# COVID Confusion in Cleveland County!!! High School Football Games to be limited or shut down?? Big Healthcare Crisis or Aftermath of political war against Trump?? What is really going on? Who is in CHARGE??? Report, gossip, secrets and analysis by Robert A. Williams

**Editor's Note: For the 99.999% of Cleveland County residents that were not notified or informed, there was a big public presentation at the LeGrand Center—Monday, September 20, 2021 at 2:00PM regarding COVID in Cleveland County. To my accounting, I was the only member of the public that cared enough to attend. It was a "Dog and Pony Show" without the dogs and the ponies. But, be sure to read this all the way to the end for the real story.**

COVID-19 has been a terrible thing over the past year and a half. Especially for those that have gotten bad cases of this China made and likely US paid for "novel" virus. Those that died from it, their families and the economic and educational impact from it that was mostly of our own dirty political making.

Let us clarify this one thing right to start with. What was the Cleveland County governmental entity that is in charge of

healthcare emergencies? The Cleveland County Health Department or Cleveland County Schools?? If you said The Health Department-you are 100% correct!!

According to the Cleveland County Website, Home Page information for the Health Department you will find the following statements:

**Cleveland County Health Department**

MISSION
To assure, enhance, and protect the health of Cleveland County citizens, through education and prevention

**VISION STATEMENT**
Creating a healthy and safe community in which to live.

Notice that you find in both Mission and Vision Statement references to HEALTH!!!

For Cleveland County Schools you will find:

**Cleveland County Schools**

Our Mission
that will lead them to become a productive global citizen and a lifelong learner by partnering with our community to provide quality learning opportunities.

Notice that Cleveland County Schools Mission is only to provide quality learning opportunities. Also note that all School Nurses are contracted out from the Cleveland County Health Department. School Nurses are Health Department employees-not CCS School Employees.

So, one thing is crystal clear. **The Cleveland County Health Department is responsible** for ensuring the health and safety of Cleveland County citizens. No matter what. Anything the Cleveland County Schools does in regard to COVID-19 should, by rights, be done at the recommendations and oversight by the

Cleveland County Health Department. A Department directly controlled by the Cleveland County Commissioners, through the Cleveland County Manager. That is the official and State Mandated chain of command. Anything less is just incompetence or downright negligence by the Commissioners themselves. Or corruption of some sort.

That is how things should have worked during all this COVID Pandemic. What was actually done was likely illegal. By illegal, I mean NOT in accordance with North Carolina. And no reason is a good reason for violating the law that the Commissioners have sworn an oath to uphold.

Now, let's consider the COVID-19 Pandemic into this picture.

In March of 2020, one and a half years ago, Democrat North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper issued a directive to Shut down all public schools in North Carolina. At that particular time there were ZERO cases of COVID-19 in Cleveland County and NO DEATHS in Cleveland County from COVID-19. Cleveland County Schools shut down per the Governor's Order as an "Abundance of Caution." I heard "Abundance of Caution," "Abundance of Caution," "Abundance of Caution" till I was sick of hearing "Abundance of Caution. There was exactly **ZERO** "Follow the Science" in closing Cleveland County Schools as it was a long time before Cleveland County started to have isolated cases of COVID-19 and CCS had already been shut-down without science. Only the Governor's mandate shut them down. Which the Cleveland County School Board did NOT challenge.

Note that closing down Cleveland County Schools dumped around 14,000 minor children (Students) into the daycare facilities in Cleveland County. Filling up all vacancies almost immediately, and leaving thousands without available care during the day so the parents could go to work. Many to most parents had to immediately stop outside employment to care for their children. Throwing the economy into a tailspin. Many believe that a lot of that was to take away President Donald

Trump’s booming economy for political purposes during the 2020 Elections. Some, about 70+ million, would say it takes a fool to think otherwise.

Then, right before the 2020 Elections, the School Board incumbents up for re-election started talking about starting schools back up. “Oh,” they would say, “virtual learning at home is excellent; but not as good as ‘in-person learning’ at school.” Then the School Teacher’s union fired-up at school board meetings; “follow the science,” follow the science,” “follow the science.” But there was no science to start with. Since the CCS Schools shut down only per Governor Roy Cooper’s Mandate, there was no criteria or science to follow. No limits. No defendable COVID infection rates. Only stabs in the dark about what to keep track of and those stabs in the dark seemed to change every day. Every week. Until after Election Day. With Schools still closed. And every incumbent School Board Member got beat in the 2020 Elections.

Robert “Luke” Queen and four other Republicans won the 2020 School Board elections and quickly got bogged down in the same old “follow the science” routine. They finally got schools partly started before the end of the 2020-2021 school year. And, by the start of the 2021-2022 School Year, they were mired in the Delta Variant of the COVID-19 virus.

All this time, the newly hired Cleveland County Health Department Director Tiffany Hansen, under the overall direction of the Cleveland County Manager Brian Epley, who reports to the Cleveland County Commissioners was attending school board meetings giving confusing and off the target updates to both the pre-election and post-election School Boards. On all occasions Hansen flatly refusing to sum up the available information and provide a recommendation to the School Board on what to do and how to handle the COVID Pandemic as it related to Cleveland County Schools. On several occasions Hansen flatly refused to provide directions to the School Board, even when directly requested to do so by School

Board Members.

I mention this Health Department failure of responsibility in a large number of my published articles and at every opportunity to both School Board members and the County Commissioners. I even suggested that if Hansen was not capable of handling this obviously complicated situation, to go and hire consultants who are capable of taking all the data and making appropriate recommendations. The Commissioners did nothing. The Health Department did nothing, The School Board did nothing.

Why was that? I wondered.

In the meantime, the Delta Variant of the COVID-19 was developing in India and spreading itself around the world. In the meantime, the American Legion World Series-former Commissioner Eddie Holbrook's crowd-was firing up. In the meantime, the Catawba Indian Casino was firing up with 500 or more slot machines and maybe a bunch of Video poker games. And reportedly big crowds from outsiders was swarming into Cleveland County. Do a time line study of the COVID outbreak in Cleveland County and you will se a direct relationship with the Casino and the ALWS with the surge in COVID-Delta Variant in Cleveland County that is NOW termed a Health-Care Disaster.

Also note that some of the outside the County and State baseball teams that played in the American Legion World Series have returned home and a number of those home states are now in a COVID Delta Variant Disaster also. Especially Idaho. The ALWS winner. Idaho now is the number one state with the Delta Variant disaster. Other top Delta Variant states also had teams at the ALWS. Many of those states, like Idaho, are very rural, like Cleveland County are usually not conducive to the fast spread of airborne diseases. Is it possible that the Delta Variant came in with only one or more of the teams and before long it was spread to them all? Remember, This Delta Variant started in India and got to Cleveland County somehow.

No single mosquito from India got caught-up in a high-altitude jet stream air current and ended up here in Cleveland County, North Carolina. That, however, is a project for somebody else to study on. There is much more to the story right here in Cleveland County.

But the fact remains that The Commissioners have put Millions of Cleveland County taxpayer tax dollars into the American Legion World Series. Mostly on the quiet. Other than my articles, the county taxpayer connections to the ALWS, through the Commissioners was a total secret. Same with all the secret land deals around the Casino. There is no legitimate doubt that the ALWS and the Catawba Casino were both Commissioners "Pet Projects" and the Commissioners had plenty of political pressure (and perhaps, in Holbrook's case anyway, financial pressure) on them to look the other way, through County Manager Brian Epley to make the Casino and ALWS both a go, even when this deadly COVID Delta Varian was bearing down hard on Cleveland County and all of North Carolina..

At this point, I would report that I have attended two Freedom Rallies regarding educating oneself about COVID vaccines and mask mandates. The first Freedom Rally was at the East side of the Earl Scruggs Center (The old Cleveland County Courthouse) on the East side of the Square. There were a number of speakers, including State Senator Ted Alexander. There were also Atrium people present wearing "theatrical" masks to hide their identities from Atrium "spies." As Atrium had allegedly threatened to terminate any Atrium employee that was present at the Rally. The Rally included a march down Washington Street to the Atrium Hospital sidewalk. Again, at the Hospital, Atrium sent out spies to identify employees. Also, an Atrium Doctor came out and tried to run-off some of the people from off the sidewalk nearest Grover Street. Nobody paid any attention to the Doctor as far as I could see.

The Second Freedom Rally (on 9-11) was held in Rutherfordton at the Rutherford County Courthouse. I brought a chair to this

Freedom Rally. The people there were all friendly and I knew some of them and talked to a bunch. Jeff Gregory from Cleveland County running for the US Congress was there and spoke. Former CCS School Board Candidate Samantha Davis was there and spoke. Even the Rutherford County District Attorney came by and spoke to the large crowd. There were a goodly number of Health Care people that spoke. Urging people to inform themselves about the vaccines and masks mandates. There were many warnings that Hospitals and other companies were in the process of putting out warnings to workers, get vaccinated or you are fired. Some of those Healthcare workers had many years of emergency care experience and did NOT think these mandates were necessary. For me, the takeaway was that America is under attack-Again!! Government entities are abusing their power by trying to force people to give away their Constitutional rights on plans and mandates that are only "half-baked" and without the proper scientific or emergency justification for implementation. Especially telling was the division of the Healthcare community. Those with management jobs are pushing the mandates and many of those that actually work with the patients say the "science" is suspect.

Now, let's fast forward a bit to the Commissioner's Meeting on September 7, 2021, the School Board Meeting of September 13, 2021 and the Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees Meeting on September 14, 2021. Let's also just stick to the COVID stuff. As much as possible, that is.

At the unusually short Commissioners Meeting on September 7, 2921 the COVID discussion was led by Health Department Director Tiffany Hansen and EMS Director Tommy Mc Neilly. Mostly Hansen.

To me, it was the same old history from day one; about now many total cases and deaths without regard to more recent trends either up or down. Trends that tell you whether things are getting better or getting worse.

Hansen went on to COVID Cases were now at 100 per day. One of sixty were dying (1.7%). That the Delta variant was more transmissible. Hansen said the County COVID prevention policy was Vaccinations and testing. Unvaccinated persons were five times as likely to get COVID as Vaccinated. Unvaccinated cases were fifteen times as likely to die. And at home rapid test kits would become available in Mid-September. Johnny Hutchins asked how many CCS students were out of school because of COVID. Hansen said about 1,000. Doug Bridges commented, “We will get through this.” There seemed to be no sense of urgency about anything COVID.

At the School Board meeting, there were three speakers during Public Participation. All three gave reasons for why they were against the implementation of the Mask Mandate. Two stated that their children were being bullied and embarrassed in class because they were exempt from wearing masks. One speaker called for the resignation of a Board Member that she did not identify. One speaker stated that CCS was refusing to give her daughter her medications while at school.

Superintendent Dr. Stephen Fisher gave the COVID Update and said several interesting things. Like:
- Home Test kits are not very accurate
- There were 477 positive test results-90% from students 10% from Staff
- Quarantines ranges from less than 1,000 to a little over 1,250 (from 7% to 9% of all students)
- There were 157 actives Positive Covid cases as of that day 9-13-2021
- Whole COVID “processes” were full of “holes”

Danny Blanton commented that communications between what the Board voted on and meetings and what was happening in the classroom was disconnected. Fisher said he would take care of that. Luke Queen gets on Blanton for bringing that up. A lady in the audience asks “Can I ask a Question? Luke Queen immediately barks out a gruff “NO MAM!”

After some discussion with some Board members wanting to tighten up the Mask requirements, a Motion was made to leave to present mask mandate policy as is. The Vote was 5-3 to leave the Mask policy in place. Members Glover, Hunt and Green voted No. Board Member Rodney Fitch was absent-in the Kings Mountain Hospital with COVID. Had been turned away from the Shelby Hospital because there were no beds available.

Also note that Danny Blanton remarked during the meeting that he had heard of a device that could be installed ibn the HVAC ducts that would kill COVID and other airborne diseases. Nobody seemed to care. That device is called a High Intensity Ultraviolet Light. I discussed this further in my recent article about my inspection tour of the Cleveland Community College facilities.

Basically, on September 14, 2021 there seemed to be no sense of urgency about COVID. But, as I watched other news reports about massive surges in COVID cases across North Carolina and the United States, I just had a feeling that something in Cleveland County was wrong. Bad wrong and it was being kept from the people. I started putting 2+2 together and was coming up with 3 for an answer. Go back to My article published September 18, 2021 titled Looking for Truth, Looking for "Sign." COVID, Commissioners, School Board and CCC.

What I did not know, was that I was 100% right and something very bad was happening. I received a call on Monday Morning September 20th and what I thought was bad was WAYyyy worse.

My trusted source told me that she had information that the there were meetings going on over the weekend regarding COVID. Discussions like:
Limiting the Attendance at all High School Friday night Football Games to only half of the Stadium capacity-or less at Luke Queen's discretion.
Calling in the National Guard for setting up surge tents at the Shelby Hospital.

Calling a press conference Monday (September 20th) at 2:00PM at the LeGrand Center and have School Board Chairman Robert “Luke” Queen make announcements that the School Board (Robert “Luke” Queen personally) was in control of the happenings at Cleveland County Schools and all of Cleveland County too.
That County Manager Brian Epley, along with CCS Superintendent Stephen Fisher were scripting the whole Press Conference thing
That Facebook folks had already learned that the Atrium Hospital in Shelby had already ran out of space to hold all the dead bodies that were accumulating at the Hospital. They even had pictures of the portable “morgue(s)” posted on Facebook.
That various Mayors of the larger cities in Cleveland County had already been notified and the mayors would be at the press conference.

So, folks, you know what I did. Without further ado, and although I had NOT been officially notified or invited even; I cut a trail for the LeGrand Center with only minutes to spare.

When I arrived at the LeGrand Center, I found the room where the “event” (for the lack of a better word) was being held. I met Commissioner Chairman Doug Bridges at the door. I asked what the heck is going on? Commissioner Bridges told me that they “were just doing what I always said they needed to do, Be Transparent.” My comment was “What about accountability? When will the Health Department finally take charge and be accountable for the Health of Cleveland County?” Bridges did not comment on that and I did not reveal any of the details I had been told about the Press Conference. Perhaps my source was wrong” I would soon learn something, although I had no clue what it would be. There were only a very few chairs spread way apart in the room. Most of the front row seats were not taken so I took one, front and center as I usually do.

I looked around and Counted six bigtime professional video cameras with camera operators and reporters. All set up in a

row. I saw County Manager Brian Epley siting in the second row close to the door. I thought he looked like he had just seen a ghost. And that look was NOT about me being there.

There was a line of tables sitting all in a row at the front of the room. They all had name tags. One the right pone side of the speaker's Podium were nametags for Tiffany Hansen, Doug Bridges. Kings Mountain Mayor Scott Nessler and Robert "Luke" Queen. On the Left side of the Speaker's Podium were Name tags for Inga Pitts (Atrium), Lamont Littlejohn, Boiling Springs Mayor Tommy Green and Shelby Mayor Stan Anthony. The big projection Screen behind the row of tables said COVID Presentation. When the meeting actually started, the lead in slide read COVID Discussion. My impression was this had all been thrown together and something was wrong.

I looked around the room and noted one other Commissioner, Johnny Hutchins, was there as well as School Board members Phillip Glover, Luke Queen, Danny Blanton and Dena Green/ Apparently making sure that NO QUORUM of Commissioners of School Board members was present. That meant that nothing would be officially voted on at this meeting, presentation, discussion or whatever this gathering was all about. Assistant County Manager Kerri Melton, CCC President Jason Hurst, CCS Superintendent Stephen Fisher were also there. Former Commissioner and now the LeGrand Center Director and Casino Coordinator for Cleveland County Jason Falls was there. Along with news reporters from Charlotte and other places. Greg Tillman of CCC was there operating one of the big cameras. Although small in comparison with the big professional cameras of the Major Charlotte TV News stations. I did not recognize any member of the Cleveland County general public as being there. Except for myself. Whatever this was, there was little to no attempt to invite the citizens of Cleveland County.

Right at 2:00 PM Commissioner Chairman Doug Bridges opens the meeting stating that Cleveland County wanted to inform and educate the citizens of Cleveland County about the new Delta

Variant of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. (I suspect the whole meeting may be available public viewing on either the CCC Website or the CCS Website. Since I was present and paying close attention, I have not checked for any video of this meeting. Bridges quickly introduces the Cleveland County Health Department Director Tiffany Hansen.

Health Department Director Tiffany Hansen them proceeds to present a PowerPoint Presentation consisting of graphs, slides numbers and statistics that provide no real basis for projecting whether the COVID is ”exploding” in dangerous numbers or just an increase this week and a decline next week. Not that I could cipher out anyway. And I am good at that kind of ciphering. No mention of limiting Football game attendance or any other kind of different measures to combat the COVID. Or anything different from masks, vaccinations and social distancing. Not a peep about the Obesity problem that was on a TV Channel 3 report this very night that showed major issues between COVID and gaining weight. Basically Ms. Hansen says there has been an increase in COVID due to the Delta Variant and says nothing about what we are going to do about it.

Then Commissioner Bridges introduces an Atrium official, Inga Pitts.

Ms. Pitts states that in the last 14 days there have been 1399 new cases if COVID and 266 people have died in Cleveland County. I did not catch whether she said that there were 266 deaths in the last 14 days or what? I suspect that 266 deaths are the overall deaths from COVID. A google check says total cases to date for COVID in Cleveland County NC is 16,594 with 277 Deaths.

Ms. Pitts says:
The transmissibility of cases in Shelby is 40% but only 20% in Kings Mountain.
Hospital beds are at a premium and lots of patients require ventilators.

Last week there were 90% Positive test results-this week only 40%. This was only Tuesday of this week.
There are 4 deaths in some 24-hour periods and ZERO deaths in other 24-hour periods. (I don't know what this proves.)
"This is the most difficult experience any healthcare community has faced."
"This is serious!" She "hopes this information is helpful."

At 2:20 PM Commissioner Chairman Doug Bridges states that "Cleveland County is in a CRISIS!" and closes the meeting. The lights dim and Bridges states that people are present that will answer your question. And closes the presentation, Meeting or whatever.

The last entry in my notes says "A Dog and Pony show with NO dogs or ponies."

I asked every Commissioner and County Commissioner I can corner and ask, "what is the story here" There has to be more going on." "Oh no" everybod6y tells me.

I overheard Commissioner Johnny Hutchings "fussing" to an Atrium person about ventilators. Hutchins wants to know why he was told there were plenty of ventilators and now he hears Atrium is complaining that they are out of ventilators and the Commissioners won't help them get any more. Hutchins tells the guy, "if YOU are out of ventilators and need help obtaining them, ask for our help.

Of particular note is:
No other people at the head table spoke one word or got to ask one question.
That Robert "Luke Queen" didn't speak one word and did not wear a mask for one second during it all. Everybody else wore a mask. It is Cleveland Community College Policy that EVERYBODY wears a mask while inside any building. Same with Cleveland County Schools. Luke voted FOR those policies and yet HE is the one person that can be exempt from his own

policies. One CCS related person says they are ashamed that Robert Queen goes around refusing to abide that he has himself voted for. I am not surprised. I've been saying that for a long time now.

Folks, this is not the end of this confusing story. It is only the beginning of another controversy.

Sources have confirmed that CCS School Board Chairman Robert "Luke" Queen did indeed promises County Manager Brian Epley that he would come to this meeting and inform the world that Cleveland County Schools was going to limit attendance at High School Football games to 50% Capacity. The Epley makes the arrangements to notify and invite all the big news media in Charlotte (and everywhere else but me) about this PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT that the Cleveland County School Board was going to limit attendance at football games to 50% or less, effectively immediately due to the COVID Delta Variant. Everything gets set to go.

But Luke finally gets around to informing his school board that he is about to call an emergency school board meeting and how they would have to vote on this issue. School Board members Danny Blanton, Dena Green, Coleman Hunt, Phillip Glover and Greg Taylor allegedly tell Luke that they would NOT vote to limit attendance to High School Football games except under a direct mandate from the Health Department, State of Cleveland County, or the Governor. They allegedly also told Luke Queen that if he carried through with the lie that the School Board was limiting attendance at High School Football games, that they, a majority of the School Board, would immediately call an emergency meeting and vote to denounce Luke for his over-reach and also vote to allow full attendance at all High School Football games until and unless mandated otherwise by the State of County Health Department of the Governor.

By the time this word got back to County Manager Brian Epley,

the jig was up. The big news media were already invited and on their way. It was too late to cancel and County Manager Brian Epley had just managed to make his boss, Commissioner Chairman Doug Bridges and the rest of the Commissioners look like an unmitigated FOOLs. Again!! Over Robert “Luke” Queen-whose mouth makes promises his behind can’t deliver. What a Hoot!!

It was no wonder that Epley was looking like he had seen a ghost. A GHOST of himself when the Commissioners get through with him. Not only did Epley make the Commissioners look like fools, Luke made the rest of the school board, Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees and the Mayors of Shelby, Kings Mountain and Boiling Springs and their city councils look like fools too,

As for me. Looking up stuff for this article revealed to me another major class action lawsuit against Cleveland County and another likely multi million lawsuit against Cleveland County Schools. On top of those already outstanding. All y’all will be hearing all about that very, very soon.