

**Part II: Commissioners
Hutchins and Whetstine
Blowing Smoke!!?? Fact
Checking—Questions-involving
Candidate Forum held at CCC!!
And other Statements and
Communications!!!
Commissioner Johnny Hutchins
Says “YOU (me) Are Blowing
Smoke” Recommend
Commissioners Hutchins, Allen
and Whetstine Resign!! Fact
Checking Questions provided
and shared by Robert A.
Williams Recommendations Made
by Robert A. Williams**

Editor's Note: Part I of this article was initially intended to be a Public Records Request to Cleveland County Government to obtain documented evidence to “Fact Check” what I believed to be false or inflated statements made by County Commissioner Candidates Johnny Hutchins and Ronnie Whetstine (or anybody else) at the February 13, 2020 Commissioner Candidate Forum

held at Cleveland Community College and other campaign information put out by those candidates and Commissioner Meetings and anywhere else they may be out soliciting votes. Then provide what I learn to the voters in Cleveland County. I will do the same for any other candidates between now and Election Day 2020.

This article relates to a call I received from Commissioner Johnny Hutchins on Feb, 21, 2020.

The call from Commissioner Johnny Hutchins came in at 09:17 on Friday, February 21, 2020. I picked up the phone.

Commissioner Hutchins immediately began to rant at me, saying "YOU (me) are the one blowing smoke." Apparently in regard to my article posted the day before.

Commissioner Hutchins went on to say that he "did NOT have any county prepared "Cheats" as I had opined, that he had done his own research and wrote it down on pieces of paper. When I responded that those pieces of paper were typed-up on County Letterhead, Commissioner Hutchins just moved his rant on to something else. And, I couldn't get a word in edgewise.

Commissioner Hutchins made some incoherent statements about the number of employees in Cleveland County and that he "didn't know anything about **Project Fix**." When I tried to respond to him that he had voted for **Project Fix** at the February 4, 2020 Commissioner's Meeting, Commissioner Hutchins hung up the phone.

After a brief period of thought about what Commissioner Hutchins had said about **Project Fix**, I came to the realization that perhaps Commissioner Johnny Hutchins most likely did NOT know about this co-called "**Project Fix**," even though he had **voted for it**.

Perhaps for several reasons-all of them bad.

One thing is for sure. There is a Project Fix. At least according to the approved minutes of the February 4, 2020 Commissioner's Meeting. An official Document with legal standing.

But there is a catch. According to Commissioner documents, Project Fix is a \$3 Million program to fix-up houses to increase the population and tax base. All well and good. Except the City of Shelby is demolishing houses as fast as they can. 58 was the last count.

So, why is the County Commissioners and the Shelby City Counsel working at cross purposes. One possible reason is Shelby is moving the black population out of Shelby slums near the Rail-Trail and Thread Trail, where big high dollar housing will take their place. And move their crime areas out in the county? What about that Commissioner Johnny Hutchins and Ronnie Whetstine? Is that the plan? Make big dollars for the real estate developers.

Another catch is this Project Fix approval was "hidden" in the Commissioner Meeting "Consent Agenda" as sub-part of the Meeting Agenda. Consent Agenda items have historically been very minor, mostly clerical and administrative stuff that needs no formal discussion. But they require Commissioner approval just the same. Usually there are four to five, sometimes ten or so Consent Agenda Items that are all read off by the County Manager and then all of them are approved by a single vote that includes them all with no discussion by the Commissioners. At least no discussion in public at an open meeting. But lately, I have discovered that the Commissioners, probably with some conniving by the County Manager have taken to sneaking in much larger items that have or should have the need to discuss in open session, being hidden in the Consent Agenda. Clearly a corrupt attempt to fool the general public.

I have started looking closely at Consent Agenda items that are in reality should NOT be Consent Agenda Items because they

do need discussion and explanation for the public to know what the Commissioners are up to. I find such items from time to time. More often in recent times.

At the February 4th 2020 Commissioner's Meeting there were eight items on the Consent Agenda.

Item C was titled Travel and Tourism. It was listed as "Budget Amendment" where some money was either spent or received. A Closer look into this time showed that the County Commissioners have "Partnered Up" with the several groups, including the Town of Boiling Springs, The Kings Mountain TDA, The Don Gibson Theater, The Earl Scruggs Center, and the American Legion World Series. To pay for some Travel Advertising. The county taxpayers paid part and the other partners paid a part. It is known that the Don Gibson Theater, Earl Scruggs Center and the ALWS survive on payments to them by the County. So, the only way they can pay anything is to take money the county gives them to pay with. Which means of the six entities, the County effectively paid four of the six parts. Probably the same with Boiling Springs and Kings Mountain. Such as this kind of Partnership should be told to the Citizens of Cleveland County. That the County Commissioners are paying most of and probably all of the cash to operate the partnerships the County gets into. But hide such facts such as this through smoke and mirror tricks such as this Item C on the Consent Agenda.

Item G was more insidious, sneaky and likely to be corrupt. It was titled Economic Development and subtitled Building Reuse Grant Resolution. You would think this was a search for a grant to help pay for a building somewhere to maybe be re-fitted for a job creating business. No matter, it deserved some discussion.

But, NOooo!!! No discussion here!!! But a deeper dive into the cover-up pile of "hokum" (A Charm School word for corruption or bull-shit or both) showed this was in reality the Project

Fix that Commissioner Johnny Hutchins claimed he didn't know anything about. Although now it is crystal clear that Hutchins voted to approve Project Fix.

In the so-called Resolution part in the subtitle, this Project Fix is to create new, full-time jobs for 25 people making \$40,378 per year. That alone is a \$1,009,450 payroll to be used in fixing up houses or something???

But then the resolution says Project Fix includes the acquisition and improvement of real property and tangible personal property, totaling more than Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000). Personal Property??? That should raise some suspicions!!

It goes on to say, PROJECT FIX, anticipates creating approximately Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000) in net new investment, which will increase the population, taxable property base, and business prospects for the County!!!

In general, this Project Fix generates much more questions than answers. Especially when it was couched in a sneaky and likely corrupt way that offends the concept of transparency and conjures up suspicions of self -dealing. Especially since Commissioner Ronnie Whetstine stated in the February 13, 2020 commissioner's candidate forum at CCC that "1,000 new houses were coming to Kings Mountain." And Whetstine happens to be a building contractor in Kings Mountain. Such as this has to make you wonder if this non-transparent **Project Fix** is nothing more than an inside wheeling and Dealing payoff to somebody- that may include kickbacks straight to the Commissioners.

Otherwise, why does Commissioner Johnny Hutchins refuse to talk about something that he has just voted for without one word of discussion. According to the Feb 4th 2020 Commissioners Minutes, the Project Fix item in the consent agenda was approved by a unanimous vote with no discussion at that time. And, now, nobody else wants to say a word about

it. Even though I sent a Freedom of Information Act request about this Project Fix to the Commissioners and nobody will reply.

I don't know about the rest of you readers, But I recommend voting in the 2020 Republican Primary Elections as shown below. I don't intend to ever vote for Commissioners who do such things as described in this article.

My recommendations for Commissioners and School Board Elections are as shown below.

Voting Guide!!!

2020 Primary Elections for Cleveland County

County Commissioners and Cleveland County Board of Education

Note: These are Republican Primary Elections as

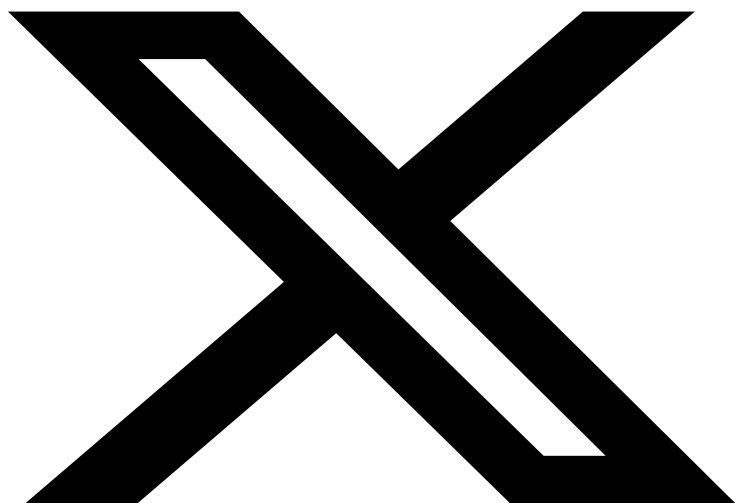
There are No Democrat Primary Elections for these offices!!!

2020 Primary Elections–Voting Guide

County Commissioners

2020 Republican Primary Elections for County Commissioner

Sample Ballot



2020 Republican Primary Elections for School Board

Sample Ballot

Mark as Shown

You May Vote for Five



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