

**School Board votes to
endanger students??!! Old
North Shelby School
Sale—Payment 8 Months
Overdue!!! \$250 Teacher
Bonus—Pay for voting for
incumbents??? School
Startup?? Indecision on
Steroids!!! & Other Political
Dirty Tricks by the School
Board At their October 26,
2020 Meeting. Eye Witness
Report, evaluation and
arguendo by Robert A.
Williams**

The October 26, 2020 Cleveland County School Board Meeting, held in the middle of the 2020 Elections Early voting, was long on hot-air talk, poor mouthing the NC General Assembly for not giving them more money to waste and short on good decision making. And full of examples of an accumulation of bad management and the lack of any strategic planning to resolve any of the multitude of past, present and future problems and issues at CCS. We suggest that everybody watch

the meeting video to see for yourself.

In the meantime, we will hit the high spots of the meeting. But, not necessarily in the order of the meeting.

Probably the best example of the worst possible board discussions and bad decision the School Board made was regarding new air conditioning at the Burns and Crest High School gymnasiums. Let's forget for a moment about the promises for new auditoriums at Burns and Crest High Schools that the incumbent board members make around every election. Now floors at the Crest High School gym and new air conditioning for seem to be the best offers to buy votes from county residents.

Some facts. All high schools in Cleveland County are over 50 years old. Shelby and Kings Mountain High Schools have swimming pools and auditoriums while Burns and Crest High Schools do NOT have swimming pools and air conditioning. Shelby and Kings Mountain schools get nice sports facilities, ball fields and high priority fixes when things go wrong. Burns and Crest High Schools get the leftovers, if they get anything at all. Like real and effective fixes for the major mold infestations at Burns and Crest High Schools. Even the little things, like changing HVAC filters at Burns and Crest High Schools are done after 14 months instead of every month like they should be.

So, Air conditioning the gyms at Burns and Crest High Schools are nice, but are way over due.

At last night's school board meeting the Air conditions bids for the Burns and Crest High School gyms were presented to the school board for approval. \$562,000 total was the low bid. Not a small sum.

But, the only thing actually provided to the board was the bid costs. Not a peep about just exactly what was going to be provided for such an amount. Or even what CCS had actually

specified in their requests for proposals from HVAC contractors. And nobody within CCS or outside CCS that knew anything about HVAC was present to answer any questions from the board. Only Superintendent Stephen Fisher and Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Wampler. Neither of which had any education, training, experience or even knowledge of how air conditioning operates and the necessary maintenance needed to maintain the equipment for proper operation and performance. It was like the old saying, "when the blind leads the blind, they all fall in the ditch." And they all fell in the ditch.

First, The addition of new air conditioning equipment at the Burns and Crest High School gymnasiums:

Board Member Danny Blanton reminded the Board that this new air-conditioning installation was not a small sum and that the health of students at Burns and Crest High Schools, endangered by the serious mold infestations needed to be fixed immediately. AND, that funds were short. Therefore "needs" should have priority over "wants." That the health of students should have a higher priority over the desire to be in a cool environment. When Blanton brought up the fact that the sale of the old North Shelby School to Mt. Calvary Church for \$550,000 had not been paid for yet and with that owed money, when collected would help resolve the cost issues involved with both the mold and hot gymnasium issues at Burns and Crest High Schools.

When Blanton mentioned the money owed on the sale of the old North Shelby School not being collected, all hell broke loose. Oh, we need those hot gyms to be cooled. That is Not a "want," that is a need, other board members were saying. Especially those incumbents running for re-election (Shearra Miller, Richard Hooker and Roger Harris) and their buddies (Bully Glover, Jo Boggs and Coleman Hunt). Board Chairman Shearra Miller was also active in shutting down Danny Blanton. She said that the action before the board was the Air Conditioning of Burns and Crest High School auditoriums, Not the old North

Shelby school. In the end, the vote was 8-1 in favor of authorizing the installation of the AC at the Burns and Crest High School Gymnasiums.

But, as I was sitting there listening to the discussion, I was quickly understanding that the School Board totally lacked management skills. They had no system of prioritizing projects. They had no strategic plan to properly maintain the equipment they have or planning for new construction of schools as they reach the end of their useful life. Or in the financing of that construction. As my mind was comprehending all of this, I realized the School Board had no strategic planning for anything. They were just making lists of what needed to be fixed and Shelby and Kings Mountain got first priority and Burns and Crest got what was left over. If anything. Since all the High Schools are over 50 years old and the useful life can be stretched to 60 or 70 years, strategic planning for construction and planning should have started 10 years ago. I thought, What a mess?? This should be the SECOND thing a new school Board majority should do. Initiate a comprehensive strategic plan for the OVERALL operation of CCS. Of course the FIRST thing a new School Board should do is reorganize the CCS organizational chart to reflect the necessary functions of operating and maintaining the overall structure of CCS Operations (including strategic planning) and fill those positions with qualified personnel who are trained and experienced with the necessary skills needed to perform that particular function.

But, the vote to install the air conditioning at the Burns and Crest High School Gymnasiums contains a risk of serious injury and death on a large scale that was not considered or discussed at the school board meeting and likely not considered in the bid specifications, bidding process as well as the air conditioning equipment installation and subsequent gym usage.

It goes like this.

During the original construction of Burns and Crest High Schools over 50 years ago, the gymnasium roof support structure inadvertently contained a design flaw that greatly diminished the roof's strength. However, the design flaws were not discovered and the gymnasiums were built and the gymnasiums put into action.

Everything appeared to be fine for a while. The gymnasiums were filled to capacity for Friday night basketball games and everybody was happy. However, one Friday night in the winter of 1969, the Burns gym was packed to capacity for a basketball game and everything was fine and dandy. That next Saturday night the weather dropped to around freezing and there was a misty rain. A thin sheet of ice built up on the roof. The same weather front hit the Crest High School gym that very same night, but the temperature was slightly above freezing, so the liquid water drained off the roof without adding extra weight to the Crest gym roof.

That next Sunday morning, somebody discovered that the Burns High School gymnasium roof had disappeared. A closer inspection revealed the gym walls had bowed out just a little and the entire roof, structural steel and all, had collapsed flat onto the gym floor. Front to back and side to side. If anybody had been inside that gymnasium at the exact time of the roof collapse, they would have been killed instantly. If the storm had happened 24 hours before, the capacity crowd would have all been killed instantly. Cleveland County Schools immediately closed down the gymnasium at Crest High School and shored up the roof with additional support structures until the design flaw was identified and corrected. The roof for the Burns High School gymnasium was eventually rebuilt with the design flaw fixed.

Now, fast forward to 2020, and the School Board approving the addition of air conditioning equipment that will be installed and supported by the gymnasium roof. Air conditioning equipment is heavy and that this extra weight must be

accounted for in strength calculations to determine whether or not the strength of the roof support structure is sufficient to hold this additional weight with sufficient strength left over to safely suspend this extra weight as well as the original weight from the roof construction-with a sufficient safety margin. There was no discussion of this extra weight on the roof structure being recalculated to determine if the roof would be safe after this air conditioning equipment installation. There was no indication that an architect had been consulted to determine that the Burns and Crest High School gymnasium roofs would be safe after the new air conditioning equipment installation. There was no indication that either CCS or the air conditioning equipment contractors had even thought of making such a calculation. Without notification that a certified calculation performed by a Registered and Licensed Structural Engineer of the roof's ultimate strength will indeed withstand the additional weight plus an adequate safety margin, you have to assume that the roof's structure is NOT strong enough to safely support the additional weight. Therefore you must stop all work on the air conditioning installation, operation as well as allowing the gymnasium to be occupied, until a Registered and Licensed structural engineer does provide notification that the addition of the air conditioning equipment is safe. From all information provided to the School Board, there is NO indication that the propose installation of the air condition equipment at Burns and Crest High School gymnasiums will result in a gymnasium that is safe for human occupancy.

Note that I spoke during the Public Participation portion at the end of the October 26, 2020 school board meeting regarding the School Board "not knowing what they do not know" regarding the Air conditioning installation, but was not provided sufficient time to add a warning that this installation would not be safe for gymnasium human occupancy until the proper calculations are made and that adequate safety margins are indeed available. Thus, putting the lives of students,

teachers and the public at an unnecessary risk of serious injury and death. YOU be the judge of whether Shearra Miler, Richard Hooker and Roger Harris deserve to be re-elected to the school board. From what I have seen from them, they DO NOT deserve to be re-elected since they would jeopardize the safety of students and staff for personal political advantage.

Next, the failure of the school board to collect the remaining \$522,500 from the auction sale of the old North Shelby School:

The auction sale of the old North Shelby School property, valued at \$1.2 Million, was sold at auction to Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Pastored by Rev. Dr. Lamont Littlejohn, for \$550,000 back in February, 2020. A 5% (\$27,500) of the sale price was put up by Rev. Littlejohn's Church and nobody upset that bid. Not one cent has been paid on the remaining \$522,000 in the past eight months. In this time the old North Shelby has been broken-in to and vandalized. Thus lowering the proper value. A review of North Carolina law regarding such sale defaults, if Mr. Calvary does not immediately consummate the sale that they committed to, the property could be resold by Cleveland County Schools and if the new sale price is less than the \$550,000 bid by Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Mt. Calvary would be liable to CCS for making up the difference. Since Mt. Calvary appears unable to meet their obligation to purchase the old North Shelby School at the agreed upon price, has not properly maintained or secured the property over the past eight months, the property has likely been used for drug deals and other illicit purposes, the value of the property has diminished and it may not bring \$550,000 on a resale of the property. Especially at this time of high unemployment and business uncertainty.

It is therefore foolish for the Cleveland County School Board to illegally continue carrying such a debt when CCS has to refrain from necessary maintenance and operation of their other property while Mt. Calvary waivers on their legal commitment to pay for the property that they have so long ago

purchased. It is also "rumored" that incumbent school board candidates Shearra Miller, Richard Hooker and Roger Harris, assisted by Phillip Glover are refraining from collection on the Mt. Calvary debt as a political payoff for Rev. Littlejohn and some reported members, headed up by Mary Degree, to deliver "Black" votes for Miller, Hooker and Harris in this 2020 School Board election. Such "rumors" certainly appear to be well founded and true as the aggressive and unethical (if not illegal) behavior of Mary Degree and others at the Early Voting site over at the LeGrand Center has been well documents by many eye witness accounts. Mary Degree has especially targeted School Board Candidate Samantha Davis for untrue statements as well as moving or otherwise "stealing" Samantha Davis yard signs. Election and law enforcement officials have yet to put a stop to Mary Degree's notorious and vicious shenanigans. Some, including myself, believe that the CCS School Board, led by Shearra Miller, Richard Hooker and Roger Harris, if re-elected, will eventually forgive the \$522,500 debt owed by Mt. Calvary Church for political services rendered during the 2020 Elections.

The \$250 Teacher Bonus for "classified" teachers at Cleveland County Schools is "rumored" to be essentially a "vote-buying" scheme by 2020 Election School Board incumbents running for re-election-Shearra Miller, Richard Hooker and Roger Harris!!??

It should be duly noted here that this so-called Classified teacher "bonus" was not on the agenda, but slipped in by Board Chair Shearra Miler in between the School Personnel Report section of the meeting agenda and North Carolina School Bord Association section of the Agenda. Chairman Shearra Miler received approval of the normal and then seamlessly slipped into this secret item, apparently hoping that nobody would notice. Personnel Report. However, I have attended school board meeting for many years now and am always on the lookout for such shenanigans.

Miller turned the floor over to Supt. Fisher and Fisher went into a diatribe about the North Carolina General Assembly funding a pay increase for full time teachers way back in the summer. Even though teachers were not teaching back in the summer. Fisher's talking points seemed to indicate that the GNC General Assembly had purposeily left out pay increases for part time teachers. Board member Danny Blanton quickly weighed in on CCS Superintendent Stephen Fisher's false statement by explaining that the NC General Assembly had indeed included raises for all teachers, full time as well as part time, but Governor Roy Cooper had vetoed the General Assembly's bill.

Fisher went on explaining that he had found some "Local Money" that could be diverted into a one time bonus that would add \$250 dollars to the classified teachers NOVEMBER pay check for part time teachers who worked between 20 to 40 hours per week and \$150 to the NOVEMBER paycheck for teachers who worked less than 20 hours per week. The motion passed.

Now, lets' figure this out. No such bonus's had ever been given to teachers before. 2020 Election day is November 3rd. And Shearra Miller, Richard Hooker and Roger Harris are facing good and solid opposition in this years elections. Miller, Hooker and Harris are totally afraid and in a panic that they will rightfully be thrown out of office. So, the when and why this obvious attempt to "buy votes" using taxpayer money becomes crystal clear. This is my learned opinion and I am sticking to it. Teachers and taxpayers, If you have any sense, vote for Samantha Davis, Robert Queen, Ron Humphries, Joel Shores and Rodney Fitch in the 2020 School Board Elections. These recommended candidates will stand up for teachers as well as taxpayers and will certainly NOT get into an illegal vote buying scheme.

Starting up Cleveland County Schools delayed-AGAIN!!!

After about two hours of endless hot air from this "shut down the economy" school board majority, the School Board finally

agreed to delay the start of four day a week schools. They decided to wait until the November 9th school board meeting to decide what to do with a 4-day a week school startup for Pre-k, K and 1st grade only. With a tentative start date of November 16, 2020. All the while TV news says the City of Rock Hill South Carolina is preparing to restart their schools with 5-day at school teaching that will begin in just a few days. This has to be a sure indication of CCS joining in on shutting down the economy as a means to beat President Donald Trump on November 3rd. As well as help Governor Roy "Crooked Roy" Cooper and others in office.

My recommendations to fix all of this "dirty politics" and those general liars that practice dirty politics is shown on the attached 2020 Cleveland County Sample Ballots. Don't be deceived by the deceivers. Vote smart by voting for all of those recommended candidates. You will be glad you did.

PS: One last example of School Board stupidity.

The School Board voted unanimously to sole-source purchase a "learning lab" for Shelby Middle school for over \$23,000. The "self contained" lab is designed teach Introduction to Culinary Arts to Shelby Middle School students. The items provided in this Lab are two computer programs for a tidy sum of over \$23,000 with a refrigerator with a freezer, a microwave convection oven, some Pro-Gem oil and powder (whatever that is), an ultraviolet flashlight, some anti-bacterial hand soap, a Demonstration table and a Demonstration table mirror as optional items at an additional cost. It was apparently a miracle that CCS did not purchase those optional items.