

On Monday, July 7th, 2014, I attended one of Perquimans County's monthly County Commissioner meetings. Eight people were seated at the front of the room facing the audience. Ms. Cole, the chair holder, was in the middle of the half-circle of county commissioners. We first started off by saying the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer from the vice chair holder. Two women stood behind a podium, facing the commissioners, and talked about trying to get county water. They brought water samples for the commissioners to smell of its horrid stench. They had to depend on well water for their water supply. The two women brought up many concerns that this foul water causes health defects. All they wanted was county water. That was one of the major concerns at the meeting that night.

On Sunday, July 20, 2014, I interviewed Kyle Jones, a part of the Perquimans County Commissioner Board, via email. Mr. Jones has been a County Commissioner since December of 2012. A commissioner's term runs for four years, so Mr. Jones's term expires in December of 2016. Before running for this office title, Jones was unaware of some responsibilities. One of those responsibilities was paying for unclaimed bodies. If a body is unclaimed for more than the statutory period, the county has to pay for the cremation of the body. They can, however, run again for reelection. When asked if he would be interested in running for reelection, Mr. Jones said, "I'm not sure. It depends where my career takes me, but at this point, running for reelection is likely." He elaborated more on how officials look at the "unfinished business" that drives people to run for reelection. While looking into this "unfinished business," Jones told a little about his local priorities that are most important to him: Planning/zoning, and juvenile crime prevention. Ever since his undergrad, he minored in Public Administration, allowing planning/zoning to be his specialty. As for long-term concerns, he wishes for people to elect competent leaders. To address this and other concerns, the Board of Commissioners guides the County Manager as to what to do. Mr. Jones uses this analogy: The County Manager's job is to be the engine of the boat, and the Board of Commissioners' job is to be the rudder, deciding what projects/tasks to prioritize and make generalized budgetary decisions. Many citizens ask Mr. Kyle Jones questions about the county's finances, mainly about both taxes and expenditures. The hardest decisions Mr. Kyle Jones has had to face as a county commissioner was whether or not to fund certain large projects. "Like the majority of my fellow Commissioners, I have chosen to continue along the path that Commissioners like Mack Nixon (a big influence on me) who preceded me in office set. This path was one of paying for most projects as you go, out of a steadily-growing fund balance. Opponents of this mindset will point to the fact that we can sustain greater debt (which is true), however, one need only look at counties like Pasquotank to see that increased debt is a slippery slope that could easily result in a County being unnecessarily handcuffed fiscally," he said.