

Commissioners to Build New Jail, Courthouse and DSS too?? No Plans for Auditoriums at Burns and Crest High Schools!! No Plans for Anything—Except to waste money!! And maybe slip another Million Dollar Check to the ALWS!! At May 21, 2019 Commissioner's Meeting Budget Presentation!!! –History and Report by Robert A. Williams

In the 2019-2020 Budget Presentation at the May 21, 2019 Commissioner's meeting information was put out that the Jail, Courthouse and DSS were built in 1965 and there is a need for replacements

As I graduated from Burns at Fallston High School in 1965, that year is significant in my memories. I distinctly remember that the new courthouse and jail was NOT built in 1965, but much later. Like in the late 1980s. And the Jail Annex was built after that.

Of course, Burns High School, Burns Middle School, Crest High School and Crest High School were completed in 1968. Shelby High School and Kings Mountain about that time frame too. Why

was there no mention of building new schools too if the age of the building is the criteria? I knew right then and there that the Cleveland County Commissioners, School Board and any other governmental leadership group in Cleveland County does NOT have any kind of strategic plan on building priorities or the various needs for new facilities or the maintenance of the existing facilities.

"They" are just as likely as not to only think about building new facilities whenever Architect Roger Holland wants another \$million or two (or more) from the county taxpayers. Just like the thought of building new auditoriums at Burns and Crest High Schools. Like, what sense does it make to build brand new multi-million-dollar auditoriums at Burns and Crest when the school buildings are already over 50 years old?

And, that is the question here also. Why build a new courthouse, jail and DSS buildings when these buildings are much less than 50 years old? And why even think about new auditoriums for schools that are over 50 years old??

Also, somebody told Commissioner Deb Hardin that the jail chiller (I think it was the jail chiller) was only 150 tons of cooling when 300 tons of cooling was needed. To me, that means the architect undersized the chiller by half. Certainly no reason to build a new jail. Also, the average life of a chiller is 20-25 years. Should we build a new building every time a chiller wears out? Certainly not. But this provides just another example of bad information being provided to the Commissioners.

And back to the jail and courthouse. Just because one inmate kills another inmate does not justify a brand-new jail. Just because a prisoner hits a deputy and bolts out of the courthouse does not justify a brand-new jail. Just because lawyers thrive on chaos and the DA's Office produces chaos, does not justify a new courthouse. And there is plenty of chaos at the courthouse because the DA's calendar calls and

other inefficient practices generates lines that sometimes exceeded 900 people does not justify a new courthouse either. Just because courtrooms are full of people because they are all told to come to court at 9:00 AM and the Judge does not show up until 10:30 AM is another good reason not to build a new courthouse until the Courts, the jails, and about everything else down at 100 Justice Place is required to enact something practical before a new courthouse is ever necessary.

And then, the six courtrooms that are mostly empty most of the time. That doesn't justify another courthouse either. I have gone court watching probably more times than any other civilian person in Cleveland County. I have seen the inefficiency with my own two eyes.

And the DA leaving people in jail for years before a trial is scheduled. Obviously just to get the inmate to "crack" and take a plea deal. Many times once the inmate signs the plea deal they are let out of court right then on "time served." What kind of justice is that? The kind of Injustice that could befall any one of us that POs the DA or judge that assigns a bond so high that you or anybody else can't pay just to show you who has the power. Who thinks they are the boss.

Now consider the new Shelby Middle School that cost \$22 Million. Built for 800 students but only 200 students attend. The new \$16 Million new North Shelby School project: built for 175 and only 50 attend North Shelby. Shelby Middle School could have absorbed all the students from North Shelby School with plenty of room left over. And \$16 million saved in the process.

I say the "powers that be," the bosses down at the courthouse and in the commissioner's chambers need a little showing of who really holds the power over building anything new. It is us citizens that will end up paying for a new courthouse. Us Taxpayers. Us voters who will throw out of office in 2020 any Commissioner that votes to build a new jail, courthouse, DSS

Building, auditoriums, school or whatever without a proper set of facts, evaluations, considerations and input from the public. Or secretly slip another Million Dollar Check to the ALWS. We are watching YOU!!!

And we demand that the Commissioners hop to it in developing short and long t term plans for new building construction and strategic plans on how to pay for them anywhere in Cleveland County, from now on. And Pronto! And they better not start with a new Jail, new courthouse or a new DSS building for all the reasons noted above.