Commissioners Cover-up Trouble in Paradise!!! Hide Organizational Problems Deep in Budget records!!! DSS asks for 12 new positions—Commissioners give them ZERO!! Everybody That Asked for new positions got them. All or mostly all. WHY Did DSS get shafted???? Discovery, Report, Commentary and Conclusions by Robert A

The Cleveland County Commissioners FY2023 Budget Presentation was 93 pages long and was presented to the Commissioners by the County Manager Brian Epley during the Budget Hearing in about 25 minutes. Much or the County Manager's Budget Message PowerPoint Presentation to the Commissioners was skipped over totally and all that WAS presented, was presented too fast for ANY member of the public to comprehend. Robert A would bet good money that very few, if any, of the Commissioners understood (or were aware) of all of what this presentation included. As for Robert A, he downloaded this 93-page FY2023 Budget Presentation document and studied oner it in quite some detail. Especially Page 39.

Page 39 of this 93-page FY2023 Budget Presentation document

was a listing of all the County Departments that had requested additional personnel, how many additional personnel were requested, how many were approved and the annual cost. That Page 39 is shown below for your convenience.

Personnel Requests

Department	Request	Recommended	Annual Cost
Social Services	12	0	$0
Public Health	2	2 (temp)	$160,000
Sheriff's Department	6	4	$280,000
Emergency Management	1	1	$60,000
Communications	1	1	$62,000
Animal Services	1	1	$55,000
I.T.	1	1	$85,000
Total	23	10	$702,000

Robert A says, notice that very first item on this Budget document.

The Cleveland County Department of Social Services, now under the total control of the Cleveland County Commissioners through an advisory board and the County Manager requested 12 additional personnel and the Commissioners approved ZERO. All the other Departments received what they requested, except for the Sheriff's Department who requested 6 and 4 were approved. Public Health requested 2 and 2 were approved on a temporary basis.

And DSS was 0 for 12.

And DSS works directly for the Commissioners??? Weren't these people talking to one another or what?

Robert A believes it is both! The we're NOT talking to one

another, except to spend $3.5 Million to move DSS from their old offices (for reasons that are totally dubious and hidden) to the Health Department Building and the “Or What.”

Before we examine the “Or What,” let’s look at this $3.5 Million DSS move out of their old offices.

The old DSS Building, according to Assistant County Manager Kerri Melton, “is past it’s useful life.” Ms. Melton has never described what “past it’s useful life” means exactly. Since the average age of 27 of the 29 Cleveland County Public Schools is over 57 years old. One could easily conclude that every one of these 27 school buildings are ”past their useful life.” Yet, Luke Queen-CCS Chairman is spending $35 Million to refurbish the four high schools; Burns, Crest, Shelby and Crest. Over half a million dollars is presently being spent on “glazing” the windows at Burns and Crest. Surely a clear sign that the CCS Maintenance Department has NOT been properly led and supervised for many, many years. Same with the HVAC systems at all four high schools that have incredibly all failed and need replacement at the exact same time. Clearly the Commissioners AND the CCS School Board and Staff don’t have a clue what they are doing as relates to facilities operation and maintenance. But that is a true story for another time.

As we speak, the Commissioners are spending at least $3.5 Million, $2.5 remodeling and $1 Million for new furniture and fixtures for the DSS to move into the Health Department building. Robert A estimates that $3.5 million will stretch into at least $5 Million before the DSS fully transitions into the Health Department Building. Mostly because those specifying the scope of work and construction don’t know how to specify scopes of work and construction processes to begin with. As work goes on, they will encounter issues and have to issue costly change orders to cover all the loose ends they didn’t know about at the start. Which is consistent and normal for how CCS, the Commissioners and CCC operates under the

Robert “Luke” Queens, Kevin Gordons and the CCC BoTs.

And, don’t forget about the bombshell Channel 3 TV news a few months back that exposed the fact that the Cleveland County Department had literally been stealing babies from their parents by using phony and totally illegal so-called “Contracts” that the CCDSS had forced upon parents with the threat that they would take their children anyway if the parents refused to sign those illegal contracts. Many people in Cleveland County saw those WBTV-3 primetime news stories and say DSS Director Katie Swanson slam her door in the TV Reporter’s face. It was a bad day for Cleveland County as WBTV 3 News Primetime reaches over a million viewers. Who the heck would ever want to move to Cleveland County? Or stay here for that matter?

And, what was the discipline the Commissioners meted out to the DSS offenders? Exactly the same as regards the “Queer” and CRT Children’s books at the Shelby Library. NOTHING!!! Cleveland County and the Cleveland County Elected leadership are the laughing stock of North Carolina. South Carolina too. Robert “Luke” Queen, Kevin Gordon and the Rogue Republicans being prime examples. As for DSS, DSS Director Katie Swanson put out a video, hidden deep on the Cleveland County Official Website, that, regarding the children stolen by the false “Contracts,” the DSS had ensured that the children were SAFE.

Regarding DSS ensuring the safety of children, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Note: FYI, please find below a few before and after pictures on how the Cleveland County Department of Social Services ensures the safety of Children. This DSS “Protected” child, thanks to the CCDSS, will now be “SAFE” and “Protected” for eternity.

Back to the Personnel Requests Budget Document:

“Or What???”

Robert A considers the Personnel Requests budget document should never have been included in this Budget Message PowerPoint Presentation by County Manager Brian Epley to begin with. This page 39 was not spoken about in the Commissioner’s meeting except to say that the FY2023 Budget included “10 new county employees.” And that was all. Mr. Epley, especially after I discovered the “hidden” $90 Million, now expanded to $140 Million that Robert A estimates will push $250 Million before it is completed cost for the new Justice Center Jail and Courthouse project in the FY2022 Budget. Epley has to know, from past experience, that Robert A closely reviews Budget documents looking for just these kinds of shenanigans.

Perhaps it was a “Freudian Slip” from Brian Epley to insert this particular page, in deep cover, in the FY2023 Budget documents. Epley figured that Robert A would find it, expose it, raise the issue with the commissioners and relieve his own conscious (if he has any) for whatever shenanigans are afoot. Although this is unlikely as the Commissioners, especially Chairman Kevin “Luke-Lite” Gordon says he doesn’t care what Robert A say or thinks or prints-even though he reads every word Robert A publishes, and sometimes even spell checks his typos, there is something to this conclusion. Perhaps County Manager Brian Epley, is NOT worried about his conscious; but his job. Knowing and witnessing the frequent aberrant behavior from Luke-Lite Gordon. The yelling and the screaming and the threats that Chairman Gordan is exhibiting more and more every day when he is questioned about even simple things to Gordon’s corrupt ways Luke Lite has let surface much bad behavior when he is flustered and challenged with the truth. Perhaps County Manager Brian Epley, as well as many other threatened county employees, would very much appreciate it if Robert A takes out

Luke-Lite in the 2024 Elections and hopefully sooner? Staff feeling so threatened because they are working under a self-made madman.

Whether or not any of Epley's speculated reasoning is true, the fact remains that the Cleveland County DSS and DSS Director Katie Swanson in particular have been dissed severely from the denial by the Commissioners to honor ANY of the 12 new employees requested by the DSS.

Now, let's explore what Robert A would do if he were a commissioner.

Robert A would have the grit and the gall and the nerve and the understanding that if a Director of any Department overly requested additional employees to "pad" the bureaucracy or just fill additional seats at taxpayer expense, he would nip the problem in the bud. Right from the start. Robert A would never fail to instruct County staff on what his expectations are. If there was no need for hiring an additional 12 employees at CCDSS, the DSS Director would have known clearly NOT to request those 12 additional and unnecessary employees to begin with. There is nothing much Biblical about this issue. Just good management techniques and processes that Luke-Lite Gordon seems to totally lack. Or practice. Especially Common Sense.

Also, Robert A would never approve any $3.5 Million relocation of the DSS to the Health Department without good facts and figures to truly justify that expenditure. If the "Old" DSS Building was indeed at the end of its useful life, like 27 CCS School buildings, the DSS Building would have to stand in line with the priorities that I would set as a commissioner. New High Schools with equal facilities being top priority. More on that in future articles. As of right now, the DSS relocation and the building remodeling are going ahead at top speed-with no overall plans from the Commissioners or anybody else.

Stay tuned folks. Robert A is working on developing a School facility construction plan that will knock your socks off!!! Just doing what good citizens ought to do.