

5-29-2013 My name is Tia Foster and on May 29th, 2013, I was able to interview the county manager of Caswell County, Kevin Howard. Mr. Howard has been the county manager in Caswell County for six years. He answered several questions about his job and the job of the county commissioners to help me to better understand the way our county is governed.

The county manager is like the liaison between the county commissioner and the head of departments funded by the county. The county manager is also in charge of putting together the annual budget for the board of commissioners to review. The county manager also is in charge of making sure that the directions of the county's board of commissioners are followed by all of the county departments. The county manager works closely with the finance director and the other department heads, such as the county sheriff, EMS director, and the parks and recreation director.

In order to create the annual budget, the county manager must give out a budget packet to all of the county departments and other organizations funded by the county so that they can create their budget request for the next fiscal year, which runs from July 1st to June 30th. Once the budget requests have been submitted to the finance office, the county manager creates a proposed budget to present to the county commissioners. There are several meetings to go through and review the budget before it is reviewed, including a public hearing to receive the opinion of the public. The budget must be adopted by June 30th.

A great example of the budget in action would be the installation of the tennis courts. In order for the tennis courts to be installed at the recreation center, it had to be put into a budget request. Once it was put into a budget request, it had to be decided by the county manager whether it would go to the board of commissioners in the proposed budget. During the several meetings to decide the final budget, the county commissioners decided that it was a project that fitted their views for the direction of the county.

The board of commissioners is a policy making board. Departments can make recommendations to the board of commissioners and they are able to make decisions based on what they have in mind for the direction of the county. They are in charge of figuring out the best way to supply the needs of the county based on the funds available. Members of the board of commissioners are Cathy Lucas, Kenneth D. Travis, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Larry G. Hamlett, Jeremiah Jefferies, and Kent Williamson.

The county manager's office is located in the historic court house, as well as the finance office. The board of commissioners meets in the court room on the second floor of the historic court house every first and third Monday of each month. I plan to attend the public session held on August 5th, 2013.