Commissioner Eddie Holbrook Caught with Both Hands in the Cookie Jar!!! Let’s Count the ways!! Report by Robert A. Williams

Democrat Commissioner Eddie Holbrook wears lots of hats to cover his many faces.

The Commissioner’s Hat, especially the Chairman of the Commissioners, voted in by FOUR Republicans should tell you right up front that something is amiss in Cleveland County. And it is.

As Chairman of the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners, Eddie Holbrook has a big say in raising taxes and how those taxes are spent. How those taxes are spent is the rub for Eddie Holbrook.

Of course Holbrook claims, among other things-largely exaggerated, that he has held the line on raising taxes. Holbrook says he has maintained taxes at 57 cents per $100 evaluation. But, last time I looked at my tax bill the County fire district taxes went up 75%. That is another 3.75 cents per $100 evaluation tax increase. School taxes are 15 cents per $100 evaluation. (I remember when there was NO separate county school taxes and the County School System (Burns and Crest areas) then has exactly what they have now.) Then, there is the garbage fee tacked on (from Zero, to $50, to about $70 now) that represents another 2 cents or thereabouts. Car taxes are now collected by the DMV, so they are hidden from view. And county motel occupancy taxes, paid by out of towners are collected from us when any of us go out of town and pay those

county occupancy fees. Then there are other fees like the landfill “tipping fees” that everybody pays in one way or another, except the Fair. The Fair and only the Fair gets to haul their stuff to the landfill for free-starting this year thanks to Eddie Holbrook. It’s because of E-coli says Holbrook. Bull-oney says I.

So, all in all, the actual Cleveland County tax rate runs about 23 cents over what Commissioner Eddie Holbrook claims to around 80 cents per $100 evaluation. But who knows, maybe every county does this kind of deception, but I doubt it. Anyway, now you know just a bit about how devious and deceptive Commissioner Eddie Holbrook actually is. A typical lying politician. But a “flawed politician” nonetheless.

But, that intro is just that, an introduction. To get you tuned in to the real stealing of your tax dollars that is going on. Now let’s send you a picture of Eddie Holbrook’s hands in the County Cookie Jar.

At this point we have to just mention Eddie Holbrooks employment at Cleveland Community College. Holbrook pockets $125,000 plus benefits for being the Senior Dean of Development and Governmental Relations. A job in name only. He teaches no classes that we can find out about. What he does at CCC is apparently a secret. Sources say his only attributes are he married a younger woman with “old Shelby Money” connections and Hoyt Bailey, former Chairman of the CCC Board of Trustees, liked him. This is, according to our estimation, just Holbrook’s “finger in the pie” though, Not quite yet a “hand in the cookie jar.” Unless you count Holbrook’s wife’s $80,000 per year at CCC as the former Director of the LeGrand Center. A job taken over by former Commissioner and loser Jason Falls, who has no credentials at all except running his personnel businesses into near bankruptcy. The County too.

Hey, enough of the intro. Let’s get down to the deception, the dirty dealing and the nitty-gritty of Eddie Holbrook’s sneaky

dealings.

Economic Development Partnership Shenanigans.

Mention Eddie Holbrook's name and you think about the American Legion World Series. A sellout every game and big money to motels, restaurants, beer joints and whore houses. Traffic jams too. (Just joking about the whore houses. But, working girls have to make a living too, so Holbrook gives his step daughter a job at the American Legion Offices.)

Eddie Holbrook is, some would say, the "Force" behind the Economic Development Partnership. Tourism, bringing in motels and all of that. Why, the new Fairfield Motel surely came to Cleveland County because of the ALWS. And just in time.

But, who owns the new Fairfield. Hey, according to the Shelby Star, it's the Catellus Group out of Charlotte that owns the new Fairfield Motel. The Catellus Group at 217
E. Tremont Avenue Charlotte to be exact. A little checking into the Catellus Group and you find a passel of Barkers. Not exactly sure if or how they might be related to the big-shot Barkers out of Shelby. But, hey, the Barkers have to make a living too.

But now the dead fish and the live rats start to smell real bad. A business called the Shelby Land Partners LLC crops up as owning the Fairfield motel property before the Catellus Group. And what is the address of the Shelby Land Partners, LLC. Somewhere in Shelby you would think. But NOOOooooo! The Shelby Land Partners LLC are located at 217 E. Tremont Avenue in Charlotte. Exactly the same address as the Catellus Group. So, all these Shelby Land Partners are joined at the same address as the Catellus Group.

And who is this Shelby Land Partners??? you ask. Well, don't say that I told you, but state records show the Shelby Land Partners, LLC "principals" and information are as follows:

Shelby Land Partners, LLC is a North Carolina Limited-Liability Company filed on October 16, 2014 . The company's filing status is listed as Current-Active and its File Number is 1407126.

The Registered Agent on file for this company is Cassarino, Ben J., Jr and is located at 217 E Tremont Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203-5021. The company's principal address is 217 E Tremont Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203-5021 and its mailing address is 217 E Tremont Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203-5021.

The company has 5 principals on record.
1. Cherokee Auto Auctions, Inc (Charlie Carrigan) from Kings Mountain NC,
2. Cibix Management from Charlotte NC,
3. Edwin C Holbrook from Shelby NC,
4. Merlin Holdings, LLC from Charlotte NC, and
5. Richard H Berkowitz from Shelby NC.

More info from State Records:

Company Name: SHELBY LAND PARTNERS, LLC
File Number: 1407126
Filing State: North Carolina (NC)
Filing Status: Current-Active
Filing Date: October 16, 2014
Company Age: 3 Years, 11 Months
Registered Agent:
Cassarino, Ben J., Jr
217 E Tremont Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28203-5021
Principal Address:
217 E Tremont Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28203-5021
Mailing Address:
217 E Tremont Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28203-5021

And More:

Actually, we are just getting started with the financial shenanigans Commissioner Eddie Holbrook has gotten Cleveland County involved with. Bad shenanigans with maybe bad connections and for very bad reasons.

If you are brave enough to “google” Cibix Management you will find out that Cibix has a connection with Catellus Group. And everybody has the same address: 217 Tremont Avenue in Charlotte.

Then “google” Merlin Holdings. You will soon see that Merlin Holdings is a registered corporation in Nevada. Yes, I said Nevada. Where Las Vegas and Reno, the gambling capitals of the USA are located. Also where lots of organized crime is located too.

On top of that you will see the Registering Agent for Merlin Holdings is Capitol Corporate Services, Inc. And, if you remember, the loan funding for the new North Shelby School Project as well as $$$Millions of “stuff” for the Clearwater Paper expansion included putting up the new North Shelby School, James Love Elementary School as well as the new Health Department building for collateral. The commissioners headed by Eddie Holbrook did not sell government backed bonds as are usually the case, but instead made a pawnshop (or loanshark) type loan with the repayment squarely on the backs of taxpayers. And with a lending institution with a name clearly similar, maybe a subsidiary of Capitol Corporate Services, with possible ties to Nevada gambling industry money. As I recall from the June budget for 2018-2019, the County would receive around $200,000 in investment income (they refused to say where the money is invested) and will pay out around $10 million in debt service. They also did not say where these debts are located, who we owe and how much each. Doesn’t that tell you something is screwy with Cleveland County finances??? under the so-called leadership of Edwin C. Holbrook.

And, then you have to remember that the Commissioners have all supported the proposed gambling casino near Kings Mountain fronted by the Catawba Indians that has been pending for so long. The casino that's supposed to bring 4,000 jobs, low paying jobs like cleaning up and making beds at the casino hotel, carrying out the garbage and such or maybe doing the same at Eddie Holbrooks new motel too. You can bet 90% of any jobs coming on account of the KM Casino will come from out of Cleveland County and out of state. A look at any map will prove that point. Say, Ask Eddie Holbrook how many construction jobs at his new motel were filled with Cleveland County residents and by Cleveland County businesses. How many minority workers and minority owned businesses too. My guess the answer to that question is ZERO, ZERO. Better yet, Ask Eddie or his Uncle Toms about that.

And, then there is Eddie Holbrook's involvement with the Economic Development Partnership that Cleveland County taxpayers are throwing $5 million at in the 2018-2019 budget. Who runs that so called partnership, etc.?? YOU go ask Eddie Holbrook that question. I have already gone to the Chamber and the County and asked those very same questions. I asked for an organizational chart like every group should have. Who is at the top? Who is accountable? Who much does anybody associated with this taxpayer funded "partnership" make? All sorts of simple and reasonable questions anybody would ask after going to the EDP website and finding only two women, Kristin Reese and Beth Norman listed. Whatever happened to David Deer? Where is Eddie Holbrook or any others involved in the partnership on the organizational chart and what do they do? And, especially, where does these 5 million tax dollars go? AND, where does any other so called "Partner" put up any cash of their own and what do they do? The answers I received can be printed on the head of a pin with room to spare. Nothing! No answers to any questions. The CIA and the FBI can't keep secrets any better than this Economic Development Partnership crowd, apparently headed up by Eddie Holbrook. The Great Poobaa, The Big Cheese

or just the Grand Dragon. One name fits all for “Massa Eddie” Holbrook.

Now, to wrap up this article, let’s look at Commissioner Eddie Holbrook’s association with the American Series World Series in relation with his legal role, duties and responsibilities as a legally elected Cleveland County Commissioner. A political subdivision of the government of the State of North Carolina. This goes for other Commissioners too.

The first consideration is Eddie Holbrook is legally responsible for avoiding all real and perceived conflicts of interests with his lawfully described duties as a Commissioner. A commissioner’s first duty and responsibility is to the County he is elected to serve. The “best interest” of Cleveland County is a commissioner’s number one and only duty. It readily becomes clearly evident that the Cleveland County Commissioner’s practice of also serving on other boards, often multiple other boards, is a conflict of interest. How can you serve as a Commissioner and as a member of the FAIR Board (for instance) and there NOT be a conflict of interest. The Fair has leased county owned property for years for a dollar a year and makes large profits without returning anything back to the county. The Fair refuses to make their records and “books” available for the public to see. Yet, now the Commissioners loaned the Fair $350,000 at zero % interest. Part of this loan is still due. Then, the Commissioners vote to allow the Fair (an agricultural Fair) to haul their garbage, including animal wastes that have for the history of the world been spread on fields to improve the soil, to the landfill for burial for Zero. A benefit no other person or entity in Cleveland can get away with. Of course the vast majority of the Fair waste is garbage, with a little animal manure thrown in for effect. But it worked, The $15,000 tipping fee the Fair normally has to pay is now excused for Zero. Holbrook simply says “e-coli” is the reason. Of course if e-coli was the real concern, the Fair’s animal waste would

be collected separately and disposed of as a hazardous waste. Probably spread on somebody's field in the dark of night. But no, another swindle of the taxpayers and a good example of a conflict of interest for the commissioners.

But now Commissioner Chairman Eddie Holbrook has invented an even more blatant way to cheat taxpayers. Small but blatant, Eddie Holbrook has taken to stealing Cleveland County government letterhead stationary and county staff time to use in his outside role as Chairman of the American Legion World Series organization. And in a very directed way to attempt to avoid US Constitutional Law requirements and the scrutiny thereof.

The Civil Rights Acts of 1972, well tested in Supreme Court decisions. Title IX requires equality (no discrimination) with regard to sex in Public Educational Institutions that receive federal funding. Presently there is a pending Title IX complaint against Cleveland County Schools regarding the fact that the baseball field at Shelby High School (home to the ALWS with at least $5 million pumped in by the American Legion) will not allow the SHS girls softball team to play on that field and there are no other facilities at SHS for the SHS girls to play on.

Well, Eddie Holbrook, as Chairman of the American Legion World Series in Shelby has been trying to sneak around that Federal law from the start of the ALWS by using grants, gifts, American Legion Money, etc. that he calls "private money" to be used to get around Federal law. That may be well and good for some, but there is more.

When the Title IX complaint came in and the Shelby ALWS under Chairman Eddie Holbrook wanted to pour another $Million or so into the SHS Ball Field to help the Shelby ALWS extend their contract. Yes, extend the Contract. Shelby, nor anywhere else, is NOT the permanent home of the ALWS as Eddie Holbrook has told that lie so many times. They are only the present home

until their contract runs out in 2019. And this extra $million might help get the contract extended or renewed for a couple more years. And to spend that extra $million, the ALWS has to get the School Board's usually rubberstamped approval. So, Eddie Holbrook, as Chairman of the Shelby ALWS sends a letter to the CCS Board back in May asking for that approval.

Only thing is, CCS, now under Title IX investigation is afraid they will be stuck with having to spend Multimillions to provide an equal facility for the girls at SHS to play softball on. And, for once, the CCS Board actually has a discussion.

Former School Board Chairman Phillip "Bully" Glover asks a question. Glover says the ALWS letter signed by Eddie Holbrook is on Cleveland County letterhead stationary. So, is this letter asking CCS permission to accept ALWS money "from Eddie Holbrook as chairman of the County Commissioners or as Chairman of the American Legion World Series???" (This is per the May 2018 School Board Meeting video) A perfect example of Eddie Holbrook's conflict of interest as well as Holbrook just stole County stationary and probably county employee time to type up this ALWS letter on County Stationary.

Of course the County employee does as illegally directed by Commissioner Chairman Eddie Holbrook. Otherwise they would soon be out of a job; just like former County Manager Eddie Bailes, Kris Krebs and even former County Attorney Bob Yelton. Same with the County Coroner, but that is another story as they just held a meeting at the LeGrand Center with this State Medical Examiner head honcho. A meeting without the present Coroner and Assistant Coroner attending. Don't know who paid the LeGrand Center bill, but I can only suppose the Commissioners (taxpayers) did as a way to funnel tax money through that failed facility run by the loser Jason Falls. Just another way to hide or minimize the losses at the LeGrand Center.

Folks, all of this information came from official public documents and reliable sources as well as attending CCS and Commissioner meetings myself. I dug up the information and so can you if you refuse to believe what I have stated.

One thing though, I am not going to dig up any more about the spider web of information surrounding the Fairfield Motel. The reason being, when you mess around spider webs, sooner or later you will find the spider. Perhaps a black widow. I don't know for sure that the Nevada folks have mob connections and are laundering gambling money. I have proven in so many other ways that Commissioner Eddie Holbrook has both hands in the Cleveland County cookie jar up to his elbows. If voters want to be fools and re-elect Holbrook, all I can say is I told you so and I am sure you will eventually get what you deserve. Why should I run any personal risks for the fools like that when the answer is so very easy. Vote for somebody else for Commissioner besides Eddie Holbrook and those other Commissioners that support Holbrook in his foolishness. More on that later.

And, there is Holbrook's age factor. Eddie Holbrook is 82+ and seeking another four year term in office. Statistically Eddie Holbrook's health and mental capacity will likely NOT hold up sufficient for another four years in office. Cleveland County saw what happened to Sheriff Raymond Hamrick when he had his motorcycle accident right before re-election. Sheriff Hamrick was virtually missing in action for years at a time before the next election and the Sheriff's Offfice was in a prolonged state of chaos until then Deputy Alan Norman was elected Sheriff (after Hamrick fired him for running against him.)

Also, Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins running for Commissioner from his deathbed two years ago. Sworn in by telephone, only to pass away eight days into his term. The sore loser Commissioner Jason Falls resigning in office only to be appointed interim County Manager and then Director of the failed LeGrand Center. Both vacancies filled by appointments

by the insane Republican Executive Committee who made Ronnie Whetstine and Doug Bridges promise to “carry on” with how things were being run by the Democrat Chairman Eddie Holbrook. Just think about what would happen if the Democrat Executive Committee got to “appoint” anybody to replace a vacancy caused by the incapacity of Eddie Holbrook. It would be another Yankee-Doodle Democrat-Socialist just like the likes of Bernie Sanders or Alexandria Ocasio-Cortiz. Or Hilary Clinton on steroids.

Wow, what a mess Cleveland County is in.

Thank you Republican Willie A. Green for running for the Cleveland County Commissioner’s office as a Write-In candidate. Totally independent of the Republican Party and Democrat Party Primary vetting where you have to promise to do unethical things. You are answerable only to the best interest of Cleveland County and accountable only to what is right.