

Black Community Leaders & Black Pastors turn backs to Education!!! Called out for being Missing in Action!!! Comment on \$50 Million for New Courthouse and Jail–Zero for Schools Article!!! Comment forwarded to the public and response by Robert A. Williams

Editor's Note: The following is a short put particularly pointed comment regarding my recent article \$50 Million for a New Courthouse and Jail–Zero for new Schools. Indeed, such an upside-down priority such as this would, and should, have immediately brought a major concern into the minds of all citizens. BLACK and white. Especially Blacks because all statistics show black students are way behind in every educational category and very OVERREPRESENTED in jail and prison populations. It seems like only Cleveland County, North Carolina governmental agencies can get by with such skewed and upside-down priorities without a big uproar from every segment of our population.

Without further ado, here is the Comment. It is addressed to me but I consider it applies to every right-thinking person regardless of Race, Creed and color. The Education of our children should always be everybody's top priority. Not even a

topic of discussion!!!

Robert,

You would think the black community leaders and black pastors would be more outraged and speak out about the County Commissioner's \$50-\$90 million proposed jail to house more young people of color. And not you, a proud son of a confederate and known Trump supporter being the loudest voice of the injustices of young people of color in our educational system and the ongoing shooting of black kids in the community.

Spending \$50-\$90 million on a courthouse and jail, and not building two new state of the art schools is a clear message the County Commissioners and City Officials in Shelby are betting on a higher ROI (Return on Investment) in a prison than investing in education and community programs. Don't be surprised if Mayor Anthony's Architect company is not getting a piece of the action.

Where is the NAACP, the Closing the Gap Pastors, the Black Ebenezer Baptist Association, our black elected officials and the Democratic Party? Why are you black leaders not as outraged and speaking out as a son of a confederate is doing in an effort to save the black kids in the community?

Willie A. Green, Sr.

For your convenience, I have embedded my original article about this at the end of this article

My response to this article is as follows:

□ I am indeed a "Son of a Confederate Veteran". In my direct "Williams" line of ancestry, My Great, Great, Grandfather fought for the Confederacy in many great battles. Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Petersburg under Generals "Stonewall" Jackson and Robert E. Lee. He was captured as he

was part of a detail of soldiers holding a critical bridge over the Appomattox River as Lee was retreating from the Petersburg area just days before Lee's surrender. He was taken to a Prisoner of War prison at Point Lookout, Maryland. Where he died days afterward. As there was a missing family place for him in the Cemetery at New Bethel Baptist Church, about 25 years ago I traveled to the Point Lookout Military Cemetery with the notion that there might be a way to bring his remains back to Cleveland County and inter him with his family. What I found was that the many Confederate Soldiers that died at Point Lookout had been buried as they died, but when the war was over. All of them were dug up and thrown willy-nilly into one big square acre size hole. It was totally impossible to verify, with any certainty, wherein that hole his remains might be. 151 years and five generations ago, the War Between the States, for me, is over. Except for my private study of History, with the thought of not making the same mistakes all over again.

□I am indeed a Trump Supporter. It is a well-recorded fact that the US economy flourished when Trump resided in the White House. Gas prices were low. Businesses were returning from foreign countries. Unemployment was very, very low. Black unemployment was at historic low levels. Taxes were lowered. The US was energy independent. The Military was well funded. The illegal immigration and drug floods were down to a mere trickle and going down from there. Border wall construction was well underway. No military "surrenders" occurred and tensions were lowered between the USA and North Korea and China. And, most of all, Trump supercharged the COVID-19 vaccine development. Otherwise, there would be no vaccine available today.

□About this new Courthouse-Jail Construction. I found about this looking for something else in the New 2021-2022 County Budget. I attended all the Commissioner meetings when the budget was discussed and explained by County Manager Brian Epley. Epley never mentioned one word in public about this project, Like I said, I discovered it by accident. A \$90

million item in the budget with ZERO public discussion by the Commissioners or Epley. And, especially no opportunity for the public and taxpayers to provide input.

Actually, the project is more than just more courtrooms and a new jail. The new project will be a brand-new Courthouse and Jail "campus." There will be a new DA's Office complex as well as a new Clerk of Court office. Magistrates offices, Probation offices, and who knows what else.

The project will be constructed in two phases and TOTAL an estimated \$90 million.

If Holland & Hamrick is the Architect, I expect the cost overruns will be 40-60%. In some significant part because the Cleveland County Government MO is to underestimate the cost upfront and once on the hook and under construction, add on cost as you go. I suspect the County doesn't know or care that they don't know how to specify exactly what they want in such a project. Don't know how to select a competent architect, don't know how to manage or even have a construction project cost control person or group. That statement is based on my observations of previous projects such as the new Health Department, The new Shelby Middle School, the new North Shelby School as well as watching unqualified construction persons such as Superintendent Dr. Fisher, Asst. Supt. Jennifer Wampler tries to describe construction and maintenance activities to a School Board, who themselves are mostly totally unsuited to understand the details of a construction project. And, are unwilling to seek out those that do understand (like me) for advice.

□The \$50 Million figure is the amount of STATE funding that Tim Moore has been able to secure as a part of the \$90 Million cost of the Courthouse "Campus" project. Remember folks, that leaves \$40 plus Millions us Cleveland County taxpayers will have to ante-up all by ourselves. No matter how you look at it, this Courthouse Project was determined by actions and inactions by our local elected official that results in Jails and prisons being given a higher priority than schools.

□The School Board telling Tim Moore that the four Cleveland

County High Schools have "life" left in them, despite needing \$35 Million to fix and repair just to continue operation, is the definition of incompetency and wishful thinking. And something every Cleveland County Citizen should be concerned with. Black as well as white. It is certainly a fact that black students are at the bottom of every measure of performance in every educational subject. And everything is even worse now that two years of educational time has been lost because of COVID. The "Black silence" Mr. Green is rightly calling to everybody's attention is clearly a matter of shame for those that consider a "Black Community" as an acceptable and permanent condition of subservience to a "White Community." As far as I am concerned, we all should strive to have a Cleveland County Community where the success of each and every member of this community benefits us all. Still, I agree with Mr. Green. When any group, based on race or anything else shirks their responsibility to be all that they can be and to do all they can do, they drag all of us down with them. I have no use to that, no matter who or what their reasoning. I have a simple two-step philosophy: 1. If you are not a part of the solution-YOU are part of the problem. And 2. It is not what you say (or don't say), it is what you do that counts. So, when a group refuses to say or do anything to bring about something positive to the community, I don't have much use or respect for them. Black or White!!!

All that being said, I believe it is about time for the PUBLIC to come together and form a COMMITTEE to provide permanent oversight and to advise and demand that our Governmental agencies and their leaders (as well as Political Party leaders) do what is right and without corruption from now on. The School Board, The Commissioners, The Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees, the City of Shelby, and other towns and cities do what is right. And what is RIGHT is what our COMMITTEE tells them is the RIGHT THING TO DO. No more secret meetings of Rogue Republicans intend on doing their dirty deeds. No more tax increased from the Commissioners unless

there is Public approval on the increase and what the money will be spent on. Actually, this COMMITTEE will do exactly what our Founding Fathers intended all of us to do in the first place. Pay attention to what is going on and do what is necessary to ensure that our government is working for us instead of the other way around. Like the upside-down priority given jails over schools in Cleveland County.

The text to my original article is as shown below:

BREAKING NEWS—\$50 Million in STATE Funding allocated to help build a new Courthouse and Jail Complex in Cleveland County!!!

ZERO \$\$\$ allocated for construction of new CCS High Schools to replace the four aged out CCS High Schools!!!

Speaker of the House Tim Moore says the CCS School Board told him that there was still life left in the four 55+ year-old High Schools!!!

Eye witness Reporting by Robert A. Williams

Folks, this news came at the very end of the November 16, 2021, Commissioner's Meeting.

Right before the meeting was adjourned, Commissioner Chairman Doug Bridges made the announcement that Speaker of the House Tim Moore had been instrumental in securing \$50 Million in funding for Cleveland County to begin the construction of a new Courthouse, Law Enforcement, and Jail project. Note that I had already discovered an item in the County Budget for 2021-2022 for this project. The Budgeted amount was \$90 Million and was to be done in two phases. I have previously reported this.

I have also been reporting, on a regular basis, on the need for planning and budgeting for the replacement of the four CCS high schools that are much older than the present Courthouse and Jail. So, I was immediately flabbergasted that Tim Moore and the County Commissioners had placed a higher

priority on the Courthouse and Jail than over properly funding adequate school construction in Cleveland County. To me, the priorities were exactly opposite to what they should be. Backward!!!

As Tim Moore was in attendance at the Commissioner's Meeting, seated no more than 12 feet away from me; when the meeting was adjourned, I made a beeline for Tim Moore.

I asked Tim since the state budget appears to have a lot of money for many projects, mentioning the \$50 Million for the Courthouse and jail, what about funding for the replacement of the aging CCS high schools? Tim's answer was quick and clear. The School Board had told him that the CCS High Schools had "years of life left in them" and the School Board had not requested any funding for aging school replacement. Tim added that he did help secure partial funding for new auditoriums at Burns and Crest High Schools. I made the statement that it makes little sense to build brand new auditoriums for 55+-year-old schools. That the funding for auditoriums would be better spent as a part of the construction of new replacement schools.

To that statement, Tim replied, "that is not what the School Board said they wanted to do."

About that time others were coming up greeting Tim and that was the end of our conversation.

So, folks. Tim working through the school board was the totally obvious and proper protocol in securing funding for public school projects. The problem here is totally and squarely on the Cleveland County School Board. A Rogue Republican Board more interested in corruption, lies, and plotting and scheming to get Danny Blanton defeated in the 2022 School Board Elections. And not giving a damn about the education of our children.

I say enough is enough. School Board Chairman Robert "Luke"

Queen has to be runoff from the CCS School Board. And anything else associated with the education of our children-Like the Cleveland Community College. And, runoff immediately-if not sooner.

Voices need to be raised at the highest volume. Protest Marches around the CCS Central Offices need to commence immediately. The Rogue Republicans, Dennis Bailey, Wes Westmoreland, Luke Queen, Ron Humphries, Kevin Whisnant, and David Allen should be stripped of any position of leadership in the Republican Party as well as any involvement of any educational facility or agency in Cleveland County. IMMEDIATELY!!!

As for us citizens, parents, mothers, and fathers, Aunts and Uncles, Grandparents, voters, and taxpayers should unite and work to rid ourselves of the corrupt trash at CCS and CCC. We need to be brainstorming about our own priorities and planning what is needed at CCS and CCC once the riff-raff is eliminated. Disinfected may be the better word.

We ALL need to do our part!!!

Stay Tuned!!!