

# **Cleveland County Commissioners Vote Unanimously for Sales Tax Increase!!! Fully Supported by the Cleveland County Republican Party!! –Report, gossip, arguendo and satire provided by Robert A. Williams**

We are going to start with the Good news:

The Cleveland County Commissioners have become experts in doubletalk, deception and downright lies. The perfect example occurred at the August 6, 2019 Commissioners meeting where commissioners voted unanimously to approve a quarter cent sales tax increase that is expected to bring in \$2,000,000 in additional revenue.

So, what does the County expect to do with the additional money. They say they want to give \$1 Million to CCC and CCS and the other \$1 million to the municipalities. Great, more money for education. Just what everybody needs, more education money. Same with the municipalities. Halleluiah for the great and wonderful Cleveland County Commissioners. More money for education and infrastructure. Hip-Hip-Hurray!!! Sis-boom-bah!! Rah, Rah, Rah!!

But, haven't the Democrats been saying that for years? But the Democrats killed education with Common Core and stupid

indoctrination curricula that takes instructional time away from the basics and adds nothing to workforce development. And infrastructure improvements? More and more tax dollars get spent on infrastructure but our streets and roads are still full of potholes and people like me pay more and more for Shelby sewer right here in Fallston even though many of us, like me, are not even connected. And don't want to be.

But the Republican Commissioners, supported by the Cleveland County

Republican Party lead by the infamous Dennis Bailey, have that all figured out, don't they? They have plans in place. Strategies to minimalize waste and all that. Don't they??? Surely our Great and Wonderful Commissioners explained all that at the August 6, 2019 Commissioners Meeting? Surely they did!!!

Well, if you are ready to have your balloon popped, cover your ears right now. Because the truth is about to come out.

The truth is this whole sales tax thing is a scheme and a fraud. The deception is obvious from the start.

The first sign of a deception is the timing of the necessary "Resolution" that has to be voted on by the people during an election. The 2019 elections are all non-Partisan city mayors, councilmen, etc. Only the County Water Board elections plus municipal elections come close to being County-Wide enough that maybe everybody gets a chance to vote for somebody somewhere. These elections are usually very, very low with an actual turnout of less than 10%. So why didn't the Commissioners choose to have their tax increase referendum vote in 2020, a Presidential Election year with a record voter turnout expected???

The answer to that question is simple. A low voter turnout brings out fewer people and allows special interests to stir up their supporters to pass a resolution with less effort. It

works too. Such a vote as this brought Cleveland County liquor by the drink, A county school tax and a school merger that never merged. To just name a few. It also brought us the Kings Mountain dominated School Board that has been proven corrupt so many times that state laws had to be changed to make that election partisan and on the even year cycle with more voter participation. Starting in 2020.

Another key part of the commissioner's deception is the fact that the county is broke and needs the extra cash to keep up with their tax and spend (I should say spend and tax) lifestyle.

This expected \$2 Million extra revenue is per year. Not a one-time only tax for specified purposes. \$2,000,000 per year, EVERY YEAR from now on. So, even if the Commissioners do give an additional \$1 million to both CCC/CCS and municipalities this year for specified purposes, what about next year and the next???

Did the Commissioner's Resolution or anything else tell us that? NOoooo is the answer to that.

But history tells us that when one tax increase goes to schools, the Commissioners lower other funding to schools to make up the difference. Go back and look at TOTAL County funding to schools before the County School tax and the school merger and after. Call me if you need more details on that switcheroo. Just another reason Burns and Crest never got swimming pools and auditoriums. And never will.

So Williams, what does the sales tax increase Resolution actually say? I will do you one better than that. I will attach the Resolution at the end of this article and let you read it yourself. Pay close attention to Sections 3 and 4 which state:

Section 3: It is the intention of the Cleveland County Commissioners to invest additional sales tax proceeds, up to

\$1,000,000, proportionately to Cleveland Community College and public schools in Cleveland County for the purpose of funding educational capital projects.

Section 4: It is the intention of the Cleveland County Commissioners to invest additional sales tax proceeds up to \$1,000,000 to be used for Community Development projects through a competitive Municipal Grant Program of which all Cleveland County municipalities are eligible to apply.

**Section 3** has no specific capital projects noted. One can only guess that this extra money will go to build a new girls softball field at Shelby High School to overcome a Federal Title IX violation. It's hard to say what CCC will get as they already have \$10-12 Million state grants for an Advanced Manufacturing Center without yet knowing just what equipment they will be putting in the AMC.

**Section 4** also has no specific needs for any named municipality project. One can only guess, as history has shown, that 90%+ of this \$1 million will go to the City of Shelby for some unnamed Community Development Project. Another educated guess is this money will get earmarked so the City of Shelby can begin to pay off Willie Green's Federal Lawsuit against Shelby and Rick Howell. At this point in Mr. Green's lawsuit, this money may not be enough.

Now, for the not-so-good news.

It has come to our attention that newly elected Commissioner Deb Hardin was subjected to intense and extreme pressure of some sort to vote in favor of this sales tax increase resolution. Pressure, in part, to show a phony public relations-based campaign that this commissioner's vote was unanimous and for other unknown reasons. Many of Deb's supporters in the animal control world are very upset that Deb caved to this pressure. They are also upset because of an incident at the animal control facility where a secret

inspection request for a Raleigh based surprise inspection of the Cleveland County animal control facility was tipped off to local people and the "mess" was cleaned up before the Raleigh inspector arrived. It is a well justified suspicion, that knowing of Deb Hardin's passion for animals, the Commissioner Chairman Susan Allen had a hand in pressuring Deb Hardin to vote for the tax increase in exchange for some better arrangements at the animal control facility.

We urge Commissioner Deb Hardin to go public with the illegal acts of pressure put upon her to vote for tax increases that she otherwise would have voted against. And when I say illegal acts, North Carolina Open Meeting laws require that all public business conducted by Commissioners is to be conducted in meetings that are open to the public. We believe that such pressures as alleged to have been put upon Commissioner Deb Hardin would never occur in any open session of a Commissioners meeting. Any county business conducted outside a public meeting is a clear and blatant violation of state law. Although it is never prosecuted in Cleveland County

Now, after all tis is said and done, this Sales tax increase resolution will be placed on the November 5, 2019 Cleveland County General Election Ballot. It is the people's opportunity to speak. The ballot language is simple. It says:

*Local sales and use tax at the rate of one quarter percent (0.25%) in addition to all other State and local sales and use taxes.*

**[ ] FOR [X] AGAINST**

All us simple country bumpkin Cleveland County voters have to do is mark AGAINST this tax increase, like we did the last time, and this battle and all the silly commissioner and County Manager games are over and done with. At least until the next battle in 2020 when the Three problem Commissioners: Susan Allen, Ronnie Whetstine and Johnny Hutchins are up for re-election and can be gotten rid of. All you good

conservative Commissioner candidates step up and take our county back. Just say NO to waste and tax increases to cover waste and corruption. And hire a County Manager who will follow the Conservative message.