

Haywood County “Toeprints”

March 23, 2016

Vol. #7 Issue #8 (Subject: CES Closure Investigation Completed!)

www.haywoodtp.net

What’s Happening?

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Haywood County Taxpayers of what transpires at the bi-monthly County Commission Meetings. This newsletter will be written from the perspective of a casual observer, myself. Any opinions expressed will be mine.

CES Closure Investigation Solved.

I have been chasing a ghost.

The purpose of my investigation into the financial aspects of the closure of Central Elementary School was twofold:

- I don’t feel that the Haywood County School system has provided a valid reason for closing CES,
- And, how near are we to having this bunch close another school if we don’t understand the reason for them closing CES?

I feel that both of these concerns have been answered / resolved.

Overview.

Earlier in the year, seeming out of the blue, the 100% democrat controlled Haywood County School Board, headed by **Chuck Francis**, announced that they would have to close CES. The speed at which they actually closed CES was as rapid as how our 100% democrat controlled county commissioners, headed by **Mark Swanger**, are on a tear jamming stuff down the throats of Haywood County Taxpayers, such as:

- Regional Recycling Solutions (failed attempt)
- Three (3) new ordinances
- Refusal to update the EMO (Emergency Management Ordinance)
- \$3.5M new Glorified Dog Pound
- \$2.3M new EMS facility
- Selling the old Hospital at a \$250,000 loss to the county, etc., etc., etc..

County Commissioners have fast-tracked closing this hospital, home to Haywood County School Administration, while refusing to build a new building for the School Administration, with construction to begin remodeling the old hospital in December.

Where is Anne Garrett and her School Administration to go?

Background of the CES Closure Investigation.

Jimmy Rogers, a current School Board Member, put out an opinion piece: “**Blame Raleigh for possible school closing**” By **Jimmy Rogers**, Jan 30, 2016 ...

<http://themountaineer.villagesoup.com/p/blame-raleigh-for-possible-school-closing/1475647>

which blamed Raleigh and specifically singled out NC Representative Michele Presnell. He said, in part:

“ ... politicians like Michele Presnell who have voted time and time again for budgets that shortchange our public schools in order to keep tax breaks for folks at the top. Over the past few years, Presnell and her GOP allies in Raleigh have pushed through legislation that expanded funding for charter schools while doing little to nothing for public schools. Their budgets have eliminated thousands of teacher and teacher assistant positions across the state, and cut funding for textbooks and other classroom supplies.”



(File Photo - Mountaineer)

[**Editors Note:** See entire reprint at the end of this issue.]

Shortly thereafter, **Vicki Hyatt**, a.k.a. The Water Girl, (a water girl carries the water for someone in a bucket, like **Vicki Hyatt** and **Becky Johnson** do for our Haywood County School Board and the Haywood County Board of County Commissioners) came out with two scathing hit-pieces:



(Credit, Monroe Miller. **Vicki** crashing HCGOP meeting)

Strange email exchange fails to provide simple explanation, By **Vicki Hyatt**, Feb 22, 2016

<http://themountaineer.villagesoup.com/p/strange-email-exchange-fails-to-a-provide-simple-explanation/1485436#1486145>

School asks critics to cease spreading falsehoods, By **Vicki Hyatt**, Mar 01, 2016

<http://themountaineer.villagesoup.com/p/school-asks-critics-to-cess-spreading-falsehoods/1488825#1489150>

These three (3) articles were enough to blow my circuit breaker. I'm used to **Vicki Hyatt** slamming me with hit-pieces, but I did not appreciate it when both **Jimmy Rogers** and **Vicki Hyatt** pounced on Michele Presnell.

That triggered an investigation on why CES was closed, and see if there was any financial reason for turning the lights out at that school. I began an investigation into Haywood County Schools finances which is well documented on www.haywoodtp.net.

[**Editors Note:** It is assumed that the reader will take the time to look at the work here, so I don't have to repeat myself.]

It was like pulling teeth to get the Public Information from **Bill Nolte**, my only contact for sending and receiving requests for Public Information. Then, he came out with that Press Release...

<http://haywoodtp.net/pubII/160301CES-PressReleases.pdf>

After that, **Bill Nolte** became known in my book as "The Spinmeister".

After failing to receive requested data on the Fund Balance, I requested, alternatively, the Check Register. Dates show that it was printed out on 3/16/2016.

I received the following from Bill Nolte:

"Attached are the fund balance public documents that you requested. Also, the "check register" public documents that you requested from 2007 to the present will be available on Monday morning at the front desk. The files are too large to transmit via our email system. We have placed the files on a flash drive for your conveyance. We do not have these public documents/files in the format that you requested."

The next day, I published a scenario that had been brought to my attention by several independent sources in:

<http://haywoodtp.net/pubII/160317RevExpRawGraphicalData.pdf>

I wrote:

"There is a growing aspect to this investigation that I hope is not true, but has now been reported from several independent sources, and that is that I will not find any financial reason for this 100% democrat controlled school board shuttering CES, but the real reason is that they had to find a new home for Anne Garrett and the school administration because of a pissing contest between the school system and the county commissioners. County Commissioners are on a tear right now with what I call the scorched-earth policy [re: When Saddam Hussein was forced out of Kuwait, he torched all the oil wells.] Swanger has been forced out and he is reeking havoc with:

- Three (3) new ordinances
- Refusal to update the EMO (Emergency Management Ordinance)
- \$3.5M new Glorified Dog Pound
- \$2.3M new EMS facility
- Selling the old Hospital at a \$250,000 loss to the county, etc., etc., etc..

County Commissioners have fast-tracked closing this hospital, home to Haywood County School Administration, while refusing to build a new building for the School Administration. So, to me, it is looking more and more like this is the reason CES was closed - new quarters for the School Administration. I hope I am wrong."

I was provided the Check Register, as promised, now posted on www.haywoodtp.net.

[**Editors Note:** What the (expletive deleted)? For years, folks around the state have asked, as a matter of transparency, that counties post their check registers on-line. Requests have been made to **Swanger** and our county commissioners to post Julie Davis' check register on-line. Ha! Fat Chance. But all of a sudden, here comes the Haywood County School Administration and hands the Check Register over on a silver platter. What gives? Tell me of any other School System in the State of North Carolina that gives you direct on-line access to their check register. Michele Presnell could not think of one. I have to give credit to Anne Garrett and **Bill Nolte** for providing the Check Register, although this does not absolve **Bill Nolte** of the title of "The Spinmeister". When someone hands over the keys to the kingdom, it becomes very difficult to believe that they have something to hide. All of a sudden, I had to re-think my entire viewpoint of ever finding a financial reason that **Chuck Francis** and the School Board turned out the lights at CES. I hadn't found a solid reason thus far. I am chasing a ghost...]

Fast-forward, County Commission Meeting 3/21/2016. This had to be the worst county commission meeting **Mark Swanger** presided over, ever ...



(File Photo, Mountaineer)

The courtroom was over half full. The reasons:

- What appeared to be a choreographed cheering squad to insure that the architects fee for the Glorified Dog Pound was passed, and
- Interest in the request to fund an evaluation to address affordable housing, drew the remainder.

There was a Public Hearing regarding the fast-track approval of the old hospital, given by **David Francis**, Administrator Of Everything [re: WLOS]. It was noted that construction would begin at the end of December. [re: view video of meeting].

Eight (8) people spoke during the public comment session. It was here you could see that **Swanger** was having a bad day. Two people spoke out against money being spent for a Glorified Dog pound. One of those people was Mark Melrose, a lawyer, who was concerned the Haywood County School Board had not followed correct procedure in their rush to close down CES. Likely there will be the possible of litigation against the School Board. Everyone got as much time as they needed, with the exception of Debbie King. When she was speaking regarding the rush to pass these ordinances coming up, **Swanger** shut her down as soon as the little red light came on at 3.00000 minutes.

Then **Dale Burris** took to the podium to discuss the Glorified Dog Pound. **Swanger** was getting more frustrated by the moment because some of the other commissioners had the gall to question the total expense of \$3.5M for this

Glorified Dog Pound. Nearly at the end of his patience, an exasperated **Swanger** called for a motion to pass funding for the Glorified Dog Pound. **Ensley** made the motion. **Swanger** asked for a second....

No second.

What the [expletive deleted]?

This had never happened before in all the time I have attended county commission meetings. **Swanger**, about ready to blow a fuse, said, "I'll second the motion". Can a Chair second a motion?

All in favor, say aye, he barked. **Ensley** said aye. All opposed? No response.

Silence.

Kirkpatrick said: I still want to discuss this.

What the [expletive deleted]? In the middle of this vote, they went back to discussion. Can they do this? I don't think so.

This discussion lasted so long that a break had to be called to change the media for the video recorder.

People got up and milled about, but I noticed that **Swanger** was leaning over and having a little "come to Jesus" discussion with **Kirkpatrick**. I can only imagine the conversation, with **Swanger** saying to **Kirkpatrick** - What? Are you on Crack or something? Here is how we do things around here...



(Photo Credit - Terry Ramey)

As soon as the meeting was called back to order, **Kirkpatrick**, **Sorrells** and **Upton** fell into line, just like the little ducklings above.

Architects fee passed, unanimously. [re: video].

All of the people who came to support the Glorified Dog Pound left satisfied and fulfilled.

[**Editors Note:** I have to say, one of the women who came to support the Glorified Dog pound was none other than The Mystery Blueberry Pie Woman, **Jamie Powell**, looking as glamorous as ever.

<http://haywoodtp.net/pubII/140610MysteryBlueberryPieWoman.pdf>]

I decided to follow the Glorified Dog Pound group out, and joined a conversation with a bunch of guys in the foyer of the courthouse, by the Sheriff's Deputies desk. The guys present were **Dale Burris**, Doyle Teague, Ken Henson, **Jimmy Rogers**, myself and the Deputy Sheriff.

Ken Henson was having a discussion with **Dale Burris** lamenting on the excessively high \$3.5M cost of the Glorified Dog Pound. I interjected, noting that the county could purchase 35 homes at \$100,000 each in Haywood County, and give each of the dogs and cats the Glorified Dog Pound was supposed to hold, each their own house. (As an extra benefit, homeless folks could be invited to use these houses to take care of each dog and cat). **Burris** indicated he never thought of it that way.

Jimmy Rogers, feeling all comfortable in this casual guy group, noted that they should put the Glorified Dog Pound at the School Maintenance Facility currently located at the top of the Francis Farm Landfill, and get the School Employees out of there. As an additional benefit, when it came time to put the animals down, they just tap into the methane gas line.

Then, I asked **Dale Burris**, point blank, "Construction will begin on the old hospital in December. What happens to Anne Garrett and her School Administration people?"

Burris responded - "I don't know. No one has ever asked me that question before."

"I'll tell you where they are going to go", I said, "they are going over to CES".

It was then that **Jimmy Rogers**, current School Board Member said, yeah, that's right, and that's why I voted to keep CES open. I didn't want it closed for that reason.

QED. (i.e. Quod erat demonstrandum)

This entire discussion took place with a Deputy Sheriff present.

All of these School Board members knew full well what they were voting for. **Jimmy Rogers**, to my knowledge, has been the first to publically admit this.

I had been chasing a ghost. There never was a financial reason for closing CES, although now that financials and the check registers are posted on www.haywoodtp.net, interested Haywood County Taxpayers can now determine for themselves if there has been any Gross Mismanage going on or any other questions they have on the spending habits of this School System.

My recommendations are to throw this entire bunch out -

- The entire school board, starting with **Chuck Francis**,
- The entire set of county commissioners.

But Wait! What about **Rhonda Schandavel**?

She, along with all the other board members knew full well about all of this. She stood silently by while **Jimmy Rogers** and **Vicki Hyatt** falsely hammered Michele Presnell, her opponent in this fall's election.

Why didn't **Rhonda Schandavel** step up like **Jimmy Rogers** did and admit they were voting to close CES to provide office space for Anne Garrett and the School Administration?

Is this the kind of person you want representing you in the North Carolina House of Representatives? Will you be able to trust anything she says? As far as I am concerned, **Rhonda Schandavel** has the integrity level of pond scum.

The CES Closure Investigation has been suspended.

Legend: If any name is in **bold**, it can't be a good thing.

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Si vis pacem, para bellum

p.s. I believe **Mark Swanger** needs to recharge his batteries prior to next weeks special called Public Hearings to jam these three (3) new ordinances down the throats of Haywood County Taxpayers. I recommend a quick weekend down at his Quarter Million Dollar Beach Front Condo in Panama City Beach that he paid \$10.00 for and put it in his wife's **Susan's** name.

[re: <http://haywoodtp.net/pubTP/T151031.pdf>]

[Editors Note: Reprinted from the Mountaineer, on-line].

Blame Raleigh for possible school closing, By Jimmy Rogers, Jan 30, 2016

If Central Elementary in Waynesville is forced to close because of budget cuts and losing enrollment to charter schools, Haywood County will know who to thank — politicians like Michele Presnell who have voted time and time again for budgets that shortchange our public schools in order to keep tax breaks for folks at the top.

Over the past few years, Presnell and her GOP allies in Raleigh have pushed through legislation that expanded funding for charter schools while doing little to nothing for public schools.

Their budgets have eliminated thousands of teacher and teacher assistant positions across the state, and cut funding for textbooks and other classroom supplies.

When you adjust for inflation, North Carolina's education investment has dropped by \$815 per student since the Great Recession began in 2008.

All the while, politicians have been burdening our public schools with unfunded mandates that leave our teachers increasingly over-worked and under-paid.

What effect has all this had here at home? Haywood County schools have lost over \$2 million in state and local funding to charter schools over the past year, and enrollment has fallen off a cliff.

Students are flocking to charter schools that aren't as accountable as public schools, and don't have to provide the same services like bus service or reduced lunch for low-income students.

According to multiple reports, North Carolina charter schools are also more segregated than traditional public schools.

Central Elementary isn't a failing school. In fact, our district is one of the best in the state (15th rated). If the school closes, it will be because politicians who do not value education have siphoned off funding and enrollment and given it to unaccountable charter schools.

These politicians would rather help line the pockets of special interests than reinvest in our children's education.

Our public schools provide more jobs than anyone else in the county, but state budget cuts have forced them to cut hundreds of positions over the past few years. That means fewer jobs for the people who need them, and fewer educational opportunities for the students who need them most.

We are losing teachers to South Carolina and other surrounding states because those states are making a better investment in education and student spending.

For example, South Carolina's average teacher salary is nearly \$8,000 higher than ours. When it comes to student spending, South Carolina spends \$800 more per student than we do. Our teachers and students deserve more than just empty rhetoric — they deserve the resources and the support they need.

Education is one of the most important factors behind economic growth and development. When a business decides to relocate, one of the main things they look at is the quality of schools. As our quality of education declines, businesses will go elsewhere — and our job market and property values will suffer.

Small towns have a hard enough time as it is, and the politicians in Raleigh are only making things worse by refusing to invest in public education.

Here in Western North Carolina, we know our kids will only have a fair shot to compete for good jobs if they have a good education.

But Republicans like Pat McCrory and Michele Presnell think it's more important to cut taxes for corporations and people at the top than to adequately and responsibly fund our public schools. If Michele Presnell won't stand up for us in Raleigh, who will?

Jimmy Rogers lives in Clyde and is a member of the Haywood County Schools Board of Education