



# FIRST TUESDAY

— Amplifying conservative voices. —

## Another Wake-up Call Monthly Newsletter

Issue 44A | January 20, 2024



### Asheville's public safety reality is stuck on broken...

Jan. 7 - Dr. Carl Mumpower (NCTruth.com)

It's been roughly three years since Asheville's City Council unilaterally destroyed public safety in WNC's central city.

We make that observation for three distinct reasons—

- 1) This elected body effectively controls the funding and operating philosophy of Asheville's police department by hiring and indirectly controlling the city's chief administrator who, in turn, controls our police chief and thus the morale of our officers.
- 2) This elected body (homogeneously comprised of seven females each of whom has a voting record that definitively would be described as liberal and reflective of the platform, policies, and practices of today's Democratic Party) has a long history of antagonism toward Asheville's public safety agency while being permissive, selective and inconsistent in the enforcement of city, state, and federal law.
- 3) This elected body, during a time of public discord and protest, indulged a series of activities that evolved into large group riots characterized by violence, abuse of public property, vandalism of private property, takeover of public streets and highways, and other forms of illegal

see Broken on page 2

### Buncombe Schools Redistricting Plan

In the dynamic and often contentious arena of Buncombe County's school board redistricting, the situation is as complex as it is critical. Central to this debate is the issue of fair representation. Our current at-large voting system for school board members allows every county voter to vote for representatives of each district. It's a stark contrast to how we elect our County Commissioners, where, for example, voters in Commissioner District 1 have no say in whether Terri Wells gets re-elected in District 2. Each district votes independently for its representative. The current approach to electing School Board members is akin to playing a basketball game where one team has all the players – a setup that leaves conservative voices struggling to be heard.

Having our values and perspectives adequately represented becomes daunting when the majority leans in a different direction. The result is a school board that may not fully align with or even understand the concerns of conservative constituents.

On January 11, the Buncombe County Schools Board, perhaps grudgingly, convened to mull over redistricting options. This was in response to HOUSE BILL 66 (Boards of Education Elections), which aims to reshape the current electoral process. Consultants laid out three draft options, each considering factors like high school enrollment districts, incumbent placements, and "communities of interest".

Amidst this, Amy Churchill, Vice-Chair and Roberson District Representative, has emerged as a controversial figure. Far from being the conservative torchbearer, she's faced criticism from local Republicans for her vocal opposition to HB66, referring to it as a "partisan" bill. Her support for student masking during the pandemic, perceived endorsement of CRT-

see Redistricting on page 3

"In a democracy, the power to make a difference lies with the people. Don't underestimate the impact of your voice and your vote."

- Ronald Reagan



### How Your Vote Impacts the Future

In the upcoming March 5 primary elections in North Carolina, your vote carries significant weight in shaping the future of local politics. Here's why it's crucial to get involved:

- Unaffiliated Voters: North Carolina allows unaffiliated voters to choose which primary to participate in. This means that individuals who may lean towards Democratic candidates could potentially vote in the Republican primary.
- Strategic Voting: It's well-known that some unaffiliated voters strategically participate in the Republican primary to influence the outcome. They may support a candidate they perceive as less threatening to Democrats, hoping that candidate will advance to the general election in November.

#### Why Does This Matter?

Impact on Republican Candidates: Strategic voting by unaffiliated voters can influence which Republican candidate secures the nomination. This, in turn, affects the party's chances in the general election.

Representation: Your vote in the primary helps determine who represents the conservative values you support. Ensuring that candidates aligned with your beliefs

see Primary Importance on page 3

# Covid Relief Funds Left Unspent

In Buncombe County, an intriguing situation is unfolding – unspent COVID relief funds totaling over \$400,000 have been left untouched. This issue is significant for conservatives and even non-conservative taxpayers alike, raising questions about fiscal responsibility and prudent financial management. Furthermore, the absence of an agenda item for a required public hearing and a vote to close the program at the January 16 regular meeting has ignited concerns. Is there a rush to find some way to extend the deadline (June 2023) and discover some way to spend this money without clear and prudent planning?



## The Unspent Funds Challenge

In August 2021, Buncombe County received \$900,000 in funds through HUD's CDBG Coronavirus Program, a part of the CARES Act. A portion of these funds was used to assist those impacted by the pandemic with mortgage and utility aid.

However, today, an unencumbered balance of \$404,212 remained at the program's conclusion in June 2023. Stoney Blevins (the county's Health & Human Services director), his staff, and County Manager Avril Pinder have recommended closing the CDBG Coronavirus grant program. Commissioner Terri Wells asked during the January 2 regular meeting, "Is there any way that they would allow us to continue with it since there was that delay in them getting the funds to us?"

Blevins responded, "We actually explored that with them, and they were somewhat open to that. The challenge that we'll see at this point is the grant is so COVID-specific that we would have to tie assistance back to being caused by the pandemic. And at this point, we're so far removed from the public health emergency's end that we believe it will be almost impossible to find that tie back at this point in time."

Wells lamented, "It's just such a shame when there's that money that feels like we could have put to good use somehow to help the community."

## The Conservative Perspective on Fiscal Responsibility

As a conservative, I hold a deep-seated belief in responsible fiscal management, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent judiciously. When unspent funds come to the forefront, it's imperative to consider the ramifications of hasty spending decisions.

### A Desperation for Spending?

The absence of an agenda item for a public hearing and vote on the program closure at the January 16 meeting raises questions. Is there an urgency to expend these funds without a comprehensive plan? Are our elected representatives hastily searching for ways to use these funds, potentially overlooking the best interests of taxpayers? Didn't they understand that the grant period ended over six months ago?

Update: First Tuesday emailed the commissioners about this topic. Terri Wells replied that the public hearing has been scheduled for February 6.

### A Cautionary Note for Taxpayers

Vigilance is key for conservatives regarding government spending. Unspent funds should not be seen as an opportunity for unchecked spending.

### Transparency and Accountability

Conservatives ardently champion transparency and accountability in governmental actions. Taxpayers must have a crystal-clear understanding of how their money is utilized, with decisions made in their best interests.

The dialogue in Buncombe County underscores that fiscal responsibility is a collective endeavor. It commences at the local level but resonates nationally.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Broken

from Page 1

activity. Simultaneously, this elected body threatened our police force with legal action, criticized their performance with arbitrary and presumptive accusations and commentary, and otherwise created a political climate that antagonized and undermined the security and enthusiasm of our community's primary public safety agency.

The results landed on a mass exodus of existing officers and an on-going serious

impairment of APD's ability to recruit new trainees. This echo has endured far longer than the broken windows, painted streets, and enthusiasm of those who participated in our community's series of politically/socially/personally (it's a great way to act out one's anger, break things, and clinch a date) motivated riots.

Most of the Asheville council members – including the Mayor – who pulled the plug on APD are still around. So are the consequences.

Most liberally governed cities in America have suffered a severe loss of police officers in recent years – few can approach the impact experienced in Asheville. On an average day in 2023, our police patrol presence is about half of what it was before APD's mission was assassinated by our elected officials and the frivolity of a large number of area residents with a strong attachment to enthusiasm and an indifference to the law of unintended consequence.

The result is that many crimes are ignored for a lack of manpower and broad officer hesitancy. Crimes are routinely unreported and our drug culture and the lawless have been unleashed.

Predictably, our politicians and supportive media outlets are blaming demographics, money, and "our city's unique character and diversity" for a worsening public safety reality. We see all of these as decoy issues.

The truth can be narrowed down to on or about the time our police chief, city administrators, and elected officials knelt down – literally and figuratively – in the face of the shrill claims, accusations, and demands of the BLM movement and other social change bodies enamored with the idea of no enforcement of the law over the more challenging mission of good enforcement of the law.

The boards are still up on Asheville's shattered public safety widow – and will be so for a long time to come...

\*\*\*\*\*

First Tuesday Conservatives – Asheville, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt advocacy organization under Section 501(c)4 of the IRC. Contributions or gifts to First Tuesday are not tax-deductible for IRS purposes.

<https://secure.anedot.com/first-tuesday-conservatives-asheville-inc/>

## Primary Importance

from Page 1

make it to the general election is essential.

Protecting Conservative Values: By participating in the primary, you contribute to selecting candidates who can effectively represent and uphold conservative principles at the local level.

### **The Bottom Line:**

Don't underestimate the significance of the March 5 primary elections. Encourage fellow conservatives in your area to vote and be aware of the potential influence of unaffiliated voters. Together, we can ensure that candidates who genuinely represent our values have a better chance of success.

## **Early Primary Voting Begins Thursday, February 15**

Consider using an absentee ballot if you want to avoid the polling sites.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Redistricting

from Page 1

influenced education, and campaigning against Republican candidates have ruffled more than a few feathers over the years. It seems she's dancing to a different tune, leaving conservatives questioning which band she's marching with.



The consultants' presentation can be found in the "Archived Agendas" section of the school board's web pages for those interested in the nitty-gritty details. The Board has also scheduled an open session on February 15 to present the redistricting maps for public viewing and comment. They've pledged to take public input seriously, and we'll be watching closely to ensure this promise isn't as fleeting as a politician's memory. \*\*\*\*\*

# Help Wanted: Volunteer Website Maintenance & Security Specialist

## **Help us secure and Innovate First Tuesday – Asheville's Digital Presence!**

First Tuesday is seeking a volunteer with a blend of technical skills to assist with the migration, redesign, and security enhancement of our WordPress site. This role is critical in ensuring a safe, engaging, and efficient online experience for our community members. If you have a passion for conservative causes, a knack for website development, and a keen understanding of security best practices, we need your expertise!

### **Key Responsibilities:**

Migration: Seamlessly migrate our current WordPress site from Blue Host to GoDaddy, maintaining data integrity and minimizing downtime.

Design Innovation: Implement a fresh theme and design to captivate and engage visitors, reflecting our conservative values.

Plugin and Performance Optimization: Evaluate and optimize plugins to improve site response times and functionality. Propose and implement cutting-edge solutions.

AI Integration: Explore and integrate AI functionalities like advanced search and chatbots to provide a sophisticated user experience.

Security Evaluation and Enhancement: Conduct a comprehensive security audit of the current site, identify vulnerabilities, and implement robust security measures to protect against threats.

### **We Offer:**

- An opportunity to significantly impact a growing conservative community online.
- A chance to apply and expand your skills in a meaningful project.
- Flexible volunteer hours tailored to your schedule.

### **Qualifications:**

- Experience with WordPress site management, including migrations, design, and plugin optimization.
- Knowledge of web hosting environments, especially Blue Host and

GoDaddy.

- Understanding of website security principles, including experience conducting site audits and implementing security enhancements.
- Interest or experience in AI for website improvement.
- Strong problem-solving skills and a detail-oriented mindset.

### **How to Apply or Inquire:**

Voice Mail: Reach us at 828/348-4180. Please leave your full name, contact details, and the best times to return your call.

Email: Send your application or questions to jimcowmia@firsttuescons.com. Highlight your experience with website security, AI integration, and any previous work with WordPress sites.

US Postal Service: Mail to First Tuesday – Asheville, 4 Long Shoals Rd., Suite B459, Arden, NC 28704.

**We hope to hear from you soon!**

# Help Wanted in Precinct 54-2: Multiple Needs

We need help reinvigorating Precinct 54-2 in honor of its previous Precinct Chair, Betty Budd - may she rest in peace. The precinct's polling location is:

Lutheran Church of the Nativity  
2425 HENDERSONVILLE RD  
ARDEN, NC 28704

We need enthusiastic and energetic people to assist or lead efforts in this precinct to educate voters, encourage voting, assist voters who want absentee ballots. Roles include:

- Neighborhood Captains
- Door Knockers
- Phone Callers
- FaceBook Page Administrator
- Social Activities Manager

Apply or inquire using any of the same means detailed above for the website job.

Buncombe County is composed of 80 precincts - All of which could likely use your energy. For these other precincts, contact the Buncombe County GOP Headquarters office:

18 G Regent Park Blvd, Asheville  
info@buncombegop.com  
828-253-5800

# Transparency Needed: Buncombe County Salaries

Upon reviewing the agenda for the January 2nd Buncombe County Commissioners meeting, a particular item stood out: "Consideration of Board of Elections Director Compensation". I hoped to see fiscal efficiency commendations, enhanced voter services, or increased election integrity. Instead, the proposal suggested a salary increase for the director simply because she has remained in position, a rationale seemingly devoid of performance metrics. This approach to managing public resources surely merits scrutiny.

Sharon Burke, Buncombe County HR Director, cited a comparative salary review and noted the county's lack of a performance-based compensation program. Yet, the reported and proposed salaries differ significantly, indicating a lack of clarity and accountability in these financial decisions.

We must understand and challenge the processes behind such significant financial decisions. Why is there no performance-based justification for Buncombe County salary increases? This policy needs some open discussion. Is this something resulting from a DEI initiative?

A transparent and rigorous approach is necessary to ensure salary adjustments are rightfully earned and clearly explained. Nevertheless, Commissioner Whitesides (District 1) was tired of discussing this topic and moved to approve the \$115,000 salary - "...we aren't talking about a lot of money. I think let's go ahead and approve it and move on." Jasmine Beach-Ferrara (District 2) seconded, and the Commissioners voted unanimously to grant the meritless pay raise during their January 16 meeting. Meritless salary increases are no big deal to these stewards of public funds.

Your engagement is crucial in shaping a more accountable and efficient local government. Speak to your representatives and Encourage the adoption of a performance-based pay structure.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Our Mission

First Tuesday is a conservative advocacy organization that amplifies the voices of Buncombe County conservatives through public events, social media, and other channels. We believe that all voices deserve to be heard, and we strive to give conservatives a platform to share their perspectives.

## Our Vision

We envision a community of active and vocal WNC conservatives who are informed about the issues affecting our quality of life and who are willing to use their voices to influence the government, business, and media in a way that promotes conservative values.

## Our Beliefs

- We believe that conservative values are essential to a healthy society, and we promote those values through our actions and our words.
- We believe that conservatives have a unique perspective to offer on a wide range of issues, and we share that perspective with the public.
- We believe diversity of voices is essential to a healthy democracy, and we promote that diversity.
- We believe that we can make a difference in the world by working together.

## Visit us on the web:

<https://www.FirstTuesCons.com>

- Calls to Action
- Citizen Resources
- Local Government Activities News
- Local Govt Committees Information
- Newsletter Archives

## Follow us on Social Media:

### Twitter:

@AshevilleFirst

### Instagram:

First.Tuesday.Asheville

### Facebook:

FirstTuesday

**First Tuesday Conservatives - Asheville, Inc.**

**4 Long Shoals Rd., Ste B459**

**Arden, NC 28704**

**828/348-4180**

## Check Your Voter information



**Snap the QR code (or browse to the url below) to be taken to the NC State Board of Elections Voter Registration site.**

Ensure that your registration status reflects "Active"

Do you know your jurisdictions? That information is also available at the voter registration site.

- Precinct Number and voting location.
- Congressional District
- NC Senate District
- NC House Districts
- County Commissioner District
- School District.

Confirm you are registered for your current address.

<https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/>

## Absentee Voting is Easy!

If voting in person at early voting locations is just not gonna happen...we implore you to vote via the absentee voting process. Any registered voter is able to make use of this easy and convenient method of voting.

You must request your absentee ballot by 5:00 PM on February 25:

You can find an Absentee Ballot Request Form on the Election Services website or by visiting their office at 59 Woodfin Place in Asheville. You can also call 828-250-4200, and they will mail one to you.

Instructions for completing and returning the ballot will be sent to you in the same envelope as the ballot.