American Legion World Series Baseball Inc !!! Biggest crowd of Thieves and Liars in Cleveland County!! Who did they steal from and lie to??? You and Me!! And Every Taxpayer!!! Another Heist scheduled for August 15-20 2019– 7th Inning Stretch Scheduled August 10, 2019 !! Report, research, arithmetic and the truth provided by Robert A. Williams

Come one, come all to the American Legion World Series Baseball games. The. yearly flim-flam known as the American Legion World Series 7th Inning Stretch scheduled for August 10, 2019 and the baseball games scheduled August 15-20, 2019. You might as well. You have already paid $millions, you just didn’t know it. And be sure to call the thief mastermind, ALWS Chairman Eddie “Massa Eddie” Holbrook at 704-466-3103 or drop by the ALWS Baseball, Inc headquarters at 117-A West Warren Street in Shelby for your free tickets. Well, not really free since you have already paid dearly for them, but you just didn’t know you had already paid for them. Many times over.

Tell “Massa Eddie” that Robert A. Williams sent you.

Folks, I am going to make this article as short and sweet as possible. But it is complex, so pay attention.

Let’s start with the arithmetic and lies.

Taxes: The Commissioners always lie about taxes.

Property Taxes: 57 cents per $100 evaluation. A lie within a lie.

Evaluation is the amount the county says a piece of property is worth. North Carolina law requires property (land) be re-evaluated every eight years. More often is allowed if the County wants to do the re-evaluation more often. This is important to this article because Cleveland County always re-evaluated as often as they could because property values tended to go up. 57 cents per times a new evaluation increase resulted in more taxes being levied, but the commissioners would always claim that tax rate, 57 cents, had not gone up. Now, the big recession hit in 2008 and property values went down. Way down. And way below the previous valuation when property values were way up.

So, what do the commissioners do? Do they lower their valuation to help all those folks who became un-employed. Over 15% of us became unemployed and lots of us that stayed employed worked for lower pay. Lots of folks lost their homes too. But Nooo! The commissioners refused to re-evaluate property until state law said that they had too. Artificially keeping the tax bills high. And they stayed high. Note that this artificially high taxation, without relief from accurate evaluations from about 2009 until around 2017. This time frame is important because that is about the time Massa Eddie Holbrook got elected as a county commissioner and the ALWS craze hit Cleveland County. And don’t forget the tax hike, despite citizens voting overwhelmingly to reject the Holbrook sales tax increase for fire and emergency services, that

county fire taxes were raised 75% by Holbrook and his dunce commissioners to make up for the taxpayer rejection of the sales tax increase. Remember that? It just happened a few years ago.

Now, the time frame noted above included a double whammy on county employees. Their pay rates were frozen but the cost of living increased. Do you county employees and their families remember that? All except for County Manager and the so-called economic development whiz, David Deer. His pay was by contract and he demanded and got four bonus's that I am aware of at $10,000 a pop. On top of his high salary to begin with. Besides him flipping houses in a resort area for major profits in the hundreds of thousands of dollars range. And other business dealings more local. There is much more along this line, but that is a story for another day.

Taxes, in short, during the time frame of the ALWS were kept artificially high by the contrivances (notice I did NOT say "COLLUSAION") of Eddie Holbrook and the commissioners; all the while the ALWS in Shelby was firing up. Regular citizens as well as county employees had their wages either lowered (some to Zero) or frozen-for years. While I will show later in this article that Massa Eddie Holbrook and his commissioner buddies were diverting $Millions in county tax dollars directly to the ALWS Baseball accounts or directly to Massa Eddie.

Secret Sale of the Hospitals and other county owned healthcare facilities to Carolinas Medical Services (CMS) for $100 Million:

First of all, this secret sale of the Hospitals was touted, once it was done, as CMS had come to the Commissioners to make this sale, but wanted it kept confidential. The terms of the sale as described by the commissioners and the Star, never made any sense to me. They were certainly not in the best interest of Cleveland County citizens. The county had financed $77 Million for CMS for 27 years at ZERO interest. So, all the

County got up front from this $100 Million sale was $23 Million to build a new Health Department building—which has since been put up for a loan to build the New North Shelby School Project, give Shelby $11.5 Million for help building water and sewer lines to Clearwater Paper plus $Millions more directly to Clearwater Paper as incentives. All to get only $3 Million per year from CMS on that $77 Million they owed. Which was cheap for CMS as the value of the Hospital property was much likely worth way more than $100 Million to begin with. On which they were renting for $1.4 million per year to start with.

It took several years to learn from sources that the deal to sell the Hospital was the other way around. The Commissioners themselves, under Massa Eddie Holbrook's instigation, went to CMS begging them to purchase the huge county owned assets for a bargain price. The county was drawing down on their reserve funds and almost dead broke from the recession as well as all the so-called economic development incentive giveaways. It took several years more to learn about the $Million Dollar Check the county wrote to Eddie Holbrook and the ALWS. A secret check that was clouded in mystery and downright lies. A check that most likely was a fee secretly charged by Massa Eddie Holbrook to CMS for handing them the Hospitals on such good terms. OR just a plain old bribe from CMS to Holbrook. Read on for the details.

I have attached a copy of that $1,000,000 check as well as a list of $Millions more in county checks to the ALWS. Totaling about $4 Million from 2009 thru 2017. Probably another $Million since then. And who knows how much County dollars the ALWS will get for 2019. We will look into that very soon. But the rub here is this, a telling account of how Cleveland County Commissioners have cheated citizens out of $Millions under false pretenses. The ALWS crowd associated with Eddie Holbrook have continually lied-saying funding for the ALWS was from donations and grants. In reality, the major funding

actually came out of Cleveland County fund accounts put up by taxpayers. Like I said before, read on.

Without further ado, let’s look at some details related to that $1,000,000 check written on County accounts on April 4, 2013. Just about the time the Hospitals were sold to CMS.

For many years I had never heard a peep about this Million-dollar check or all of those other checks totaling another $3 Million. But about mid-year in 2018 sources began to report some shady deals regarding ALWS Baseball and Eddie Holbrook. As the reports came to me they described two Million Dollar checks. One directly to Eddie Holbrook, which Holbrook allegedly deposited directly into his own personal account. Then Holbrook either came to believe or was advised that if he got caught, he might go to prison. So, Massa Eddie then decided to transfer the $Million from his account to the County account and then have the County issue that $Million check attached below to the ALWS Baseball, Inc of which Holbrook was the chairman he was the Chairman. Basically, laundering that million dollars back to himself.

As I tried to understand what I was being told, it became totally apparent that moving a million dollars in and out or around and around in County accounts took some major doings by others besides Eddie Holbrook. Any County Manager that did not know this kind of shenanigans was going on in country accounts deserves to be fired for incompetence. But the County Managers during this time frame; David Deer, Eddie Bailes, Jeff Richardson and now Brian Epley are not incompetent, so they had to know this kind of a financial “culture of corruption” was going on as it was going on. And, likely as not, Brian Epley as the Financial Manager at the time was probably the one who cut the Million Dollar check and kept quiet about it. The other Commissioners too. Perhaps that is why it took over a year and Eddie Holbrook being disgraced and defeated in the 2018 election before the Copy of the Million Dollar check as well as the accounting for over $3 Million more in other

county checks was finally provided to me in December of 2018. Although I had requested, under the, Freedom of Information Act, a copy of both the front and back of that Million Dollar check and only the front was provided-even after numerous follow-up requests. Obviously to withhold from me who actually endorsed and cashed that million-dollar check.

After weighing all the reports and putting the information together, like a jig-saw puzzle, it brought me to this conclusion. It was CMS that cut that first Million Dollar check. Either a bribe or a fee to Eddie Holbrook for his favorable (to CMS) actions to sell the Hospitals at such a cheap price and unheard-of good terms for CMS. CMS must have cut that first million dollar check directly to Eddie Holbrook and Eddie Holbrook deposited THAT check into his personal account. Then Holbrook became aware of his criminal liability for doing such a thing and transferred the million dollars to the county and the county cut a million dollar check back to ALWS Baseball and Massa Eddie Holbrook.

Now let’s add a little more collusion to this confusion. The Accounting (attached) I received from the Commissioners, after Holbrook’s disgrace and defeat, listed the check as “Grant for ALWS – funded by CMS.” But another county ledger, that sources provided to me, listed the purpose for that million dollar check to be “For SHS (Shelby High School) ball field improvements.” Different purposes listed at different times for the same check. The check listings for the Million Dollar check plus the other $3 Million worth of checks was years later and involved CMS about the time of the Hospital sale. Therefore, I have to believe the accounting involving CMS was correct, but was inadvertently released to me by someone new who didn’t know so much about the ALWS cover-up.

I hope you readers were able to follow this piecing together of a jig-saw puzzle like bits of information. But the documents are attached and the conclusion is obvious: There was and is still a culture of corruption surrounding the

American Legion Series World Baseball, Inc. from start to finish. A culture of corruption that was heartless, ruthless and criminal. Thieves and liars all. Knowingly, as Holbrook, Commissioners and County Staff had to be or unknowingly as many of the 600 so-called volunteers who drank the Eddie Holbrook-ALWS Kool-Aid.

But folks, I can't say enough about the blatant and disingenuous lies that were told.

Remember all the tall tales about the two busloads of Cleveland County folks who travelled to Indianapolis to pitch Cleveland County to the American Legion big-shots for the ALWS location? They didn't travel on their own dime. The very first check on the list, for $70,000 says this was for a 2008 Loan from somebody that the County paid on September 30, 2009. Right in the middle of big unemployment and many home foreclosures in Cleveland County.

Remember the tall tale that the ALWS was so popular that ESPN had picked them up for broadcast. Scroll on down the list of checks and see where ESPN was paid by several County taxpayer checks totaling $240,000 or more. Add them up yourself. Don't believe me.

Look at all those checks for SHS ballfield renovation. The "Field of Dreams" as they call it. The ALWS Baseball, Inc spent almost $3 Million on SHS ballfield improvements. I wonder if that includes the "Eddie Holbrook Gate" out front of the SHS Baseball Field. Look around when you attend the 2019 games with your free tickets. (Actually, you can see the gate at any time as it is out front before the ticket booth.) You begin to wonder who owns the Baseball Field? Shelby High School, CCS and taxpayers or Eddie Holbrook and the ALWS. Nonmatter, YOU taxpayers paid for it and Eddie Holbrook and others have THEIR names all over it.

Look at the numerous county checks that say "Operations County

Part.” I count a total of $725,000. Don’t you just wonder why Cleveland County is paying three quarters of a million dollars for ALWS operations. And what is “Operations?” Boondoggle trips and fancy motels and meals. Or what? And that is not even counting the many large checks that just say “ALWS Support.” And why would Cleveland County taxpayer money pay $50,000 for “ALWS UN-BUDGETTED operations expenses?” Or pay for anything else. If the ALWS Baseball can’t support themselves and pay their own bills, just shut’er down. Or let the taxpayers vote on it!!! Perhaps that is why all of this has been kept secret for so long. Taxpayers would NOT approve such expenses. Especially in the middle to the great recession.

Also, the $75,000 Travel/Tourism Grant that Commissioners used taxpayer money to pay ALWS. What was that money used for? And another $75,000 to ALWS for “Marketing, Advertising, Operations?” m
Again, ALWS expenses, not county bills to be paid for by taxpayers.

It goes on and on. Now you have the list. Look through it and find one red cent of the $4 Million the county spent, during hard times for CC citizens, that ALWS fairly deserves from Cleveland County. And note that the list stopped with only one check in 2018. That doesn’t mean that county funding for ALWs stopped with that last check on the list.

It also does not mean that the Commissioners diverted taxpayer funds from other accounts without listing them on this particular list. Maybe another $4 to $5 Million. Or more for that matter. There is no telling about that, but I am going to ask. The Freedom of Information Act is a good thing. NC Public Records laws are good too, although the Commissioners and others usually ignore such requests. And, why should they not ignore these laws? They ignore laws all the time and the DA won’t prosecute. But that too is an article for another day.

It is also no-telling how much county tax money sent to the ALWS Baseball, Inc went into somebody else's pocket. The County, under Commissioner Chairman Massa Eddie Holbrook has not been accountable. Why would any sane person even start to believe the ALWS Baseball Inc, under Massa Eddie Holbrook would be accountable?

You would think that the other commissioners would have done something about this a long time ago. You would think the commissioners NOW would do something about wasting all this taxpayer money without any accountability. I fully expect that the Commissioners will continue funding the ALWS Baseball as is. If so, I will let you know so we can make some changes in the Commissioner's board in the 2020 Commissioner's Elections!!!. Like we did in 2018. New Commissioners Doug Bridges and Deb Harding need some help to form a majority. Let's make it so in 2020.

***Documents are on the next page!**

Stay tuned!!!

[gview file="https://citizensforgoodgovernment.org/online/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/County-Payments-to-ALWS-redacted-1.pdf"]

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