Part XII: The Rest of the Do Nothing Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees-Gridlock Guaranteed!—Report and evaluation by Robert A. Williams

Editor's Note 1: The many and varied scandals at Cleveland Community College that have only recently been publicly exposed have in fact been festering for years. There have been several layers of delay and cover-up. First, the CCC Staff and Administration leadership have used threats and intimidation regarding employment to keep employees quiet. Next, Staff and Administration only provide "good news: (often lies) and never present problems or issues at CCC Board of Trustees meetings to cover-up scandals. Then, if a whistleblower does come forward, they get retaliation and often termination. Staff and Administration never allow the terminated employee to have a fair hearing with the full CCC Board of Trustees.

Then, there is the Board of Trustees themselves. Most of which, over the years, have been appointed as some sort of honorary title type ploy so the individual Trustee gets to put on their resume that they have served on the CCC Board of Trustees, but are in fact just rubber-stamps for the Staff, Administration and those that appointed them. They always ""make their decisions based on the information that they have been provided" and never question those that are providing one sided and self serving information. (This is how most every Board in Cleveland County operates.)

And when scandals do surface, like now, the CCC Board is

split. Some are on the Board to possibly line their own pockets. Some are on the Board, like the School Board appointees, to cover for problems at CCS. and so forth. With split boards like the CCC Board as presently constituted, there is gridlock. Nothing is done. Everything is delayed. And the status quo remains because the public has a short memory.

We have reviewed the present CCC Board of Trustees makeup and provided our evaluation. None of the CCC Trustees are elected so they can't be voted off the Board. However, the only hope of getting anything done is follow the Trustee appointments back to the source and throw those guys and gals out of office. It may take a while, but this is the only thing that works. That and the many calls to your elected officials to fix the problems at Cleveland Community College.

A listing of all CCC Board of Trustee Members and our evaluation follows below:

Acting Chairman Greg Melton:
Part XI ended up as a separate article because of the many conflicts of interest of Board of Trustees Acting Chairman Greg Melton. We suggest you re-read that article. Melton's monetary interests (his pone) rests largely with County building contracts to Holland & Hamrick Architects where Melton works. Greg Melton would certainly benefit financially by keeping everything in place at CCC. Melton has not resigned even though his conflicts are obvious and well known for years. However, Greg Melton was appointed by the Cleveland County Commissioners and his appointment runs out this month. The Commissioners, well known for doing stupid things and are themselves embroiled in various scandals, are not considered stupid enough to re-appoint Greg Melton to the CCC Board of Trustees for another term. We will have to wait and see about that though.

We consider Greg Melton's refusal to support the actions necessary to identify and correct problems at CCC as just

another example of a conflict of interest and a sure example of bad judgement in regard to what is best for CCC.

Trustee Allen Langley:
Trustee Allen Langly term runs out this month. Langley was appointed by former Republican Governor Pat McCrory and present Democrat Governor Roy Cooper would never re-appoint a Republican. But the NC General Assembly is changing the way these Boards are appointed. However, Trustee Langley has publicly been quoted as not believing the allegations made regarding many of the problems at CCC and supports President Thornburg, thus getting caught up in hearing only one side of the story. We are supposing Trustee Langley regrets being forced to continue to support the status quo because of his previous statements made in the context of one sided information. Trustee Langley is also leading an investigation committee and his term will run out before the next Board of Trustees Meeting.

We believe Allen Langley will not be re-appointed to the CCC Board of Trustees and that his votes in support of Thornburg and his term in office running out before his committee work is finished has and will further delay the Board of Trustees in taking the obvious actions that are needed to straighten out the mess at CCC. Otherwise, Trustee Langley has most likely learned his lesson about trusting one sided information and once this mess at CCC is cleaned up, an appointment on the CCC Board of Trustees would be in order.

Trustee June Yarboro:
Trustee Yarboro’s term in office also expires this month. Trustee Yarboro was appointed by the Cleveland County School Board who expects her to support the School Board as they too are caught up in CCC related scandals. The NC General Assembly is wisely changing state law to eliminate the school board from appointing CCC Board of Trustee members as there is an obvious conflict of interest there. Trustee Yarboro has supported the status quo at CCC.

We believe Trustee June Yarboro will not be re-appointed to the CCC Board of Trustees because the NC General Assembly Republican majority will not re-appoint a Democrat. We also believe that Trustee Yarboro's failure to support the necessary cleansing action necessary at CCC has delayed resolving the many scandals swirling around CCC and CCS.

Trustee Lamont Littlejohn:
Trustee Lamont Littlejohn's term ends in 2020. Like Trustee June Yarboro, Littlejohn was appointed by the CCS School Board and is expected to cover for the School Board in all these scandals. Littlejohn was also caught up in a planned scheme by the school board to dissolve the so called "Diversity Team" and reconstitute a new Diversity Team that left out those members who questioned why the CCS School Board was not doing what their policies said they wood do. The new Team, formed for the purpose of covering up, included Littlejohn. We expect Rev. Littlejohn will always vote to maintain the status quo at CCC and also vote to cover-up and delay resolving the obvious problems at CCC and CCS as well.

We consider Board of Trustee members like Lamont Littlejohn, who has three more years in office as a Trustee, represents a continuing impediment to resolving the scandals at CCC and CCS. We recommend the NC General Assembly, while they are at it in eliminating the School Board from appointing CCC Trustees, to also get rid of all the Trustees that have already been appointed by the school board. Otherwise the scandals and mess will continue at CCC for years to come.

Trustee Chris Turner:
Trustee Chris Turner's term ends in 2018. Trustee Chris Turner was appointed by the School Board for one obvious reason. Mr. Turner's business, Turner Trucking, supports the Cleveland County School Foundation by hosting an annual Golf Tournament that is the major source of the foundations revenue. Mr. Turner is well respected in the business community and supports the School Foundation. The problem lies in that Mr.

Turner attends CCC Board of Trustee Meetings and like Trustee Allen Langley only hears the one sided information only coming from the CCC administration and staff. Although this is typical of the way Cleveland County Boards like to operate, Trustees like Chris Turner and Allen Langley end up becoming the face of the Community College and they have the tendency to leave the status quo in place instead of making the hard decisions required when the facts of the matter come out into public view.

We consider Trustee Chris Turner to have unfortunately become "tainted" by his association with the CCC Board of Trustees when all these scandals were brewing. We believe Trustee Chris Turner should resign from the CCC Board as did Board Chairman Ellis Monroe, thus allowing the NC General Assembly to appoint someone who is not tainted with having to justify why such scandals were allowed to happen on his watch.

Trustee Larry Hamrick, Jr.:
Trustee Larry Hamrick's term in office expires in 2019. Trustee Larry Hamrick was appointed by the school board to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins. Trustee Larry Hamrick was also the campaign manager for CCS Board member Shearra Miller, who nominated Hamrick to the CCC Board of Trustees. There is certainly too much political favoritism in the appointment of Larry Hamrick to the CCC Board of Trustees, besides his obvious conflict of interest in protecting the status quo and the scandals at the Community College as well as within the schools.

Just like others mentioned above, Trustee Larry Hamrick cannot be depended upon to cast a vote that would jeopardize the status quo at CCC as well as CCS. Cleveland County does not need any board member anywhere with such conflicts of interests that delay and deny the CCC Board of Trustees actions that are necessary to resolve the mess at CCC as well as CCS. We recommend Larry Hamrick resign from the CCC Board of Trustees and, barring that, for the NC General Assembly to

remove him from the Board.

Editor's Note 2: All of the six Community College Board of Trustees noted above are considered, for one reason or another, very, very unlikely to take sufficient actions to resolve the scandals and problem issues at Cleveland Community College. This is one half of the CCC Board of Trustees in lockstep to do nothing, guaranteeing gridlock. They all should be encouraged to resign as soon as possible and none should be re-appointed. Otherwise, they should be removed from the CCC Board of Trustees effective immediately. Their presence, representing half of the CCC Board, insures gridlock, stalemate, delay and ridicule from citizens as well as potential companies thinking about coming to Cleveland County. All in the name of protecting their own best interest and not giving a whit about CCC.

The half of the Board of Trustees listed below are checkmated by the Trustees noted above. It is their duty, however hard, to prevail in fixing the scandals and problems that have festered for so long at CCC.

Read on.

Trustee Alan Norman:
Sheriff Alan Norman was appointed by Governor Pat McCrory and his term expires in 2019. Sheriff Norman, although having heard only one side for much of his term, has now shown a willingness to take prompt action regarding the scandals at CCC and CCS.

We consider Sheriff Alan Norman to be an asset on the CCC Board of Trustees who is unafraid and un-conflicted enough to do what is necessary to resolve the scandals at CCC

Trustee Bill Turpish:
Trustee Bill Turpish was appointed by Republican Governor Pat McCrory. Trustee Turpish's term expires in 2020. Trustee Turpish has a background in engineering where you have to make

clear observations of the facts and then make sound judgements according to all the facts in play. The one sided nature of the information presented in previous board meetings may have slanted and basically tainted Trustee Turpish's judgement up to now, but we suspect Trustee Turpish has now seen the light.

We consider and believe Trustee Turpish's objectivity will carry the day when the CCC Board of Trustees, minus the gridlock, will have to make their hard and final decisions that will be necessary to resolve the various and many scandals that have cast such storm clouds over the once healthy Cleveland Community College.

Trustee Wayne King:
Trustee Wayne Kings was appointed by Governor Pat McCrory. King's term expires in 2018. Trustee King's hobby is politics. Trustee King's job is politics too, conservative politics. Trustee King is the Deputy Chief of Staff for District 11 US Congressman Mark Meadows, leader of the Freedom Caucus. Over the years Wayne King has learned to lead from the front and when things don't work, you fix them. Trustee King is in the exact right place and the exact right time to make the hard decisions that are necessary to clean up the mess at Cleveland Community College That is fix the programs that are broken, get rid of the administration members that have failed to meet expectations, shake up the CCC Board as necessary and in the end, do the right thing for CCC instead of continuing some aged-out mindset. long term conflicts of interests and one sided presentations that leave out the truth.

We believe Wayne King should be elected as the Chairman of the CCC Board of Trustees where Trustee King's talents and skills can best be used to promptly address the problems, cut through the red tape and do-nothing tradition of previous CCC Boards. And fix the various scandals that have taken over at CCC.

Trustee Gordon Hamrick:
Trustee Gordon Hamrick was appointed by the Commissioners. His

term expires in 2019. Trustee Gordon Hamrick is the oldest member of the CCC Board of Trustees with a lifetime of experience. And is willing to make the hard decisions necessary to clean up the mess that has developed at CCC over the years. Although Trustee Hamrick is willing to make the hard decisions he has become less interested in serving on committees and more interested in hearing recommendations and making his decision on that. That is well and good as long as a stop is put to the one sided information presentations that have gone on for years.

We consider Trustee Gordon Hamrick will make the right decisions to clean up the scandals at CCC, to return CCC to a healthy, honest and ethical organization committed to education and not a bunch of personal agendas, ego trips and conflicts of interests..

Trustee Wes Westmoreland:
Trustee Wes Westmoreland was appointed by the Commissioners, His term expires in 2018. Trustee Westmoreland owns and operates Westmoreland Printers and is well respected in the business community. Westmoreland also served in the NC General Assembly as a Senator a few years back. Westmoreland is presently the Chairman of the Board at Pinnacle Classical Academy. Pinnacle Classical Academy is the first Charter School located in Cleveland County and has been wildly successful straight out of the gate. Pinnacle started in the old Hallelujah Acres Building and is now building for themselves a brand new school. A new school that is self financed and well managed without wasting taxpayer dollars like the current Cleveland County Board of Education.

We believe Wes Westmoreland should be elected as the Vice Chairman of the CCC Board of Trustees where Trustee Westmoreland’s talents and skills can best be used to promptly address the problems, cut through the red tape and do nothing tradition of previous CCC Boards and fix the various scandals that have taken over at CCC.

Trustee Jason Falls:
Trustee Jason Falls was appointed by the Commissioners to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of former Board Chairman Ellis Monroe. Trustee Falls is also a sitting County Commissioner himself. Falls term is listed to expire in 2020, which is questionable as former Trustee Ellis Monroe's term expired this month-just like several others noted above. It's like why didn't the Commissioners go ahead and fill the terms of all the Trustees that expired this month. I have officially requested information from the Commissioners regarding the questionable appointment of Jason Falls under the Freedom of Information Act and North Carolina Public Records Laws but the Commissioners have not responded. This leads me to know something is amiss in all this, which is, unfortunately, typical of the whole batch of County Commissioners we have right now.

We have listed Trustee Jason last on this list of Trustees because he is probably the least trustworthy. Commissioner Falls has helped waste untold millions of taxpayer dollars over the past seven years and refuses to be fair and honest. Commissioner Falls appears to just consider what is best for his political career over everything else and has worked his political career onto a dead end street. "Fixing" his appointment until 2020 appears to be just a phony trick to keep Commissioner Falls unfairly associated with local government and to cover up for all the scandals that have been exposed on Falls' watch.

However, the untrustworthy Trustee that is Jason Falls is now a Trustee and has apparently been given a mandate by the Commissioners, who have their own interests in this matter, to get rid of CCC President Steve Thornburg. Since Thornburg's bad judgement, indiscretions, issues, scandals and problems have been exposed, Falls has accidentally found himself to be on the right side of straightening out, at least part of, the problem at CCC. For now we will have to do with that. Perhaps

a new majority on the County Commissioners after the 2018 Elections will force Jason Falls into total retirement from politics altogether.