Commissioners Vote to Raise Property Taxes Next Year!!! Re-evaluation of Property, Three Years Early!!! The story with NO Happy Ending has begun to hurt taxpayers!! You deserve it, I told you so and YOU did nothing!! By Robert A. Williams

I have written about this a number of times. This should NOT be anything new. I told you that this was coming and YOU did nothing at the ballot box. YOU let this happen.

North Carolina law requires all counties to re-evaluate real property every four years. It is a county option to reevaluate more often. When property values go up counties tend to re-evaluate more often since they can raise more revenue without the liability of raising taxes going on their voting record at the next election. If property values go down, counties tend NOT to re-evaluate, until they have to -the 8-year law-because their tax revenue will go down.

For Cleveland County, it is all about the revenue. The amount of money they can extort out of your pocket and into theirs. Mostly so they can give away money to their friends (or projects backed by their friend) like the Fair, The American Legion World Series, Baseball, Inc. i.e. Eddie “Massa Eddie” Holbrook, the Shooting Range etc.

And, remember, these Commissioners ain't too smart. They sold OUR Hospital and Healthcare facilities for million$ when they could have gotten BILLION$. Wike New Hanover County sold their Hospital for 5 Billion just recently. But, don't believe me. Look it up for yourself. I've done your research for so long and YOU don't pay attention. YOU keep electing the same ole crowd.

This is what happened in 2008. Early in 2008.

Property values were skyrocketing because of the housing bubble Wall Street Scheme. Cleveland County's 8-year reevaluation time was up and they re-evaluated everything sky high. Then the housing bubble burst and the greatest recession since Wall Street fell in 1929 hit everywhere. Especially here in Cleveland County where we always seem to be over-run with corruption at the County Commissioner level.

Cleveland County was especially hit hard by the big recession of 2008. Jobs were lost and unemployment skyrocketed. Many people began to over extend and then losing their homes went from a possibility to a probability. And then to homelessness. All the while, the commissioners went "Ho-Hum, things are bad everywhere."

And, what did our Commissioners do? Did they re-evaluate property to reflect the times and help people in need??? Did they do that??? Oh NOooooo!!! No re-evaluation and on top of that, they froze the salaries of County Employees. I just happened to attend the Commissioner's Meeting at the Shelby Airport (they moved the meeting location, apparently so nobody would come-but I went anyway. I had smelled a rat.

Then County Manager Jeff Richardson told the Commissioners that" the County Employee Pay Scale could NOT be maintained." And that the "County would have to dip deep into reserves to "pay the bills." I heard that with my own two ears.

So, what did the County do? They froze salaries, which was

already low. They decided, ON PURRPOSE, to NOT re-evaluate property until they had to in 2016. At the end of the 8-year law.

One thing the Cleveland County Commissioners DID NOT DO was to curb spending on boondoggle projects. The worst boondoggle was Massa Eddies ALWS Baseball, Inc. Massa Eddie got Millions in County Checks. All the while every property owner was paying higher taxes to support the Commissioner's foolishness and fiscal irresponsibility.

Then 2016 hit and the Commissioners were forced to re-evaluate property values. Obama had bailed out the Wall Street crooks and property values had only increased slightly. So, the Commissioners, who has to Re-evaluate by law, did so and property was re-evaluated by an independent group at a much lower rate than the 2008 evaluation. The county lost a couple of Million dollars in revenue in 2016. So, they dipped more into reserves.

Then, in November of 2016 Donald Trump was elected President and businesses took off and the very high unemployment rates ultimately dropped to record low unemployment rates. Especially in the black community.

So, the never-ending spending Cleveland County Commissioners began planning to re-evaluate property much sooner than the 2024 date as required by law. By February 2020 the Dow Jones Industrial Average had risen to a record of 29,551. The Commissioners, after losing twice in ill conceived sales tax increase referendums decided it was time to spring the trap on property tax increases. By 2021 becomes the plan instead of 2024 as required by law. What the heck, raise taxes in 2021 as well as in 2024 too.

Now, the October 2020 Commissioners Meeting comes around and the 2021 Re-evaluation is on the agenda. I go early so I an pay my 2020 property taxes and then go the Commissioners

meeting too. I suppose I am like everybody else when paying property tax rolls around. I get riled up and then it wears off until next year's tax bills come in. I signed up for Citizens Participations and my topic was TAXES. The 2020 Elections are taking place and these fool commissioners are blatantly raising taxes? I would give them a piece of my mind. And I did. But first I did some figuring. I was early for the meeting and the first one there.

The Commissioners are always bragging on them not raising tax rates over the past so many years. 57 Cents per hundred dollars of evaluation. As I looked at my tax bill receipt, I could see the 57 cents as a general county tax rate. But there were other things too. School Tax, Fire tax, Town of Fallston tax and a garbage disposal tax were all there too. I added all these extra's and came up with an additional 40 cents per Hundred dollars evaluation. My property tax paid was based on a rate of **97 cents per 100 dollars evaluation. NOT 57 cents.**

As I sat there all alone in the Commissioner's meeting room, I also realized something else. The School Tax that the commissioners pay to Cleveland County Schools is NOT based on the school tax revenue, but on a fixed amount per student. **So, an increase in school tax revenue based on a higher property evaluation does not get passed along to Cleveland County Schools.** It must be the same for the Fire Tax, the Fallston tax as well as the garbage fee/tax. These Commissioners certainly seem apply their corruption and lies with equal opportunity for all.

But, in the meeting, I only had three minutes under citizens participation so I did not have time to get into the commissioners screwing the school children and every body else out of tax dollars. I had to limit my presentation to the simplest of terms. At the end of my presentation I simply asked "Why are you doing this property re-evaluation when you don't have to?" I knew the answer; It was to raise tax revenues, to take more money out of taxpayers' pockets and put

it in their pockets. They refused to answer.

And things get worse. Later in some discussion, it was noted that the re-evaluation would not be done by an outside independent entity. It is going to be done inhouse in the County Manager's Office. Since I have already determined that County Manager Brian Epley has become a master of disguise and at cooking the books. So, this inside job makes sense. They can all sit in front of their computers and pick and choose who they want to screw on the re-evaluation and which one of their friends and buddies get a big break. If there is a more perfect crime, I do not know what it is.

But, hey. This commissioner's meeting ain't over yet. The DSS Director Katie Swanson is on the agenda.

Basically, Director Swanson presented a slid show showing how COVID-19 had affected citizens of Cleveland County. Food stamps are up. Child support collections are WAY down because the courts are closed. But nutrition is important. There was some mention of fraud, but I couldn't tell if she was talking about Foodstamps being used to finance drug usage and drug dealing or what? All I know about that is that before her time, NO Food stamp fraud had ever been prosecuted. Swanson also bragged about paying maximum benefits to help DSS clients. Which sounded good. Then, later, she says the extra benefits would be paid back! Good luck with that, I thought.

I also thought about all the COVID-19 restriction that had put so many out of work and have or will bankrupt so many businesses. About the time that the COVID laws that prohibit landlords from evicting people that haven't paid their rent, or the mortgage or whatever comes to an end. When people may actually find work, but have all this debt hanging over their heads. And here comes the Cleveland County Commissioners significantly raising their property tax bills. All on top of losing BILLION$ in the Hospital giveaway!

I suppose life is not fair sometimes. Especially in Cleveland County, North Carolina, USA. Where we keep on letting the County Commissioners screw-over us and then thank them by putting them back into office.

The Commissioners will make their final vote to raise property tax bills on November, 17, 2020. Perhaps you folks that like to complain about your taxes ought to show up at the meeting and watch them screw over you one more time. Of course, all you invisible people can sign up for Citizens Recognition and thank them for making you see the light. Way too late.

Oh well. I told you so. First time, shame on the commissioners. Second, third and so on; Shame on YOU.