

CC Commissioners FORCED to reduce the Huge Property Tax Increase Plan @ Nov 12th Meeting

Editor's Note: The November 12, 2024 Cleveland County Commissioners meeting was a classic case of a corrupt political deception being totally reversed by a single voice of reason spoken at the exact right time in a standing-room-only crowd of concerned and outraged CC citizens and taxpayers. And VOTERS in future elections. It went like this:

The long awaited and dreaded final Commissioners vote on the huge Property Tax increases to pay for the New Justice Center Project and other CC boondoggles was firmly disguised by being placed at the end of a 25-item long list on the Agenda Consent Items. Where all 25 items were to be approved in ONE "Motion to Approve" action where ALL the Commissioners, in a planned, but illegal act-a conspiracy, were going to vote "Aye" (Yes) without one word of question or discussion.

However, one Commissioner, Ronnie Whetstine-the most honorable and principled commissioner over the other Commissioners (Kevin Gordon, Johnny Hutchins, Deb Hardin and Doug Bridges) spoke up with a little speech. Commissioner Whetstine stated that this was **HIS** last meeting on the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners and he wanted to go out on a truthful note. Commissioner Whetstine continued saying that he had full hope that the other commissioners would discontinue their "personal agendas" and start acting like they had the best interest of Cleveland County citizens and taxpayers at heart in all their future county business responsibilities.

Then Commissioner Whetstine made the request that the New Property Tax valuation schedules that had drawn out the full-house of citizens, taxpayers and spectators be separated from the other 24 Consent Agenda Items and be fully explained to the people and Taxpayers of Cleveland County. The other commissioners, totally red-faced, embarrassed and caught, basically had to agree. The whole room full of citizens clapped and cheered!!! The will of the people, to demand full and fair disclosure of important County Business, was finally coming true.

The County Manager and various Department Heads were tasked with explaining to the people just what were the results of this latest property revaluations and just how much, on average, would the 2025 Property tax bills be increased. A 40% to 60% increase was the presented estimates. Assuming the same Property tax Rate.

Questions and demands from the Crowd demanded that the Property tax RATE be reduced to fully compensate for the increased valuations. Some demanded that major actions be taken to cut waste and also cut items such as the Shooting Range, the ALWS, the Fair, etc. to reasonable amounts.

The Commissioners voted to table the Tax Valuation actions to a later date to allow additional work to be done to lower Tax Valuations and/or Tax Rates to maintain exactly the same-Revenue Neutral-Property Tax BILLS that will be sent out in 2025 and later.

Folks, This November 12, 2024 Commissioner's Meeting shows that there is power in numbers. And enough numbers turning out at County Commissioner Meetings-and speaking up loudly and informed will keep the Cleveland County Commissioners on their toes and their hands OUT of the proverbial "cookie jar."