

New Scandals Developing at Cleveland Community College!!! Report by Robert A. Williams

Just when you get a new President at CCC who is truly qualified, capable and just getting settled in, trouble is brewing from unexpected places. Not especially new troubles for Cleveland County, but troubles coming from new directions that CCC does not need to be getting involved with. These troubles started surfacing publicly at the November 13, 2018 CCC Board of Trustee Meeting.

Trouble Number 1. A NEW “American Legion” Lady’s Fast Pitch Softball Field for Cleveland Community College (with a fancy scoreboard?)

Folks, you might ask, why would the present CCC softball field, when renamed for the “American Legion” be trouble for CCC? We have the great and wonderful American Legion World Series (ALWS) whose “permanent” (WRONG!!!) home is the Shelby High School Baseball Field, don’t we? Hey, go down to the Shelby High School baseball field and look around. You will immediately be struck with the question, who actually owns this field, the taxpayers of Cleveland County or the American Legion World Series?? The ALWS, who, by the way, is not under the control of the National American Legion but a local North Carolina corporation inappropriately, in my opinion, registered as the “American Legion World Series, Inc.” whose ALWS Board Chairman is the recently defeated Commissioner Chairman Eddie Holbrook.

Now, First, I would ask “why do we need to change the name of the CCC softball field? Then I would ask, does CCC even have a

girls or boys softball team to begin with. And, do any of the CCC girls or CCS-SHS girls play on the American Legion Lady Fast Pitch Softball team? I smell a rat!!!

Then, I would immediately say to you, what "rock" have you been hiding under for the past several years? Don't you know that Cleveland County taxpayers have already secretly paid over \$4.5 million to support the ALWS (which, with no accountability, has turned into a can of worms for all involved). Including a \$1 Million county check, allegedly issued personally to a Commissioner in regard to the ALWS. A \$1 million check the county administration refuses to talk about, admit or deny. Or provide under North Carolina Public Records laws.

Also, do you know that there is, as we speak, an active Federal Civil Rights Investigation of a Title IX (Gender Discrimination) complaint against Cleveland County Schools related to the ALWS facilities at Shelby High School. SHS has this "secret" mixture of taxpayer and donor paid multi-million-dollar facility—the boy's baseball field—with the big "Eddie Holbrook Gate" out front with the big fancy new scoreboard and locker rooms too, without having an equal facility for the girls' softball team; totally in disregard with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. A part of the Federal Civil Rights Act laws.

Wouldn't you come to the reasonable conclusion that the new "American Legion Lady' Fastpitch Softball" field at CCC will immediately become the "Permanent Home Field" rallying cry, according to CCS, for the SHS girls' softball team so the ALWS and CCS can buy their way out from under the Title IX discrimination complaint at taxpayer expense, as well as not having to spend million to build a softball field at Shelby High School, equal to the boys baseball field, for the girls to play on. Also note that there has been a Facebook page devoted to the North Carolina American Legion Ladies Fast Pitch Softball that shows American Legion Ladies Softball

being played at the ALWS Field at Shelby High School. So, why will the ALWS or Shelby High School NOT allow the Shelby High School girls softball team play on that very same field??? Or the American Legion Lady's Fast Pitch Softball Team for that matter.

CCC does NOT need to be getting involved with such a tar-baby tax money sinkhole as the mess CCS, SHS and the ALWS have gotten themselves into. Since CCC has a softball field and IF the AL Girls and others want to occasionally use it, that is well and good. No signs, banners, Eddie Holbrook Gates and such as the SHS field is full of. And certainly, don't get involved in any way with the American Legion in such a way as the ALWS and Shelby High School "boondoggles" as CCC has enough problems of their own to deal with. And especially stay away from all Title IX requirements that might eventually rub off on CCC.

One thing especially troubling here is the CCC Board of Trustees approved a contract with the "American Legion Fast Pitch Softball" (not the American Legion Lady's Fastpitch Softball) on November 13, 2018 with very little to no public notice or discussions beforehand. The only good thing is the contract can be cancelled by any party with 24 hours notice. A new majority of County Commissioners should see to it that the CCC BoTs are replaced over time by citizens who have no connection to the previous boondoggles that surround Cleveland County, CCS and the ALWS. The CCC BoTs should stick to their own business-which is educating their students and preparing them to enter the workforce as trained workers. Period!!!! And forget that Eddie Holbrook's new motel is just down the street from the CCC softball field.

Trouble Number 2. An Energy Management Project that saved \$50,000 in electrical and gas bills last year.

A Utility Cost Savings Report was presented at the November 13, 2018 Bot Meeting which stated a grant funded an energy

management program which saved \$50,000 last year; with more to come as other areas such as lighting modifications, insulation and input to the architect for the new Advanced Manufacturing Building would be included.

So, what is the problem with saving \$50,000? Nothing, except for these few things.

- The cost savings were allowed by spending for HVAC and HVAC control modifications that would be paid back in 6 years. At \$50,000 per year that represents \$300,000 in spending.
- Cleveland Community College has an HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) program.
- There is a nationwide, perhaps world-wide, program called LEED (LEED Certification – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) in the HVAC industry that is totally involved with energy savings and energy management in facility design, construction, operations and maintenance.
- A search of CCC educational program curriculum for HVAC does NOT include LEED. Anywhere that I could find.
- Recent HVAC Specifications for the new Health Department building as well as the new North Shelby School Project were issued by the same Architect as the CCC BoTs have already selected, with obvious conflicts of interest, for the Advanced Manufacturing facility, without up to date LEED design considerations as well as actually specifying “obsolete” high energy consumption chillers that used a refrigerant that is banned in the United States. The only thing that saved the Health Department and the New North Shelby School from having this obsolete equipment installed is the fact that, under US Law, the chillers that use the banned refrigerant are also banned from being manufactured in the USA.

What this means to me is that CCC is about 20-30 years behind in their HVAC curriculum. And their selected architect is also 20-30 years behind in updating their mechanical specifications. (And CCC seems to be that much behind in other Workforce Development programs too.) In their ignorance is bliss” M0, the CCC BoTs continue to select architects who

specify energy wasting building designs and energy wasting equipment. As does Cleveland County government. I smell a rzt there too.

My suggestion is for CCC to get themselves up to date with their HVAC curriculum (to include LEED), and use their own old facility updates and new facility designs as hands on training for their HVAC students as well as CCC maintenance personnel training. Then apply this to all county owned facilities. It could be easily shown that such an approach would save up to a \$Million per year and allow the utilization of existing facilities as educational tools (examples) in the CCC HVAC curriculum.

Engineers on the CCC Board of Trustees; Bill Turpish, Craig DeBrew and Robert Queen should recognize the problems here and push for real and long-term solutions for the betterment of CCC educational programs instead of spending grant money to pay outside groups to do what CCC itself is not teaching, but should be.

Trouble Number 3. The appointment of the new CCC President, Dr. Jason Hurst, as Chairman of the Economic Development Partnership Executive Committee.

The problem here is Dr. Hurst, a well-recognized expert in workforce development and improving higher education has enough on his plate cleaning up the mess at CCC that he inherited and is forced to live with by the BoTs. The out of date HVAC program noted above is a good example of that. The Advanced Manufacturing facility that is already funded with \$millions without having any real knowledge of what is going into the facility is another good example.

Dr. Hurst's high qualifications and well proven abilities are obviously being recruited as a "cover" for the long term festerings, flounderings, ill directed, ill defined, no accountability, wasteful, shadow operated and overall

defective mess of an Economic Development Partnership which has only two employees who have no known supervision, have no accountability and a \$6+Million budget (bottom of Page 4 in the Ccounty2018-2019 Budget Ordinance). Also, the CCEDP refuses to provide any organization chart or strategic plans for doing anything. Isn't that enough of a mess for our new and promising CCC President to stay clear of??? The Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees would do well to relieve Dr. Hurst from any participation in the secret and quite obviously corrupt Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership and task Dr. Hurst to clean up CCC as a first priority.

Also note that former CCC President Steve Thornburg was also President of the CCEDP and has been gone from CCC for many months. The CCEDP as well as CCC floundered around for years under Thornburg's so-called leadership (lack of). A well run CCC is a vital part of Economic Development and "fixing" CCC should take first priority. That is where we need the skills and talents of Dr. Jason Hurst. And, from what I can tell at CCC, the BoTs are not allowing Dr. Hurst to do what needs to be done at CCC. And, doing what needs to be done will take time. Some of those needed things are noted below.

Trouble Number 4. Hiring of Personnel without resolving the lessons-learned from complaints and lawsuits against the CCC BoTs.

A list of new hires was presented at the November 13, 2018 CCC BoT meeting. Many of those new hires were present at that meeting. A review of that list indicated few to none of the new hires would be involved in any new and recognized to be necessary workforce development initiatives. Most likely because the CCC BoTs and CCC staff and others still do not have a clue what that workforce development initiative will actually consist of. Even though CCC is getting ready to spend millions of dollars that Speaker of the House Tim Moore has thrown their way during a record election campaign..

Also, no qualified instructors illegally fired have been brought back. Conversely, no member of CCC Administration, other than Thornburg, have been disciplined, "remediated," or fired.

Trouble Number 5. Things that were NOT on the agenda!!!.

- Reports from the various Workforce Development groups. Region C, Cleveland County Schools, CCC, Industry, elsewhere. Too many groups with no findings worth talking about involving a subject that is very important to the core purpose of CCC. This is where Dr. Hurst may be forced to go it alone and do his own research and strategic plan development. Which would be the most effective anyway. Another reason to get Dr. Hurst off the EDP group who would only be anchors to past mistakes instead of innovative initiatives with sound judgements involving CCC curriculum.
- Reports from within CCC involving updating the various trade-based curriculum such as HVAC noted previously.
- Suggestions involving developing trade-based curriculum supporting subjects such as math, English, physics, geometry, etc. to better fit the trade in lieu of teaching whole semesters of course work that the student, for the most part, may never use or need in the course of plying his or her trade.
- Absolutely no discussion was made regarding "dumbing down" college level classes to enhance high school student participation in "Dual Enrollment" classes that are allegedly pushed by both CCS and CCC to enhance revenue streams instead of student achievement.
- Strategic plans regarding any aspect of the existence and future direction of Cleveland Community College. Same for Cleveland County Schools and Cleveland County in general.

Trouble Number 6. The Cleveland Community College has gone back to meeting every two months as an unfounded indication that it is business as usual. Every indication to watchful eyes and ears is the only business as usual is "Monkey

Business” and continuous cover-up by the CCC BoTs.

Stay tuned folks. If you want your children to grow up, be educated and find a good job in Cleveland County, you had better start paying attention too. And start doing something about what is going on. Getting yourself informed and voting on Election Day is a good start. The 2019 Elections will include five members on the School Board. An excellent place to clean house.