

My name is Tatyana Belfield from Gates County. I am a rising sophomore at Gates County High School, in Gatesville, N. C. It was indeed a pleasure to meet and speak with Ms. Linda Hofler, Chairman and County Commissioner, for the Hobbsville District. At the meeting she clarified the mission of the Gates County Board of Commissioners. She stated that its mission is to provide leadership, support and advocate actions for an effective County Government. The responsibility of the board is to seek and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations for the citizens of Gates County.

We discussed some of her major responsibilities as a County Commissioner. Ms. Hofler shared that one of the key responsibilities was to adopt an annual budget for the county. Some other tasks included setting county property tax, as well as assessing and establishing priorities on the many needs of the community. Some of the main concerns of citizens in the community include issues regarding health, education, welfare, and mental health members.

We talked about the communities concern regarding the continuous plea by our superintendent Dr. Williams to the County Commissioners to accept the budget presented to them for our educational system. The request for funds needed by our educational system was denied. Ms. Hofler replied that the county just didn't have the money, due to our low tax rate.

We also had a dialogue with regards to actions taken to increase the health and welfare of our community and district. Ms. Hofler stated that representatives from the Board of Education, schools, community, and healthcare givers continue meeting to discuss the high rates of diabetes, obesity, and cancer. She stated that they would work on behalf of our general public by making them aware of available resources. She affirmed that they continuously ask citizens to take advantage of screening for diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, cancer as well obesity.

The Board of Commissioners contact businesses asking for assistance so that people won't have to commute outside the county in order to find work. They also contact businesses and contractors requesting assistance in renovating properties to bring them to code.

In closing we discussed long term concerns of the community and what role the Board of Commissioners will play in order to make sure that concerns are addressed. Ms. Hofler stated that they would continue to provide leadership, support and advocate actions for an effective County Government. They will continue to maintain the highest quality of service in order to seek and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations for the citizens of Gates County.

I also had the opportunity to attend a County Commissioners' meeting. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Linda Hofler. In the meeting they discuss many areas of concern. The commissioners talked about solar farms being a part of our community. The apprehension of some of the commissioners included the possibility of health issues (radiation). They tabled the debate and will revisit it again in the very near future.

Another request brought before the commissioners was the funding for new playground equipment at the Community Center. After much debate they decided to grant the request. The meeting was very interesting and informative, and I was fortunate to have had this experience.

