

2015 NCACC Youth Summit

I am Burke Pollard and I interviewed one of my County Commissioners before coming to Youth Summit. Mr. Johnny Carswell has been around politics for practically his whole life. He has served on the board of Commissioners since 2012. Mr. Carswell was appointed to the board in 2011, when one of our Commissioners passed away. He ran for election in 2012. His term expires in 2016. He said he isn't sure on whether he will run again when his current term expires in July, but is leaning towards running again.

Local priorities are crucial to the benefit of any county. When I asked Mr. Carswell about the topic, I think he hit the nail on the head. He said jobs were the number priority, especially jobs for young people, whether they go to college or not. He also said the jobs for people out of work right now are a priority. He said that his second most important was quality of life and tourism in Burke County. He said he wants places of recreation for families and all people to enjoy.

We also talked about long-term concerns in Burke County. He again said jobs, Quality of Life, and Schools are a priority. He said the Board of Commissioners are policy makers, and an extension of state government. He said they make sure that legislation is enforced. The authority they have is to solve resolutions, and setting a tax base.

A lot of the infrastructure in Burke County is old and unstable. This is one of the main concerns that people ask about. He said that as leaders of the county, the commissioners have to make sure the infrastructure will be around for years to come. He also referred to quality of life, saying that the recreational areas around Burke County are also an area that people ask about.

I asked Mr. Carswell if there was anything he wasn't aware of as far as responsibilities for his office when he ran. He said there wasn't really anything he wasn't ready for. Like I said before, he has been around politics his whole life, before being elected; he was Chairman of the Burke County Republican Party. He understood the framework of what the board does.

Mr. Carswell said the hardest decisions he's had to make are not being able to help everyone who needs it. He gave me an example of something that is going on in our county right now. He said there are about ten to fifteen families in our county who don't have a water supply and the county has to pay for their water right now. He explained that for some unfortunate reason, the water company just stopped supplying them. It costs about 1.3 million dollars to supply these ten to fifteen families in Burke County with city water. He went on to say that it is the right thing to do, but isn't really economically stable.