

Jessica Hoffman

Commissioner Joe Winslow has served as a Pasquotank County commissioner for 5 years and he has 3 years left in his term. When asked if he would run for re-election he said that when the time came to make that decision he would, because a lot can change between now and then, and if he felt that he could still bring something to the people who live in Pasquotank County then he would consider it. County issues that hold the most importance to him are the budget that they have to work with and trying to make more opportunities for the people of Pasquotank County and for generations to come. His long term concerns that he has for Pasquotank County is that he wants us to undergo change. He wants us to remain a rural community but go through an upgrade, like the Sentara hospital that took over Albemarle hospital. He would like to see the free trade zone carried down from Norfolk to create more industrial jobs in this area. Commissioner Winslow would also like to see advancements made in education throughout the county. He believes that each of these combined would not only boost the local economy but also give way for growth opportunities in neighboring counties. One of the most common issues that Commissioner Winslow is confronted by citizens on is whether or not they will be seeing an increase in taxes. He said that due to so many variables in today's economy that it's not that simple to answer that question. They will begin planning the budget around January. Part of planning the budget is that they will look into each department as thoroughly as possible to see not only where they will be able to cut out from the budget, but also to make certain aspects of each department more effective, Winslow said. Once each department has been evaluated from each angle, they must then look at the revenue for the county compared to what the projected annual operating costs will be. The hope at that point is that they can operate on the same budget or less than the previous fiscal year. Winslow stated that one of the most difficult decisions that he has

been faced with as county commissioner is the choice to allow Sentara to lease the hospital. Adding a five billion dollar company to this area has the potential to influence our economy in ways that this region may not be prepared for. Commissioner Winslow specifically stated that the number one concern that he had was the quality of care for the people in this area. He was adamant not to have a clinic but to have a full service hospital. The decision was eventually made by Winslow and his associates that Sentara seemed to fit the mold quite well. The deciding factor that pushed Winslow to run for office was the people of Pasquotank County and the love that he has for them. He said that he is simply there for the people of Pasquotank, as well as people in surrounding areas, as he tries to approach everything that comes across his desk with a regional mindset. When posed with the question at what age should citizens become involved with local government, he responded that it is based on maturity, but a spike in interest is most commonly seen around the age of 18 or 19. He said that some people never seem to become interested in politics to any extent. Commissioner Winslow said that you do not have to be a politician or any certain age to see a need in your local community and to go fulfill that need. No matter what caliber the task at hand may be. Commissioner Winslow was asked what he would want young people to know, he responded saying that even with all of the technology available today that young people especially seem to be uninformed on certain issues that legislatures may be dealing with that may have a direct impact on that young person's life. Commissioner Winslow emphasized several times that while he tries to make decisions that impact this area and the people with a positive outcome immediately, his main focus is that decisions he make will have beneficiaries many years to come. He stated that the only way he could have a positive impact on the next generation is to make the right choices today.