

Campaign Finance

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Maybe if the public knew more of the details more people would vote. Yes more voted in this election than the previous, but that isn't saying a lot. In 2014, only 14% of the registered voters voted – 13,122. In 2016, only 17% of the registered voter voted – 15,031. Did the other 75,000 registered voters stay home with a cold? They may have, and that illness is called apathy.

I don't know if low voter turnout is a state or country wide situation, and unlike Wallace who thinks being crime ridden like other communities is a non-issue, I'm concerned about my community. One crime or one absent voter is one too many.

How did the money flow for the winners? I was extremely surprised by the number of contributors and the amounts donated. All these people (can't verify if they are citizens) and companies contributing to our little podunk school system. I feel the love for our children...not. The amounts contributed to the two incumbents who have sat on the board 8 to 12 years, and led us to only 41% of our schools being fully accredited, definitely makes me believe it **was not** a campaign contribution made out of respect or concern for our children. Especially since two years ago Hampton only had a whopping 50% of its schools fully accredited. I just wonder if those out-of-town contributors felt compelled to contribute to those running in their own districts. (Story to follow.)

Stories have been written about local elections being more of a name game. Whether it's first place on the ballot or having signs plastered around town...sadly, I have to believe it is a name game...and those campaign signs may prove it. I still see Mugler's up a month after the election. Daily during the campaign season, I would pass Henry's at Raceway on Armstead...three or four in a row on a little strip of grass along the roadway. At a shop on a corner near my house were a ton of signs next to a telephone pole. Several of this candidate and a few of another, etc. In the mix of signs was one from the shop owner advertising – ATM. I felt compelled to do a write-in for ATM.

Below is a snippet of campaign finance data. More info can be found on the **Supporting Information** page.

Candidate		Number of contributions less than \$100*	Total \$ contributions less than \$100*	Number of contributions greater than \$100		Total \$ contributions greater than \$100	Number of contributions greater than \$100 from outsiders	Total \$ contributions greater than \$100 from outsiders	Percentage of \$ contributions from outsiders
Mugler incumbent	-	85	\$5,930	54		\$19,555	14	\$6,700	34.26%
Henry incumbent	-	35	\$2,355	6		\$3,950	3	\$2,325	58.86%
Stephens[-]Cherry		121	\$6,822.42	14		\$4,300	5	\$2,000	46.51%
Woodhouse		35	\$2,355	6		\$3,950	3	\$2,325	58.86%
Grand Total						\$31,755		\$13,350	42.04%

*Contributions of less than \$100 are not recorded individually by contributor.