

Part 1: Robert A Speaks Up when others are afraid to!!

Editor's Note: North Carolina Law requires governmental bodies such as Boards of Commissioners, School Boards, etc. to hold meetings at least once per month and those governmental bodies are required to allow public participation. The NC Law requires that each person wanting to speak must be allowed at least three minutes at a minimum. For its part, the Cleveland County Commissioners as well as the CC School Board have adopted policies that make those three minutes a MAXIMUM. And both have adopted timing devices that measure the time to the second. And when your three minutes, exactly to the second, runs out; you are required to shut up and sit down. Sometimes, if they don't like what you have to say, they yell and scream at you or try to have you removed from the building. After attending Commissioners and School Board meetings here in Cleveland County for years, Robert A doesn't recall a single time that the School Board OR the Commissioners have ever taken any definite action because of public participation. And, both the Commissioners and School Board have recently adopted policies where they don't even record in the minutes of the meetings what the members of the public actually say to them during that Public Participation period. Note that shows exactly what the uppity CC Commissioners and the Uppity CC School Board think about the public. NOTHING!!! You people who want to speak are just a bunch of trashy and stupid people who have come just to waste their time. Robert A makes it his goal to speak up at every opportunity. First, there are always things that the Commissioners and School Board need to hear about. But mostly because other citizens will see that public participation is their right and a duty. When the citizens are watching and talking, the corruption of our elected officials is MINIMIZED. Cleveland County needs MORE, many more citizens like Robert A, who are not afraid to speak up about what is

wrong with Cleveland County and are also willing to offer suggestions on how to make things better. But the Commissioners and School Board refuse to listen.

Also, Folks, we have upped our abilities and technology on our Citizens For Good Government website (www.citizensforgoodgovernment.org) such that we can more easily “clip” the recorded videos of Commissioners and School Board members to obtain the exact particulars of items of interest as necessary to provide clear and concise “proofs” of what we are writing about. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. We believe a video of a meeting with the “fluff” taken away is more watchable and informative than going through lots of searching through CC websites that are often required to understand what is going on. WE can do the editing one time and all y’all readers won’t have to individually wade through all the mess and distractions on the County websites.

Now, for the facts:

This article is in regard to the October 17, 2023 Commissioners Meeting and is limited to Robert A’s Public Comments during that meeting’s Public Participation agenda Item. The reasons for this are:

- Robert A has announced his intention to run for the elected office of Cleveland County Commissioner in the 2024 Elections. The incumbent Commissioners are presently using their elected offices to campaign for reelection at an unfair advantage in their re-election bids. The Commissioners (and the School Board) both often send Press Releases to the now-defunct Shelby Star to unfairly have their say. Robert A will allow the incumbent candidates as well as all challengers the opportunity to provide their records and campaign issues to the public. With no real countywide news media presently in Cleveland County, this will provide

everybody the opportunity to get their message out to the citizens, taxpayers, and voters.

- Since news outlets in Cleveland County are so limited, **WE can** also provide and record candidate forums on a regular basis. Also, one-on-one debates are possible and are encouraged to suppress the influence of campaign lies and misinformation with much more effectiveness.
- All candidates will have the opportunity to lay out their vision for Cleveland County as well as point out any poor voting records of the incumbents in almost real-time.

Also, the **main point of this article** is to recognize **Robert A's** comments about honoring our veterans that he expressed during the Public Participation section of the October 17, 2023, Commissioner's meeting. The incumbent commissioners have their records in office that are often at odds with their 2020 campaign promises of transparency, etc. **Robert A.** also has a record of his own position on issues that the voting public deserves to hear (and see)!!

Folks, the October 17, 2023 Commissioners Meeting announced a brand-new one-time initiative to help US Military Veterans who are presently residing in Cleveland County. **Robert A** immediately **Smelled a RAT**, recognizing that it was just a **publicity stunt** for the incumbent Commissioners to fool and deceive the Veterans in Cleveland County that the commissioners were going to help them so the Veterans would vote for Kevin Gordon, Ronnie Whetstine, and Johnny Hutchins to re-elect them in the 2024 Elections.

OK, Mr. Robert A Williams, show us some proof, you might say. Be glad to folks, says **Robert A.**

Watch the video "clip" of the County Clerk delivering a prepared **"Intro" for the Commissioners re-election publicity stunt.**

Proof:

- The filing period to run for Cleveland County Commissioner in 2024 is less than 30 days away.
- The Commissioners seem to have finally discovered the plight of the US Military Veterans in Cleveland County and how much help they might need. What took them so long??
- Back in May and June 2023 when the county Budget for 2023-2024 was being developed, **where was any additional funding of county money to be used to significantly improve Veterans Services???** Aside from that Marion Street. has one small “hide-away” office in the basement of the County Office Building. It is perhaps likely that the Feds paid the County rent for their Veterans Liaison Officer whenever he (or maybe a she) was in the County.
- Historically, the CC Commissioners always deferred to the Feds and the State for any help (monetary or otherwise) for Veterans. **The Commissioners even had to be severely shamed and chastised to ever help provide transportation to CC Veterans seeking medical treatment at the VA Hospital in Asheville (Actually, Oteen).**
- Aside from Commissioner Johnny Hutchins passing out “50-cent” pins to Veterans during Commissioner’s Meeting “recognitions,” **Robert A** has no recollection of any special attention ever being paid to US Military Veterans at Commissioner’s meetings.
- It is doubtful that any services provided by the CC-DSS, the CC Health Department, or the CC Mental Health had any special allowances for Veterans above any other citizens needing those same services. I.e. Nothing special for Veterans unless there were Federal or State Dollars attached to those services.
- Now, from the “clip” as provided above, note that the County Clerk ended her Commissioners publicity stunt

“pitch” with the question, What can YOU do to help??
(*Notice that not a single one of the Cleveland County Commissioners gave an answer to that question.*)

Now, watch the next “clip” which was from the Public Comment section of the Agenda. Watch Robert A. provide an answer to that question at the beginning of his three minutes. Robert A., in a small way and taking his time away from what he originally planned to say, gave a superb three-part answer to how every citizen in Cleveland County, North Carolina, and the USA should honor our US Military Veterans. From our country’s formation until now and into the future. An answer that left the Commissioners speechless.

The remainder of Robert A’s Public Comment, about the \$250 Million plus Justice Center Project’s uncontrolled cost escalations, also left the Commissioners even more speechless.

Now, let’s think about Robert A’s answer to the question previously noted.

Robert A stated that HIS answer was this:

1. That WE should ALL remember the reasons and ideals why our US Military Veterans were fighting and risking their lives for.
2. That WE should ALL Honor our US Veterans s for their sacrifices on our behalf.
3. That WE should ALL fight TYRANNY (and CORRUPTION) wherever we find it!! As our way of Honoring our Veterans and our children.

Folks, as an elected Cleveland County Commissioner in 2024, Robert A. practices what he preaches!!! This should bring a sigh of relief for all citizens, voters, and taxpayers in Cleveland County with Robert A. Williams in a key leadership position.