

Commissioners lies & deceptions regarding the NEW CC Justice Center!!

Editor's Note: Folks, Robert A has been questioning the massive estimated and the REAL costs of the NEW CC Justice Center for a long time now. Not only is this New Justice Center the most expensive construction project managed (Mis-Managed) by the nit-wits; Kevin Gordon, Johnny Hutchins, Ronnie Whetstine, Deb Hardin and Doug Bridges, on the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners, its purpose for being is packed with inaccuracies, false narratives, lies and deceptions. AND overall stupidity with perhaps a large dollop of corruption mixed in for good measure. In reality, the New Justice Center is NOT needed at all. All it took was Robert A making a two-hour inspecting and investigation tour to the "Presently operating Courthouse" on Wednesday (August 21, 2024) to put all the pieces together of this sad, sad puzzle and financial disaster in the making. Folks, this is not opinions talking. This is well proven facts. YOU have the same opportunity to see for yourself as Robert A.

First, some phony and downright false statements, mostly from Commissioner Kevin Gordon, regarding the necessity of the new Courthouse and jail complex:

□Kevin Gordon, the "Artful Dodger" says "The Courthouse was built in 1972." The fact is, the courthouse and jail were not built at the same time. The Jail was indeed built in 1972, but the Courthouse was built in 1992. This can easily be totally proven by simply walking down to the Courthouse front door. From the outside facing the Front Door, there is a bronze plaque on the right side of the Front Door stating the Jail was built and dedicated in 1972. On the left side of the front door there is another bronze plaque that dedicates the

construction of the Courthouse in 1992.

This means the jail is only 52 years old and the Courthouse is only 32 years old. Both were built under strict North Carolina Building Codes resulting in a reasonable building expected lifetime of well over 60 years. For comparison, Shelby, Kings Mountain, Burns and Crest High Schools are all older than the present-day Cleveland County Jail. The average age of ALL of the CCS Schools is around 60 years old. And walk uptown from the Old Jail and Present Courthouse and take a look at the Old Courthouse on the Square. A 100+ year old landmark that is still in full operation, as the Earl Scruggs Center.

Also, note that the Old "landmark" Courthouse, during its 100+ years of operation contained, not only a Single Courtroom located upstairs, but all the other county offices such as the tax offices were on the first floor, Register of Deeds, etc. Also, the entire CC Sheriff's Office was housed in that small side building next to the Old Courthouse that had once called the "Well House."

□Commissioner Kevin Gordon, the "Artful Dodger," has personally stated, on several media occasions, that NC Building Codes require that a new \$400+ Million\$ Justice Center project must be built because of Building Code violations. And that prisoners have escaped from the jail parking area as they been brought in from their arrest site to an unsecure entrance to the jail.

□Kevin Gordon says: "We have to build a new Jail (& Courthouse) because of Building Code violations. When all the jail inmates flush the toilet at the same time, the Clerk of Court offices are flooded."

This Artful Dodger (Kevin Gordon) falsehood is especially deceptive because it is, in part, true. Robert A, in previous (Years ago) investigative trips to the CC Courthouse had occasion to visit the Clerk of Court's Office area in search

of some public records. (Robert A has done this many times in the past and has near future plans to continue.)

On this occasion, Robert A himself noticed "tarps" draped over a number of file cabinets and asked the Clerk (Mitzi Johnson) what was the purpose of the tarps and questioned whether or not the roof was leaking. Mitzi informed Robert A that the area above this document room was NOT the building roof, but was a part of the jail. AND, that the inmates had learned that they could cause flooding by them all flushing the toilets at the same time. Mitzi informed Robert A that she intended to keep the tarps in place until the problem was well fixed.

Robert A advised Mitzi that it was the wise thing for her to do. Knowing that it was the Clerk's Office responsibility to preserve public records and said no more about it to Mitzi (or anybody else). Knowing the responsibility for the flooding rested outside the purview of the Clerk of Court. Then, Mitzi and Robert A went on to find the public records of interest. All of this was from way before Kevin Gordon, the Artful Dodger, was ever on the scene in CC Government.

However, Robert A was a degreed Engineer with extensive knowledge and 42 years of engineering experience in Building and Equipment Codes and Standards. Mechanical, Plumbing, HVAC, Fire Protection, etc. Robert A immediately knew, from what Mitzi described to him, that Plumbing Codes for houses and buildings required plumbing drain lines from multiple fixtures such as the CC Jail's toilet and sink fixtures were required to be sized for the maximum flow from all the fixtures being used simultaneously. By design and by state law, for the inmates of the Cleveland County Jail to flush all toilets and turn on any and all other spigots and valves simultaneously; not one drop of water should have overflowed onto the floor or anywhere else. With NO EXCEPTIONS!!

But, an overflow from the CC jail did occur on one or more occasions. And CC officials were notified. So, Robert A

decided to just wait and see what would happen. It was obvious to Robert A that perhaps the inmates had torn apart towels, clothing, newspapers, mattresses, magazines or whatever and purposely stuffed them down into the toilets sufficient to cause an overflow. In such a case as this, the Sheriff's Office should have imposed rules and regulations to prevent any such re-occurrences. And called in the Roto-Rooter Man to clean out the obstructions. Or, and very likely with the dirty dealings in Cleveland County, the plumbing drain lines could have purposely been undersized and not properly tested so the building contractor could make additional profits, all the while paying off County officials to look the other way.

However, if there are repairs that are necessary to bring the Jailhouse Plumbing system up to code because of accidental damage repair or purposeful fraudulent violations, the codes that would be in effect for such repairs would be under the Codes that existed during the time (NC Building Code-Plumbing (1963 Edition) that the Jail was designed and constructed. NOT necessarily the Codes in effect in 2024.

Also, the ONE exceptionally agile Prisoner who broke loose from Officers in the open jail basement and simply outran his would-be captors? Hey, properly applied handcuffs and shackles would have prevented this silly episode. Robert A remembers this from the day it happened. At the most, an appropriate fitted chain link enclosure (at no more that \$25,000 would be more than sufficient to prevent such as this from ever happening again. And, to Robert A's knowledge, such as this has never happened again.

So, why does the Artful Dodger, (Kevin Gordon) and his pickpocket pals Johnny Hutchins, Ronnie Whetstine, Deb Hardin and Doug Bridges want to put Cleveland County Taxpayers on the hook for \$400+ Million more in debt to build a NEW Justice Center NOW??? Instead of later when the present jail and courthouse are much closer to the end of their useful lives. And the \$40 Million in debt that is already due for CC is paid

off in full. And the Schools with leaking roofs and other maintenance needs get fixed now instead of later when the damage and degradation is more extensive and expensive.

Editor's Note: Folks, Let the facts and truths noted in this article sink in for a day or two. Then, stay tuned for the killer fact regarding a new jail and Courthouse that was confirmed on Robert A's trip to the Courthouse on August 21, 2024. A new Justice Center Project is not needed at all!!! No mater what. Get yourself ready to be pissed off at the lies and deceptions you have been confronted with by the Artful Dodger and his gang of pickpockets.

Also note that the accurate Artful Dodger comparison in this article is based totally on the Artful Dodger character in the classic Charles Dickens's 1838 novel Oliver Twist. Where the Artful Dodger's real name was Jack Hawkins, a pre-adult skilled pickpocket criminal in London, England in the 1800's who supervised a gang of child pickpockets. And NOT the recent TV show titled "Artful Dodger." In this article and perhaps others to come, the term Artful Dodger is an idiom describing a person who engages in skillful deception. A nickname that Robert A considers entirely accurate and appropriate for Kevin Gordon and his gang of taxpayer pickpockets.