

Haywood County “Toeprints”

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Vol. #4 Issue #3 (Subject: Haywood County GOP voting on Board of Election Candidates)

www.haywoodtp.net

What’s Happening?

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Haywood County Taxpayers of what transpires at the bi-monthly County Commission Meetings. This newsletter will be written from the perspective of a casual observer, myself. Any opinions expressed will be mine.

Haywood County GOP Board of Elections Vote.

The GOP held their third (3rd) meeting since the GOP County Convention. This meeting marked the transition from what I would call the “Old Guard” to the “New GOP” with the inclusion of Precinct Chairs (and Vice-Chairs) included as voting members of the Executive Committee.

NC General Statutes require counties provide three (3) candidate names for the county Board of Elections and request the top order of preference. The state will select two of the three.

The candidates were:

- **Tony Beaman** [See Legend for bold]
- **Alice Ensley** [See Legend for bold]
- Marie D. Ferguson
- Andrew Lee Jackson
- Elizabeth S. Norris
- Margaret Renzi
- Michele Marasco Rogers
- Penny Squires
- **Sarah Warren** [See Legend for bold]

The winners were, in order of receiving the most votes:

- Penny Squires #1
- Elizabeth S. Norris #2
- Andrew Lee Jackson #3

Tony Beaman, prior head of Haywood County DSS who converted to the Republican Party in 2009, had the nerve to submit his name as a candidate [re: See article printed in the Mountaineer, dated April 22, 2009 by Vicki Hyatt, next page]. He wound up with less than a handful of votes.

Alice Ensley, wife of County Commissioner **Kevin Ensley** [RINO - Republican In Name Only] also had the nerve to submit her name as a candidate, and she similarly wound up with less than a handful of votes.

Sarah Warren, prior member of the county Board of Elections, also wound up with less than a handful of votes.

Haywood County voters should feel confident that, no matter which two are finally selected from these three candidates, we will wind up with a good County Board of Elections.

Legend: If any name is in **bold**, it can’t be a good thing. [RINO] Republican In Name Only (i.e. **Kevin Ensley**).

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Social service director squelches employee remarks to commissioners

By Vicki Hyatt

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When Tony Beaman, Haywood County Department of Social Services director, got word employees were planning to speak to the county commissioners Monday night about actions requiring employees to take a week off without pay, he forbid it.

Concerned the comments would reflect poorly on the department and that the individuals were basing their arguments on emotion rather than fact, he sent out a memo stating any who spoke would be subject to disciplinary action.

"I am aware that there are some staff who are not pleased with the salary cuts/time off that we are all facing and how the county wound up in this financial situation," the memo stated. "As you are aware, there were information sessions set up by the county manager to help staff understand how all this happened. I am told that very few of our staff attended for whatever reasons."

After giving the matter careful thought about the negative impact such comments might have on the agency, the memo contin-

ued, "I am instructing all staff, via this memo to you, that they are not permitted to voice their concerns

to the board of commissioners about these issues and are not to attend the commissioners meeting on April 20."

The Friday memo continued to say any DSS staff member who appeared at the commissioners meeting and or spoke out about issues concerning the economic situation of the county would be disciplined for insubordination.

"No one is happy about having to take unpaid time off or salary cuts," the memo stated. "Regardless of how the county got into this situation we cannot go back and undo it; we have to deal with it."

The directive was replaced shortly after noon on Monday, however, when Beaman issued a second memo saying county employees do have a right to attend and speak at the commissioners meeting on public policy, but do not repre-



Tony Beaman

sent the agency. Beaman urged employees who chose to speak to base their comments on facts, not hearsay.

In an interview Monday, Beaman said he met with the employees who wanted to voice concerns to the county commissioners and tried to explain that posing questions to the board and expecting answers is not how the process works.

"My job is protect this agency and not let things hinder our ability to do our job," Beaman said. "If they get up there and fire off false allegations, they will come off looking like fools and it could create problems for the agency."

Copies of the April 10 memo were anonymously distributed to news agencies by employees who questioned its legality.

County Manager David Cotton hadn't seen the memo, but said the social service agency answered to a separate board of directors and was governed by state personnel policies. The commissioners appoint some of the DSS board members, and Commissioner Skeeter Curtis serves on the board.

Cotton said the county process is to handle employee concerns first at the

department and then at the county manager level. However, that doesn't preclude employees from taking their concerns to the commissioners at a board meeting as long as it isn't a personnel or legal issue, he said.

"I would be concerned if the first time I'm hearing of an issue is in front of the commissioners and it hasn't gone through the proper chain of command," he said. "That would be the red flag for me."

DSS Board Chairman Riley Covin said he didn't see Beaman's memos before they went out and said it would be inappropriate to comment without knowing the details.

Chip Killian, who has a contract to serve as the county's legal counsel, said Beaman's memo was an operational issue, and wouldn't offer an opinion on whether an employer could prohibit staff from speaking out on an issue.

During Monday's commissioner meeting, there were plenty of comments about plenty of topics, but no one indicated they were a DSS employee or spoke of the ripple effects of county budget cuts on those employed by Haywood County.