

I interviewed Person County Commissioner Jimmy Clayton, he was born in 1946 and lives in Timberlake, NC. He graduated from NC State University and worked for the Durham County Health Department, he retired as State Health Director.

How long have you served on the board? Will you run for re-election when your current term expires? He is 68 years old, he was elected to serve on the County Commissioner board in 2000 and has continued to serve for 15 years. If he has time to campaign Mr. Clayton may run for re-election.

What are your local priorities, or what county issues hold the most importance to you? His local priorities are economic development, he doesn't think the board is doing what is needed for Person County. His pet project which has become a recycling business is Person Industries, he feels that it gives handicapped and disabled people something to do.

Are there long term concerns you have about our county? What role does the Board Of Commissioners play in addressing those concerns? His long term concerns for Person County are that the state department is not helping bring business to our county most of our jobs are going to Georgia and Alabama. Another concern of his is the Landfill, in 20 years the landfill will be moved and it would only take 2 votes to keep it here, the contract was written in such a way that it seems like it will be here for a while but in reality it needs to be renewed, and the role of the Board of Commissioners is to give permission to have the landfill.

What are the biggest issues that citizens ask you about? A lot of citizens come to him with questions about the roads, but they are handled by the state, not the county. Citizens are also concerned about their property taxes around Mayo Lake and Hyco Lake, as well as questions about other commissioners and their trouble with the law.

What are some of the responsibilities for county governments that you were not aware of when you ran for office? Mr. Clayton says that he was unaware of all the different boards and committees each commissioner has to serve on, and he was surprised by how complicated the budget process is at the county level.

What are the hardest decisions you've faced as a county commissioner? One of the hardest decisions he has had to make is appointing people to the many boards. You might have five great people running for the same position and you have to choose just one of them, and it is very hard to choose one person that pleases everyone. Another difficult decision for him is the budget, he receives a lot of requests that are good programs to fund but out of all the good options they have to narrow it down to just a few.

I attended the Person County Commissioners meeting on August 3rd. It gave me a better understanding of what he has to do as a County Commissioner.

Eryn Haynes
Person County

