

CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF PIEDMONT

1-7-2014

6:00 PM

The City Council of the City of Piedmont met in regular session at the time and on the date above. Present were Mayor Bill Baker, Council Members Ben Keller, Mary Bramblett, Frank Cobb, Kenny Kelley, Brenda Spears, Mark Harper and Terry Kiser.

Following the invocation given by Frank Cobb and the pledge of allegiance to the flag the minutes were presented for approval. Mary Bramblett made the motion that the minutes be approved as presented. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the minutes were approved with one "no" vote from Brenda Spears.

The bills totaling \$513,685.49 were then presented for consideration for payment. Terry Kiser made the motion that the bills be approved as presented. Ben Keller seconded the motion and the bills were approved for payment with one "no" vote from Brenda Spears.

The Mayor then called on Chief Tidwell to give the Police, Abatement and Animal Control Reports for the month of December 2013. In Police reports there were 719 contacts made with the public, 3 felony arrests, 22 misdemeanor arrests, 5 drug arrests, 2 crimes against persons arrests, 2 theft arrests, 8 court/warrant arrests. 13 citations were written, 7 accident reports and 42 motorists assists. 6 burglaries were reported, 17 thefts reported, 44 cases investigated, 60 incident reports. 148 rescue calls were dispatched, 16 calls were dispatched for fire and a total of 1920 calls were dispatched to the communication center. The Municipal Court collected \$17,207.52 in fines for the month of December. For the month of December the Abatement Department had 21 cases. 9 yard cases, 12 house cases, 8 cases being processed, 27 holdover cases from prior month, 8 cases with second notice sent and 9 cases completed/properties in compliance for current month. Piedmont Animal Control had 32 calls for service, 32 work orders completed, 6 preliminary investigations, 2 follow-up investigations, 46 animals picked up, 46 animals taken to the shelter, 21 surrendered animals, 25 stray animals at large and 3 animals reclaimed from the shelter by owners.

In Other Business the Mayor asked the Council to consider a hiring freeze for the City except for in the situation where a department lost an employee and needed to fill the vacant position. After some discussion Mary Bramblett made the motion to put a hiring freeze in place unless a department needs to replace an employee. Ben Keller seconded the motion and a roll call vote was as follows:

| <u>YEAS</u>    | <u>NAYS</u> | <u>ABSTAIN</u> |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Ben Keller     | None        | None           |
| Mary Bramblett |             |                |
| Frank Cobb     |             |                |
| Kenny Kelley   |             |                |
| Brenda Spears  |             |                |
| Mark Harper    |             |                |
| Terry Kiser    |             |                |

Following the roll call a unanimous vote was cast for the hiring freeze.

Brenda Spears said that the garbage truck ran on December 24<sup>th</sup> which was a holiday for employees and that she received complaints that the citizens were not aware that the trucks would be running and asked that the citizens be made aware of the change in schedule.

In Council Comments Ben Keller thanked the Electrical Department and the Water, Gas and Sewer Department for the job that they do.

Mary Bramblett said she had ditches that needed cleaning out and unstopped. She also said there would be 500 U.S. China Manufacturing Companies coming to Dothan looking for places in the United States to put businesses from March 26<sup>th</sup> through March 28<sup>th</sup>. She said someone needs to go to represent Piedmont.

Frank Cobb had no report.

Kenny Kelley said the "Jake Brake" sign on Highway 9 South had been knocked down and needed replacing.

Brenda Spears council comments: The January 7 bills for payment were \$513,685.49 with \$160,894.50 for payroll and taxes for a total of \$674,579.99.

My December 17, 2013 Council Comments for District 5 are not accurate as read from the typed page. Comments and concerns were omitted. With a point of order when the motion was made for approval of the minutes, I will ask at the January 21 meeting for the corrections to be made.

Citizens in all districts deserve the council approved holiday closings for city to be applied as published, especially garbage pick-ups.

Thanks to Jesse McKnight, superintendent of the WGS Department and all city employees for their preparation of the low temperatures for our area.

Piedmont Rescue Squad and the American Red Cross is sponsoring a Blood Drive on Wednesday, January 8 at 121 West Ladiga Street from 10:30 AM to 3 PM. One donor could save three lives.

I am asking for a work session in February for the council to discuss salaries, department policies, cost reducing measures for all departments, and amending the 2013-2014 budget. We, the council members, are responsible to be informed and set standards and control the finances for new employees and their salaries and employee raises and overtime to mention a few. The Mayor and City Clerk must keep all council members informed of all costs and expenditures and revenues for us to do our job as explained in the Code of Alabama: Duties of a Council Member. The reality is that it is the Council Members who will be held accountable for Piedmont's financial outcome for the coming months and year. We must be proactive and willing to work on these topics that need attention.

I am turning in work orders for raw sewage on private and city property, limbs and leaves pickup, street sign, and a metal pipe with an exposed hole.

Mark Harper had no report.

Terry Kiser said that the First Annual Polar Plunge was a great success and raised a lot of money for Venecia's Foundation.

In visitor's comments Vincent Cottrell asked everyone to attend the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting when John Robert or Lyndsey Green from the Sherriff's Office would be at the meeting to discuss community watch program.

Mr. Harry Nuttall gave his annual donation of \$100.00 for police, fire and rescue services that are provided to him in the police jurisdiction.

In the Mayor's Comments the Mayor said that Mrs. Spears mentioned the duties of the Mayor and he said he does try to keep the Council informed. He said he talks to most of the Council daily because they

call him and he emails information that he receives to them. He said that he has an open door policy and that he also expects the Council to make the effort to talk with him. He said Mrs. Spears mentioned the bills after he had already mentioned them and then he went on to explain why the bills were high stating that we have reoccurring bills such AMEA bills that are high, utility taxes and payments for purchase of natural gas just to name a few. He said that we buy what we need and we buy what we need to serve the citizens of Piedmont. He said that the Council, ITS and the School would meet on January 15 at 5:00p.m. to discuss the internet. He asked the Council to make a New Years Resolution to go out and promote Piedmont and say good things. He said no one is going to want to bring a new business to the city if they think that we don't have money to pay the bills and that the city is going to go bankrupt. He said to try to bring some positive things to the council meeting instead of all the negative. He also spoke about the First Annual Polar Plunge that raised money for Venecia's Foundation which is a foundation that supports cancer patients and was held at the new Aquatic Center. He said he was very pleased with the attendance and the participation from everyone that came out to support the cause.

Also the Mayor read a letter from Mr. Dean Humphrey that stated he would like to donate three lots at 104, 106, 108 West Ladiga Street to the City of Piedmont. The property is formally known as Blackwelder's Grocery Store and Street and Mobs Hardware Store. After some discussion Ben Keller made a motion that the city accept the property. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and a roll call vote was as follows:

| <b><u>YEAS</u></b> | <b><u>NAYS</u></b> | <b><u>ABSTAIN</u></b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Ben Keller         | none               | none                  |
| Mary Bramblett     |                    |                       |
| Frank Cobb         |                    |                       |
| Kenny Kelley       |                    |                       |
| Brenda Spears      |                    |                       |
| Mark Harper        |                    |                       |
| Terry Kiser        |                    |                       |

Following the roll call the Council voted unanimously to accept the property.

With no other business to come before the Council Terry Kiser made the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mark Harper seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.