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Interview with County Manager Mr. Yates

At first I was anxious about meeting with my County Manager before the commissioners meeting and with possibly messing up with the interview by not knowing what to say. But I couldn't have been more misguided, for Mr. Yates was very kind and patient. I knew that he took time out of his busy schedule to talk with me about the importance of his job and answer the questions I prepared for him. The interview went speedily and I enjoyed my time talking with him, Mr. Yates was even kind enough to give me a guided tour around the building, introducing me to all the other employees and telling them that I was this year's Youth Scholar. The tour around showed me how they have separated departments by floors so that it would be more convenient, for example most things regarding agriculture things will be found on the second floor, that includes permits and such. Everyone I met was very kind and informative.

Mr. Yates explained to me that the role as county manager was to handle the budget and personnel. He said he is appointed, not voted on by the county commissioners. The County Commissioners are appointed during the first meeting of the year. Mr. Yates has held the county manager's position for seven years, and loves it.

After meeting with Mr. Yates I met with the Commissioner Mr. Blevins. He explained the upcoming Commissioners meeting, and the County Commissioners Youth Summit. He said most of the commissioners around the state would be attending this summit.

Later that same day the Commissioners meeting was held in the main room with cameras all around and the commissioners in the front. They began with some jokes, but soon jumped straight into the important decisions set for that day. They spoke on leasing acres from the Wilkes County Airport to the Boone-based Samaritan's Purse, a disaster relief and approved it. Next was about their Budget amendments, where they bought new protective suits for the bomb squad, having a company clean up hazardous labs, and a grant for the Health department. Funds were also shifted due to the increase need for in-home aid. The commissioners considered two people from the library board to become members of the board, but only one was approved. They also appointed their voting delegate for the N.C. conference, and reappointed a three-year term for the Nursing home Advisor. Later I was introduced as the representative for Wilkes County at the NCACC. Also most importantly at the end of everything else, Gary D Blevins chairman of commissioners, was sworn in as a member of the N.C. Arboretum Board of directors by the clerk of the board. Watching this meeting and being part of it opened my eyes to how much work and thought the commissioners put into all of this before the meeting and yet still talk and ask more questions before approving or disprove it. Normally there are two board meetings held every month, but between those meetings everyone keeps up to date by emailing each other.

I came out of this meeting and interview enriched with the knowledge of what they do and how much they put into it, everything amazed me. This has given me a better understanding of my county and the powerful people who impact it. With what I now understand, I would like to go and discover even more, the little bit that I saw has intrigued me, with the processes of what runs the county that I live in.