

County Commissioners Creates NEW Position!!! Citizens Development Director!!! No Job Description-No Defined duties!! Perfect job for Former Commissioner Jason Falls??? Another taxpayer Rip-Off??? Report, research findings and gossip provided by Robert A. Williams

I have attended many Cleveland County Commissioner's Meetings, School Board Meetings, Cleveland Community College Board of Trustee meetings and a few Shelby City Council meetings. I always pay attention and take notes. I have developed a "knack" for discovering mischief, corruption and cover-up from what is NOT said as well as what IS said at these meetings. The most recent example of this "knack" occurred Monday (May 18, 2021) at the Commissioner's meeting. Literally minutes after the meeting was called to order.

During the usual introduction of Department Heads, Former Commissioner Jason Falls calls out his title "Citizens Development Director." With those three words, "Citizens Development Director," my mental "Red Flags" were going up. I immediately smelled a rat. Until that very second there was no "Director" position titled "Citizens Development Director." Previously Falls would have called out "Director of the

LeGrand Center.” A high paying position the Commissioners made for Jason Falls so he could pay his bills and not have his house foreclosed on.

Since I had not signed up for Citizens Recognition, I did not have the opportunity to ask about this new “Citizens Development Director.” To ask things like when did this position get created? What is the Pay? What is the job description? What are the Duties” And more importantly, What is the Budget for this brand-new bureaucracy? Of course, I would not have gotten any answers during Citizens Recognition as the Commissioners have adopted a policy to NOT comment or answer questions during Citizens Recognition. They have also adopted an unwritten policy NOT to do anything about anything brought up during Citizens Recognition. The School Board and the CCC BoTs don’t even put into the minutes of their meetings anything about what is said by the citizens that speak out. They might only record the identity of the speaker but not a peep on what the speaker said. Most people, including me, don’t even bother speaking out anymore. But, in my case, I have other ways to get my point across. Like this article and others.

But I was determined to find out more about this new Citizens Development Director position. So, after the meeting, I asked a Commissioner (I will not name that Commissioner at this time) about this Citizens Development Directorship. Incredibly, that commissioner stated the he/she hadn’t even heard about such a thing until Jason Falls made his statement at the start of the meeting.

Also, incredibly, the one item on the agenda that night, the 2021-2022 County Budget presentation, presented by county Manager Brian Epley, also did not include anything about a new Directorship. The Citizens Development Director.

So, earlier today, I stopped by the Library in Lawndale to review the new 2021-2022 Budget. I purposely went to the

Library in Lawndale first, instead of the County offices, to look at the budget just to see what is being put out to the general public. I asked for the County Budget that had just arrived. I was handed a thick notebook folder that had printed on the front 2021-2022 Budget Highlights. Budget HIGHLIGHTS it said. The complete budget was not being made available to the public.

Remember my “knack” I described at the start of this article. When a Budget Document that is supposed to be complete is turned over to the public for a public review period as prescribed by law, turns out to be just “highlights,” my “knack” kicks in yet again. From my experience, when something is put out for review that is supposed to be complete, and it is NOT complete-there is a reason. Corruption somewhere!!! And a cover-up.

So, NOW, I go to the County offices.

I ask to see the COMPLETE County Budget. I was handed the same document as was the Lawndale document, clearly marked “Budget Highlights.”

N00ooo! I say. I want to see the COMPLETE Budget. I want to see the “Account List” (Account Numbers and definitions.) It is all there, I was told,

N00ooo! I said again.

What are you looking for? I was asked.

For example, I said, I want to see the complete list of Revenues for the LeGrand Center as well as the expenses. “It’s not in the budget” I was told. “It’s supposed to be” I said.

I said, “Let’s add to the list of what I want to see, The County Manager’s salary. The Citizens Development Director’s salary and budget too. Also, a list of Account Numbers and what the Account Numbers refer too.” (Listing account numbers

without describing what the account numbers refer to is an old Cleveland County accounting trick to hide things from the public.)

So, the Finance people (Lucas Jackson) were called. They were busy and refused to come answer any questions. Another old trick. Be too busy during the budget review period so nobody knows what is going on until after the June 1, 2021 Commissioner's Meeting when the budget is adopted as is and no questions from citizens are answered,

I left a "starter" list of easy lookup stuff in the clerks office of things I wanted to see, I am sure that the County Manager Brian Epley will "order" his staff not to answer any of my questions or provide any information to me until after the budget is approved on June 1st.

Of course, that is fine with me. Nobody but me, as far as I can tell, is asking questions because nobody cares. Nobody cares YET, that is. I predict when the new property tax bills come out at the end of July, there will be an uproar amongst taxpayers the likes of which may never have been seen in Cleveland County. Then, I am going to tell them, I told YOU so!!!

And, since Commissioners Doug Bridges and Deb Hardin are the only ones up for re-election in 2022. When I tell them "I told YOU so," I will also tell them "goodbye," "That's what you get when you have the same voting record as Former Commissioner Eddie Holbrook,"

Stay tuned folks. The May 18th 2021-2022 Budget presentation by Brian Epley was chocked full of things you will want to know. That will be told in another article.