

School Board votes 9-0 to STOP Auditoriums for Burns and Crest!!! CCS Doesn't have the money!!! Have already wasted too much!! Foolish behavior comes "home to roost" for Rogue school board!!! Eye Witness Report, comments and opinions by Robert A. Williams

Forrest Gump had it right all along, "a fool is, as a fool does!"

School Board Chairman Robert "Luke" Queen and his Rogue Republican sycophants (Rodney Fitch, Ron Humphries, Joel Shores and Greg Taylor), after being properly warned of numerous problems and issues with going ahead with their flawed and ill considered plans to build brand new auditoriums onto 55 plus year old Burns and Crest High Schools, had to go to FULL-STOP on those plans for the simplest of reasons. CCS had already wasted too much money on other things and didn't have enough cash in hand to even pay for the lowest bid to construct those auditoriums. And, the Commissioners flat turned them down just a couple days prior to the Low Bid acceptance drop-dead date. BAD Planning and BAD Advice all around. Especially by Luke Queen and his secret and illegal wheeling and dealing!!!

This saga actually begins in 1954, when I was in the process of graduating First Grade at the Old Fallston School, with the Brown vs. Board of Education Ruling by the US Supreme Court. Leaving out all the details (for your reading convenience), that ruling was the basis for Burns and Crest High Schools NOT having auditoriums and swimming pools to start with. Now, let's fast forward to 2016 when the Cleveland County Schools School Board first mentioned putting new auditoriums onto these 50 plus year-old schools.

In 2016, I had already retired from 42 years Engineering experience that included major construction projects specializing in Mechanical and HVAC experience that included designing HVAC for auditoriums. And, for curiosity, I researched recent construction of new auditoriums onto existing American schools. I found a good example of adding a new auditorium to an existing school that had just been completed in the town of Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin for \$8 million. WAY less than bid prices for the Auditoriums at Burns and Crest.

Folks, I started an article about 8-10 days ago regarding these Burns and Crest Auditoriums in comparison with the Auditorium built in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin for \$8 million. This is what WE could have also had if we, the CCS School Board, had any sense. I have some pictures for you. Two angle shots from inside and a shot from the outside. If the school board had been serious in 2016, this is what they could have had for \$8 million each. \$16 Million total. This is the article I didn't get finished before the events of January 21, 2022 proved me 100% right.

Budget for Auditoriums at Burns and Crest WAY-WAY Over!!!

T00 Much Waste elsewhere and NO planning except BAD planning!!!

School Board and Chairman Robert "Luke" Queen fully to blame!!!

Commissioners need to step up and withhold funds!!

Report, project saving research and recommendations by Robert A. Williams

Folks, I received a message from a trusted source that the HVAC broke down at Crest High School yesterday and classroom temperatures plunged to 23 degrees, CCS HVAC Maintenance was short two people due to COVID. The HVAC was finally started, ran for about seven minutes and shut itself down again. I don't know what happened after that.

I have received other reports that all the HVAC at Shelby, Kings Mountain, Burns and Crest High Schools need to be replaced. Imagine that. Four High Schools with bad HVAC units all at the same time.

Other reports are that both the Burns and Crest gymnasiums have had new HVAC Units installed in recent weeks.

Since I have 42 years of engineering experience with HVAC on big Navy Nuclear Ships (Aircraft Carriers) and Big Nuclear Power plants, I know exactly what the problem at CCS is. Bad Management. Bad Maintenance, Bad Organizational skills. Bad Planning. Wasteful Spending. NO Priorities! AND NO ACCOUNTABILITY. The Cleveland County Commissioners should immediately withhold all county funding to Cleveland County Schools until further notice. And continuing the withholding until CCS gets the message.

NOW, let's talk, like we've got some sense, about Auditoriums at Burns and Crest High Schools. And the positive HVAC impact those Auditoriums would have at the schools and in the community; if common sense is properly applied.

Also note that I have taken the opportunity to study the "Auditorium Question" at Burns and Crest for many years, especially since the subject was brought up by School Board Member Phillip Glover in 2016. Unfortunately for political purposes. Here are some of my findings:

Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center

History

The Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center (PAC) opened its doors in November 2016 with a United States Air Force Starlifter band concert, offered free-of-charge to the public. This beautiful Center is a state-of-the-art, 736-seat nonprofit performance venue built for the artistic and theatrical enrichment of the community members of the Village of Ashwaubenon and surrounding Greater Green Bay area. The PAC actively presents regional, national, and international touring entertainment and also serves as home to school and community musicals, plays, concerts, and theatre programs.

Unique to Ashwaubenon, the facility is funded through the Village and situated on School District property, and its usage is shared nearly 50/50 between the schools and community. The PAC welcomes students, families, greater Green Bay area residents, and performing arts lovers of all ages!

[ASHWAUBENON HIGH SCHOOL](#)

As a result of a needs analysis, exploration of potential solutions, and a village-wide survey, Bray worked closely with both the Ashwaubenon School District and Village of Ashwaubenon to develop a four-question referendum to address renovations to the Ashwaubenon High School and community spaces. The referendum passed in April 2014.

The referendum included a new Performing Arts Center and renovations to the Pool. These spaces are primarily used by Ashwaubenon High School but can also be utilized for community events.

The new auditorium is fully equipped with a full-fly loft, LED theatrical lighting and a seating capacity of 730. The space also includes new dressing rooms, a green room, and a connection from the existing school to the new addition.

The new 8-lane pool replaces the school's smaller 5-lane pool and allows the school to host larger swim and dive competitions. Located above the new team locker rooms is

seating for up to 500 people and offers an enhanced, elevated view of the space. This project also features the creation of a separate 1,500 square foot warm-water pool which can be used for open swim, aquatic therapy and swim lessons.



Folks, before we get back to the details of Luke Queen's Friday January 21, 2022 special; called secret School Board meeting, consider this: If the CCS School Board had not let themselves be "hood-winked" into building an unnecessary NEW North Shelby School, auditoriums just like this could have been built at both Burns and Crest High Schools for half a million dollars less than the New North Shelby School final cost. And would have been put to good use years ago.

Back to the original topic of this article: Luke Queen's secret called school board meeting held at 10:00 AM Friday January 21, 2022.

Note that I call this called meeting a SECRET meeting because Luke refused to give proper notification or an agenda for this meeting as required by NC Law. Luke's purpose was clear-keep the meeting secret from the public until the school board's decision was done and over with, and without public attendance or input into the meeting. However, Nannette Leonhart discovered the agenda on the School Board website Thursday evening and called me. I found it too. But too late to get the word to the public. Nannette and myself were the only two citizens to attend that meeting.

Luke was also unsuccessful in keeping Danny Blanton away from the meeting. Although Danny Blanton had a previous scheduled appointment in Charlotte later that morning, Danny Showed up to the meeting and made the arrangements to hook up by telephone to the meeting as he was driven to his appointment in Charlotte by his wife. It was a bad day for Luke and his Rogue Republicans as they were thwarted in every part of their planned scheme to keep the public away from their meeting that was filled with bad news for the Rogues, And good news for the public.

The first thing the Rogue Republicans did in this special called meeting was to go into closed session for a discussion with their lawyer. They had to go into closed session in another room because Nannette Leonhart and I were sitting there in attendance. Watching the Rogues like hawks.

The Closed Session lasted exactly one hour and two minutes. When the School Board came back into Open Session, they declared that they were **\$5.7 Million short** of the \$27,7 Million low bid by Beam Construction. They did not mention the fact that they had sent Supt. Fisher to the Cleveland County Commissioners for that \$5.7 Million and the Commissioners

turned them down. The Commissioners had previously told the School Board that the Commissioners required the School Board to develop a detailed Strategic Plan for new capitol construction that included priorities before the Commissioners would provide additional funding for anything. And the School Board refused to comply. Because the school board had refused to comply with the Commissioner's reasonable (and fiduciarily responsible) requirements, Supt. Fisher came back to CCS empty handed. It is of NOTE that School Board Chairman Luke Queen did NOT accompany Supt. Fisher to talk to the Commissioners. But after Luke Queen lied to the Commissioners about his CCC Board of Trustees appointment, it was obvious that Luke Queen is pretty much toast in the esteem of the Commissioners. Which is NOT good for CCS and CCC.

So, then Supt. Fisher went through a "conniption fit" of a history of CCS's funding methods for the construction of the new auditoriums for Burns and Crest. These methods were totally based on requesting grants from various sources prior to the use of local funding.

Local funding would have consisted of CCS saving a portion of each years CCS Budget funding and setting it aside in a special fund for the Construction of the Burns and Crest Auditoriums. Or new schools as the old schools age and reach the ends of their useful life. Every year CCS spends every bit of its funding and asks for more next year. A typical bureaucratic MO, honed to a fine edge by Fisher, Queen and the School Board. But totally bad for long range planning.

Then, Supt. Fisher offered two options to the School Board.

- 1.Go ahead and sign a contract with Beam Construction and start construction, knowing that the funding was NOT in hand, Putting a major challenge onto the CCS Budget.

Or

- 2.Delay the construction of the Auditoriums until new grant money could be applied for and approved. Never mentioning cutting back any of the wasteful spending at CCS.

The School Board chose Option 2. Delay the construction of the Auditoriums.

All the while, Burns and Crest will be soon be 60 years old and aging more every day.

Further advancing the reasoning for NOT building new multi-million-dollar attachments onto very old schools. Already infested with Mold and probably asbestos galore.

All this represents clear examples of bad management all around at CCS.

Also, it appears the Commissioners may seem to finally have awoken to the idea that good management practices must be utilized by all agencies that receive taxpayer funding. Just like I have challenged them to do. Which would be good. My conclusion is a little different. I predict the refusal of the Commissioners to provide additional funding to CCS is more a function of the Commissioners being afraid that their own new \$150 Million Jail Complex and the new \$8.5 No. 4 Shell building project has a high risk of going way over budget themselves, wrecking their own projects funding budgets by cost over-runs for CCS . Especially if they give \$5.7 million to CCS for the new auditoriums.

What I would recommend fir CCS is this:

- 1.CCS build nothing new until a "real" Strategic Plan is developed for a Consolidated County School District, doing away with the old and outdated so-called "attendance zones" within Cleveland County borders.

2. Select the optimum or preferred size (attendance) of a High School and determine how many high schools are necessary in Cleveland County. Then determine how many high schools are required for all the students in Cleveland County

- 3.Develop a single modern design high school that includes equal facilities for each and every high school. Classrooms, auditorium, gymnasium with centralized HVAC, football field, baseball field, tennis courts with equal provisions for boys'

and girls' sports.

4. Select the center of the number of attendance zones (based on the latest census data), selected in paragraph 2.

5. Construct this same design High School as close to the center of the attendance zone in a sequence such that a new high school is constructed every 5 years.

6. Using the location of the new high schools as the center, around which smaller middle schools and elementary schools would be constructed to best suit this model.

Note that these recommendations are of a general nature suitable for refinement to include roads, school bus routes, natural boundaries, etc.

Also Note that this general plan is 10,000 times more refined and equal than any plan CCS has developed on their own to this date.