No “Transparency” by School Board Chairman!! January 25, 2021 School Board Meeting tells the tale on School Board Chairman Robert Queen!!! Meeting an engineered disaster, over 4,200 watch Video!!! Part II of Series!! Report, facts, evaluation and arguendo by Robert A. Williams

Folks, if you have read my last article-Part I of this series, you will surely know that I tell it like it is. When I spot a problem, I identify the problem and offer a solution. In Part I, I identified School Board Chairman Robert Queen’s lack of TRANSPARENCY and recommended that he resign immediately from the School Board. I held off publishing that article until after the January 25, 2021 School Board meeting in order to think more on the issue and make sure I did not make a hasty evaluation and decision. Unfortunately, the January 25th meeting turned into an embarrassing disaster that total ally proved my Part I evaluation and recommendations (unfortunately) 100% correct.

Now, let’s establish some facts:

Transparency was clearly noted in Part I of this series as

something the NEW School Board Majority ran on in the 2020 elections. Something I found lacking in last Friday's School Board Committee meeting and said so independent of any other discussion or information. At this past Monday's School Board meeting, transparency became a hot topic of discussion by others independent of my Part I article that had not been published yet. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly define transparency so we all know what it is without question. And can judge who is transparent and who is NOT. And why true transparency is something that us citizens must emphatically demand from our governmental leadership and individual leaders as well. And School Board Chairman Robert Queen in particular.

All the definitions and examples of transparency noted below came from different sources, but clearly establishes what transparency is and provides a guide to who is and WHO is not transparent.

1. Transparency, as used in science, engineering, business, the humanities and in other social contexts, is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed. Transparency implies openness, communication, and accountability.

2. Transparency is the condition of being see-through. An example of transparency is the fact that you can see through glass. The quality or state of being transparent. Describes the situation that occurs when companies openly communicate important information to investors and shareholders.

3. Transparency, in a business or governance context, is honesty and openness…

4. What does transparency mean in a person?
If "Someone is Transparent" it means that person cannot or does not hide or conceal anything. It means observers who want to know what this "Someone" is up to, the observers are free

to observe. A person who is “Transparent” has no secrets and tells no lies.

5. And, especially Transparency in Politics:
The right and the means to examine the process of decision making is known as transparency. In politics, transparency is used as a means of holding public officials accountable and fighting corruption. When a government’s meetings are open to the press and the public, its budgets may be reviewed by anyone, and its laws and decisions are open to discussion, it is seen as transparent.

State law regarding Open Meetings, Committee Meetings, Public Participation and Meeting Minutes are also very important to understanding what is going on in our government. Especially the CCS School Board under the New School Board Majority leadership. In General, this is what the North Carolina. General Statutes say:

1. All governmental agency business (with just a few exceptions) must be conducted in open sessions where advance notice to the public of the meetings are given and the public is allowed to attend, participate and record.
2. Minutes of these meetings are required to be documented and kept as public records.
3. Meeting Minutes are not required to be verbatim, but must be kept as a “fair and accurate” record of what transpired in the meeting; such that a person that did NOT attend the meeting could read the minutes and understand all the details of what transpired.

These State laws are simple and self-explanatory, right? RIGHT!! This will be critical later in this article.

Now that we are clear what transparency is and what state laws say, let’s move to the January 25, 2021 School Board meeting, which circles around to hard discussion of transparency. And a strong rebuke of the lack of transparency from those that ran

their election on transparency.

The first order of business was the Scholl Board Meeting Agenda. As noted in the Part I article, Chairman Robert Queen stated that the Board Committee Meeting minutes would be provided on Board Docs (the CCS Website) along with the "final" agenda. They were not. A clear and obvious lie from Chairman Queen that would greatly and negatively affect the course of the meeting. From my personal perspective the lack of the Board Committee Meeting minutes was a plan scheme to keep the public in the dark so no member of the public would have the information necessary to fake informed comments to the School Board during "Public Participation." Stay tuned as it turned out to be much-much worse than that. I recommend anybody that hasn't already watched the January 25, 2021 School Board Meeting Broadcast (already over 4,000 views) to do so.

I took 9 ½ pages of notes during this disaster of a meeting.

I did not speak during the "Public Participation" as I often do. I did not have any information on the Board Committee activity and neither did any other member of the public. Little did I know that some Board members were also kept in the dark.

There were 11 speakers in the Public Participation. I will leave the names off for some of them as they were sharing personal information.

Speakers:
1. Notified the school bard that his wife had been dismissed from CCS and her personnel records that showed her awards and high recommendations had been "gotten lost" or "disappeared" in the process. The School Board ordered no investigation.
2. Samantha Davis who has 7 children and four had COVID reported that despite the rhetoric that all teachers are working hard and care, that some teachers are NOT working hard

or helpful. Samantha also reported that four of her children came down with COVID and three did NOT contract COVID, yet Health Department policies required that all seven be reported as COVID cases. Samantha warned that the numbers from the Health Department are NOT accurate or reliable. The School Board did NOT order any investigation or check of this information.

3. David Poston, a hired investigator looking into the alleged teacher assault on a handicapped child at North Shelby School, alerted the School Board that the teacher's assault on the child was a felony crime that was improperly investigated by a Shelby Police Officer who is the Husband of the CCS HR Director. A Felony Crime covered up by a conflicted Police investigator (who also is factually known to have covered up a teacher's criminal sexual liaison with a CCS Student. And perhaps other coverups. Mr. Poston requested the School Board to conduct their own internal investigation of the matter and hold people responsible for their criminal acts. The School Board did NOT order an investigation. Information has come to me that one of the over 4,000 people watching the Board Meeting broadcast realized the School Board was NOT going to do anything, so he has made a formal request to the NC SBI to conduct such an investigation.

4, 5 &6, These speakers spoke about the COVID and the desire for the School Board to
make wise decision on restarting schools.

7. Amanda Buchanon asked the School Board to NOT retaliate against teachers for voicing their opinions.

8. Stated there was not enough good information about COVID and stated that Plan B was not a failure.

9. Speaker Number 9 turned her back on the School Board because they had turned their backs on teachers. She stated that the School Board had broken every rule, did not respond to requests and were not "transparent" even though they had campaigned on transparency.

10. This speaker identified himself as a person of concern and a Pastor of 41 years. He stated Than kids staying at home

because of COVID were also suffering detrimental effects.
11. This speaker expressed concern with moving forward and that kids with no symptoms were testing positive for COVID.

So, for public participation, the School Board just let the words go in one ear and out the other. The NEW School Board Majority did not invent this practice, but this is something that needs to change. Serious crimes against children needs to be investigated and punished. Certainly not covered up.

During the Approval of the Minutes for January 11, 2021 School Board Meeting, Danny Blanton made some statements regarding contracts for the new gymnasium floors for Burns and Crest High Schools. Danny is on the School Board Operations Committee and apparently had some questions about just what CCS was paying for and why it cost what it cost. A pretty good follow up on the Board Member Poodle Glover questions Blanton on "WHY" he wanted to see the contracts. Double checking the spending of hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money is good was what I thought of Blanton's comments. I wrote in my notes that Poodle's question was "stupid." Chairman Queen stated that Glover should wait until the Operations Committee report for his questions. Later I would conclude that Poodle's question might have had a grain of a valid concern in it. Stay tuned.

The Finance and Personnel Board Committee report was next. This is the Committee that I attended their meeting last Friday that I reported in Part 1. As I previously stated, I did NOT publish Part I until after the regular School Board meeting on January 25th because I wanted to see this "Committee" process from start to finish. As you could tell from Part I, I was not pleased with what went on at the Friday's meeting. Unfortunately, the Meeting the next Monday (Jan 25th) confirmed all my conclusions of Part I and this Monday's meeting was even worse. A reread of Part I is recommended.

The Finance/Personnel Committee only seconds of a report was given. Discussion was little to none and the recommendation to approve the Budget Resolution was unanimous. Not a word of the fictitious nature of this preliminary budget resolution was told to the full Board, just like I had mentally predicted. Also, as I stated in my Part I article, not a peep of information regarding the missing $522,500 from the sale of the old North Shelby School property was shown in the Budget Resolution the School Board just passed unanimously.

The Personnel Report passed 8-0 with one abstention.

The Education Report was short in length and shorter on any details.

The Board Operations Report was short and provided no exact details on anything. Committee Member Danny Blanton did mention shortly about some discussion with Architect Roger Holland about auditoriums at Burns and Crest High Schools. I know for a fact that something sinister is going on there. I previously had a reason to look up some videos of School Board Meetings way back before CCS began their broadcasts, back when Hal Trammel and myself were video taping School Board meetings. I looked at a School Board Workshop video from June, 2014 and reminded myself of discussions then about auditoriums for Burns and Crest High Schools. I also found passages regarding the need for CCS to develop Strategic and long-term plan for building new schools to replace aging and high maintenance properties. Monday evening, Danny Blanton also made note that the Operations Committee needed to address the need to develop strategic plans for school construction. Blanton was present in those 2014 videos as were Stephen Fisher, Jennifer Wampner, Poodle Glover and the rest of the defeated Democrats. Seven years later and nothing on developing strategic plans until Blanton brought it up. Blanton also noted that six companies were contacted for bids regarding fixing the source of the mold problems at Burns and Crest. Something that I have informed the Board that I would

assist the School Board in resolving. An offer that I have withdrawn because of the School Board's lack of transparency and accountability. Also because of some apparent illegal tampering with official CCS records regarding original quotes on auditoriums for Burns and Crest High Schools. But mostly because of the secrecy the NEW School Board Majority is exhibiting in their apparent attempt of misusing Board Committees as a means of avoiding transparency in their running of CCS.

The School Board Policy and Safety Committee meetings were also short and incomplete of information as required by State law as previously noted. And restated as this: The report says "We had a meeting and we discussed several things. There were questions and answers from others. We request the full board to approve this plan to spend $10 MILLION." Only a fool amongst fools would vote to approve such a request as this. Would you, as a taxpayer, trust a committee that would hold such a meeting and make such a request? If so, please identify yourself as I have some Ocean Front Property about 10 miles North of Moriah that I will sell you cheap.

Little did I know that all Hell was about to break loose at the January 25, 2021 School Board meeting in the discussion of hiring a new CCS Attorney.

The January 25, 2021 School Board Agenda, Item 11.01 was titled Attorney Selection Request. I didn't sense the "earthquake" that was coming.

Joel Shores gave a short blurb about four law firms submitting an interest in applying for the School Board lawyer position. Two were selected for interviews. The Sink Law Firm was recommended. The Sink Law Firm consists of Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Sink. Mrs. Sink (slightly pregnant) would be the most likely to attend the School Board Meetings. Note that I had previously, in other articles, recommended the NEW School Board Majority to hire the lawyers of their choosing and hire

them on an interim basis until the details of a better prepared RFQ for an attorney firm could be issued. My suggestion was ignored. The New School Board Majority ignored good advice and plunged full speed ahead with a poorly written RFQ prepared by Superintendent Stephen Fisher that, had Fisher prepared such a poor document to any private company, he would have been fired on the spot.

But, Now, and with Mr. and Mrs. Sink present; the four of all the 5-4 school board votes cut loose. Starting with Republican Greg Taylor.

Editor's Note: The four School Board members, Greg Taylor, Dena Green, Poodle Glover and Coleman Hunt went on to make the same comments as I made in my Part I article regarding the Board Committee Meeting the Friday before. They had come, to the same conclusions independently as my Part I article had not yet been publisher. And that were now being confirmed. Not only had the public been kept in the dark about what the board member majority were doing, so was the four school board members. And now they were being asked to approve the hiring of a lawyer that they did not know in advance of the meeting which law firms were interviewed and which law firm was now being put before them for approval. Such as this is a sad thing to happen in Cleveland County and anywhere else for that matter. It was an embarrassment for Mr. and Mrs. Sink too as I am sure they never anticipated such a display of incompetence from those that they would be going to work for.

Greg Taylor wanted information on all the Q&A that had gone on in the Lawyer Selection interview. He wanted the same opportunity for every other Board Member that had been kept in the dark. But Greg Taylor had only lit the fuse to sticks of dynamite.

Dena Green was the first stick of dynamite that exploded. Folks, watch the meeting video broadcast if you don't believe me. Dena declared, "Where is the Transparency? There was NO

information on anything to the rest of the board until tonight. No local firms were interviewed. YOU ran on transparency, where is the transparency?”

Chairman Robert Queen broke-in saying he wan not aware of their concerns, nobody asked. Apparently not realizing that people he is keeping in the dark, like me, the rest of the School Board and every member of the public in Cleveland County don’t know to ask questions about things they don’t know about.

But Dena was not phased with this failed attempt to shut her down. She continued,” there is “no transparency to the rest of this Board.” “YOU didn’t tell us anything.”

Then Coleman Hunt opened up with a broadside. “YOU five are new board members without a track record. We don’t know you enough to have confidence in you.” Hunt went on. “I have Questions.”

I wrote in my notes that this is a good example of the failure of Board Committees under the leadership of Chairman Robert Queen. When I first heard of plans for Board Committees, I thought it was a good idea. And it was. The only thing is the “Devil is in the Details.” And keeping secrets from other board members and the public is not only bad, it is against North Carolina law.

Mrs. Sink, who was standing at the podium said that she was available for questions.

It was a FUBAR! Hunt, without having the opportunity to prepare asks some questions. Everything about this was embarrassing for Attorney Mrs. Sink. The School Board, the audience and even me.

Dena Green had some questions for the Attorney too. About the Ten Commandments at Schools and availability of attorney for all board members.

Poodle Glover Chimed in with his own brand of dynamite.

Something “doesn’t smell right about these committees” Poodle said. This, hiring of the Attorney, “was a done deal” said Poodle-obviously correctly. “Now I will never have the opportunity to participate in the interview” says Poodle. “Why didn’t the committee invite experts and other board members?” Poodle Glover was grandstanding and being hypocritical in my informed opinion, but much of the complaints were valid from an organization standpoint. There was obviously no transparency or anything legal or ethical about Robert Queen’s so-called committees.

But Queen exclaims, “I don’t understand the complaint here.” Obviously ignoring the facts. And defends his and the committee’s actions. I sent emails said Queen, only to be called a liar by one of the Board members who had searched the records.

Danny Blanton adds that he had been on the School Board for seven years and the OLD board did the very same thing to him. Blanton was correct to make that point. But, overall, two wrongs don’t make a right. The secret Committee process under Robert Queen’s direction is a fiasco, is unethical and illegal to boot.

Queen calls for a vote, which passed 5-4 to hire the Sink Law firm.

The next Item was the COVID Update.

Supt. Fisher gives all the usual numbers that are totally unsuitable for evaluating whether or not to restart schools. (I won’t get into that just now in this article.) Samantha Davis’s information that the Health Department’s numbers were wrong and misleading was ignored. Chairman Robert Queen announces that a Committee decision has been made to delay the reopening of schools for K-5 to February 22, 2021. No explanation of why. This vote was 6-3 with RINO Greg Taylor

voting with the other Republicans.

Then the lack of transparency issue flames right back up during Board Member Reports.

Greg Taylor again says ther3e is little communication between Board members

Dena Green still has issues with transparency and communications, the lack of both.

Danny Blanton says he will continue to stand up for the kids and taxpayers/

Joel Shores apologizes for the lack of communication.

Ron Humphries says Poodle Glover is another P.T Barnum with his grandstanding.

Poodle Glover goes off that another Board Member is calling him names.

Coleman Hunt says the Board is fractured and only has a 100-day agenda. That CCS is not “failing” although the number of failing schools and test scores say CCS is failing. Hunt also says that for all the talk about the CCS lawsuit against the Sheriff, the old law firm “had done a lot of good.” Robert Queen should have challenged Coleman Hunt right then and asked for some instances when the old attorney had done good. Hunt was grandstanding too as about all the “good” Hunt was talking about was the old lawyers covering up lawsuits and negotiating secret settlements when CCS had done bad things. Maybe Coleman Hunt will publicly ask me for some instances. And I will publicly give him some. As well as ask for an official investigation of some CCS sex crimes and just exactly how the lawsuit against the Sheriff came about and who knew what and when.

Rodney Fitch stated that the division of the Board started at the December 14, 2020 School Board meeting seating

arrangement. Which started with the Old Board and was turned over to the New School Board Majority as soon as they were sworn in and a Chairman was selected. I attended that December 14, 2020 School Board meeting at the LeGrand Center and wondered myself about the weird seating arrangement, Fitch was correctly telling the New Board Minority that they were not blameless themselves.

Robert Queen finished up by stating “what others are calling an Agenda (a Political agenda by the New Board majority), I call a PLAN!” Obviously, Queen does not understand the meaning of transparency. That is why I spent time at the beginning of this article clearly defining what transparency actually means. Queen went on defending the way his committees operate, refusing to believe what everybody is telling him. Me included. And Communication is a too way street-basically blaming the lack of communication on others. About that time someone in the audience stated that Queen doesn’t respond to emails. Queen retorted that “I am not going to be baited into a Facebook Catfight!” Apparently with the intent to show his “elitism” by insulting all those that regularly communicate with others via Facebook.

By all accounts from attendees at the January 25, 2021 School Board Meeting, the meeting was a shocking tragedy. In my opinion, Robert Queen appears to be the cause of most of the complaints about the lack of communication and the lack of transparency on the New School Board. And Robert Queen refuses to accept his part of the blame for the failure of his “Committee” processes that tend to promote illegal secret meetings with secret decisions. This is why I changed my mind about the leadership capability of Robert Queen in My Part I article that was confirmed by the many fiascos of the January 25th Meeting that is described in this Part II article.

In my informed opinion, Robert Queen should immediately resign or be removed from board membership of the CCS School Board as well as the CCC Board of Trustees. After this January 25

School Board meeting, I would add that Phillip “Poodle” Glover also should immediately resign or be removed from the Board of Education. Otherwise the best interest of our children will never be met and a CCS education will continue its steep slide towards failure.

Also note that I smell a rat in the Operations Committee regarding secrets about plans for new auditoriums and major renovations in the gymnasiums at the aging Burns and Crest High Schools, As well as the secret involvement of Architect Roger Holland with these projects even though Holland’s firm has a history of going 40-60% overbudget on recent projects at CCS Schools and the new County Health Department building. I will certainly be attending CCS School Board Operations Meetings and requesting Public Records regarding these and various other projects.