

December 1, 2014

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Called Meeting on Monday, December 1, 2014 at 3:00 PM in the Washington County Courthouse, 2nd floor Courtroom, 120 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, Phelps, Sexton and Walker were present. Also present were County Manager Jerry W. Rhodes, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, Finance Officer Frank Milazi and County Attorney Curtis Potter.

Chair Johnson called for a motion to adjourn the November 3, 2014 Board of Commissioners meeting. **Commissioner Phelps made a motion to adjourn the November 3, 2014 Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Johnson called the December 1, 2014 Special Called Meeting to order.

Commissioner Manning made a motion to go into Closed Session under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) (attorney client privilege). Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried unanimously.

The Commissioners returned to Open Session.

CALL FOR THE SHERIFF'S BOND /DECLARE A VACANCY FOR THE SHERIFF'S POSITION: Mr. Potter explained that as a matter of law, the Board is required to call for the Sheriff-Elect to present his bond as pursuant to NCGS 162-9. Mr. Potter noted that the bond cannot be presented at this time since the Sheriff-Elect has passed. Chair Johnson called for a motion pursuant to NCGS 162-5 to declare the Office of Sheriff for the 2014-2018 term vacant as of 3:40 PM on December 1, 2014.

Commissioner Sexton made the motion pursuant to NCGS 162-5 to declare the Office of Sheriff for the 2014-2018 term vacant as of 3:40 PM on December 1, 2014. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION WITH POTENTIAL SHERIFF'S CANDIDATES: Chair Johnson explained that the Commissioners allowed interested parties to show their interest in filling the Sheriff's vacancy by signing up with the Clerk to the Board who presented the names to the Commissioners for tonight's meeting. Chair Johnson asked the potential candidates to move to the jury room and explained that they would be called back out one at a time to answer questions from the Commissioners. Chair Johnson also stated that no cell phones are to be used in the jury room by the candidates.

DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL APPOINTMENT OF A NEW SHERIFF: Chair Johnson stated that each Commissioner will ask 2-3 questions to each candidate and each candidate will be asked the same questions. [The questions and a brief excerpt of the answers given by each candidate are below.]

1. Please state your name and address.

John Barnes, Jr. 23 South Deerfield, Plymouth

2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*

3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*

4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *In 1981, I started with Plymouth Police Dept.; in 1984, I went to Washington County Sheriff's Dept.; left there and went to Marine Patrol; and was most recently a Tyrrell County Deputy.*

5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *We need to get back to talking to people and hearing their concerns. Having Deputies stop and talk to people and go in the stores and have conversations with people. Different parts of the County have different views of what is going on in the County. We need better communication all around.*

6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason?
No

7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *Had a friend, John Sawyer, and was going to be his chief deputy. Talked about a lot of things that he wanted to see happen. I do not want to see his dream die. I want to keep it alive and bring about the changes he wanted for this department.*

8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *We need to have open communication with the Board. It needs to be a two way street and we need to be able to work out a solution beneficial to all.*

9. Describe your leadership style. *More of a hands on leader—lead by example. I will do the same work as all of my staff.*

10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *As captain of marine patrol I was in charge of 15 counties...given a budget and had to operate within*

that budget. I had to do requisitions, line items, had to justify all items. I have managed personnel also.

11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *Getting deputies back up to speed and back to working with the general public. Some issues need to be taken care of such as training and standards....get them up to date. Make sure the budget is on track and what we need to go forward with.*

12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *Give the officers training and support and don't cut them off at the knees...don't micromanage and let them blossom on their own. They just need a chance to excel by getting the training they need.*

13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *I will do utmost best to bring this department to the people and treat everyone fairly and equally. I want the agency and the people to work together....we are there for them and to serve them.*

1. Please state your name and address.

Ivan Hester Fowler, Jr., 1901 Hwy 45 S, Plymouth, NC

2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*

3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*

4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *I retired from marines; served as a sniper in GITMO; as an undercover CID agent....northern naval police in CA, drug task force in CA; served in the Elizabeth City Police Department in patrol division; and as a Deputy Sherriff in Currituck County. I have a lot of education...highly organized...leadership skills are superior.*

5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *I would like to see a change...the Sheriff's Office needs to be more of a family....be a little more friendly to each other. More community policing. I was a friend of John Sawyer's and was on the same page. Always give people respect. Would like to see the Sheriff's Office relocated.*

6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *No*
7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *It is a position of authority. I am a resident and believe I can contribute my experiences to the county and be an asset.*
8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *Believes in communicationwill keep open with the Board*
9. Describe your leadership style. *Lead by example. Not a big alcohol fan.*
10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *Knows a lot about budgeting. In Marine Corp I had to manage my own budget. Had to worry about personnel, equipment, and fuel. I know how to set up estimates. When there are cutbacks you squirm.*
11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *You will see me out on the street...either by myself or with my chief deputy or others.*
12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *I want it to be a family. I do not want people disliking each other. I will have a meeting with each individual to get to know them and will discuss any issues they have.*
13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Very saddened that John Sawyer is not here. I was bothered quite a bit. If I become Sheriff, I would donate half of my first year's salary to help the Sawyer family.*

1. Please state your name and address.
Greg Hassell, 4175 Pea Ridge Road, Roper
2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*
3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*

4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *Was commander of multi county drug enforcement agency. Set the operating procedures and trained them and saw the day to day work and managed a budget. Was a shift detective for Ply PD. Has experience in writing grants and worked on budgets with other agencies. Works in probation/parole now.*
5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *Make it a proactive agency instead of a reactive agency. Got to have a good working rapport with the community. Would restructure the civil process. Assign deputies to work specific areas of the county in hot spots in the county. Would provide specialized training.*
6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *No*
7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *For years felt that there were challenges within the Sheriff's Office and felt that the current administration wasn't taking the necessary steps to make it a progressive respected law enforcement agency.*
8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *One on one contact. Will work with the Board...get input from the Commissioners.*
9. Describe your leadership style. *Easy going. Very easy to work with. Gets along well with people.*
10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *Worked with the Plymouth Police Department and wrote grants and assisted with budgets.*
11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *Will start to see a progressive agency. Will meet with everyone already employed in the Sheriff's Office. Will start a good working relationship with in the county.*
12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *Will encourage input from the staff. Working together will build morale.*
13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Thank you for your consideration.*

1. Please state your name and address.

Arlo Norman, 15672 Hwy 94 N, Roper

2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*

3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*

4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *Started here as patrol deputy, then corporal, then sergeant.*

5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *Improve moralcreate a better working relationship within the dept. and the community and school board.*

6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *Yes*

7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *Wants to make a difference. This is where he has chosen to live.*

8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *Would keep morale up and hopes the Board would be willing to work with him.*

9. Describe your leadership style. *An open persontakes different approaches with different people to get the best out of them.*

10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *One major issue that hurts the budget is turnover. He would do better background checks to avoid having to let folks go and paying them.*

11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *Main priority would be to get more accountability. Would consider asking for an audit to get a good foundational starting point. Setting goals with him and deputies.*

12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *Set standards and treat everyone fair. Reward staff set attainable goals.*
13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Wants to be seriously considered. Has chosen to stay in Plymouth....been here through the good and bad.*

1. Please state your name and address.
Charles Bernard Norman, 82 Sunrise Lane, Plymouth
2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*
3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*
4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *Started out at Creswell prison...Dept. of Corrections. Worked with other state and federal agencies. Currently working with DMV....trains school bus drivers. Was a probation officer. Lot of dealing with gangs.*
5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *Try to make a strategy to employ more deputies from this county and get them trained. Be out in the community to talk to the mayors and find out what is needed and take sure needs are met.*
6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *No*
7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *Because of our youth. Youth is being destroyed and they need guidance. Wants to make things safe for them at home and at school. Wants to get drugs off the street. Need to protect our kids.*
8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *Try to keep within the budget, find ways to save money. Get out in the community and talk to people. Can't patrol an area if you don't know it.*

9. Describe your leadership style. *Hands on.....will work with everyone. Make sure everyone is trained.*
10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *Will try to keep within the budget. Will know what the budget is and use the minimum...do research to get bang for the buck.*
11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *Get structure re-organized...get a chief deputy, get ranks in line...find out strengths and weaknesses in department. Will have open communication with everyone. Needs everyone to be a team player.*
12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *Work with people and don't try to embarrass anyone. Try to make them strong.*
13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Will keep it real with everyone. Will be out in the community.*

1. Please state your name and address.
Mickey Robbins. 25 Albemarle Beach Road, Roper
2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*
3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*
4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *Currently supervisor in the Plymouth Police Dept....been there for 16 years.*
5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *Get the supervisors on the street, removing the 8-5 stigma. Would like to get the kids doing something useful. Try to break the drug momentum within the county.*
6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *No*

7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *Because of our youth. Youth is being destroyed and they need guidance. Wants to make things safe for them at home and at school. Wants to get drugs off the street. Need to protect our kids.*
8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *Could bring improvement to the County. Would have a working arrangement with the Commissioners. Would have to work together as a team.*
9. Describe your leadership style. *Somewhat dominate. Retired military. Doesn't believe jobs can't be done. Would get out to the people...doesn't like to be blindsided. Can't supervise by sitting in an office.*
10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *Not much experience in budgeting....worked on military budgets.*
11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *An awful lot of learning. Speak to the people and find out the wants of the citizens are and what the wants of the County are.*
12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *Lead by example. Show that you aren't afraid to do a job. Making them feel important by giving them training.*
13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Needs to lead by example. Would delegate authority responsibly.*

1. Please state your name and address.
James Ross, 27 Old Roper Road, Plymouth.
2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*
3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*

4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *Started here in 1994 as a jailor/dispatcher, 1996 went to school and was promoted to road deputy. 1998 shift supervisor, 2000 criminal investigator, 2006 Sheriff for the last 8 years.*
5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *Equal coverage of the county. Don't know why it is so hard to keep deputies in the Creswell area. Would promote education in the County.*
6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *No*
7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *Believes he can make a difference. Been sheriff for the last 8 years. Feels he's done a pretty good job. Knows he's made mistakes and has learned from them. Believes he can bring staff back up to standards.*
8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *Thinks he has a good relationship with the Board. Will go to more Board of Commissioners meetings and stay in contact more.*
9. Describe your leadership style. *Kind of like former President Reagan. As long as staff is doing what they should be, leave them alone.*
10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *Prepared budgets since he was a chief jailor. Was a big task.*
11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *Get back to full staff. Getting people working under him back on the street and figuring out how to help the citizens. Need better communications with citizens.*
12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *Have a certification system to get everyone certified. Will help with professionalism.*
13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Been working here for almost 21 years...very dedicated employee...feels he can always make a difference.*

1. Please state your name and address.
Kevin Sawyer, 212 Golf Road, Plymouth, NC
2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*
3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*
4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *Probation officer, narcotics investigator, Chief deputy... 4 year degree in criminal justice.*
5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *Increase accountability and increase professionalism...increase response time and have officers available to citizens.*
6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *Not terminated....suspended on one occasion.*
7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *To provide effective leadership...is a civil servant not for a title. Been here since 1992.....life has been in law enforcement. Can do a proactive job for citizens.*
8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *Will be available to Commissioners. Will do what's best for the County.*
9. Describe your leadership style. *Proactive...trust officers to do their job.*
10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *Has worked with budget development....over the last 8 years...and written grants.*
11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *Will take time to assess each and every employee. Knows there needs to be changes. Will not rush into anything. Will give current employees a chance to show that they want to be there and want to do their job.*

12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *Offer opportunities for advancement within the department. Encourage hard workers ...recognition for a job done well. Give a pat on the back when they deserve it and a hand when they need it.*

13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Believes the Sheriff should be accountable to the citizens of the County. Won't let personal bias affect how he treats a citizen. Will effectively enforce the laws and be available to the citizens in the County.*

1. Please state your name and address.

James Wilkins, 139 Folly Road, Plymouth

2. Are you a resident of Washington County and have you lived in the County during the preceding year? *Yes*

3. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation?
No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? *No*

4. Describe your prior experience in law enforcement including positions that you have held. *Worked in the Sheriff's Office for 7 yearsResource officer at school....sergeant and patrol officer.*

5. What would be your goals for Sheriff's Office during the next four years? *Make improvements on what exists. No major movements.*

6. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from employment for any reason? *No*

7. Why do you want to be Sheriff of Washington County? *This is his home. Something he's always wanted to do.*

8. What will be your approach in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners? *Will attend Board of Commissioners meetings.*

9. Describe your leadership style. *Lead by example.*

10. Describe your experience preparing and managing a departmental budget. *Would seek help from the Finance Officer.*
11. What will your first 90 days look like if you are appointed as Washington County's Sheriff? *Would meet with current personnel in place and try to make improvements.*
12. What will you do to promote high morale within the Sheriff's Office? *They already have a good spirit. Will have an open door policy. Will assess things together and work things out.*
13. Is there any other information you would like to share with the Commissioners? *Happy to be here today.*

DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL APPOINTMENT OF NEW SHERIFF: Mr. Potter explained that the actual appointment of a new Sheriff will need to be made in the regular meeting due to the way the statute is written.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to adjourn the Special Called Meeting of December 1, 2014. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Tracey A. Johnson
Chair

Julie J. Bennett, CMC, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board