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Craven County
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On Monday August the 10th, I had the privilege of interviewing a local County Commissioner as a project for the Youth summit pre-assignment. This interview followed the Craven County Commissioners meeting where I had briefly met Commissioner Jones. Through both the County Commissioners Meeting and the interview, I was able to gain a bountiful amount of insight to the complexity and importance of county government and their duties. As a result, I have a better understanding of the process.

As I interviewed Commissioner Jones, I discovered him to be a down to earth and easy man to talk with. My first questions involved his duties as Commissioner. I also asked what he finds important as he fulfills his leadership role. He spoke of being responsible and concerned with what is best for the county as a whole, though his passion lies in the rural communities. These communities are where Commissioner Jones was raised and still lives.

In addition, I asked about the major issues that affect our county. He talked about funding, budgeting properly, and typical personnel issues that arise with a large county workforce. He continued with sharing one of his greatest concerns apart from those listed above. Commissioner Jones spoke about the difficulties of having the same rules and regulations for both urban, and rural parts of Craven County. While many of the people who live in the rural areas live there because they are secluded, many of the laws against noise ordinances (loud hunting dogs for example) have to be enforced there just as in urban areas. This is a concern of the people as much as it is a concern of the Commissioner and he does everything he can for laws to be fair and balanced.

I then asked what the hardest thing he has had to do as a Commissioner has been. His answer was a story about a woman who could not afford to pay her taxes or back taxes on her home/property. She came to him in concern and he did everything in his power but ultimately he could no longer assist her. The issue had gone past a certain point and he did not have an influence on the decision. I believe the most important part of that story is seeing the effort the Commissioner invested into the citizen to help her as much as he was able. After all, that is his job!

The act of care he shows for all in this community is one very refreshing quality to see in a politician these days and a quality I have seen in multiple other Commissioners. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to engage in my local government system and learn so much about how they serve the county. I hope to one day be as helpful and invested in my local government as the Commissioners are. I can say that this interview was certainly a step in the right direction.