Commissioners Mis-Use “Shelby Shopper” to Deceive Citizens!!!

The front-page article of the June 27, 2024 Shelby Shopper was titled “Cleveland County Juvenal Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) provides a vital service to our area.” That article is included in this report for your convenience and review. Little did the Shelby Shopper or readers for that matter realize that they were being duped by a feeble attempt by the Cleveland County Commissioners to deceive and dupe the taxpayers and citizens of Cleveland County into believing that the JCPC, as administered by The CC Commissioners, were actually doing something that was effective to reduce juvenile crime in Cleveland County. Folks, and the Shelby Shopper, this is the real story behind this phony article.

Just a few weeks prior to when this Shelby Shopper publication was printed, Robert A had signed up to speak during a CC Commissioner’s Meeting regarding several concerns related to the 2024-2025 CC Budget. Robert A, among other things in his three-minute limited presentation, informed the CC Commissioners that their budget had a number of concerns and discrepancies. Robert A stated:

- *The County’s present $40 Million debt repayment over the next 10 years would NOT be paid off by the per year debt repayment schedule as stated in the budget. Much less even considered the Hundreds of Millions of Dollars in debt the County is set to incur because of the New Justice Center Project. Nor the $160 plus Millions the Cleveland County Schools say they will need just to maintain their facilities (NO NEW CONSTRUCTION at CCS) going forward.*

- *An entry of $65,000 for the “Coroner” was bogus and*

fraudulent because the CC Commissioners had disbanded the Office of Coroner about five years ago.

That the several hundreds of thousands of "county" dollars budgeted to administer the $Millions of state dollars for the CC Juvenile Crime Prevention Council was a lot of money for the CC JCPC programs (that Robert A did NOT mention by name). That, according to the many news reports of Juvenile Crimes committed in Cleveland County, the JCPC programs WERE NOT EFFECTIVE.

Note that the Commissioners refused to mention any of these items in their official "minutes of meetings" that were approved at the next Commissioner's Meeting. These minutes only stated that Robert A "had spoken about his concerns about the budget." It is clear to Robert A that the CC Commissioners; Kevin Gordon, Johnny Hutchins, Ronnie Whetstine, Deb Hardin and Doug Bridges, do not want CC citizens and taxpayers to know that the Commissioners are also NOT effective in their leadership, financial management and fiduciary responsibilities.

Also note that Robert A is not alone in his questioning of the effectiveness of The Cleveland County Commissioners leadership as well as the CC Juvenile Crime Prevention Council program's effectiveness. Remember that the "P" in the JCPC stands for PREVENTION. Juvenile CRIME PREVENTION!! The Shelby Shopper article in question here gives lots of "general" information about the various CCJCPC programs. But, upon a full review of the Shopper's article, NOT ONE WORD of the CC Commissioner's/JCPC's phony Press Release relates to any measure of effectiveness or accountability of the JCPC programs. Or, to the JCPC itself.

Actually, the Shopper's article only raises more issues and concerns about the CCJCPC and the CC Commissioners themselves than Robert A mentioned to begin with:

1.The second paragraph of the Shopper's article (Info provided by the Commissioners) states: "Cleveland County JCPC is made up of an eclectic blend of agencies, including… One has to immediately wonder whether the CC JCPC administrators (The CC Commissioners) have ever set up criteria for selecting the agencies involved with the CCJCPC, or do they just put onto the taxpayer's payroll anybody that forms a group with an important sounding name and a good sales pitch. Without ever requiring any accountability or performance measures to meet. (OR, JUST HIRE FRIENDS AND FRIENDS OF FRIENDS WHO SUPPORT THE COMMISSIONERS WITH CAMPAIGN CASH AND UNDER THE TABLE PAYMENTS!!! Also, the funding to run the county JCPCs all come from State funds. The Commissioners are only funded Hundreds of Thouand ($340,063), to administer the programs. And the State has no visible requirements for the County to follow. Only to spend the money that they are given. This is always the formula for graft and corruption with little to no accomplishments required. (Note that the purpose of Robert A's original statements to the CC Commissioners was to remind the Commissioners that THEY had the authority to require accountability and performance measurements for the CC JCPC and that THEY, the Commissioners, were responsible for NOT requiring the CC JCPC to show some performance on juvenile crime PREVENTION here in Cleveland County. Again, when you read the Shopper's article that is provided with this article, there is not one word of description regarding the prevention of any crime in CC that was committed by a juvenile.

2. The Shopper's article also states "The whole (CC JCPC) Council is made up of volunteers from the agencies (that receive JCPC Funding)." This is the perfect example of the "Fox Guarding the Henhouse!!!" No CC taxpayer, given this single fact, would ever approve of this kind of phony CC JCPC oversight provided by Commissioners Kevin Gordon, Johnny Hutchins, Ronnie Whetstine, Deb Hardin and Doug Bridges to the CC JCPC.

3.At the recent Commissioner's Meeting where Robert A spoke, Robert A noted that he had attended Commissioners meetings for many years and did NOT ever remember the CC JCPC giving the Commissioners a report of the CC JCPC's measured performance. The Shopper's article (continued on page 8) provided an answer to Robert A's statement. "On June 5 (CC) JCPC members met at the Cleveland Country Club to celebrate the organizations good work and to recognize folks who played an especially important role in it. At the appreciation banquet, representatives of each of the funded agencies reported on their activities of the past year…" Again, another faux pas by the Commissioners and the CC JCPC. Robert A previously did NOT know the CC JCPC and the Commissioners were having their "Soirées" at the Cleveland County Club. And now he does. All at taxpayer expense, Directly or indirectly.

And, let's not forget some of the many other indications by others that the CC JCPC is NOT significantly preventing Juvenile crime here in Cleveland County:

1.The North Carolina General Assembly met in special session this past week to overturn the veto by NC Governor Roy Cooper on a bill to raise the age of juveniles to be tried for their alleged crimes in ADULT Court. The new law (HB-834) that re-defines "delinquent juvenile" in North Carolina will automatically send more teens (ages 15-17) to adult court trials.

2.The most expensive construction "boon-doogle" in history by the CC Commissioners, the New Justice Center Project, will increase the number of courtrooms from 6 to 10 upon completion. Just in time to accommodate the increased influx of Juvenile Crime perpetrators caused by the NOT requiring the CC JCPC to properly do their jobs…

3.The CC Commissioners and the City of Shelby totally rejected Mr. Willie Green's "Sports Complex" Project. A project that would have directly decreased juvenile crime by providing

something for juveniles to do, instead of committing crimes. Mr. Green had tailored his business plan on exactly what the City of Shelby's 10-Year Strategic Plan had called for to reduce juvenile crime. Now, Shelby, CC AND the CC JCPC have nothing real to show for all the wasted tax money that they have spent on preventing Juvenile Crime. Note that Mr. Green moved his Sports Complex Project to Athens, Georgia, made an immediate improvement to the Athens juvenile crime rate and was welcomed with open arms by the City of Athens.

Stay tuned folks, Robert A will be providing more information of the Commissioner's fraudulent budget entry of $65,000 to the Coroner and the $40 Million county debt payoff. Plus other things that Robert A did not have to describe in the three minutes the Commissioners will only allow for citizens participation. Now, the rule is three minutes, but only one time per month. That is another story altogether.

This is the link to the Shelby Shopper's article.

Editor's Note: Robert recommends voting in the 2024 General Elections for the CC Commissioner and the CCS School Board Candidates as follows:

(Please vote for ALL of the Candidates listed below on your ballot to provide the maximum Ballot Security!!)

Cleveland County Commissioners Candidate recommendations: Vote for these three!

XXXX Tony Berry
XXXX Stormy Mongiello
XXXX David Peace

Cleveland County School Board Candidate recommendations: Vote for these five!
XXXX Kenneth A. Ledford
XXXX David Fisher
XXXX Gloria Sherman

XXXX Rod Powell
XXXX Tracy Ross