

August 16, 2012

An Open Letter to Greg Boothroyd at the Smoky Mountain News.

HCC trustees narrowly split on whether to expand their search for new president

Written by Caitlin Bowling, Wednesday, 15 August 2012 12:32

Please read the following article first (above and at the link below), then read my letter to Greg Boothroyd, followed by a curious e-mail exchange with Becky Johnson, News Editor of the Smoky Mountain News.

<http://www.smokymountainnews.com/news/item/8343-hcc-trustees-narrowly-split-on-whether-to-expand-their-search-for-new-president>

Monroe A. Miller Jr.
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Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
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August 15, 2012

Greg Boothroyd
The Smoky Mountain News
261 Sweetwater Drive
Canton, NC 28716

Subject: HCC trustees narrowly split on whether to expand their search for new president

Mr. Boothroyd,

Did you see the article in today's issue of **The Smoky Mountain News** by Caitlin Bowling? The first sentence says:

“The Haywood Community College Board of Trustees **have apparently rejected five finalists** in its search for a new college president and will now cast a wider net by selecting five additional candidates.”

The first sentence, as you know, is the most important sentence in an article, as it must be designed to capture the readers attention and set the tone for the subject of the article. Ms. Bowling states that the BOT “**have apparently rejected five finalists**” ! Yet later in the article, she quotes someone who might actually know if this is true, Bob Morris, the chairman of the Board of Trustees, when she writes:

“Although the board is considering five new candidates, Morris claimed that **the five finalists** — Douglas W. Allen, Barbara Beebe, John D. Gossett, Keith Mackie and Teresa E. Smith — **are still in the running**. The board's decision does not automatically mean that the five are out altogether, he said.”

What the ... ? Morris claimed?

What is it, Ms. Bowling? The board “apparently” rejected the five finalists, or, the five finalists are still in the running?

Seems to me like Ms. Bowling is interjecting her own editorial opinion with the first sentence, with what is purported to be a news article. Why don't you straighten this out with her and have her put something like this on the editorial page next time, rather than submit it as a news article. It's not too late to transfer this piece of work over to your editorial page on your website.

Then she singularly asks Bob Morris why he voted like he voted, evidently to beat up on him. Why didn't Ms. Bowling go around to each of the Board of Trustee members and asked why they voted the way they did?

Please have a discussion on these issues with Ms. Bowling, and let me know how that went.

Sincerely,

Monroe A. Miller Jr.

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: HCC trustees narrowly split on whether to expand their search for new president

Date: Wed, 15 Aug 2012 12:10:38 -0400

From: Becky Johnson <becky@smokymountainnews.com>

To: Monroe Miller, Greg Boothroyd <ads@smokymountainnews.com>

CC: Caitlin Bowling <caitlin@smokymountainnews.com>, Vicki Hyatt <vhyatt@themountaineer.com>, Bob Morris, Caroline Klapper <caroline@themountaineer.com>

Hi Monroe,

I actually rewrote the lead on Caitlin's article.

I think it is pretty clear that if the board loved one of the current candidates they wouldn't have expanded the search.

FYI - she did call some of the board of trustee members and they deferred to the chairman.

--

Becky Johnson, news editor

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On 8/15/12 12:04 PM, "Monroe Miller" wrote:

Please see attached.

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: HCC trustees narrowly split on whether to expand their search for new president

Date: Wed, 15 Aug 2012 12:19:15 -0400

From: Monroe Miller

To: Becky Johnson <becky@smokymountainnews.com>

CC: Greg Boothroyd <ads@smokymountainnews.com>, Caitlin Bowling <caitlin@smokymountainnews.com>, Vicki Hyatt <vhyatt@themountaineer.com>, Bob Morris, Caroline Klapper <caroline@themountaineer.com>

Ms. Johnson,

So, you wrote the lead sentence...

The Board of Trustees has to submit three (3) candidates to the state for approval before they can continue with the selection process. As you might be aware, each of the candidates were open to questions from the community while they were in town for interviews. I had an opportunity to speak with each one, as summarized in my latest issue of Haywood County Toeprints, <http://haywoodtp.net/pubTP/T120803.pdf>. (it's near the end of the issue). I personally found only two reasonably acceptable. Perhaps this might be a reason the board voted as they did. Perhaps if you or your reports hung around BOT meetings a little more, it might help to put things in perspective.

So it's not so clear that the board "had to love" one of the candidates, they had to choose three to continue the process.

Monroe Miller

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: HCC trustees narrowly split on whether to expand their search for new president

Date: Wed, 15 Aug 2012 13:22:30 -0400

From: Becky Johnson <becky@smokymountainnews.com>

To: Monroe Miller

CC: Caitlin Bowling <caitlin@smokymountainnews.com>

If you would like to make a donation to the Smoky Mountain News and sponsor the salary of an additional reporter, we would be glad to attend every government meeting occurring in our four county area. For now, we make the meetings we can. Four counties, 14 incorporated towns, 9 tourism authorities, 4 EDC's, several town and county planning boards, two community colleges, one university...you get the drift.

I cannot say why the board voted the way they did. But again, if they really liked one of the candidates and thought that candidate was an excellent choice, it seems that person would have been chosen.

[**Editors Note:** It was not necessary for me to respond to this last e-mail. I guess it went right over Becky Johnson's head that the Board of Trustees needs narrow the field to three (3) candidates, submit those names to the state for validation, and then make the selection. Who knows, one of those three candidates might chose to accept a position at another community college or whatever, and the Board had better be prepared to extend the offer to the remaining two. I believe I will decline to make a donation to the Smoky Mountain News to sponsor the salary of an additional reporter at this time].

Monroe A. Miller Jr.