

India Jones
August 2014

About Warren County: An Informative Talk with Our Chair of The Board of Commissioners

Warren County is home to approximately 20,000 residents, and it is located in the Northern part of North Carolina surrounded by Kerr and Gaston Lakes. There are four elementary schools, one middle school, and three high schools. Warren County has a public memorial library and many historic places. This county is separated into three towns Warrenton, Norlina, and Macon. Warren County like a lot of other places in the South is flourished with tobacco and other crops, many of which are fresh fruits and vegetables.

The town is operated from a council-manager form of government. North Carolina General Statute 153A-82 picks the county manager as the chief administrative officer for the county government. There is a governing body of a five-member Board of Commissioners, representing five voting districts. They are elected to serve four year terms. The county manager is held accountable to the board of county commissioners for directing and supervising the administrative offices all over the county departments, boards, commissions, and agencies. These places are under general control of the board of commissioners. The county manager is appointed by the Board serves as chief administrative officer for about 250 full time employees.

About me; I am India Jones and I am 14 years old, going to the 10th grade at Warren County High School. This is my seventh year being an active 4-H'er with North Carolina

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Cooperative Extension. I am excited about opportunity to participate in Youth Voices, and I am looking forward to attending all of the related activities.

In order to complete my project for Youth Voices, I interviewed Warren County Commissioner Bertadean Baker. Commissioner Baker is the current Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

Questions for the County Commissioner

1. **How long have you served on the Board? Will you run for re-election when your current term expires?**

Ms. Baker: "I am in my first term and being elected for the second. I am undecided if I will run again. I have already been elected for four more years. The final election is in November which I do not think I have an opponent."

2. **What are your local priorities, or what county issues hold the most importance to you?**

Ms. Baker: "Economic growth and development, and healthcare. There are a lot of issues with wanting to improve healthcare."

3. **Are there long-term concerns you have about our county? What role does the Board of Commissioners play in addressing those concerns?**

Ms. Baker: "They are really the same. There's been no economic growth such as businesses and tourism." The county commissioners have a board for economic growth, and healthcare. Most things that are brought to them mostly work along with other boards from the county where Ideas and strategies are shared .

4. **What are the biggest issues that citizens ask you about?**

Ms. Baker: " A lot of issues are irrelevant to the commissioner's job. Some health care such as Obama care and voting procedures changes are often asked about.

5. **What are some of the biggest responsibilities for county governments that you were not aware of when you ran for office?**

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Ms. Baker: "Involvement of commissioners include being required to go to meetings such as budget meetings. I was not expecting all of these meetings which can sometimes take up to two months to be completed."

6. ***What are the hardest decisions you've faced as a county commissioner?***

Ms. Baker: "The county funds were low, and there had to be a tax raise, a loss of some workers, or a furloughing of some workers. We choose the furlough because we didn't want to put anyone through higher taxes, and we didn't want to make any workers lose their jobs."

Conclusion

I enjoyed interviewing Ms. Baker it was very helpful, informative and it allowed the opportunity to expand my knowledge. During this interview I was able to learn about the County Commissioners job and many of the ways the county operates and how the commissioners and county manager are helpful to the community with making a lot of decisions.