

County commissioners approve new jail program and react to election

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

A new program to help those in jail with mental illness and substance abuse issues was among the items Forsyth County commissioners voted on during their Monday, Nov. 28, meeting.

Stepping Up is an initiative by the National Association of Counties that uses case management and intervention to reduce recidivism among the mentally ill and substance abusers in jail. Commissioners voted unanimously to execute the necessary documents to receive a \$82,500 grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust to fund a local Stepping Up pilot program for women in the Law Enforcement Detention Center.

The funds, along with a \$36,363 Winston-Salem Foundation grant and \$50,000 of county money, are being used to hire a program manager and part-time peer support position and cover the costs of programing and operations.

County Commissioner Gloria Whisenhunt, who spearheaded the effort to bring the program to Forsyth, said in a commissioner's briefing last month that she expects the program to eventually expand to men in jail.

"I'm just overwhelmed by the support that the community has given us on this program," she said. "I anticipate it will be extremely successful."

Amber Humble, who has worked as a Mental Health Court liaison, was expected to start as program manager this week. The program is expected to start its services in the spring or summer of next year.

Also during the meeting, Walter Marshall and Everette Witherspoon — who are the only African-Americans on the Board of County Commissioners — addressed calls they'd received from constituents fearing what Donald Trump's election means for minorities. Trump's campaign promised mass deportations, increased scrutiny on Muslims entering the country and implementing stop and frisk in black communities. White nationalists celebrated his victory and there have been increased reports of hate crimes.

Both commissioners said that minorities shouldn't live in fear and hoped the country wouldn't move backward.

"At the end of the day, the United States is bigger than one man," said Witherspoon. "There's accountability systems in the United States government to hold people in



check."

Witherspoon, who supported progressive Democratic Sen. Bernie Sanders in the primary, said Hillary Clinton's loss was the "chickens coming home to roost" for the Democrats. He said his party stopped looking out for working people by supporting trade deals that sent jobs overseas, cuts in welfare and policies that resulted in mass incarceration of African-Americans. He hoped U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minnesota, a fervent Sanders supporter

and brother of Forsyth County Democratic Party Chairman Eric Ellison, would be named as the new chair of the national Democratic Party.

"It's time for Democrats to get back to being Democrats," said Witherspoon.

Also during the meeting:

*Funds for the county's pay-go projects, paid for with surplus money from last year's budget, were approved. Commissioners will approve contracts for each individual project in future meetings. This includes \$1.5 million for Old Salem to renovate its historic boy's school.

*A new lease was approved for the public defender's office at Liberty Plaza on West Third Street. The three-year lease for 9,172 square feet costs \$116,058.40 in the first year, \$119,554.72 in the second and \$123,126.36 in the third. The office should soon be moving from its current location at 8 West Third St.

*A commissioner participated remotely for the first time ever as Don Martin, who was attending a meeting in Denver, Colorado, called in over speaker phone. Martin listened and voted, but said that he had a hard time hearing and at times was unresponsive as he was checking into his hotel.

City loses longtime coach and mentor Hansel Hentz

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Thanksgiving took a turn for the worse last week for hundreds in the community as news surfaced last Thursday that longtime mentor Hansel Hentz, 73, had passed away following a brief illness.

Simply known as "Hentz" to those around the city, and as a hardwood guru, Hentz had a passion for basket-



Hentz

ball that was only matched by an even bigger passion to uplift the youth in the community.

A passion for teaching life lessons through the game of basketball is what propelled Hentz to legendary status here in Winston-Salem.

The founder of the popular summer basketball league at the 14th Street Recreation Center, for years Hentz inspired generations of young boys and girls to succeed on and off the court. In 2012, Hentz earned the Northwest YMCA Strong Award, which is awarded annually to adults who demonstrate exceptional volunteerism.

Hentz' daughter Precious Hentz made the announcement on Facebook that her father had passed. She wrote, "Today I lost my first best friend, my mentor, my backbone but, most of all my father."

Shortly afterward, dozens flocked to the social media site to give their condolences.

Will Miller wrote, "He was and still is a powerful man in the community."

Just a week before his death, a GoFund Me page was started to help pay for Hentz's medical bills. In less than two weeks, the campaign had raised over \$1,000.

As of Tuesday, Nov. 29, at press time, funeral arrangements were unknown.

Check back with The Chronicle next week for more on the life of Hansel Hentz, who inspired the community to shoot for the stars.

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