

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
2200 Camp Branch Road
Waynesville, NC 28786
October 9, 2022

Subject: Cory Vaillancourt - SMN Tabloid - 'More misinformation'?

Cory Vaillancourt seems to be hating life, now that he is in **bold**. So **Cory** punched out an article in the Smoky Mountain News Tabloid Friday, in titled 'More misinformation: Miller's 'missing' millions', which in itself, is loaded with misinformation.

See: <https://smokymountainnews.com/news/item/34444-more-misinformation-miller-s-missing-millions>

I am looking at creating a "misinformation" factor, of how much of an article is loaded with misinformation. So far, I rate **Cory Vaillancourt's** article at about .25, that is, 25% is loaded with misinformation.

We will take the opportunity to review **Cory Vaillancourt's** article, first by reprinting the entire article (in **red**), with my underlining suspicious statements, and then going through paragraph-by-paragraph, to get another view of what is happening injecting comments. The format to be used will be the same when Lois Hollis reviewed Officer **Ryan Griffins** write-up of Incident Report WPD2200520, on www.haywoodtp.net

[WPD2200520 & WPD2201282, Incident Reports. What is going on with the Waynesville Police Department? 9/28/2022...](http://www.haywoodtp.net/pubII/220928WPD-IncidentReports.pdf)

<https://www.haywoodtp.net/pubII/220928WPD-IncidentReports.pdf>

That is, the **Cory Vaillancourt** article text is indented, and my comments will be in (parentheses, in **bold**) following each sentence with a suspicious statement.

This has got to be a milestone. My bet is that this article will be on the front page of the next Wednesday edition of the Tabloid! This means that I will have had two front page articles about me in two successive weeks, and on two different issues!

- 'County petitions state to change syringe programs' by **Vicki Hyatt**, 10/5/2022,
- 'More misinformation: Miller's 'missing' millions' by **Cory Vaillancourt**, 10/6/2022

By the way, **Cory Vaillancourt** labels me as a "gadfly" in his article.

Wait a minute!

Is **Cory Vaillancourt** plagiarizing **Vicki Hyatt**?

As everyone must recall, that's how **Vicki Hyatt** referred to me in two of her articles in May of 2017! A simple search of prior Mountaineer articles reveals the following:



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NEWS

Monroe Miller local government gadfly

By Vicki Hyatt Updated May 24, 2017

By Vicki Hyatt

Editor

news@themountaineer.com

Haywood County government operations seem to have first appeared on the radar of Waynesville area resident Monroe Miller in 2009 when neighboring property owned by the Ron and Brian Cameron families was as the center of an erosion control lawsuit.

The county ended up losing the suit and paying more than \$280,000 in legal costs after a judge found the Camerons ...



NEWS

Revaluation charges draw fire

By Vicki Hyatt Updated May 24, 2017

At Monday

s board meeting, county leaders fired back in defending the controversial revaluation that has been a topic at numerous past meetings.

It was charges from local government gadfly Monroe Miller that set off County Tax Collector David Francis and led to a solid commissioner defense of both Francis and the county

s revaluation process.

I did not see anywhere in the **Cory Vaillancourt** article that he was giving **Vicki Hyatt** credit.

Anyway, here we go...

Grab some popcorn and enjoy.

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
Haywood County Taxpayer

‘More misinformation: Miller’s ‘missing’ millions’, Written by Cory Vaillancourt, Friday, October 07, 2022



A dump truck spreads dirt — not misinformation — on the Jonathan Creek parcel in January, 2018.

After a marathon misinformation session at an August Haywood County Commissioners meeting during which commissioners fought back against comments from the public that were not based in fact, the misinformation hasn’t stopped — and neither has county government’s fight against it.

Back in 2007, the county purchased a 22-acre parcel off Jonathan Creek with the intent of turning it into some sort of recreational amenity. During the auction, a number of upset bids drove the price to \$1.1 million, leaving some to complain that the county had paid too much.

Then, the Great Recession set in, and as other localities constructed ball fields and sporting complexes, the idea of a large park became moot. The county sat on the parcel for years, renting it out for cattle grazing. Once the county started trying to sell the parcel, commissioners decided to add dirt to some areas, moving them out of the flood plain and increasing the usable area.

When dirt for the project was taken from the Waynesville site that is now home to the Publix grocery store on Russ Avenue, it was found to be unsuitable, so the county dumped more money into finding better dirt.

Throughout the process, local government gadfly Monroe Miller ridiculed the county’s handling of the parcel, derisively calling it the “James Weaver ‘Kirk’ Kirkpatrick III Super-Duper sports complex” and the “David Francis dirt spreading project,” after Community and Economic Development Director David Francis.

Finally, this past June, the county received an offer of \$1.8 million on the troublesome parcel from Quiet Creek Properties LLC. The developer plans to construct around 80 residential units once closing occurs in early November.

Francis told commissioners at the time that the county purchased the parcel for \$1,120,611 and spent another \$462,722 on it, for a total of \$1,583,333.

With the \$1.8 million offer, the county will turn a small profit on the deal, although when adjusted for inflation, it's pretty much a wash or even a small loss.

Regardless, once sold the parcel will not only provide some badly needed housing inventory, but also will rejoin county tax rolls after a 15-year absence, netting the county around \$100,000 a year in tax revenues, in perpetuity.

Miller, however, has apparently been haranguing commissioners with public records requests meant to prove that there's some nefarious scheme — he calls it a "rabbit hole" — to hide the parcel's true cost to the county, a figure he puts at an astonishing \$6 million.

"This request was simple. How much had the county poured into the money pit called the Jonathan Creek property since the county purchased it in 2008," Miller told commissioners during public comment on Oct. 3. "The result I received multiple times was a little over \$462,000."

Miller claims that during a recent meeting, Terry Ramey, a candidate for county commission in this year's election, brought up "multiple instances of expenses" that Commissioner Brandon Rogers "could not explain." Miller also claimed that Rogers offered to set up a meeting between him, the county's finance director, Ramey and Rogers.

Near the end of the Oct. 3 meeting, Rogers explained that he wouldn't let Miller waste any more taxpayer money by demanding time with county staff.

"A lot of our conversation revolved around whether or not he had evidence of the money he was asking about, which I think was close to \$6 million," Rogers said. "We've asked for the evidence to be brought forward. No evidence has been brought forward as of yet. I would like to see that evidence if you've got it, Mr. Miller. Before I waste a lot more of our county staff's time, if he can bring the evidence forward, we'll set up a meeting."

On his blog, Miller claimed that Rogers was trying to implement a new public records policy by demanding evidence before scheduling a meeting, but this claim conflates two separate issues, public records and private meetings with elected officials.

Public records laws are quite specific about document production obligations by public bodies; however, elected officials are under no mandate to meet with anyone, ever, except at their own discretion.

Another of Miller's claims — that the county accounting system only goes back three years — is false. Francis said that when he went back through the system, year by year, he found an additional \$17,000 expended on the parcel that had been inadvertently left off the total provided to Miller.

Unfortunately for Miller, \$1,583,333 plus the waylaid \$17,000 doesn't quite equal \$6 million.

When given the opportunity by The Smoky Mountain News to participate in an interview and present evidence supporting his \$6 million claim, Miller declined to do so.

Miller also claimed on his blog that the county failed to include a \$385,000 expenditure to settle lifetime dowry claims on the parcel, and also failed to include a \$106,000 expenditure for legal fees, which would

have pushed the total cost of the parcel to more than \$2 million — if it was true.

On Oct. 6, Francis emailed settlement documents to The Smoky Mountain News and commissioners, showing that the legal fees were actually \$36,376.24.

These fees were not paid by the county, but rather by the estate of the man who sold the parcel to the county.

The documents also show that the \$375,000 dowry claim on the property — not \$385,000 as Miller alleged — was paid by the estate, not by the county.

Miller and Francis have a long history of animosity, as alluded to by Francis in closing his email.

“I’ve seen you struggle with accounting and legal issues for over a decade, as the County at no time paid \$385,000 as you stated or the correct amount of \$375,000 to Ferguson as that was paid by the estate of William Lucius Jones. The County did not pay any attorney fees in the amount of \$106,000 or the actual amount of \$36,376 as that was paid by the estate of William Lucius Jones as well. There are no expenses in 2007,” Francis said. “Goodness gracious, the rabbit hole is closed.”

Here we go with a closer examination of the **Cory Vaillancourt** article. Remember, the article contents are indented, and my comments follow each paragraph (parentheses, in **bold**) following each sentence.

After a marathon misinformation session at an August Haywood County Commissioners meeting during which commissioners fought back against comments from the public that were not based in fact, the misinformation hasn't stopped — and neither has county government's fight against it.

(This is where Cory Vaillancourt got himself into trouble in the first place, picking on Deannie Brooks, thus earning himself the new title of Liberal Hack Political Editor, and marking the day he went bold. See: on www.haywoodtp.net

[August 24, 2022 - the day Cory Vaillancourt, SMN, went bold. 8/24/2022...](http://www.haywoodtp.net/pubII/220824TheDayCoryWentBold.pdf)

<https://www.haywoodtp.net/pubII/220824TheDayCoryWentBold.pdf>)

Back in 2007, the county purchased a 22-acre parcel off Jonathan Creek with the intent of turning it into some sort of recreational amenity. During the auction, a number of upset bids drove the price to \$1.1 million, leaving some to complain that the county had paid too much.

(There was no auction. Cory Vaillancourt is attempting to re-write history. Upset bids are common practice in foreclosures, this was not a foreclosure, it was a bidding war. From Becky Johnson's (now not in bold) article in the Mountaineer 'County to pay Maggie Valley back for J-creek land buy-in' 6/11/2019, she indicates that

"At the time, county commissioners were locked in a protracted bidding war for the land."

https://www.themountaineer.com/news/county-to-pay-maggie-valley-back-for-j-creek-land-buy-in/article_1aa96930-8bfe-11e9-8af4-bf928a48178c.html

This bidding war was a pissing contest between the owners and James Weaver "Kirk" Kirkpatrick the III, because James Weaver "Kirk" Kirkpatrick the III had a vision of having a Super-Duper Sports Complex named after him.)

Then, the Great Recession set in, and as other localities constructed ball fields and sporting complexes, the idea of a large park became moot. The county sat on the parcel for years, renting it out for cattle grazing. Once the county started trying to sell the parcel, commissioners decided to add dirt to some areas, moving them out of the flood plain and increasing the usable area.

(More misinformation. The land was never rented out for cattle grazing, i.e. IT WAS NEVER FENCED IN! The county leased the land to various farmers to grow corn.)

When dirt for the project was taken from the Waynesville site that is now home to the Publix grocery store on Russ Avenue, it was found to be unsuitable, so the county dumped more money into finding better dirt.

(This was a major David Francis Blunder, along with BLE Bunnell-Lammons Engineering, whose original work failed to analyze that the Publix dirt could not be compacted, and therefore, unusable to build anything on).

Throughout the process, local government gadfly Monroe Miller ridiculed the county's handling of the parcel, derisively calling it the "James Weaver 'Kirk' Kirkpatrick III Super-Duper sports complex" and the "David Francis dirt spreading project," after Community and Economic Development Director David Francis.

(Plagiarizing? See original Vicki Hyatt articles about me, calling me a gadfly. Still cannot figure out if this is a good or bad thing.)

Finally, this past June, the county received an offer of \$1.8 million on the troublesome parcel from Quiet Creek Properties LLC. The developer plans to construct around 80 residential units once closing occurs in early November.

(It is my understanding that the bidder pulled out, and it is the end of the due diligence period that ends through November 21 that Cory Vaillancourt is referring to).

Francis told commissioners at the time that the county purchased the parcel for \$1,120,611 and spent another \$462,722 on it, for a total of \$1,583,333.

(This is the crux of the problem. What about the \$115,000 Kevin Ensley and Haywood County paid back to Maggie Valley, who demanded it be returned since the sports complex was finished?

https://www.themountaineer.com/news/county-to-pay-maggie-valley-back-for-j-creek-land-buy-in/article_1aa96930-8bfc-11e9-8af4-bf928a48178c.html)

With the \$1.8 million offer, the county will turn a small profit on the deal, although when adjusted for inflation, it's pretty much a wash or even a small loss.

Regardless, once sold the parcel will not only provide some badly needed housing inventory, but also will rejoin county tax rolls after a 15-year absence, netting the county around \$100,000 a year in tax revenues, in perpetuity.

Miller, however, has apparently been haranguing commissioners with public records requests meant to prove that there's some nefarious scheme — he calls it a "rabbit hole" — to hide the parcel's true cost to the county, a figure he puts at an astonishing \$6 million.

"This request was simple. How much had the county poured into the money pit called the Jonathan Creek property since the county purchased it in 2008," Miller told commissioners during public comment on Oct. 3. "The result I received multiple times was a little over \$462,000."

Miller claims that during a recent meeting, Terry Ramey, a candidate for county commission in this year's election, brought up "multiple instances of expenses" that Commissioner Brandon Rogers "could not explain." Miller also claimed that Rogers offered to set up a meeting between him, the county's finance director, Ramey and Rogers.

(This is the same bear trap that Cory Vaillancourt jumped into when he disparaged Deannie Brooks. Was Cory Vaillancourt at the Waynesville Police Department Community Event, as was Deannie Brooks and me?

No!

Was Cory Vaillancourt at the same meeting of the Concerned Citizens of Haywood County at the Buttered Biscuit on September 15, where Brandon Rogers accepted an invitation to speak, attended by Terry Ramey and me?

No!

So how the [expletive deleted] can Cory Vaillancourt use the word “claim”?)

Near the end of the Oct. 3 meeting, Rogers explained that he wouldn't let Miller waste any more taxpayer money by demanding time with county staff.

“A lot of our conversation revolved around whether or not he had evidence of the money he was asking about, which I think was close to \$6 million,” Rogers said. “We've asked for the evidence to be brought forward. No evidence has been brought forward as of yet. I would like to see that evidence if you've got it, Mr. Miller. Before I waste a lot more of our county staff's time, if he can bring the evidence forward, we'll set up a meeting.”

On his blog, Miller claimed that Rogers was trying to implement a new public records policy by demanding evidence before scheduling a meeting, but this claim conflates two separate issues, public records and private meetings with elected officials.

(Blog - this is false. I own a website. A blog affords the opportunity for people to respond to what is presented. I never give anyone an opportunity to respond on my website.

I have never included in any Request for Public Information, on this, that a meeting be set up as a condition of the Request. Brandon Rogers was asked during the meeting at the Buttered Biscuit, “What could he do to help resolve this issue (my not getting full information from Haywood County), and he offered to set up a meeting (with conditions), which I accepted. There is no claim or conflagration here.)

Public records laws are quite specific about document production obligations by public bodies; however, elected officials are under no mandate to meet with anyone, ever, except at their own discretion.

Another of Miller's claims — that the county accounting system only goes back three years — is false. Francis said that when he went back through the system, year by year, he found an additional \$17,000 expended on the parcel that had been inadvertently left off the total provided to Miller.

(I have never had a response from Kristian Owen, Haywood County Finance Director, the woman who I could never get a straight answer from when I requested her calculation of the Revenue Neutral Tax Calculation, where in a presentation by Bryant Morehead -

“In Bryant Morehead's presentation on 5/17/2021, he presents two (2) calculations for the Revenue Neutral Tax Rate. WTF? Are we supposed to choose which one Haywood Taxpayers want? Are you going to submit a Certification with two calculations?”

Kristian Owen is the custodian of the information I am requesting, yet I am provided information from David Francis, a Program Administration Economic Development guy, and in an email dated August 15, 2022 states the accounting system can only account for current and three previous years:

From: David Francis

Sent: Monday, August 15, 2022 6:01 AM

To: Amy L. Stevens <Amy.Stevens@haywoodcountync.gov>; Monroe Miller

Cc: Thomas A. Long <Tommy.Long@haywoodcountync.gov>; Kristian B. Owen <Kristian.Owen@haywoodcountync.gov>; Bryant Morehead <Bryant.Morehead@haywoodcountync.gov>; Mark.Pless@ncleg.gov; Brandon C. Rogers <brandon.rogers@haywoodcountync.gov>; Kirk Kirkpatrick <Kirk.Kirkpatrick@haywoodcountync.gov>; Jennifer Best <Jennifer.Best@haywoodcountync.gov>; Frank Queen <Frank.Queen@haywoodcountync.gov>

Subject: RE: Request for Public Information, #1.

When the construction report was run in June, I was not aware the accounting system can only account for current and three previous years, thus an additional \$13,476.28 needs to be added for a total of \$476,198.28. Attached are the cost over the five fiscal years.

**David B. Francis, AAE
Haywood County Program Administration
Economic Development
Parks & Recreation
215 N Main Street
Waynesville, NC 28786)**

Unfortunately for Miller, \$1,583,333 plus the waylaid \$17,000 doesn't quite equal \$6 million.

(The waylaid funds Cory Vaillancourt is referring to was sent to me as one of six attachments in another caustic email from David Francis on September 13"

Subject: Request

Date: Tue, 13 Sep 2022 13:38:19 +0000

From: David Francis <david.francis@haywoodcountync.gov>

To: Monroe Miller

CC: Amy L. Stevens <Amy.Stevens@haywoodcountync.gov>, Thomas A. Long <Tommy.Long@haywoodcountync.gov>, Kristian B. Owen <Kristian.Owen@haywoodcountync.gov>, Bryant Morehead

<Bryant.Morehead@haywoodcountync.gov>, Mark Pless <Mark.Pless@ncleg.gov>, Brandon C. Rogers <brandon.rogers@haywoodcountync.gov>, Kirk Kirkpatrick <Kirk.Kirkpatrick@haywoodcountync.gov>, Jennifer Best <Jennifer.Best@haywoodcountync.gov>, Frank Queen <Frank.Queen@haywoodcountync.gov>

Mr. Miller,

Attached please find copies of the requested items, which you were previously emailed. I have attached the J Creek Expenditures, which was emailed to you on February 1, 2019 that shows attorney fees and closing cost. Since it's been a bit, you may have forgotten you received the email. There is no other investment items. The County had some maintenance for mowing, weed eating and ditch cleaning totaling around \$4,000.

The public information request has been completed.

David B. Francis, AAE
Haywood County Program Administration
Economic Development
Parks & Recreation
215 N Main Street
Waynesville, NC 28786

The name of the attachment was: J Creek Expenditures.pdf. This document was not created by Kristian Owen, rather Julie Davis, prior Finance Director, in an email sent to me by Bryant Morehead on 2/1/2019. Julie Davis indicates there were additional expenses with the purchase of the property amounting to \$7,998.50. [re: New Request for Public Information email sent to Brandon Rogers, entitled: Evidence - Request for Public Information about the David Francis Dirt Spreading Project.]

When given the opportunity by The Smoky Mountain News to participate in an interview and present evidence supporting his \$6 million claim, Miller declined to do so.

(Cory Vaillancourt is fully aware that I don't give interviews, Politico being an exception.)

Miller also claimed on his blog that the county failed to include a \$385,000 expenditure to settle lifetime dowry claims on the parcel, and also failed to include a \$106,000 expenditure for legal fees, which would have pushed the total cost of the parcel to more than \$2 million — if it was true.

(Blog - see previous. Correction already posted on www.haywoodtp.net)

On Oct. 6, Francis emailed settlement documents to The Smoky Mountain News and commissioners, showing that the legal fees were actually \$36,376.24.

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The documents also show that the \$375,000 dowry claim on the property — not \$385,000 as Miller

alleged — was paid by the estate, not by the county.

Miller and Francis have a long history of animosity, as alluded to by Francis in closing his email.

“I’ve seen you struggle with accounting and legal issues for over a decade, as the County at no time paid \$385,000 as you stated or the correct amount of \$375,000 to Ferguson as that was paid by the estate of William Lucius Jones. The County did not pay any attorney fees in the amount of \$106,000 or the actual amount of \$36,376 as that was paid by the estate of William Lucius Jones as well. There are no expenses in 2007,” Francis said. “Goodness gracious, the rabbit hole is closed.”