

New School Board Members—Same as the Old??? Crooks and Liars keeping secrets from the Public?? Promise of Transparency already badly broken!!! Offer to assist with HVAC Technical Problems Withdrawn!!! \$1.5 Million Property already given away??? Report, facts, evaluation and conclusions by Robert A. Williams

Editor's Note: This article was withheld for two days pending verification of events at the January 25, 2021 School Board Meeting. Now, please consider this as Part I of a two (at least) article series. The New School Board Majority members, under the inept and corrupt leadership of Chairman Robert Queen, have turned Transparency at School Board meetings into a joke of secrecy and a disaster at Board Meetings. To say the least. You will be shocked and alarmed by this article and those to come.

Folks, I usually start my articles with some background information and then move to the point in question. This time I am going straight to the point. Did all us voters in Cleveland County just vote overwhelmingly to put in place a

brand-new set of school board members who are crooks and liars just as bad (maybe worse) than the old set we just threw out of office?

The following is an email message I received from Robert Queen, the New School Board Chairman, in regard to a School Board "Committee Meeting" that was scheduled to be held at 11AM this past Friday, January 22, 2021. This message below is exactly as it was sent. NO changes to the message have been made. Nothing has been added or subtracted

Sent: Friday, January 22, 2021 10:14 AM

To: raw@shelby.net ; 'Stephen Fisher' ; 'All School Board CCS'

Cc: 'Robert Queen (Gmail)' ; 'Joel Shores' ; 'Ron Humphries' ; 'Rodney Fitch' ; 'Danny Blanton51'

Subject: RE: SECOND REQUEST--: School Board/CCC BoT Committee Meetings-Exact locations, agenda time and dates.

Mr. Williams,

Agendas for committee meetings are informal and can change on the spot. There are no published agendas before the Committee meetings are for the board and staff to gather and discuss information to be presented to the full board so there is no mechanism for public input at a committee meeting. meetings. Minutes of committee meetings will be posted on Board Docs in the next formal board meeting agenda.

Robert Queen

Chair – Cleveland Co BOE

My reply is found below. I have underlined some portions for your convenience. Also note that this exchange is now a public record.

Mr. Queen,

Thank you for your written response.

I strongly disagree with your approach to meetings, agendas, record keeping and especially “no mechanism for public input.” I am sure you recognize my intent to inform the public of the actions, inactions, and general information about how our governmental agencies operate.

I am also sure the public will want to know about how the NEW School Board Majority plans to exclude the public from knowing the facts about how CCS intends to operate. Of course, you will have the opportunity to read and comment on any and all articles that I will publish.

Robert A. Williams

www.citizensforgoodgovernment.org

Now, I am going to analyze Mr. Queen’s message, sentence by sentence and line by line, and provide you readers with what I find so egregious.

Sentence 1 of Robert Queen’s message

“Agendas for committee meetings are informal and can change on the spot. “

The following is from a management training outline on the importance of a meeting agenda. You might want to skip over this if you already know, apparently unlike Robert Queen, the importance of meeting agendas.

. Believe it or not, there are many managers who struggle with becoming a manager. One reason I find is because they have a hard time handling all of the duties a manager must constantly juggle. They get overwhelmed and shut down. Another is a lack of training.

If you are a new manager or leader who hasn’t had adequate training you may have a difficult time running meetings. This can result in your staff lacking confidence and loyalty in you.

This problem is not easily undone if you continue to publicly

display your weak areas through meetings that are poorly run.

To help you over this hurdle, there are 5 reasons you need an agenda for your meetings.

1. Reduces Wasted Time and Resources

As a manager, you know there are real reasons you need to hold regular and impromptu meetings. You likely have announcements to make regarding your business or problems to go over and correct.

Everyone can direct their attention to the matters at hand when an agenda is created. Attendees have a written list of what is to be achieved by the meeting. Furthermore, it allows them to bring up relevant issues.

Should anyone need to leave the meeting early, having an agenda helps them know what is going to be discussed. If they need to catch up with you later to fill in the blanks, they have a general idea of what was talked about.

Was someone late to the meeting? If so, they now know what they didn't hear because it's on the agenda. In addition, you don't have to waste everyone else's time getting them up to speed on what has already been settled.

2. Allows Other Speakers to Prepare

Having an agenda is courteous to other guests you may have included in the meeting. It can also help invited speakers prepare for when and what they will talk about.

3. Encourages Participation

With a clear outline of what is going to be talked about, employees will feel freer to participate. Include time for questions and answers about what was discussed.

Also, add a line item to the agenda for staff members to bring up issues they feel are important. When employees are valued and empowered, they are more loyal and productive.

4. Keeps You on Track

Have you ever gotten off topic in a discussion? If you are

like the majority of people you said yes to this question which means you need a meeting agenda.

It is far easier to stop wasting time, stay focused, and get back on track when you have the discussion items in front of you to reference.

5. Ensures Important Topics are Covered

You can cut down on the number of meetings everyone attends by ensuring all the important topics were covered. The best way to do this is through an agenda.

When you are in management, meetings are an important and necessary part of your work. Being able to run a meeting, therefore, is a must. Get more out of your meetings by creating an agenda for the next one

Sentence 2 of Robert Queen's message

"There are no published agendas before the meetings."

If you read the reasons for having a meeting agenda as explained above, you (and Robert Queen) should know and understand why a written agenda is important. But the key word here is "PUBLISHED." Assuming Mr. queen is not a dummy, NOT having a meeting agenda that is published means you are trying to hide something from the public or the meeting attendees. Or BOTH. Which is likely a criminal violation of NC Law or unethical at the least. Things are picking up fast now.

Sentence 3 of Robert Queen's message

"Committee meetings are for the board and staff to gather and discuss information to be presented to the full board so there is no mechanism for public input at a committee meeting."

North Carolina Open Meetings Law requires all business conducted by a public agency to be held in a meeting that is open to the public and the PUBLIC have the opportunity to provide input to that public body doing public business.

Also, Mr. Queen, the other NEW school board members as well as the OLD school board members that were defeated in the 2020

elections ALL campaigned on TRANSPARENCY. From the 122 total years of experience with the OLD school board, we all knew they were lying and being crooked about it. Now, Robert Queen, Chairman of the NEW School Board, is openly (and in writing) violating HIS promise of Transparency by the school board. And, so are the other Republicans that voted to make Mr. Queen their Chairman.

Sentence 4 of Robert Queen's message:

"Minutes of committee meetings will be posted on Board Docs in the next formal board meeting agenda."

The CCS Communications Officer posted the Meeting Notice for the January 25, 2021 School Board Meeting with a link to the "next FORMAL board meeting agenda. No minutes for any of the several past Board Committee meetings minutes are included. Thusly making Mr. Robert Queen, Chairman of the CCS School Board a documented and a multiple liar. As well as a Crook for his creation of Board Committees that violate Open Meetings laws as well as deny the PUBLIC's right to have an input into CCS business.

Therefore, I am withdrawing my offer to assist CCS solve some technical issues with HVAC, mold and maintenance inefficiencies at Burns and Crest High Schools. Effective immediately. I will, however, continue to attend as many School Board Meetings and Board Committee Meetings as I see fit to attend. Which may be all of them.

I am also calling on Mr. Robert Queen to resign immediately from the Cleveland County School Board as well as from the Board of Trustees at Cleveland Community College. Such a disregard for the rights of citizens as previously described most certainly are detrimental the best interest of the public as well as the Students at CCS and CCC.

But, folks, there is more.

I did attend the last Friday's (January 22, 2021) CCS Board

Committee Meeting related to the Finance/Personnel Committee. I made it clear prior to the meeting that I was interested in what ever happened in regard to the details of the auction sale of the old North Shelby School property. Especially where the money went and how it was accounted for.

I will also state right now that my interest in the uncompleted sale of the Old North Shelby School property was piqued by a trusted source, outside of CCS, who reported to me "gossip" that Rev. Lamont Littlejohn had worked out some kind of a "deal" regarding the \$522,500 that is still owed (plus CCS expenses incurred during the past year because of the deal NOT being completed) by Mt. Calvary Baptist Church where Rev. Littlejohn is Pastor.

In short, the Budget document discussed in the January 22 Board Committee meeting did not include 10 cents worth of the \$550,000 auction sale price, A year's expense related to CCS upkeep on a supposedly "sold" property or even verification that the \$27,500 deposit on the sale in January 2020 was actually paid as required by State law. This Budget document is set for approval in the January 25, 2021 School Board meeting.

Note that the old North Shelby School property is appraised for \$1.5 million and was sold an a poorly advertised auction for \$550,000 by the Old School Board in January 2020. Many, including myself, believe the cheap sale to Mount Calvary Baptist Church was a political payoff to Rev. Lamont Littlejohn for delivering black votes to the Democrat candidates. It is also believed that the plan was to eventually deliver the Old North Shelby School Property to Littlejohn for nothing. For the past year, that seemed to be coming to pass. Why Robert Queen would support giving the property to Littlejohn after Littlejohn supported Queens election opponents is a mystery that Queen and Littlejohn should be made to explain.

Again, there is more.

Mr. Joel Shores is the Chairman of the Finance/Personnel Committee. Robert Queen and Dena Green are members. Robert Queen did most of the talking between him and Joel Shores. From the salaries of the CCS staff that attended, I estimated a minimal cost of around \$575 for the staff salaries for those staff attending this meeting that was held without a "published" agenda.

Mr. Queen also made several comments during the 90-minute meeting that were troubling. Perhaps the most troubling was a comment that he envisioned the School Board "Committees" to take over more and more of the School Board discussions and decision making and the Full School Board to have less and less meetings. "Maybe only one per month." (Note: State Law requires at least one School Board meeting per month.)

Such a statement indicates Queen's "no mechanism" for public input at School Board Committee meetings is indeed just a ploy to exclude the public from Committee meetings as well as limit their information on how CCS operates so they will also have "no mechanism" for input at full School Board meetings. Also, a review of the Agenda for the January 25, 2021 School Board meeting shows "Public Participation" before the regular business items. This, plus the Committee Meeting Minutes not being available before the regular meetings, totally excludes any public knowledge of what CCS is doing about anything. Totally contrary to State Law as previously described. Showing a total disregard for TRANSPARENCY that he campaigned on in the 2020 Elections.

Other troubling items were some things that Robert Queen did NOT say. Or do.

The 2020-2021 Budget Resolution that was presented by the CCS Chief Financial Officer was noted to be basically a "fictitious" (my word) document because state, federal and local allocations of funds are not provided until May or June.

Chairman Queen voiced no opposition to knowingly signing a false document. Dena Green voiced opposition to taking the false document to the Full Board Monday evening without the Full Board having the opportunity know anything about the Committee's discussion. (Like the Full Board not knowing that they would be asked to approve a false and fictitious document. Isn't knowingly signing a false government document a felony crime?) Robert Queen is not only a Crook and a liar, he is a fool for knowingly signing his name to a fictitious document.

Another occasion was in the discussion brought up by Joel Shores about the meal program during COVID "burning up so much money when the number of meals dropped from 15,000 to 2,000." Totally a valid concern from Shores. Superintendent Stephen Fisher explained that the "overhead" in the Child Nutrition was "fixed" and they were only reimbursed for the actual number of meals that CCS actually provided to people at home. Queen seemed to buy into that answer. But, from a business standpoint this is very troubling.

First, every restaurant in Cleveland County was shut down by COVID and had to lay off people. Some may never re-open. Lots of those restaurants had to lay off people in order to survive. So, why was and is CCS still running a full staff (full overhead) with full pay when everybody else has to cut back and be laid off.

And, even more basic than that, why and how did CCS get into the business of delivering meals around Cleveland County when schools were closed. Isn't that DSS's job? Food Stamps? Wouldn't most any restaurant, to generate their own revenue in a cost-effective manner to keep their own employees busy, have loved to prepare meals to a delivery service? But, in the windup, CCS took the COVID money because it was available, even when they burned through their whole fund balance. Didn't that thought occur to School Board Chairman Robert Queen? Let CCS go bust on a losing proposition? If it did, he didn't say

anything.

About the only thing that I considered productive, from a management prospective in this Finance/Personnel Committee meeting was when Joel Shores required Superintendent Fisher to develop a real Organizational Chart that shows who at CCS does what. And who is responsible for what. Also, something that will very likely show a top-heavy management structure where money is wasted hand over fist.

I recommend Joel Shores for Board Chairman when Robert Queen resigns or is booted from the School Board.

Editor's Note No 2: Stay tuned for my next article related to the January 25, 2021 School Board meeting. Everything in this article is independently verified by the tragic and senseless events at this January 25th meeting.