County Manager Confirms County is Officially “Dying!!” Shelby Star Says County Health Has Improved Slightly??? Who is Right?? No Wonder Everybody is Confused!!! Let’s Get Some Straight Answers!!! And Talk!! Report and more questions by Robert A. Williams

My article published March 27, 2019, in the form of a Public Records Request was answered that very same day by the County Manager. I thank County Manager Brian Epley for the promptness of his response.

County Manager Brian Epley’s response letter of March 27, 2019 did indeed confirm that Cleveland County is Dying as a matter of a “definitional term” whose “Definition” of “dying” was never very well defined. Except to say that “migration out/end of life” is more than “Migration in/ Birth Rate. The response letter raised many more questions that it answered. A map of North Carolina was included that clearly showed Cleveland County and a few other Counties were indeed termed “dying.” While Gaston, Lincoln and Catawba Counties were all at the top of the chart. Counties living very well I will say and right next to Cleveland County.

Then, all of a sudden, the Shelby Star just "coincidentally" published an article on April 1, 2019 titled How Healthy is Cleveland County? and subtitled Rankings show slight improvement over 2018. Another one of the Shelby Star's Happy, Happy, Happy Press Releases obviously put out by Cleveland County, although the Happy, Happy, Happy theme was Cleveland County is only 80th out of 100 counties in NC. That is not very Happy, Happy in my book.

The Star article noted some Health Department statistics and indicators and also noted that diabetes had been taken out of the more recent calculations. That's "cooking the books" in by book. Throwing out the big negatives to try to make the County look less bad.

Now, consider this. Brian Epley's response letter also offered me opportunity to set up an appointment and meet with him to discuss this issue. Of course, I do intend to accept this opportunity. But I have a few questions, sixteen involving his response letter and some more as follows"

A. How do the Commissioners intend to require Cleveland County Schools and Cleveland Community College work together to develop a seem-less Workforce Development Program that Starts in the First Grade at CCS, advances through High School at CCS to cover all the basics and then continue to CCC for more advanced studies, either vocational or College level.
B. How do the Commissioners intend to terminate county financial involvement in the American Legion World Series, the Earl Scruggs Center and the LeGrand Center?
C. When and How will Cleveland County extricate themselves and taxpayers from the ineffective and deceptive Economic Development Partnerships that favor a few at the cost of the many, with poor overall performance?
D. How will the $6 Million budgeted for Economic Development and Tourism for a dying county be re-directed into more effective use?

These four questions plus the 16 questions I have embedded into Brian Epley’s marked up response letter shown below will go a long way in determining just why Cleveland County is dying and what to do about it that will actually work to accomplish a positive purpose.

Thanks Brian for your invitation. Please look over these 20 questions and then let’s have a discussion at your convenience. Let me know when you are ready.

[gview file=”https://citizensforgoodgovernment.org/online/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Response-from-the-County-Manager-with-questions.pdf”]