

NC State Auditor Beth Woods Reports Embezzlement to FBI & SBI \$430,000 plus Involved Similar to Cleveland County Schools P-Card Abuse Scandal Covered up by CCS School Board and DA a few years ago!!! Report, comparisons and conclusions by Robert A. Williams

Beth Wood in her State Auditor website homepage says her MISSION is:

Providing citizens and North Carolina State leadership with independent, unbiased and professional assessments of whether public resources are being properly accounted for.

One thing is certain. North Carolina State Auditor Beth Wood does her job well. Especially for a Democrat in this day and time.

Several years ago, Beth Wood's Auditors came to Cleveland County and took a look at Cleveland County Schools P-Card (Credit Card) receipts and called in the State Bureau of Investigation. Wood's Audit Report and the SBI's investigation in Cleveland County resulted in a report to the Cleveland County's District Attorney's Office. The great and wonderful CC DA's Office took the report and did what they always do in regard to political corruption in Cleveland County. They

branded the SBI Criminal investigative report as SECRET and refused to divulge even one word of what the SBI Investigation had found and completely refused to criminally prosecute anybody at CCS.

Of course, we demanded, under the Freedom of Information ACT as well as North Carolina Public Records Laws, for copies of all the P-Card receipts and received tons of them. Finding out that tons more of the receipts had been illegally shredded by CCS.

But, from the receipts that we did have, as well as from sources who were totally afraid to allow their names be used, we found out plenty. We found out that the fraudulent misuse of the CCS's 200+ P-Cards went all the way to the top and on down.

We found:

- High level CCS personnel used their School P-Cards to take friends out to high dollar restaurants every Friday Night.\

- CCS employees, ignoring state law, would go out and purchase multiple expensive cameras and electronic equipment items one purchase at a time so as not to exceed their individual CCS spending limits.

- One employee who lived in Rowan County would use her CCS P-Card to pay for all of her gasoline bills as well as purchase stock to sell at her private business in a Gastonia Mall.

- Another employee who would also purchase cases of items to sale at a convenience store her family owned.

- An employee who went on a training trip to the exclusive and expensive Grove Park Inn in Asheville and charged multiple "massages" in the Grove Park Inn "Spa," costing hundreds of dollars each.

- Employees who used their CCS P-Card to purchase a breakfast biscuit every day.

- Employees who used their CCS P-Card to grocery shop almost every day on the way home for work for supper that night for the family.

□And the list goes on and on.

About the only one that was actually punished (only a little- and never criminally prosecuted) was a person who had bought tires for his truck, a truck bed toolbox, clothes for himself. etc.

Also, about the time of this CCS P-Card scandal, large ticket items such as a CCS owned Boom Truck, a tractor and many other items mysteriously started to reappear overnight at CCS facilities where the Security Cameras had also been mysteriously turned off.

Also note that during all of this, School Board candidate (and later elected) Danny Banton was the only school board member pushing for accountability and fiscal responsibility in P-Card purchasing.

The “light” School Board member Danny Blanton was shining on the School Board over these illegal acts finally resulted in CCS bringing in a so-called independent auditor (NOT from Beth Wood’s Office). This auditor was restricted from auditing anything except documents that Superintendent Stephen Fisher provided him. Which were later determined to only record that had been closely and fully prescreened to insure there were NO PROBLEMS prior to being given to the outside auditor. Who then reported NO PROBLEMS. And the School Board quickly issued a Press Release to the Shelby Star that the Independent Auditor could find no problems with his so-called independent audit.

Over time, it appears that many of the most egregious offenders of the P-Card misuse scandal are gone from CCS. A superintendent even. And a last remaining one, the Child Nutrition Director, is now leaving too.

Now, The Carolina Journal reports that State Auditor Beth Wood is at it again. Catching up with embezzlement in a small North Carolina Town. Spring Lake in Cumberland County. A small town of only 12,000 people between Fort Bragg and Fayetteville

where \$430,000 has been misappropriated.

In that Carolina Journal article, the State Treasurer Dale Folwell has some important and totally relevant quotes about how these bad acts by local governments come about. They are also totally relevant to Cleveland County:

Folwell says,

Noting the long-time financial turmoil of the town, State Treasurer Dale Folwell told Carolina Journal “the more we peel the onion, the more we cry.”

He’s concerned about the millions of taxpayer dollars that flow into the coffers of small towns, often lacking capable accountants and transparency. And Folwell, who serves as chairman of the NC Local Government Commission, said the problem is not an easy fix because “you can’t legislate common sense and common courtesy.”

Folwell said it’s up to local citizens to become more involved to ensure their tax dollars aren’t squandered. He pointed to East Laurinburg, which had its charter revoked after years of financial trouble.

Amen, State Treasurer Dale Folwell.

Good Job, State Auditor Beth Wood.

PS: Many folks, including myself, believe that when corrupt elected or appointed officials get prosecuted and led off to prison in handcuffs; that will be the day that corruption in government stops!!!

The Carolina Journal article can be found at the following [link](#).