



Sheriff Bill Schatzman listens as Democratic challenger Bobby Kimbrough speaks during a forum held by the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, Oct. 17, at Forsyth Tech's West Campus.



County Commissioner candidates Keenen Altic, Ted Kaplan and A.L. "Buddy" Collins participate in a forum last week held by the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce.

Sheriff and County Commissioner candidates sound off

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Candidates for sheriff and county commissioners told voters why they deserve their vote during the final forum held last Wednesday by the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce at Forsyth Tech's West Campus.

The sheriff candidates were Sheriff Bill Schatzman and his Democratic challenger Bobby Kimbrough. Schatzman, who was first elected in 2002, said his department deals with cybercrime, identify theft, everyday crime and drug related offenses regularly. He emphasized the responsibility of parents, schools and churches in raising children to avoid a life of crime and not use drugs. He said the Sheriff's Office does outreach in the schools to encourage kids to stay on the straight and narrow.

"You can't arrest your way out of social ills," said Schatzman.

Kimbrough, a former DEA (Drug

Enforcement Administration) agent, said that the epidemic of opioid addiction, along with drugs and gangs in schools, are major issues in the county. He emphasized collaboration with other agencies, including putting local officers on federal task forces, which would allow the department to receive a percentage of asset forfeitures. He also said community relations were vital to the work of the Sheriff's Office.



"We've got to go back and strengthen our communities and recognize that we all have a say in this because it's our community," he said.

For At-Large County Commissioner, there was Democratic incumbent Ted Kaplan and challengers Republican A.L. "Buddy" Collins and Green Party Candidate Keenen Altic.

Kaplan said the county plays a vital role in economic growth by using incentives to attract and retain businesses. The county helps to educate and train the future workforce by funding public schools and Forsyth Technical Community College. He said Forsyth Tech will soon break ground on an Aviation Career Development Center at Smith Reynolds Airport, which is owned by the county. He said managing the county's growth is one of the commissioner's biggest challenges.

"Part of that is going to be new school facilities, which the county commissioners are involved in," said Kaplan. "Some of it's going to be in welfare issues, some of it is public health and mental health."

Collins said the county needs both a stable tax rate and steady tax base. He said it needs an educated, trained workforce that'll be attractive to companies that want to come to Forsyth County. He said schools need to be a priority and that there is no excuse for hungry children with

unmet medical needs in Forsyth County. A former state and local school board member, Collins criticized the county for relying on the quarter-cent sales tax referendum to fund teacher pay increases.

"To the extent that our teachers need supplement pay increases, that should be part of the budget from the get-go and not afterwards," he said.

Altic touched on numerous issues including affordable housing, education, a living wage and local eviction rates. He said working people need to be united so they can establish workplace democracy and democratic ownership of resources. He emphasized economic inequality in his remarks.

"There's not been a recovery for the working people since the capitalist crash of 2008 in which we bailed them out and the 99 percent didn't get bailed out," said Altic. "The wealthiest 1 percent now own more than the bottom 90 percent."

Adams vs Foxx

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On a question about encouraging innovation and investment, Adams evoked the City Council's role in the Innovation Quarter and other public-private partnerships that helped Winston-Salem transition from its dependence on the tobacco and manufacturing industries.

"Winston-Salem had to reinvent itself and I'm proud to say I had my fingerprints all over it for the past decade," she said.

Foxx agreed with Adams that the city and county have

done a "fantastic job" in transforming itself and that private-public partnerships are important, but felt that "at the core of that is freedom," including lower taxes and less regulation.

When asked about recent hurricanes, Adams said that climate change needs to be taken seriously. Foxx had a different view.

"We've had extreme weather events for a long time, they aren't exactly a recent phenomena and, again, we've coped with them over the years," she said. "I think because of the advent of 24-hour news and some other things, they seem to be a little worse recently."

Later in the debate, Foxx said she wasn't anti-environ-

ment or anti-regulation, and that it was unnecessary, duplicative regulations she opposed.

"I am one of the strongest environmentalist that I know," she said. "So I want people to have safe housing, safe water, safe food and to know their elected officials are doing everything that they can to make sure that the places they live are as safe as they can be."

The League of Conservation voters gave Foxx a 0 percent rating on her 2017 votes on environmental issues and gave her a 3 percent lifetime rating.



Malishai "Shai" Woodbury right, chats with Elizabeth Motsinger during the Meet and Greet on Sunday, Oct. 21.



Barbara Burke talks to citizens during the Meet and Greet on Sunday, Oct. 21.

Greet

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Woodbury, who currently works as a project coordinator for the Guilford County School System, has over 20 years of experience working in education and is a founding member of the Coalition for Equity in Public Education. A 1992 graduate of Carver High School, Woodbury said a point of emphasis for her will be having open lines of communication with the community.

She also discussed the

importance of having equitable schools

"One of my main points of reference is being connected to the community," she continued. "I believe all of the schools in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County need to be strong so all of our children and families can enjoy a great education and have a wonderful experience."

After Burke and Woodbury finished, Commissioner El-Amin took a moment to encourage those in attendance to vote "Yes" on the quarter-cent tax increase that is on the November ballot. El-

Amin explained that the increase would be used to increase teacher supplement pay across the district if the Board of Education approves.

Although it wasn't his intention, El-Amin's call to action sparked an unplanned question and answer session when a local teacher asked, "What money goes toward materials and books?"

She continued, "I'm asking because I've been a teacher for about 25 years now and the last time we purchased text books was about 12 years ago."

Eric Martin, who

worked for the local school system for more than 25 years before retiring, said the reason schools don't have textbooks is because WS/FCS decided not to buy books any more, instead choosing to use the funds from the state on other things.

"I'm the individual who purchased the books for over 25 years. The reason you don't have books in the classroom is because Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools chose not to purchase them," he continued. "... The money was allocated by the state, but when the money got here,

they decided they didn't need to spend that much on books."

As the only sitting school board member in attendance, Elizabeth Motsinger felt the need to speak up after Martin's comments. She said, "There is not enough state money coming in, and we are paying less per pupil than we were before the recession in 2006."

"Where money for text books went was to keep teacher assistants in classrooms when on the state level they cut out teacher assistant pay," said Motsinger. "... We chose

people. We chose not to have massive layoffs during a recession and letting people go that's where the money went."

Others topics that were discussed during the impromptu town hall was the current make-up of the Board of Education, and Ashley Elementary.

Although the meet and greet didn't go as planned, both Burke and Woodbury mentioned that the gathering is something they plan to do regularly to get a feel for what the residents in District 1 would like to see from the board.

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