

Haywood County "Toeprints"

March 18, 2022

Vol. #13 Issue #1 (Subject: 2022 Candidates - County Commission.)

www.haywoodtp.net

What's Happening?

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Haywood County Taxpayers of what transpires at the bi-monthly County Commission Meetings. This newsletter will be written from the perspective of a casual observer, myself. Any opinions expressed will be mine.

County Commissioner Candidates for 2022 Elections.

These are some continuing comments on the candidates for the upcoming 2022 elections for County Commissioners. This issue will focus on County Commissioner candidates only. Since no new information has developed for the democrat candidates, other than **James Weaver "Kirk" Kirkpatrick the III** [D] did finally sign up to run, this issue will primarily focus on the Republican Candidates.

One candidate dropped out of the race, Christian Burnette, and two new candidates entering the race, Terry Ramey and James Nash, since my initial Toeprints of December 10, 2021.

A Republican County Commissioner forum was held at the County Courthouse on 3/15/2022, where the following candidates responded to question from Kay Miller, Janet Presser and Peggy Hannah.

Candidates present were:

- **Tommy Long** [M]
- Jennifer Best [R]
- James Nash [R]
- Erich Overholtz [R]
- Terry Ramey [R]

[Editor's Note: Code for above:

[R] = Republican, [M] = Manikin]

During the initial questioning period, Kay Miller asked each candidate five (5) questions. I thought I would keep a scorecard in order to keep track of responses. The technique was simple. Each candidate received either:

- A smile face, = +1
- A neutral face, or = 0
- A frowny face. = -1

The scorecard does not take into account questions asked by Janet Presser or Peggy Hannah. The scorecard follows this page.

The results:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----|----|
| • Tommy Long | [M] | -1 |
| • Jennifer Best | [R] | 5 |
| • James Nash | [R] | 0 |
| • Erich Overholtz | [R] | 3 |
| • Terry Ramey | [R] | 0 |

Peggy Hannah directed her question to **Tommy Long** [M]. Candidates up to that point had adhered to a time limit (either 2 or 3 minutes), but evidently, Peggy Hannah pressed **Tommy Long's** [M] button, and he completely ignored the time limit, in effect denying other candidates to address the question, which is what **Tommy Long** [M] thought about Pre-Trial Release. **Tommy Long** [M] started reading from a script, and responded with roughly the following:

Q: Do you support Judge Letts' pre-trial release program?

"The program actually is a pilot program through the state judicial system and yes it is Judge Letts program. The nuts and bolts of it are his. I had a meeting with him and he explained it but stopped short of saying "this is it". He said it was subject to change and it was a moving dynamic depending on what was working or not working. He emphasized that no time would he or any judge break any sentencing laws. They are bound by law the legislature hands down. He was focusing mainly on folks with small children who were caught up in low end misdemeanors that required 200-500 dollar bail for simple charges like shoplifting clothes or food. He said if they couldn't post bail they sat in jail until a pre-trial hearing which is supposed to be 3 days but in certain circumstances 5-7. When arrested the kids involved must be taken care of. This tasks our DSS with placement duties. The current FTA's (failure to appear) after bond was posted is a crazy high number. That misdemeanor charge then gets a FTA charge added. Sheriffs have to go get them and lock them up and it gets worse. His only request of commissioners was to provide a "case worker" to basically try and get them to court on time. When one is hired grant money will be sought after to pay this person. So technically financially we're out on the front end. But if we get a through care worker (one has not been hired yet) it will benefit us on the back end by lowering case loads for displaced kids through DSS and warrant retrievals and jail cost (80-90 bucks a day plus medical and dental care while in custody). There are people who purposely get arrested so they can get dental or medical work done for free while in custody. He insisted hardened criminals are not included in his program. Just these low end misdemeanors.

His program really hasn't been implemented here. If it does it could save money and help people/kids. The question on the form is a hard question for a commissioner because at this point we have nothing to do with it. We haven't seen it implemented or changes made to make it better post implementing. The catch and release that our county has seen in recent months was due to Covid sentence shortening. Charges were dropped and lessened by a directive from the Governor and NCSDHSS to reduce jail populations due to close quarters risk. That was handed down to counties, sheriffs and judges across the state. The judge elections are simply HUGE in every election and they get little lip service during the election cycle around the coffee pot. The state legislature sentencing laws needs to be addressed. We have law from Raleigh that pads pockets with repeat offenders. They also closed prisons and cut mental health care and kicked back that expense to the counties across the state. On any given day in our county jail we house 30-40 prisoners who should be in state prison. This is a big reason for our need of expanding the jail at a proposed 16.4 million a year ago. The price is going up in today's hyper inflation. So for "catch and release" as a statement and at face value I'm a NO. But the details of his program for the targeted group could help jail population (cost to taxpayers) and kids and women who may just be shoplifting for their kid to have food and clothes because the deadbeat dad is locked up on failure to pay child support... isn't that nice? How will they be able to support a kid and it's mother when locked up? What a tangled web indeed. Sorry for such a long explanation but catch phrases leave out important details that are critical for decision making. One final thought, oft times I feel in this conversation victims rights are forgotten. We don't need to get caught up in helping the perpetrators to such a degree we forget about the law abiding citizens who are the victims of repeat offenders. Law abiding citizens need rewarded and protected not penalized. I believe in forgiveness and long suffering but... there is a time when someone who stiffens their neck and hardens their heart will be cut off and that without reproof. Some people need to be in Jail or prison! That is why we elect Judges and have representative jurors."

This was the response he supplied to a LOCAL ELECTION CANDIDATE SCORECARD on Haywood IS Happening.

<http://haywoodhappenings.org/candidates/tlong.htm>

WTF?

The primary election will weed out the five candidates to three, the number of open seats for County Commissioner. From this initial candidate forum, I can recommend two (2) candidates:

- Jennifer Best [R]
- Erich Overholtz [R]

But wait, that is only two. We haven't heard from any of the democrat candidates yet, and they are:

- **James Weaver "Kirk" Kirkpatrick the III**
- Jeff Haynes

The obvious choice at this time is to insure that the following current county commissioners are voted out.

- **Tommy Long** [M]
- **James Weaver "Kirk" Kirkpatrick the III** [D]

Let's see where this goes...

Legend: If any name is in **bold**, it can't be a good thing.

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Si vis pacem, para bellum

LetsGoBrandon

3/15/2022

Commissioner
6:30 - 8:30

Mark Pless
Cory



😊 = 1
😐 = 0
☹ = -1

	Long	Best	Nash	Overholty	Ramey
Revenue Neutral Tax	☹	😊	😊	😊	😊
Action Item Should do Should not do	☹	😊	😐	😊	😐
County Zoning Regulations	😊	😊	☹	☹	☹/😊
Surplus 2-3M\$					
New Capital Improvement Rain day Return \$	☹	😊	😐	😊	😐
Budget Ex perian Cuts	☹	😊	😐	😊	☹
Education Adequate					
Closures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	-1	5	0	3	0
Janet Presser Is there a question? Mandates	☹ ☹ ☹ ☹	😊	😐	😊	😊
Peggy Hannah Pre-Trial Release Thru Care	☹ ☹ ☹			😊	

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