

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
2200 Camp Branch Road
Waynesville, NC 28786
December 12, 2021

Subject: Ensley Transcript, December 6, 2021 Meeting, response to Public Comments.

This transcript begins at 28:18 on the video recording of the County Commission meeting on 12/6/2021.

https://haywoodcountync.granicus.com/player/clip/140?view_id=1&redirect=true

Ensley was blasted by three people during the Public Comment period for his response to a Public Comment at the previous county commission meeting. Here is his response.

28:18 [Ensley] ... And I will say, you know, that Pathways has been a solution to the jail, uh, it's really helped us keep the recidivism rate down, Sheriff, and the Sheriff he's back their shaking his head yes, so, I remember when we started Pathways in 2013, there was a need, because there was a lot of homeless people that weren't getting any help and we did, we went ahead, the commissioners when we contracted with Pathways to do the, um, the Pathways center where the old prison was, that worked really well. Uh, we did have opposition to that, but it was a solution, and now we are seeing the fruits of that, from the lady that spoke at our last meeting. Um, there are hundreds of cases like the lady that spoke that Pathways has helped. It's really kept our recidivism rate down, and of course with population growth, your gonna always, you know, we've kinda gotten to the end of that, so we, we're all looking at adding on to the jail.

29:15 And, as far as low barrier shelters, we don't really get into that. I will say that, the county, there was a low barrier in Maggie Valley during covid, it worked really well. People, it gave em a place to stay, gave em a place to, um, gave em a place, you know, kinda, I guess you could say, get their feet on the ground, and where they could get a job, and some of them actually had gotten into jobs while they were at that, and they were only operating for a couple of months. So, we had law enforcement presence there, and there was some structure. That's what happened with low barrier shelters. You've got to have some structure. It's not going to be willy-nilly. The one that Mark Pless has talked about, that is technically a low barrier shelter in Raleigh, it works really well. It's a faith based program. And I will say I'm not ashamed to say that I support any effort to help the homeless, I'm a Christian, and my Christianity tells me in Matthew 25, verses 37 through 44, I believe, that we need to take care of the homeless, and Jesus said in Matthew 26:11 that the homeless, rather, or rather the poor you will have with you always. So I take my admission, and sometimes my Christianity complacent¹ with my Republican Party, and that's a shame, but I'm gonna always err on the side of Christ, and on the side of Christianity, and I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

30:33 So, hopefully, we can try and get some solutions, for some of the homeless folks that we have. There was a couple of great movies that we watched lately. We have Amazon Prime, and I just kinda started to get into that, but there's a movie called Same kind of different as me, it's a Christian movie, Same kind of different as me, and it's about, it really helps you understand homeless people and their challenges, if you will, a lot of them have mental health issues. There's another movie that has Robert Downey Jr. in it, and it's called the Soloist, he, and it really shows you that these people have a lot of mental health issues, and there's no help out there today for mental health. None whatsoever. Or, very little, I shouldn't say none, but, uh, we don't have, I know the Sheriff was talking about it, one of our meetings about some of the folks need be institutionalized, but we don't

¹ com-pla-cent - showing smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one's achievements.

have any institutions to institutionalize them in. So their out just kind of wandering the streets and they really can't function as normal people like we think they can. A lot of em can't. So there's a lot of mental health issues that we need to try to address, but we're looking at all those issues, but there's no low barrier shelter that I know of on our radar, any time soon. So, hopefully, those folks can find ways to get help and... One thing the low barrier shelters do do, where you have structure, and law enforcement present, it gives em someone to talk to about getting maybe off drugs, and like I say, when we did that one a few months ago, uh, for a few months, back during covid, it really helped those folks that were participating in that, and it's too bad they don't come in and give us some of their thoughts, but, they don't. So, anyway, but that's my thoughts on all that.

Where do I start?

- Direct reference to the Bible during his speech has no place during this public county commission meeting. If **Ensley** is starting a new trend or breaking protocol, let's change the invocation at the beginning of each meeting and include a direct reference to God or Jesus Christ.
- This is a perfect example of **Ensley** being a [RINO], Republican In Name Only. He places his believe in Christianity above the Republican Party, i.e., complacent². Why should there be a conflict? This guy has a total disregard for the Republican Party.
- **Ensley** can't have it both ways. On the one hand, he professes to be a bleeding heart for the homeless advocating low barrier shelters, and on the other, is doing all he can, under the radar, to get a new and improved capacity jail. **Ensley** is a hypocrite wanting to have both.

Bryant Morehead, for the first time publically at this meeting, declared that there were two (2) bids for the new jail, not one. I believe that, under any circumstances, the new jail is a done deal. As far as I can determine, there has been no RFP or RFQ for these two (2) jail expansion quotations/designs. The major obstacle holding up the design is that both designs submitted to the county encroach on the railroad right-of-way, and the county manager / county commissioners are too obstinate to pay money to the railroad for a right-of-way on county owned property. WTF? That amount of money is round-off error on this whole project. Why not create an RFP or RFQ that requires that the designers take into account the railroad right-of-way when they submit a new design?

- **Ensley** has a problem with the definition of a low barrier shelter. On the one hand, he is for them, as the one he referenced in Maggie Valley - "when we did that one a few months ago", as long as they have structure and law enforcement present. But that conflicts with the definition of a low barrier shelter. Structure and Law enforcement presence creates a barrier, conflicting with the definition of a low barrier shelter. Law enforcement presence is not exactly a conducive environment for a drug addict to walk into.
- **Ensley** is slamming everyone that works with the mental health of homeless and other people asking for help when he says: "... there's no help out there today for mental health. None whatsoever. ...". What's he going to do? Solve the world's problems by hiring a "ThruCare" county employee?

Ensley is not up for re-election in 2022, but with the voters of Haywood County voting for people to replace **James Weaver "Kirk" Kirkpatrick the III** and **Tommy Long**, perhaps, a new set of county commissioners will displace **Ensley** as chair.

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
Haywood County Taxpayer

LetsGoBrandon

² com·pla·cent - showing smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one's achievements.