

**Watauga County Republicans held their annual meeting this past weekend and, with the memory of recent defeat fresh in their minds, elected a new slate of officers and shaped a new strategy.**

The group unanimously voted ASU history professor Jim Goff as chairman and former Watauga County Commissioner David Blust as Vice Chair. Jan Woods was elected Secretary-Treasurer and Toby Oliver elected Deputy Secretary Treasurer. The party also presented outgoing chair Denny Norris with an excellence in leadership award. On strategy, the Republicans passed three resolutions to serve as keystones for the Republican platform for local and state issues. The first resolution opposed allowing Watauga County Commissioners to raise the local option sales tax. The second was a response to recent legal and ethical troubles of House Speaker Jim Black who has been removed from office. It opposed the influence of special interests in state legislative politics. The third proposal was an expression of gratitude to soldiers serving in the US Military.