

NCACC Report
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August 2014

A county is a part of you, when you think about it. It's where you go to school, where you work, where you become the person you grow up to be. It's always there for you, an expanse of land and memories that many people never really take the time to think about in depth. My interview with county commissioner Mark Gillespie, and watching a Bladen County Commissioner's meeting, has led me to think more about my county and what has made the world I've grown up in the way it is.

The interview was a brilliant - I loved getting to learn about the inner mechanics of Bladen County, and Mark Gillespie was the perfect person to answer my questions. Ranging from intrinsic motivations to the problems that our county is facing today, I wondered about what a county commissioner is like, what they can do, and - though I didn't consciously realize it - what a politician is like. For that last point, I found that, at the least, Mr. Gillespie was just as human as myself, my mom's boss, or my dad. He was relatable and seemed to me to be a nice man who had all the right answers. Those answers? The most striking to me was about the money; naturally, one might say.

Budgeting is an important part of work and life for the county commissioners in Bladen County, and I learned from Mr. Gillespie just how far a little can go. A hot-button issue in our county is tax, and when it comes to employees and youth, groups Mr. Gillespie has been a staunch advocate for, all it could take to make the improvements many people feel we need would be a one-fourth cent tax. A little does go a long way, and when you look at the countries with high taxes and nearly free health care and education, you wonder why more people aren't on board. But, I digress.

The meeting I witnessed was an experience in parliamentary law and in worldly education. I saw the ways that have shaped my life, and it has brought to me to a point of something like enlightenment. I am excited by seeing what I did, the conclusions I came to make, the ideas that I had as I sat, watched, and took notes. To me, it was an experiment in maturity, and for it I believe that I am on a fast track to becoming a greater and more involved part of my community, my county, my country, and my world.

My brief but striking brush with politics has made me think. It's answered a lot of questions, and raised a lot of others. As a member of my community and my county, I believe that it's become my duty to ask more questions, get more answers, and similarly to what President John F. Kennedy said, to find out what I can do for my county, not what my county alone can do for me.