

Chowan County Board of Commissioners
Special Joint Meeting
With the Bertie County Board of Commissioners
And the Martin County Board of Commissioners
Thursday March 28, 2019
DSS Board Room
110 Jasper Bazemore Ave.
Windsor, NC

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners held a special joint meeting with the Bertie County Board of Commissioners and the Martin County Board of Commissioners on Thursday, March 28, 2018, at 6:00 pm in the DSS Training Room 110 Jasper Bazemore Ave. Windsor, NC. Members of the Bertie Martin Regional Jail Commission were also present.

Chowan County Commissioners Present Chair Patti Kersey, Commissioners Ron Cummings, Bob Kirby, Don Faircloth, Ellis Lawrence.

Commissioners Larry McLaughlin and Greg Bonner were absent.

Chowan County staff present were County Manager Kevin Howard, Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin, Chief Deputy Andy Bunch and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings were also present.

Bertie County Commissioners Chairman John Trent, Commissioners Ron Wesson, Greg Atkins and Ernestine Bazemore.

Bertie Commissioner Tammy Lee was absent.

Bertie County staff present were County Manager Scott Sauer, Administrative Assistant Domonique Walker, Sheriff John Holley and Finance Officer William Roberson.

Martin County Commissioners Chairman Tommy Bowen, Commissioners Dempsey Bond Jr., Elmo "Butch" Lilley and Ronnie Smith.

Martin Commissioner Joe Ayers was absent.

Martin County Staff present County Manager David Bone and Board Clerk Jessica Godard

Members also representing the Bertie Martin Regional Jail Commission were Dempsey Bond, Jr., John MacDonald, William Stalls and John Trent.

Jail Commission Member Dianne Bazemore was absent.

This meeting was recorded. A copy of the recording is in the meeting file labeled March 28, 2019.

Special Meeting

Bertie Chairman John Trent welcomed all to the meeting. He then called the Bertie County Board of Commissioners to order.

Martin County Chair Tommy Bowen then called the Martin County Board of Commissioners to order.

Chowan County Chair Patti Kersey then called the Chowan County Board of Commissioners to order.

Dempsey Bond Jr. then called the Bertie Martin Regional Jail Commission Board meeting to order.

Bertie County Commissioner Ron Wesson provided the invocation.

Martin Commission Dempsey Bond read a statement of purpose for the joint meeting. He noted in October the Chowan County Manager contacted Bertie and Martin County and asked that they consider the feasibility of a partnership to add Chowan to the regional jail. The three managers met and discussed the request. An inter-local agreement memorializing the discussion was drafted to fund a study for the project. An RFQ was drafted with proposals due January 15th. Two proposals have been received. He noted that Martin and Chowan Counties have both adopted the inter-local agreement. He stated that the counties agree the feasibility study would provide the most insight and answer all of the questions regarding a partnership.

All in attendance were served dinner, following the meal the meeting continued.

County Manager Kevin Howard stated that Chowan County is currently at a crossroads in needing to decide on a future for the Chowan County Jail. He stated Chowan either needs to build a jail, renovate the existing jail or partner with another jail. He stated that Chowan is not in a position to build a jail. He introduced Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin and Chief Deputy Andy Bunch.

Chowan Sheriff Goodwin provided a handout to the group with information on the current Chowan County jail. A copy of the handout is in the meeting file labeled March 28, 2019.

Bertie Commissioner Ernestine Bazemore stated that many of the topics covered in the handout will be addressed in the feasibility study. She stated that Bertie should vote to proceed with the feasibility study. She then moved to approve the study.

Bertie Commissioner Greg Atkins asked about the cost of the study.

Bertie County Manager Scott Sauer stated that the groups would interview the two firms who have made proposals and select a firm to engage. He stated the cost can be negotiated. He stated that Chowan and Martin have pledged to move forward with the study but Bertie has not.

Bertie Commissioner Ron Wesson asked if the cost will be split three ways.

Bertie Manager Scott Sauer stated yes, the study will look at the needs of all three counties and would be an excellent tool for the three counties going forward.

Martin Commissioner Ronnie Smith stated the benefits of regionalizing and stated there are monies out there to support joint projects. He noted that two of the three counties have resolved to perform the feasibility study. He added that currently there are only three regional jails in the State of North Carolina.

Martin County Manager David Bone stated that the cost will be negotiated and must be approved by all three Boards of Commissioners before they proceed with the study.

Bertie Chair John Trent called for a vote on the motion for Bertie to approve the agreement. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Martin County Chair Tommy Bowen stated that Martin County has enjoyed a good working relationship with Bertie County.

Chowan Commissioner Bob Kirby noted that there are two proposals and asked if he could review them.

Chowan County Manager Kevin Howard stated he had a copy and would share them with him.

Bertie Chair John Trent stated this was a good opportunity for the three County Boards to meet and begin the dialogue.

Martin County Manager David Bone noted that there have been discussions for establishing a committee to represent the three counties to interview the two firms who have submitted proposals.

Chowan County Chair Patti Kersey noted that the two Commissioners who were not in attendance Commissioner Greg Bonner and Commissioner Larry McLaughlin would represent Chowan.

Martin Commissioner and Jail Commission Chair Dempsey Bond thanked the three Boards for their participation in the meeting.

Bertie County Commissioners, Martin County Commissioners and the Bertie/Martin Regional Jail Commission Boards all voted to adjourn their meeting.

Commissioner Bob Kirby moved to adjourn the Chowan Board of Commissioner meeting. Chair Kersey asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Patti F. Kersey, Chair

Susanne Stallings, Clerk