

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
2200 Camp Branch Road
Waynesville, NC 28786
June 16, 2022

Subject: Dialog with **Becky Johnson**, re: Waynesville Police Department Community Meeting.

Yet another dialog with Dumb-as-a-Brick Mountaineer reporter **Becky Johnson**. This dialog pertains to the Waynesville Police Department Community Meeting, that was held at 6:00 PM at 112 Virginia Ave. Waynesville, NC on 6/2/2022.

I happened to be one of the few attendees that bothered to attend, with of course, **Becky Johnson** of the Mountaineer. There were a very considerable number of personnel from the Waynesville Police Department that showed up in force for this presentation. As Peggy Hannah pointed out in her Public Comment at the Waynesville Town of Aldermen meeting last Tuesday night, no single elected official showed up. No mayor, no Aldermen, no County Commissioners, no one. WTF?

Upon reflection, this community meeting had wide ranging implications, some of which the impact is only starting to be felt.

This dialog with **Becky Johnson** is interesting, in that it shows how different people can pick up entirely different aspects of the meeting, and how it is reported. Since I had not intended to take notes during this presentation, I am omitting the names of some of the presenters.

[**Editor's Note:** At the close of the meeting, I had requested a copy of the power point slides, but have yet to receive them.]

The main presentation, a slide show, was given by Tyler Trantham. During his presentation, he pointed out a couple of homeless people that had been going through the revolving door of the catch and release program, who had been recently sentenced to prison time. He also mentioned that the bail schedule had been changed and had been increased earlier in the year, and his department was seeing the results of that bail increase.

What Bail Schedule increase?

Last time I heard, the most recent "Order" that was issued was by Judge Brad Lett's and Judge Richard Walker (now retired), 18R425, signed on December 28, 2018. This was the catch and release order that turned Haywood County upside down. Originally posted on www.haywoodtp.net on 5/25/2021.

[Flashback 18R425 - ORDER - IN THE MATTER OF PROMULGATING LOCAL RULES RELATING TO BAIL AND PRETRIAL RELEASE FOR JUDICIAL DISTRICT 30B. Determining Conditions of Pretrial Release. 12/28/2018. 5/25/2021...](http://www.haywoodtp.net/pubII/210525HaywoodAndJacksonBailPolicy2019.pdf)

or

<https://www.haywoodtp.net/pubII/210525HaywoodAndJacksonBailPolicy2019.pdf>

I made a bee-line over to the Justice Center and requested a copy of the new Bail Schedule. It took Mandy a loooooong time to located it, but she finally produced a new order, 21R411. This one was signed by Judge Brad Lett's and Judge Roy Wijewickrama on November 29, 2021.

WTF?

That's over six (6) months ago, and this is the first I am hearing about it?

WTF?

I posted both the old and new orders on www.haywoodtp.net for comparison, then posted a highlighted version of the two documents, highlighting the differences, and finally a summary of the changes of these two documents.

[21R411 - Summary of Changes in Order 21R411 from 18R425 - "Bail and Pretrial Release Policy for District 30B". 6/5/2022...](#)

[Direct Comparison of 18R425 vs 21R411, "Bail and Pretrial Release policy for District 30B". 21R411 has new text highlighted in yellow, and 18R245 has obsolete text circled in purple. 6/3/2022...](#)

[NEW!!! 21R411 - ORDER - IN THE MATTER OF PROMULGATING LOCAL RULES RELATING TO BAIL AND PRETRIAL RELEASE FOR JUDICIAL DISTRICT 30B. New Conditions of Pretrial Release, by Brad Letts and Roy Wijewickrama. 11/29/2021. 6/3/2022...](#)

[Flashback 18R425 - ORDER - IN THE MATTER OF PROMULGATING LOCAL RULES RELATING TO BAIL AND PRETRIAL RELEASE FOR JUDICIAL DISTRICT 30B. Determining Conditions of Pretrial Release. 12/28/2018. 5/25/2021...](#)

Do you think that any of this appeared, or will ever appear in either of the two local newspapers, the Mountaineer or Smoky Mountain News? [Expletive Deleted] No!

Why?

- Mountaineer - Liberal Hack News Editor, **Vicki Hyatt**,
- SMN - Liberal News Editor **Scott McLeod**.

In fact, not a single word about this Waynesville Police Department Community Meeting has ever been written in the SMN to date.

Haywood County was turning into Oregon.

A catch phrase popped up [redacted] during this Community Meeting and that the department was welcoming the new changes in the Order, as Judge Lett's had evidently been feeling the heat. The sentencing of these two revolving door criminals marked a beginning of real evidence of the new Order taking effect.

FoxNews highlighted the failure of this type of program in Oregon this morning:

“Overdose deaths hit record levels, murders surge after blue state decriminalizes hard drugs - Self Inflicted Wound”, - “Oregon's drug decriminalization effort a 'tragedy'”.

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/portland-drug-decriminalization-effort-tragedy>

The democrat party here in Waynesville was on full display during the Candidate Forum held on April 27, 2022 by the “Young democrats” of Haywood County (a.k.a. “Young Socialists” or the “Young Marxists”).

See Toeprints <https://www.haywoodtp.net/pubTP/T220428.pdf>

One of their questions by **Chelsea White** to both John Hemingway and Larry Bryson was:

- **Will you work with Judge Letts to make the pretrial release program as effective as possible?**

To their credit, they both responded with responsible answers.

You know, the funny thing is, Judge Letts had already changed his order over four (4) months earlier! And Myrna Campbell was at this Forum and listened to all this [expletive deleted]. (She left early, midway through the forum.) No one evidently knew about it. Was the question even relevant any more?

So, that sets the backdrop for articles **Becky Johnson** started to pump out.

[**Editor's Note:** One of the main points of my communicating with **Becky Johnson** is that I was not appreciative that **Becky Johnson** was attempting to embarrass one of the people who attended the meeting. Consequently, in a rare instance, I am redacting any text relating to that incident from these emails, but you will still get the idea.]

Becky Johnson, in her follow up articles, has failed to provide any details of the new Order, or any way readers can research what the new Order contains.

There is absolutely zero (0), not even a word, in the Smoky Mountain News, about any of this.

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
Haywood County Taxpayer.

Date: Tue, 7 Jun 2022 19:31:28 -0400

From: Monroe Miller

To: Becky Johnson <bjohnson@themountaineer.com>

CC: Vicki Hyatt <vhyatt@themountaineer.com>, Jonathan Key <jkey@themountaineer.com>, Cory Vaillancourt <cory@smokymountainnews.com>, Kyle Perrotti <kyle.p@smokymountainnews.com>, Scott McLeod <info@smokymountainnews.com>

Ms. Johnson,

Both you and I attended the Waynesville Police Department Community Meeting 6:00 PM at 112 Virginia Ave. Waynesville, NC on 6/2/2022. Yet we came away with two entirely different perspectives.

- Your perspective. [redacted]. This is what appeared today in the online version of the Mountaineer - WTF?

Who the [expletive deleted] do you think you are?

- Second perspective - mine. Trantham casually mentioned that there was a new bail schedule, which came out early this year. Did you take the time to look into this? [Expletive deleted] NO!

I investigated and discovered the new Bail and Pretrial Release Policy for District 30B over at the Justice Center, and found

[21R411 - Summary of Changes in Order 21R411 from 18R425 - "Bail and Pretrial Release Policy for District 30B". 6/5/2022...](#)

[Direct Comparison of 18R425 vs 21R411, "Bail and Pretrial Release policy for District 30B". 21R411 has new text highlighted in yellow, and 18R245 has obsolete text circled in purple. 6/3/2022...](#)

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This has been on my website for a couple of days. Yet there is nothing in the Mountaineer (or Smoky Mountain News for that matter) about any of this, which has been the underlying problem of criminal activity for the last couple of years.

[redacted].

I noticed that your link to this article went inactive about an hour after you posted it. https://www.themountaineer.com/news/is-the-tide-finally-turning-on-waynesville-s-homeless-problem/article_8b7a7e7a-e645-11ec-95e2-d3400e7741e2.html

You slammed Pathways, and to some extent Trantham. I wonder who made the command decision to pull your article off-line?

Who the [expletive deleted] do you think you are?

By the way, I enjoyed the part of the meeting where you got chewed out by Peggy Hanna for your irresponsible reporting of the ammo incident at Ingles.

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.

p.s. Here is the article... By the way, thanks to you, I finally figured out how to capture photos from the source code of your articles.

Is the tide finally turning on Waynesville's homeless problem? June 7, 2022

Becky Johnson bjohnson@themountaineer.com

Waynesville police officers unpacked the tangled web of homelessness, addiction and crime on the streets of Waynesville during a community forum in Hazelwood last week, where residents got an insider's look into the life of a beat cop.

The picture they painted was both sobering and frustrating: playing whack-a-mole with homeless encampments, a revolving door of the jail and court system, and neighborhoods plagued by larcenies from addicts supporting their drug habits. But the tide may finally be turning, thanks in part to Waynesville's culture of community policing and the relentless advocacy of residents fed up with the status quo.

"There have been some great successes because of y'all," Assistant Police Chief Brandon Gilmore told the audience. "We were in your corner, seeing the same thing. Numbers don't lie. Every officer on the street was dealing with it." Officers wanted to highlight strides that have been made, emphasizing that Waynesville was their hometown, too. "We aren't here to just put a badge and a gun on in the morning and go to work. We want to solve the problems in front of us, and I assure you we've been just as frustrated by this as some of you guys have been," said Lt. Tyler Trantham. For years, officers have been pushing a boulder uphill, only to have it slip back down. They spend an inordinate amount of time busting up homeless camps, only to have them pop up somewhere else. "We continue to try to shuffle those folks along, but it's a vicious cycle," Gilmore said. They arrest the same people over and over — so-called frequent flyers — only to have them back on the street the same night. "On the way to the jail, they'd be telling the officer 'I'm going to be out before you even clear the jail,'" Trantham said. "When you know you there are no repercussions and you'll just get a citation, there's no deterrent. People would just take their chances." Meanwhile, officers befriend those struggling with addiction and mental health issues in hopes of convincing them to seek help. But more often than not, they reject the social services that could turn their lives around. "They tell us 'I don't want your help.' I'd rather be out here in my tent, my rules, doing my thing," Trantham said.

Rise in homelessness

The community presentation was packed with stats and trends. The police department meticulously tracks data in a quest to find root problems and measure what's working and what's not. And lately, police see promising signs that the peak is behind them. One of the success stories has been a reduction in homeless people migrating to Waynesville from out of town. In the mid-2010s, police began seeing a measurable increase of homeless people from elsewhere. It coincided with the opening of the Pathways Center in Hazelwood as a homeless shelter. "There was a mass influx of people. We started seeing people sleeping in our parking lots in cars from other states," Gilmore said. So get a handle on the trend, officers began creating folios on everyone they encountered. "Any officer who had an encounter on patrol, we logged it. Where they were from, why they were here, anything we could find out about them," Gilmore said. "And we found they were waiting to get into Pathways. That was the story time and time and time again." The Pathways Center claimed it only accepted locals, but its definition of a local was someone who'd been here 90 days — a loophole that could be easily exploited. During the high water year of 2019, police documented 110 homeless individuals from out-of-town who'd come expressly here after hearing about Pathways. "Pathways would finally have an opening, they would get in, but they wouldn't follow the rules and wouldn't clean up, so they'd get kicked out and be homeless again," Gilmore said. Then-police chief Bill Hollingsed

negotiated funding from the town to pay for bus tickets for those who wanted to go somewhere else. “We hauled a lot of people out of here during those times,” Gilmore said.

Turning the corner

Leadership of the Pathways Center ultimately responded to community concerns, growing into their true mission of a life rehabilitation program. Counseling, financial management and career coaching are mandatory for Pathway clients, the majority of which hold down jobs as they actively work toward re-entering society.

And Pathways now adheres to a strict local-only policy. “March 2020 was the last time any of our patrol officers identified anyone who was from out of town saying they’d come here to try to get into Pathways,” Gilmore said. “That number was completely dissolved.” Meanwhile, Trantham now serves on Pathways board of directors to ensure an open line of communication with the police department. “There’s not a week that goes by that Pathways doesn’t call me about someone,” Trantham said. Despite past perceptions that the Pathways Center is part of the problem, Trantham said those days are over. “I am not making excuses for the past, because when it got off the ground it was a train wreck. But the point is you guys spoke, and they adjusted,” he said. “They are transitioning folks back into society. I would propose without them, where are these people going to be?” Deanie Brooks, a member of the audience, said the community is eager to help when someone is willing to help themselves. A couple of weeks ago, a Facebook post listed furniture and household items needed for someone transitioning out of Pathways into an apartment. Within two hours, the list had been filled. “In no time, all of his needs were met,” Brooks said. The Pathways Center also requires drug and sobriety testing for all its clients, which is the only approach that works, Trantham said. “You use, you’re gone, there’s accountability. When it’s done correctly, it can help us not hurt us,” Trantham said.

No more out-of-towners

The number of homeless people documented in Waynesville has sharply declined from 130 in 2020 to 43 just a year later in 2021. The number is gathered during an annual census count conducted every January by a boots-on-the-ground team. Police keep their own monthly running tally of encounters, keeping tabs on individual homeless people and their status in the community — part of their community policing approach. “Just because I’ve seen someone walking down the road 500 times, doesn’t mean I won’t get out and talk to him the 551st time and say ‘Hey, where are you going? Where you headed?’” Gilmore said. In October 2021, police documented encounters with 47 individual homeless people. Only two were from out of town. “They were from New Bern, and we put them on a bus the next day and they were gone,” Trantham said. By March 2022, the number was just 26. All were from here. “They are from Cruso, from Clyde, from Hazelwood. They aren’t from somewhere else. They are our people,” Gilmore said. Waynesville police are as much frontline case workers as they are law enforcement officers. “We talk to them daily, they aren’t strangers to us,” Gilmore said. “We had a lot of strangers here at one point, and it was alarming to us. That’s when Pathways was wide open. But they listened to what was being said and changed things.” Now, officers are back to being on a first-name basis with the homeless population, even knowing the names of their dogs. They also know many of their personal stories. Trantham reminded the audience that not all homeless people commit crimes, trespass and do drugs. “We have a lot of people living in cars who are working full-time jobs,” Trantham said. Trantham said the root problem of Waynesville’s street crime is addiction. “Yes, we have a homeless problem, but we also have an addiction problem,” Trantham said. “We can’t attribute every needle to a homeless person.”

Subject: Re: Is the tide finally turning on Waynesville's homeless problem?

Date: Wed, 8 Jun 2022 00:47:55 -0400

From: Becky Johnson <bjohnson@themountaineer.com>

To: Monroe Miller

CC: Vicki Hyatt <vhyatt@themountaineer.com>, Jonathan Key <jkey@themountaineer.com>, Cory Vaillancourt <cory@smokymountainnews.com>, Kyle Perrotti <kyle.p@smokymountainnews.com>, Scott McLeod <info@smokymountainnews.com>, Sinclair Carr <scarr@themountaineer.com>

Hey Monroe,

The story accidentally went live before print publication. It will be in Wednesday's paper, and will go live some time after that. We stagger our online start times so all of our stories for Wednesday's print edition don't go live at the same time.

I guess you didn't see the editor's note on the story.

It reads:

Editor's note: This is the first in a series exploring the problems and solutions to homelessness in Waynesville. Coming Saturday: the pretrial release program that's allowed repeat offenders to stay on the streets may finally be changing course.

There was too much information covered in the meeting to put in one story. So I had to break it up into a series.

Lastly, [redacted]. It was a public meeting in a public setting.

Becky Johnson
The Mountaineer, reporter
828-507-9141 (cell)
themountaineer.com

Subject: Re: Is the tide finally turning on Waynesville's homeless problem?

Date: Wed, 8 Jun 2022 08:22:20 -0400

From: Monroe Miller

To: Becky Johnson <bjohnson@themountaineer.com>

CC: Vicki Hyatt <vhyatt@themountaineer.com>, Jonathan Key <jkey@themountaineer.com>, Cory Vaillancourt <cory@smokymountainnews.com>, Kyle Perrotti <kyle.p@smokymountainnews.com>, Scott McLeod <info@smokymountainnews.com>, Sinclair Carr <scarr@themountaineer.com>

Ms. Johnson.

Not the first time this "accident" happened, and no, I did not see the Editor's Note. It was not located within the <articlebody> in the source code. Something else for me to look for (sigh). Thank you for motivating me to figure out where the .jpg photos are located.

Say, I made the astute observation that you added a name to the copy list, Sinclaire Carr (you spelled it Sinclair in the email). According to her LinkIN page:

https://www.linkedin.com/in/sinclaire-sparkman-carr-aa82a091?original_referer=

She is now the self appointed Lead Editor of the Mountaineer.

Lead Editor
The Mountaineer
Apr 2022 - Present 3 months
Waynesville, North Carolina, United States

Congratulations to Sinclaire Carr. Say, is Sinclaire Carr related in any way to Ted Carr, Pat Carr or Steven Carr? If so, I may have some new material to work with. I'll have to work fast, because new News Editors don't seem to last long around your establishment.

What happened to Vicki Hyatt? You know, the previous news editor that had difficulty with the difference between an airplane and a train [re: Stealth bomber tactic derailed]. Is she finally back tending the family farm?

So it appears you got passed over again for the job of news editor. Maybe a new opportunity will come up again in a few weeks, depending on how long Sinclaire Carr remains around.

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.