Commissioners Foolishly Abolish Office of Cleveland County Coroner in Political Hack-Job!!- -No Public Hearing, No Referendum-Only Lies and Political Bull Hockey!!! –Report by Robert A. Williams

The office of Cleveland County Coroner has been in existence since 1841, unlike other elected offices, that office over all these years is without any blemish of corruption, malfeasance or scandal. As the old saying goes, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” If the Commissioners had any sense, that statement should be the end of this article. But, they don’t and it ain’t.

If you go back to my article published March 13, 2017 you will see all the details regarding the foolishness of this as it started out.

Well, my article apparently embarrassed the Commissioners as they were caught in the act with their back room dirty dealing and before the deed was fully done. Commissioner Chairman Eddie Holbrook commented to me that he had not been in the back room meeting when the abolishment of the Office of Coroner was discussed. My comment back was that this kind of stuff, by law, had to be done in open session. Commissioner Holbrook said they would stop the process of abolishing the Office of Coroner. Read on for what they did next. It was totally within the letter of the law, but it was also a total

lie. Lots of that lately with the County Commissioners, as well as the Community College and the schools.

The first thing they did was to delay putting out the agenda for the Commissioner's meeting on April 18, 2017 so nobody will have advance notice of what the Commissioners are up to. This is becoming a regular happening with this crowd of Commissioners. If they can't get by with doing their dirty business behind closed doors, they do it in a regular session without anybody knowing what they are about to do. In this case, they also gave ZERO advance notice to the Coroner, Robbie Morgan that they are about to abolish the Office of Coroner.

Next, at the meeting that started at 6:00 PM, there is an item on the Agenda that simply says "Coroner/M.E Medical System." County Manager Jeff Richardson was listed as the presenter.

Jeff Richardson has this slick little PowerPoint presentation that shows that most of the hundred counties in North Carolina had changed over to a Medical Examiner system run out of Raleigh and had done away with the Office of Coroner. That was the "trend" according to Richardson. "Trend" was a word used a lot in Richardson's presentation. Not one word in the presentation mentioned any tangible benefit to doing away with the Office of Coroner for Cleveland County. Although there was some talk about the Hospital, Law Enforcement, Funeral Homes, etc. needing to have input into the transition from Coroner to a Medical Examiner system run out of Raleigh, there was ZERO information that any of them had been contacted for their opinion before this meeting. Richardson also failed to mention that although many counties were "trending" to do away with the DSS Board and have the Commissioners serve that purpose because of all the problems at DSS, the Cleveland County Commissioners had not done that.

Then Commissioner Chairman Eddie Holbrook asked County Manager Jeff Richardson if he (Richardson) had discussed this with

Coroner Robbie Morgan? Richardson says that he had called Morgan at 3:00 PM before the meeting at 6:00 PM and Morgan had agreed with the trending information and basically everything Richardson had said. The Commissioners took turns saying they had not made up their minds beforehand and then voted unanimously to abolish the Office of Coroner at the end of the present term-which will be 2018.

I am sitting there in the front row listening to all this, not believing a word I am hearing and smelling a rat. After the meeting I made a beeline home, pick up the phone and call Robbie Morgan.

I tell Robbie what just happened at the Commissioner's meeting and all about Jeff Richardson telling the Commissioners he (Morgan) had agreed with all that was said. Robbie Morgan listens to all of this and says, Yes, Richardson had called him at 3:00 PM out of the blue and Yes, he had told Richardson that he understood most of the counties had changed to a Medical Examiner system instead of a Coroner. Then Morgan tells me all he told Richardson that Richardson had left out telling to the Commissioners. Morgan says "I told Jeff Richardson that it would be the worst thing the county could do was to switch to the Medical Examiner system." Morgan went on to say many of those counties that had switched were now regretting what they had done. The Medical Examiners working out of Raleigh do not work on weekends so if you have a fatality wreck or a murder on a weekend, there are problems. The Medical Examiner's Office bill the counties in such a way that it is hard to budget for what they charge. Counties no longer have any control over what the Medical Examiners do and when they do it. Morgan went on and on about why such a change should not be done and then told me that he been told the Commissioners would not let him speak if he showed up at the meeting.

Since I have known Robbie Morgan for quite a while, I say, you know there will be three commissioners up for election in

November of 2018 and three commissioners are a majority. I hear a little chuckle on the other end of the line and Morgan says, “I will probably be thinking about that when the time comes.”

I chuckle a little too. I’m thinking, all we need now is two more good candidates and we can put a stop to all this foolishness by the crowd of crazy Commissioners we have now. And, if we can’t quite get it done in 2018, three commissioners are up for election in 2020 too.

So, folks, this article is a good example of how the Commissioners operate. This is like what they did when they sold the hospital out from under the citizens of Cleveland County and spent all the money. The many tens of millions of tax dollars they have given away in the name of economic development while 25,000 county residents are on food stamps. The mess at Cleveland Community College and at Cleveland County Schools that the commissioners have helped cover-up-till now.

Folks, think about running for office. Think about running for the office of Cleveland County Commissioner. 2018 is not that far away.