

Political Intrigue? DA Appointment Stalls

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It was a surprise for most, the sudden retirement of 24th District Attorney Jerry Wilson whose letter Tuesday said his retirement would be effective immediately. The matter was brought up at the Watauga County Commission meeting yesterday morning, and Wilson's letter was received during that meeting. Wilson said in his letter; "A few months ago I announced I would retire on the last day of this year. Unfortunately, medical problems have forced me to move my retirement date forward. Monday, March 31st, 2014 marked my last day as District Attorney in the 24th District. I count it a special honor that the people of this district have allowed me to serve them as District Attorney and Prosecutor for over 30 years." Watauga Republican Party Chair Ann-Marie Yates offered the party's best wishes for Wilson, "The Republican Party would like to thank Jerry Wilson for his 12 years of service to this community as District Attorney, and we wish him a long retirement." At the commission meeting, it seemed an orderly plan was in place to have long-time chief judge in the 24th Judicial District, Alexander Lyerly take over the position, for the rest of the year, officials just awaiting the commission from the Governor. That's when the political intrigue started, with a flurry of calls between the district and the Governor's office, with others seeking to be put into consideration. So that's where the process stayed all afternoon, and it is unclear just where the process is at this time. Lyerly retired just the week before after serving three-plus decades, and was apparently at the courthouse to take the oath, but things turned into a waiting game. Whoever is appointed by Governor McCrory will take the position pending the fall elections, with three Republicans seeking the nomination with no Democratic opposition for the fall election.