

1. Why are you running for county commission and why do you think you are the best candidate?

I am running to continue to serve the people of Guilford County. My father is a pastor, retired Air Force senior officer, farmer, and business owner. My mother is a retired public school teacher with over 40 years of experience. My parents instilled in me the importance of service to one's community and family. Because of the example they set for me, I have always sought to be involved in whatever community I have lived.

As will be highlighted throughout the responses in this document, I have been incredibly involved in the community since moving to Guilford County in 2008. I have been involved due to the passion I have to make our community the best that it possibly can be in every facet imaginable. I fully ascribe to the servant-leader model, where the goal of the leader is to serve the people. In many cases, I have worked behind the scenes or on causes that received no publicity. My goal has been to accomplish results, not simply to receive public credit.

My four primary areas of focus that I want to continue to work on are:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Economic Development
3. Education
4. Health and Human Services

In addition to my passion as a servant-leader, I have the professional experience, local government experience, and community involvement to best represent the District as detailed more fully in my response to Question #2.

2. How are you different than your opponent(s)?

In addition to being the incumbent, I have the community involvement, professional experience, and local government experience to be the best choice to continue to represent all of District 7.

1. Community Service: My diverse service to the community across a variety of organizations and community efforts has provided me with a deeper understanding of our entire community and provides a major distinction in this race. This perspective has allowed and will continue to allow me to effectively communicate across various communities which is necessary in a District that is as diverse as District 7. Organizations in which I have served on the board or volunteered include the following: Greensboro Branch NAACP, Piedmont Land Conservancy, Gateway Research Park, Preservation Greensboro, United Way African American Leadership, Triad Goodwill, Guilford County Association of Black Lawyers, Triad Stage, Greensboro Sports Council, Bell House, Black Investments in Greensboro (BIG) Equity Fund, and Elsewhere. I have also mentored numerous students at Page High School (Team Voyage), NC A&T and Elon Law.

2. **Professional Experience:** I will be able to continue to leverage my experience as an attorney and in business to represent and advocate for the constituents of District 7.

3. **Local Government Experience:** First, I am the current County Commissioner for District 7. Second, my prior service on six (6) local government appointed boards and graduation from Greensboro City Academy has already allowed me to immediately play a critical role in important discussions facing our County in my short time in office. Finally, in private practice, I regularly worked with municipal governments on behalf of individuals and small businesses, and I understand how County governments work. This understanding has allowed and will continue to allow me to have meaningful impacts.

3. **Community Service:** My diverse service to the community across a variety of organizations and community efforts has provided me with a deeper understanding of our entire community and provides the greatest distinction in this race. This perspective has allowed and will continue to allow me to effectively communicate across various communities. Organizations in which I have served on the board or volunteered include the following: Greensboro Branch NAACP, Piedmont Land Conservancy, Gateway Research Park, Preservation Greensboro, United Way African American Leadership, Triad Goodwill, Guilford County Association of Black Lawyers, Triad Stage, Greensboro Sports Council, Bell House, Black Investments in Greensboro (BIG) Equity Fund, and Elsewhere. I have also mentored numerous students at Page High School (Team Voyage), NC A&T and Elon Law. I am a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, which has included men such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Thurgood Marshall and has a significant focus on service.

3. If you are an incumbent, what are some of your proudest achievements as a commissioner?

I was selected in March to fill the unexpired term of Commissioner Carolyn Coleman. I was honored to subsequently win the three-candidate Democratic primary with almost 60% of the vote. My proudest achievements in my short time include: (1) successfully advocating for the passage of the school bonds along with other Commissioners including attending school tours, advocating in the community, and passing school bond materials out at the polls; (2) co-hosting a property tax town hall in Southeast Greensboro with the Southeast Greensboro Coalition, Guilford County Tax Department, and Greensboro City Councilmembers Sharon Hightower and Hugh Holston; (3) working with my fellow County Commissioners to effectively allocate millions of dollars in ARPA funds, including critical water and sewer infrastructure and funds for the Windsor-Chavis-Nocho Community Complex in East Greensboro; (4) passing a budget which included increases in pay for educators; (5) securing the County's participation in Southeast Greensboro Community Day where the community learned about important county services; and (6) spending significant time meeting and mentoring the youth in custody at the Juvenile Detention Center and participating in the graduation ceremonies at the Juvenile Detention Center this year.

4. What is your current occupation and how does that job experience translate to working as a county commissioner?

Currently I am a Vice President in the Investments Department at Lincoln Financial. I am also a licensed attorney with 14 years of experience.

- a. As an attorney, I have significant experience in advocating for others. This experience translates into my ability to effectively advocate for the needs of the community. To be an effective advocate, one must work with people and not just for people. Due to my background and training, I will be able to continue to work with constituents to discuss concerns and then help to identify actionable items that then can turn into substantive actions. I have demonstrated this through the successes referenced above – from participating in community forums to conversing with local activists to engaging with mental health advocates to meeting with leadership of the City of Greensboro, Town of Pleasant Garden, GTCC and Cone Health. I am committed to representing all the people of District 7.
- b. I will be able to use my business experience in furtherance of economic development. As an officer in a large corporation, I have firsthand insight into the power of strong partnerships and smart investments to break down barriers and improve communities. Additionally, my wife’s family owns a small business in East Greensboro, which has given me direct insight into the needs of our small business community. When I was in private practice, I represented many small and large businesses, including entrepreneurs, on a variety of issues, such as formation and MWBE certifications. This combination of large business and small business experience will allow me to be an important voice in our economic development efforts and ensuring inclusivity in local government contracting.

5. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges Guilford County faces currently and what would you do to address those concerns?

**Four of the biggest challenges our County is currently facing are:**

1. **Affordable Housing:** We need to ensure that our County has housing that is affordable. Safe and affordable housing is critical to the overall health of our community. This includes exploring options looking at a diversity of housing options and working with communities and developers to identify solutions. One potential solution is to ensure that we have more streamlined and consistent property permitting regulations across the entire Piedmont Triad Region. This will help cut down on the administrative costs of development which could then be passed to the buyer in the form of lower housing prices.
2. **Economic Development:** We need to support economic development in our community which involves focusing on retaining and attracting high-paying jobs from current and prospective. One area we need to address is infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, etc.). Specifically, we need to invest in infrastructure in areas of the County that are undeveloped or underdeveloped which will allow for greater economic development across our entire County. Enhanced economic development will provide additional revenue to the County which will help control property tax rates.
3. **Health:** Our community is currently performing poorly with respect to several key health indicators including infant mortality and hypertension, especially in communities of color. We need to increase access to quality health care through strategic partnerships with our local health providers. One potential solution is

working with local health networks to support the creation of additional mobile units that can go to communities to deliver health services.

4. **Education: We need to continue to support the multi-year plan to raise teacher salary supplements to make sure we are compensating those who are educating the future generations of our county. We also must continue to remain competitive with principal and assistant principal supplements to attract and retain top talent in our school system. Finally, we must continue to focus on funding annual capital maintenance to protect the significant investments we are making in our schools**

6. A lot of the county commission's job is working with the county budget. What experience do you have with working with large budgets?

**I worked on and supported the budget passed earlier this year. We had several multi-hour work sessions, and I was proud to be one of the Commissioners who attended every session. Additionally, I have worked with balancing large budgets in both my professional and volunteer capacities and in making the tough decisions necessary for good fiscal health and for investing in opportunities. Professionally, I work with both project specific budgets and our department's annual budget. Specifically, I review and approve project budgets for over 100 multi-million dollar transactions every year.**

**I was a member of the Advisory Committee for the 2020/21 Greensboro/Guilford County Financial Capacity Study which took a comprehensive, by-the numbers look at the status of Greensboro and Guilford County and offered several recommendations. As a Greensboro ABC Board member, I participated in the annual budget process for the board's significant multi-million dollar budget every year for 7 years. From a volunteer-perspective, I have sat on numerous boards where the responsibilities include balancing the annual budget, some of which had very significant budgets.**

7. A lot of the work that the county has been working on is spending ARPA and other Covid-19 funding. How is that going and how have you worked with the board to facilitate that process?

**The County received \$104M in ARPA funding which we must allocate by December 2024 and which funds must be spent by December 2026. Thus far, we have been incredibly busy with several public work sessions each month focused on hearing the details around the various requests and then beginning to allocate funds. We prioritized the municipality requests which included funds for water and sewer infrastructure and the Windsor-Chavis Nocho community complex. We recently heard requests from several nonprofits and will begin evaluating those requests as well. The board has worked hard to evaluate the requests and I have been impressed with the engagement and thoughtfulness throughout the process.**

8. What things should the county be spending more money on? Spending less money on?

1. **Our community is currently performing poorly with respect to several key health indicators including infant mortality and hypertension. We need to continue to dedicate**

funds to increasing access to quality health care through strategic partnerships with our local health providers.

2. We need to continue to support more resources for mental health services. We need to focus attention on diverting people from non-emergency visits to the emergency room and getting them the help that they truly need. Visits to the emergency room are incredibly expensive for all parties involved. By focusing on mental health alternatives and supporting preventative care options, we can save the money spent on the use of emergency services which could better be addressed in other ways.

3. We need to ensure that our County has housing that is affordable. This includes exploring options looking at a diversity of housing options and working with communities and developers to identify solutions, including continuing to fund the necessary infrastructure in undeveloped or underdeveloped portions of the County.

4. We need to continue to focus on attracting high-paying jobs to our County. We have thousands of talented high school, community college, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students graduating in our community every single year. We need to make sure that we have jobs available that will provide them the opportunity to stay in this County and contribute to our future.

5. We need to continue to support the multi-year plan to raise teacher salary supplements to make sure we are compensating those who are educating the future generations of our county; We must continue to remain competitive with principal and assistant principal supplements to attract and retain top talent in our school system; and We must continue to focus on funding annual capital maintenance to protect the significant investments we are making in our schools

9. Since the events of 2020, many in the country are calling for police reform and even defunding of law enforcement agencies. What are your thoughts on these stances?

I support identifying ways to make sure all our investments have the best outcomes for our community, including law enforcement and other public safety departments.

1. We need to focus on both prevention and enforcement. For example, our county needs to strengthen support for supplementing traditional law enforcement positions with mental health personnel both in the community and inside of our detention centers.

2. Additionally, we need to support community policing models which emphasize the importance of relationships between the community and law enforcement.

3. We also need to enhance resources to supplement traditional law enforcement with programs and support for organizations that focus on community building and crime prevention/reduction in Guilford County.

4. Finally, we need to continue to focus on the recruitment, training and retention of law enforcement officers who are reflective of the diversity of this County and ensure that all

**our county employees, including our law enforcement officers, are adequately compensated.**

10. As reported recently, Greensboro saw a huge increase in rent prices for one-bedroom apartments over the last year. If re-elected, how would you work to provide affordable housing to people in the county?

**Addressing affordable housing is a challenge facing our entire country, and Guilford County is no exception. First, enhanced collaboration on affordable housing with representatives from key stakeholders including government, landlords, tenants, communities, affordable housing developers, and industry experts, is critical. There are best practices that have been implemented in other communities, including incentives, tax credits, and grants, that must be considered here. Second, I would continue to support investment in infrastructure. We have already allocated a significant portion of the ARPA funding for water and sewer infrastructure in many of the municipalities in Guilford County that do not currently have water and sewer. More densely populated property types require water and sewer as the demands are too great for well and septic. The availability of water and sewer in more portions of the County will allow for greater density and a greater diversity of housing options, including apartments. Increasing the supply will help to control prices in the face of a growing county and increased demand. Finally, I am committed to working with our Planning Department to address how government regulations are impacting the rent prices, including permitting, inspections, etc.**

11. Anything else you'd like to mention?

**This is a pivotal moment in our County where we are experiencing renewed energy around economic development with several big announcements over the last few months. These announcements will lead to significant opportunities that will allow us to attract and retain a highly paid workforce. We must also make certain that we help the most vulnerable persons in our community and provide opportunities to succeed. This includes investments in health and human services, education, and affordable housing. We must serve all facets of our community and I look forward to continuing to work with my fellow County Commissioners to continue to advance Guilford County.**