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes pending any changes from the County Attorney for Regular Session 5-19-14. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Tax Department Error Ledger – May 2014

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Harrell made a **MOTION** to accept the Tax Department Ledger for May 2014 as recommended by the County Manager. Vice Chairman Smith **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Budget Amendment #14-05

County Manager Sauer recommended this item for approval.

Commissioner Harrell made a **MOTION** to accept Budget Amendment # 14-05 as recommended by the County Manager. Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Budget Amendment #14-05 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT

14-05

	INCREASE			INCREASE
10-6100-5695-29	\$ 12,000	LEGAL	10-0090-4991-99	\$ 12,000
TO INCREASE CADA BUDGET TO COVER IDA PROGRAM REIMBRUSEMENT				
10-0050-4839-82	\$ 1,625		10-4950-5399-20	\$ 1,625
TO INCREASE BUDGET - FOOD PANTRY NEWSLETTER REIMBURSEMENT				
10-0025-4586-05	\$ 3,893		10-5860-5399-10	\$ 5,191
10-0090-4991-99	\$ 1,298			
TO INCREASE BUDGET FOR SR GENERAL PURPOSE MONEY				
12-5380-5399-70	\$ 5,963		12-0025-4531-02	\$ 5,963
INCREASE BUDGET FOR CRISIS - MONEY FROM FEDERAL GOV.				
12-5380-5411-50	\$ 9,234		12-0025-4586-18	\$ 9,234
TO INCREASE BUDGET FOR LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE - (LIEAP)				
61-7111-5399-00	\$ 2,160		61-0090-4991-99	\$ 2,160
62-7112-5399-00	\$ 7,020		62-0090-4991-99	\$ 7,020
63-7113-5399-00	\$ 5,220		63-0090-4991-99	\$ 5,220
64-7114-5399-00	\$ 3,600		64-0090-4991-99	\$ 3,600
TO INC CONTRACT SERVICES FOR WELL AND PUMP PERFORMANCE TEST ON ALL WELLS				
10-4170-5126-00	\$ 4,666	ELECTIONS	10-0090-4991-99	\$ 4,666
TO INCREASE BUDGET FOR EARLY VOTING AS MANDATED BY STATE				
10-4310-5540-00	\$ 22,126	ELECTIONS	10-0090-4991-99	\$ 22,126
TO INCREASE BUDGET TO REPLACE TOTALLED VEHICLE - SHERIFF (COX)				

APPROVED __/__/2014

Scattered Site Housing bid awards and related Resolution by McDavid and Associates

Mike Barnette was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Barnette requested that the Board approve the bid awards for Demolition and Reconstruction for the 2011 CDBG Scattered Site Housing program.

After some discussion, Commissioner Trent made a **MOTION** to approve the Resolution of the bid awards. Commissioner Harrell **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Mid-East Commission Area Agency on Aging Director, Annette Eubanks presented the Home and Community Block Grant Initiative to establish a Block Grant Advisory Committee in the County

Annette Eubanks of the Mid-East Commission's Area Agency on Aging approached the Board with a request for a Block Grant Advisory Committee to be established in the County as outlined in the Home and Community Block Grant Initiative.

Ms. Eubanks answered questions from the Board where needed, and after some discussion, the Board requested that Ms. Eubanks forward all pertinent information about the proposed Committee and its desired make up to the Clerk to the Board Sarah S. Tinkham for the Board's review.

Commissioner Wesson stated some concerns regarding the current elderly population in the County, as well as about the County having the largest aging population in the Mid-East Commission service area.

He stated that he hoped these items would provide the County with more funding options from the Mid-East Commission to assist this population.

In reply, Ms. Eubanks stated that U.S. Census data would need to support those claims, and that funding is based on the information gathered from the U.S. Census.

South Windsor Water Association – Mr. Jeff Best reviewed recent procedures as agreed to in March 2014

Jeff Best of Carr, Riggs, and Ingram was present during this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Best stated that all is well in regards to the South Windsor Water Association and its wrap up activities.

County Manager Sauer also stated that the County staff performed a successful switch over to supply water for the previous South Windsor Water Association customers.

The Board commended Anthony Ward and all staff of the South Windsor Water Association for a well ran organization and for assisting in the County's acquisition of all South Windsor water customers.

The Board and the County Manager also discussed the need for transition documents with the Town of Windsor for South Windsor sewer service.

Mr. Best was also commended for his due diligence in the matter.

Discussion of proposed consolidation of four water districts and creating a single water utility fund, and review the Resolution adopting an agreement between Bertie County and the County Water Districts

County Manager Sauer approached the Board regarding the current budgetary and financial accounts set up of the County's four water districts.

County Manager Sauer proposed for consideration the consolidation of the four water districts for the purpose of budget and accounting purposes.

County Attorney Smith explained that the independent water districts were initially created to satisfy loan application requirements to finance the four districts which were phasing into operation over a number of years.

Mr. Sauer also presented a Resolution that could be used to complete this task, but did not expect the Board to act on the matter at this time.

The Board requested that this item be reviewed during an upcoming Water Department Work Session.

Community Meeting locations – beginning July 2014

Commissioner Wesson expressed his support for the Community Meetings that were conducted during the 2012-2013 Commissioners Meeting schedule, and stated that the meetings seemed to have larger turn outs, and seemed to be well received by the community.

After some discussion regarding the need to continue this practice, Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to uphold the decision made previous about holding evening meetings in various locations within the County. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Chairman Perry requested that Clerk to the Board and County Manager provide a list of possible locations for the Community Meetings, and the Board came to a consensus that churches would not be suitable locations for these meetings.

National Association of Counties (NaCo) 79th Annual Conference – July 2014 and related voting credentials

This item was deferred until further notice.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Commissioner Trent stated that the old Elections Building has been completed minus some last landscaping tasks, but that Cooperative Extension will begin moving in on Wednesday, June 4, 2014.

There were no other remarks in this section.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS

County Manager Sauer presented his summary of the proposed FY 2014-2015 budget.

First, County Manager Sauer stated that today's meeting begins the discussion of the next budget, and that he had no expectations that the budget would be approved as presented in its current state.

Mr. Sauer stated that in its current state, the budget for FY 2014-2015 would warrant a \$0.20 tax increase for the County, further, he also outlined the criteria he follows for the needs of the County.

Questions asked while deliberating over each budget item include: Is it prudent? Is it imperative? Is it a citizen-based request? Is it a strategic board initiative? Is it a state-mandated function? Is it a contractual obligation? Is it a moral obligation? Is it good practice?

After sharing his extensive thought process, Mr. Sauer then summarized the proposed budget.

County Manager Sauer stated that the overall proposed budget is \$31.5 million with a General Fund budget of \$20.4 million. If the budget were to remain the same, the ad valorem tax rate would increase from \$0.84 to \$1.04.

Mr. Sauer stated that all current needs in the proposed budget could be met under a \$0.20 tax increase, but that would only apply if the County does not use any funding from the fund balance.

Mr. Sauer stated that the County's strength lies within the fund balance which is currently near \$7 million.

The County Manager then addressed the "drivers" of the budget including the following areas and departments: Sheriff's Department, Emergency Services Department, Department of Social Services, Tax Department, Board of Elections, debt service, schools, and County owned public buildings.

In regards to Emergency Services, County Manager Sauer stated that the proposed budget plan includes the creation and operation of a non-emergency transport program that will require an additional 11 full time staff and 5 part time staff.

The proposed plan from the Emergency Services Department would result in an additional net cost of \$87, 979 to the General Fund.

Additionally, the Sheriff's Department has proposed the addition of nightly coverage of law enforcement for the FY 2014-2015 to address citizen concerns. Mr. Sauer recommended funding for the Sheriff's office to increase by an additional \$496,920 for next fiscal year which would provide for 4 additional road patrol deputies, and 6 replacement vehicles.

County Manager Sauer also urged the Board to consider \$89,618 of additional funding to the Communications Department for equipment and software upgrades. Currently, the system in use is prone to technical failures.

Mr. Sauer stated that it is a worrisome situation when a citizen may be waiting for help to arrive, but help is delayed due to computer malfunction. He stated that updating the Sheriff's Department's current equipment is "imperative."

Lastly, County Manager Sauer also suggested additional funding of \$36,804 for the Animal Control Department which would include funding for a replacement truck and several capital outlay items.

County Manager Sauer also addressed the state of the debt service which will also have a large impact on the final budget. As of next year, the debt service will be \$2.3 million which would equate to approximately \$0.20 on the tax rate.

Mr. Sauer stated that the main expenses impacting the debt service include public schools, the Department of Social Services building, and the County's Health Department.

County Manager Sauer took this opportunity to address funding of the County's schools calling it the "toughest part of the budget," as it is always encouraged to provide the best possible opportunities to children in the community.

Mr. Sauer recognized that some sparsely populated areas of the County have made additional funding resources difficult to obtain.

Mr. Sauer stated that the Board of Education has requested a total of \$3,526,976 which is an increase of \$648, 976 from funding allotted in the current budget year.

County Manager Sauer recommended that the County fund the school district at the same rate as the current expense for FY 2014-2015, and with a capital outlay budget of \$100,000.

Mr. Sauer stated that according to the school district's current audit, the school district's unassigned fund balance currently sits at \$1.7 million, and suggested to the Board that a discussion could take place with the Board of Education in order to encourage that Board to use some of that funding for FY 2014-2015.

In summary, County Manager Sauer also addressed proposed funding for other organizations including: \$73,206 to Martin Community College, \$35,000 to Roanoke Chowan Community College, \$75,000 to the Bertie County Board Elections for new, state-mandated voting equipment, \$275,000 for cost of living/merit based raised to County employees, \$930,673 to the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail, and full funding for the increase in County employee medical coverage.

Lastly, Mr. Sauer addressed the Board regarding the Courthouse and its current state of disrepair. He recalled a day that was spent with Commissioner Trent and Maintenance Director Anthony Rascoe where both gentlemen toured the facility.

Mr. Sauer suggested, and Commissioner Trent concurred, that if the County were to set aside a total of \$350,000 to be distributed over the next three years that it could "get the ball rolling" on fully repairing the current facility.

The proposed budget and all of its documents, including County Manager Sauer's summary of the proposed budget, may be picked up at the County Manager's Office in Windsor, or be located online at <http://www.co.bertie.nc.us/>.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

County Attorney Smith informed the Board that he had provided all of the current documents in the Board's electronic packet that are currently associated with the Sunenergy1 project including leases, easements, and surveys.

County Attorney Smith requested approval.

Commissioner Wesson made a **MOTION** to approve the Sunenergy1 documents as provided in the Board packet by County Attorney Smith. Commissioner Trent **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

County Attorney Smith also requested guidance regarding the South Windsor sewer system and its part in the County's new venture in adopting all customers of the South Windsor Water Association.

After some discussion, the Board requested that the County Manager schedule a Work Session specifically related to the Water Department and South Windsor Water Association.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED

There we no comments in this section.

ADJOURN

Chairman Perry adjourned the meeting at 11:45am.