

March 26, 2018

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Called Meeting with the Bertie County Board of Commissioners and the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Commission on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the NC TeleCenter, 415 East Blvd, Williamston, NC.

ASSEMBLY

Martin County Commissioners and Staff in attendance: Chair Elmo “Butch” Lilley, Vice Chair Tommy Bowen, Commissioner Ronnie Smith, Commissioner Dempsey Bond, Jr., County Manager David Bone, Clerk to the Board Marion B. Thompson and Finance Director/Deputy Clerk Cindy Ange.

Bertie County Commissioners and Staff in attendance: Chair Ernestine Byrd Bazemore, Vice Chair Ronald “Ron” Wesson, Commissioner Tammy A. Lee, Commissioner John Trent, Commissioner Stewart White, County Manager Scott Sauer, and Bertie County Sheriff John Holley.

BMR Jail Commission and Staff in attendance: Chair/Martin County Commissioner Dempsey Bond, Jr., Vice Chair/Bertie County Commissioner John Trent, Martin County/Director John MacDonald, Martin County/Director William Stalls, Bertie County/Director Lawrence Carter, Jr., Bertie County/Director Dianne Bazemore, BMR Jail Administrator Terrence Whitehurst, and BMR Jail Deputy Administrator/Secretary.

Martin County Chair Lilley, Bertie County Chair Bazemore, and BMR Jail Chair Bond called the meeting to order around 7:00 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was repeated by all. Vice Chairman Bowen provided the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVAL

For Martin County, Commissioner Smith made a MOTION to approve the agenda as presented, with a SECOND by Vice Chairman Bowen. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

For Bertie County, Commissioner Lee made a MOTION to approve the agenda as presented, with a SECOND by Vice Chair Wesson. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

For the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Commission, Vice Chair/Bertie County Commissioner Trent made the MOTION to approve the agenda as presented, with a SECOND by Martin County/Director MacDonald. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

Strategies To Improve Retention & Recruitment of Detention Officers

BMR Jail Administrator Terrence Whitehurst began the discussion by proposing that current Jail employees be given a 2% increase for each year of service to address compression and the issue of retaining/recruiting personnel. The aim would be to reward those employees for their loyalty and excellence in service. The minimum starting salary had been increased to

assist recruiting efforts but more incentives would be needed because of the increase in dangerous occurrences in the jails, prisons, and law enforcement, in general. Administrator Whitehurst suggested compress needed to be examined to retain seasoned/experienced employees. He also suggested addressing the base salary issue as well. It would not be advantageous to hire new employees at a higher salary than those who have been there for years.

Administrator Whitehurst was complimentary of the great efforts to bring the salary within the market ranges with comparable facilities thus far through collaboration between the BMR Jail Commission, Bertie County and Martin County. Administrator Whitehurst commended the BMR Jail employees for their tenacity during such a challenging time.

Administrator Whitehurst explained seven (7) of the twenty-six (26) positions, remain unfilled. Additionally, one (1) long-time employee is on medical leave and may retire, taking a great deal of experience away from the jail. Historically, the gender distribution of employees for the Jail was 65%-70% male and 25%-35% female. Now, the gender make-up is 50% male and 50% female. Staff has been operating the Jail for over a year, while not taking vacations, holidays, and coming to work sick, in an effort to provide coverage for BMR Jail.

The officials asked about exit interviews, reasons for leaving, salary of comparable facilities, and potential liabilities.

In addition to the suggestions offered by Administrator Whitehurst to address retention and recruitment, the following suggestions were given by the local officials:

- Sign on bonuses upfront (\$2,500-\$5,000)
- Loyalty program (Signing bonus after 2 to 3 years employment)
- Build incentives over a number of years/give bonuses at marginal points in years of service
- Offer existing employees an incentive to bring someone else on board
- Establish a program in conjunction with Martin and Bertie Counties Sheriff Offices to recruit, i.e. Basic Law Enforcement Training
- Reconsider adding Sheriffs to BMR Jail Commission as board members
- Reach out to the local community college regarding an apprenticeship program, with credits toward an advanced degree

On behalf of the Boards in session, the Chairs of each board voiced support of the Jail's mission on finding a solution to the current retaining and recruiting issues.

County Managers and staff were to compile more concrete financial documentations to support budgetary implications, and to schedule another meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Martin County Commissioner/Vice Chair Bowen made the MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m., with a SECOND by Martin County Commissioner Smith. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

Bertie County Commissioner Tammy Lee made the MOTION to adjourn, with a SECOND by Bertie County Commissioner/Vice Chair Wesson. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

BMR Jail Director MacDonald made the MOTION to adjourn, with a SECOND by BMR Jail Director Stalls. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

Elmo "Butch" Lilley, Chairman

Marion B. Thompson, NCCCC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board