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150 Attend Candidates' Forum

Commission Candidates Agree On County Manager Proposal

By ROBERT KOENIG

More than 150 voters attended an historic candidates meeting Monday night in Beech Glen. The meeting, sponsored by the Madison County League of Women Voters, allowed voters to question local candidates for county offices.

Candidates for the county commission, District I school board, sheriff, tax collector and clerk of court were invited to address the meeting. All the candidates except Clarence Cutshall, a Republican candidate for the county commission, attended Monday's meeting. Cutshall was reportedly ill and unable to attend.

Voters attending the forum were asked to submit written questions to the candidates on 3x5 index cards. Moderator Bruce Phillips posed the questions to the candidates. Most questions were addressed to the county commission and school board candidates.

Before answering the questions, the candidates were given one minute to introduce themselves and outline their positions.

Although the county commission candidates offered differing views on many issues, all six were in agreement that county commission meetings should be held during evening hours. Republican Bob Phillips of Mars Hill said, "Without some participation from the citizens, I don't see how it will be possible for three men to run county government." Phillips also called for conducting a series of county meetings in communities outside of Marshall to get residents' input.

The Republican and Democrat county commission candidates also agree on the need to hire a full-time county manager to oversee operation of local government. Democrat Bobby Capps of Mars Hill told the audience, "I don't think three county commissioners can do the job and the other jobs we have to do." Of the six candidates, only one, Bob Phillips, is retired.

Republican Clarence Faulkner also endorsed the county manager system, saying the manager should also serve as an industrial recruiter.

Attracting industry to Madison County was a theme both Republicans and Democrats sounded frequently during the Monday night meeting. Clarence Faulkner said, "Industry is the number one priority. I'm not for sure what the county can do, but whatever is allowed by state law, we should do it."

Bobby Capps linked industry with new school construction, saying, "Whatever it takes, we're going to have to do it. We need to work in every direction to get industry in here and the

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THE CANDIDATES MET at Beech Glen Community Center on Monday night. Questions were asked of all candidates present running for school board, county commission, sheriff's office, tax collector and clerk of court. Over 150 citizens attended the two hour meeting, sponsored by the Madison County League of Women Voters.

Evening Meeting Endorsed

By WILLIAM LEE

At the Beech Glen "Meet The Candidates" meeting Monday night the four school board candidates seeking election from District I were in agreement on many of the issues raised by the audience.

The four were in agreement when it came to hiring the best teachers available, getting more parents involved in the schools, keeping well-informed of education trends and the needs of Madison County schools, and the possibility of holding school board meetings at night.

All four, for example, said they would be in favor of a bond referendum to raise money for new schools if the people of Madison County wanted it. Democratic incumbent Gerald Young said the extra half-cent sales tax to be set aside for capital outlay funds should go far in assisting the school board in renovating the schools.

"Of the first half-cent county option, we were given the minimum 40 percent, which comes to about \$150,000 per year," said Young. "The extra half-cent given to the counties in June, the county commission has graciously allocated it all to the schools. That amounts to another \$377,000 per year."

Next to renovations to the schools themselves, the candidates were somewhat divided as to the next greatest needs for the county. While incumbents Gerald Young and Franklin Anderson felt gaining accreditation for the schools was a top priority, Republican challengers Ed Krause and Joseph Godwin were adamant in their demand that the school system be free of political interference.

"We need to hire teachers on the basis of their abilities and not because of who they are, or how they vote," said Godwin.

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School Enrollment Declines

By WILLIAM LEE

Once again school enrollment in Madison County has declined, according to the ten-day enrollment figures released by the State Department of Education.

According to the new figures, Madison County has a total enrollment of 2,754 students, down from the end of last year when enrollment was 2,849. The ten-day figures are of importance because an increase enrollment could have gained teachers for Madison County. Teacher allotments are based on state estimates from last year, and adjusted by actual attendance at the beginning of the year.

Bobby Jean Rice, general supervisor for Madison County schools, says her own reports for the first full month show that attendance has since gone up to 2,776, but as yet have not been reflected in the state's compiled figures.

"Usually after Labor Day our attendance goes up," said Dr. Rice. "That trend, plus the new basic education program, probably means

we will hold to the same level of teacher allotment."

According to Dr. Rice, the best three of the first four state attendance reports are used to adjust teacher allotments.

"It's part of a trend that has plagued our schools for a number of years," said Superintendent Robert L. Edwards. "We educate them, but they are forced to go elsewhere to find the jobs."

"We're going to keep losing students until we have jobs in this county to keep the people here," added school board chairman Bobby Ponder. "We are losing our youth."

"I certainly don't claim to have all the answers," Ponder continued. "All I know is that unless we can draw industry to this county, our attendance figures are going to continue this downward spiral."

Ponder said the closing of Melville Shoe factory in Hot Springs two years ago drastically cut into enrollment at Hot Springs Elementary School. The school has been further decimated by

layoffs at Banner House, Hot Springs' other large employer. At the other end of the county, Mars Hill's two industries, Micro-Switch and Shadowline, have both had large layoffs over the past few years.

"We're willing to do anything to help," said Ponder. "We've given room to A-B Tech for vocational training programs that would give our people the skills industry is looking for when considering location. We haven't seen the results of their or our efforts as yet."

"It is our duty as educators to give our students the knowledge and skills that they need in the world today," said Edwards. "The shame of it is that they have to go elsewhere to find the jobs that pay for that education they got here."

Current enrollment figures, by schools, are as follows: Madison High, 821; Mars Hill 770; Marshall School, 307; Marshall Primary 221; Laurel School, 193; Walnut School, 173; Hot Springs, 169; and Spring Creek School 100.

Krause Calls For Edwards To Resign

By ROBERT KOENIG

Republican school board candidate Ed Krause of Mars Hill announced this week that he would seek removal of Madison County School Superintendent Robert L. Edwards and school board attorney Larry Leake if he is elected in the Nov. 4 election. Krause is seeking one of two District I seats in the local election.

Rumors of Krause's plans to depose the school officials had been circulating for several weeks. The Mars Hill attorney addressed the rumors in a press release made public last Friday.

In his statement, Krause denies that he would break or contest Edwards' contract with the school board. The school superintendent's present contract expires in June, 1989. It was approved in Dec., 1984 by board members Gerald Young, Dedrick Cody, Ed Gentry, R.Z. Ponder and Floyd Wallin. Cody has since left the board and been replaced by Franklin Anderson.

Although he would not break the contract, Krause goes on to state, "I will request Mr. Edwards' resignation and I would like to consider other people for the job." The release did not name prospective candidates for the post.

Krause pledged that he would try to work with Edwards "for the good of our schools," but also warned that he would seek to have Edwards removed from his position if the school superintendent "does not follow the board's rules and regulations, or his duties."

Krause also called for the replacement of Larry Leake as the school board attorney, while praising Leake's ability as a lawyer. Pointing out that Leake also served as the county attorney, Krause said the recent controversy regarding the Board of Education courthouse offices would have been resolved sooner if the commissioners and school board had different attorneys. Krause is a civil attorney, but would be ineligible to serve as school board counsel if elected.

Krause's press release also called for hiring teachers based upon academic qualifications and away from political considerations. "I am opposed to the hiring process in the county," Krause stated. "Madison



Ed Krause

County schools have many fine teachers, but there are people who should not be there because of bad hiring practices in the past." The release did not reveal specific examples of teachers hired because of political considerations.

Krause also said he supports increased parental participation in the schools and called on the school board to reduce the number of executive sessions conducted during public meetings. Krause also called for holding school board meetings during evening hours. The present board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m.

Krause contends that voters should remove Democrat Gerald Young and the other school board members for extending Edwards' contract beyond their present term of elective office. "It may have been legal for them to

do this," Krause contends, adding, "but it was not fair."

The Republican challenger said, "I do not want a superintendent that will always agree with me, but that person must be in total agreement with my general policies and be faithful and have confidence in me."

Krause said he believes that many county school teachers are afraid to voice their opinions to the administration of the school system. "I also believe that they lack the freedom to participate in our two-party political system as allowed by law because of the administration," Krause said. "Most of the teachers and staff are registered Democrats and are expected to participate in party functions. In fact, many serve as Democratic election precinct officials."

Community Calendar

Monday Is Registration Deadline

Monday, October 6 is the final day for Madison County residents to register to vote in the November 4 general election. The Madison County Board of Elections office on Main Street in Marshall will be open on Saturday, Oct. 4 and Monday, Oct. 6 to register county residents. Teenagers who will be 18 years old by November 4 are eligible to register for the election.

For more information, contact the Madison County Board of Elections at 649-3731.

Candidates Forum Monday Night

The Madison County League of Women Voters will sponsor a second Candidates' Forum on Monday, October 6 at 7 p.m. in the Little Theatre of Madison H.S. A Community Calendar announcement in last week's edition incorrectly reported that the meeting would be held on Oct. 5. The News Record regrets this error.

Clarke Campaigns Hot Springs

James McClure Clarke will be at the Lippard House on Walnut St. in Hot Springs on Oct. 6 from 9:30 until 11 a.m. The public is invited to attend.

Hendon, Broyhill Attend Barbeque

Rep. Bill Hendon and Sen. Jim Broyhill will be honored during a family barbeque hosted by Gov. Jim Martin on Oct. 4 in the Asheville Civic Center from 6 until 8:30 p.m. Admission to the barbeque is free and open to the public.

Democratic Women To Meet

Host Poor Man's Supper Oct. 11

The Madison County Democratic Women's Club will meet at 7 p.m. on Oct. 7 in the Western Steak House in Mars Hill. The club will also sponsor a poor man's supper on Oct. 11 at Madison High School.

Candidates Divided Over Edwards

By WILLIAM LEE

As might be expected, not all the candidates for the Madison County Board of Education are in agreement with Ed Krause's recent statements toward removing Superintendent Bobby Edwards.

Neither Franklin Anderson or Gerald Young, the Democrat incumbents from District I, were in favor of such measures. And, while Dr. Joseph Godwin and James Baker expressed a desire to have Edwards retire after the election, neither wanted to replace him if they are forced to honor his contract through 1989.

"I would like to see us reach a mutual release of that contract," said Baker, a Republican candidate in District II. "Then I'd consider him for reappointment along with the other applicants for the job."

"I think Edwards is well aware of the inexperience of his contract, and should resign," added Godwin, a Republican candidate along with Krause in District I. "However, I don't see the wisdom in paying him a salary for a contract that is not his. It seems to me legally sound to find a way to get rid of him."

Edwards' contract was renewed in 1985 for another four years. According to Young, Edwards' contract has always been renegotiated the year before elections.

"I've lived with it and I think anyone else can live it for these last three years of Edwards' term," said Young.

Edwards has expressed a desire to retire at the conclusion of this term, but has indicated he would not resign. "Unless we break his contract, Edwards is our superintendent for the next three years," said Anderson, an appointee to the board last year. "I do not think that's a good idea. It would be a mistake."

Anderson and Young were also opposed to Krause's suggestion that Larry Leake resign as attorney to the Board of Education. Leake also serves as attorney to the Board of County Commissioners. Krause has accused Leake's serving on both as a "conflict of interest."

"Having Larry serve both of us has helped more than hindered," said Anderson. "I haven't seen any conflict of interest. He's been doing a good job of representing both sides."

"But Mr. Leake's services have proven invaluable as a go-between for us and the county commissioners."

Both Baker and Godwin, however, felt such dual service was in itself a conflict of interest on Leake's part, and he should remove himself from serving one or the other.

"There's no doubt in my mind that some negotiations have not gone as well as they might because Leake has tried to serve the best interest of both. It can't always be done," said Godwin.

The issue of politics in the hiring and firing process in the schools has also been raised by Krause, as it has by Godwin as well. Both candidates contend that teachers are afraid to speak out for fear of losing their jobs. Others are not afraid strictly because of party affiliation, Krause has said.

"We need our schools' management from political interference," Krause said. "No amount of money or school improvements will be satisfactory toward education until parents have control over the schools and the state."

"There's a lot of politics in the schools," Krause said. "We need to get rid of it. We need to get rid of the politics in the schools."