

CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF PIEDMONT
OCTOBER 7TH, 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, Brenda Spears, Mark Harper and Terry Kiser.

Following the invocation given by Rev. David Cox and the pledge of allegiance to the flag the minutes were presented for consideration. Mary Bramblett made the motion that the minutes be approved as presented. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

The bills totaling \$650,617.39 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 abstention from Brenda Spears.

Next Benda Spears made a motion to table Resolution 2014-12 concerning the 2014-2015 Budget. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the City Clerk to do a roll call and the vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call the vote was six to one not to table the 2014-2015 Budget.

Next Brenda Spears made a motion to change the wording in Resolution 2014-12 concerning the Budget to read in the places where it states the City Clerk/Treasurer to also add the City Council in the wording of the Resolution. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the City Clerk to do a roll call and the vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call of 5-2 the wording in Resolution 2014-12 would not be changed.

Mary Bramblett made a motion to Adopt Resolution 2014-12 which would pass the 2014-2015 City of Piedmont Budget. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the City Clerk to do a roll call and the vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call a vote of 5 to 2 was cast and the 2014-2015 Budget was adopted.

The Abatement Officer Charles McDonald asked the Council to vote 403 5th Avenue a public nuisance. Mr. Schoonhoven asked that the Council give him two weeks to negotiate with the owner so that maybe he could do the necessary repairs and rent it out. Mary Bramblett made the motion to allow Mr.

Schoonhoven two weeks to negotiate. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

In Other Business the Mayor said the bids had come in on the bridge repair on Old Piedmont Gadsden Hwy to increase the tonnage so that PEMCO's truck could use the bridge. He said McInnis Construction was the low bid at \$73,934.85 and there would also be an Engineers fee of \$5,000.00 but the Chamber of Commerce was going to pay that cost for the city. Kenny Kelley made the motion to except the bid from McInnis Construction to make the necessary repairs to the bridge. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Next in Other Business the Mayor gave two options to the Council on the health insurance increase to the city employees. The first option would be for the city to absorb the full cost of the increase and the employees pay nothing. The second option would be for the employee to pay an extra \$5.00 per week. After some discussion Frank Cobb made the motion to choose option one for the city to absorb the total cost of the health insurance. Mary Bramblett seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the City Clerk for a roll call and the vote was as follows:

<u>YEAHS</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Mary Bramblett	Ben Keller	Mark Harper
Frank Cobb	Kenny Kelley	Terry Kiser
	Brenda Spears	

Following the roll call the vote was 3 – 2 for the city not to absorb the total cost of the health insurance.

Kenny Kelley made the motion to accept the second option where the employee pays \$5.00 a week to help cover the cost of the health insurance. Ben Keller seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the City Clerk to do a roll call and the vote was as follows:

<u>YEAHS</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Ben Keller	Frank Cobb	Mary Bramblett
Kenny Kelley	Brenda Spears	Mark Harper
Mayor Baker		Terry Kiser

Following the roll call a vote of 3-2 was cast for the city employees to pay \$5.00 per week to help absorb the cost of the city's health insurance.

Mark Harper made the motion to resend the previous motion that would have the city employees pay \$5.00 per week for health insurance so that the council could look at the numbers before they make a final decision. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the City Clerk for a roll call and the vote was as follows:

<u>YEAHS</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Ben Keller	NONE	Terry Kiser
Mary Bramblett		
Frank Cobb		
Kenny Kelley		
Brenda Spears		
Mark Harper		

Following the roll call the majority of the Council voted to resend the previous motion to allow the Council Members to look at the numbers for the health insurance.

The Mayor then asked for a motion to have a donation box for the Disabled American Veteran's placed on the utility bills. Mary Bramblett made the motion to allow for a donation box. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Jesse McKnight informed the Council that on July 15th, 2014 ADEM had an annual inspection at the water treatment plant. He said that there were some deficiencies at the plant that had to be corrected by November 1st, 2014. The deficiencies consisted of needing continuous chlorine monitor recorders and raw water monitor and totalizer and a finished water monitor and totalizer. He said that bids had been opened today and the only bid received was from Revere Controls in the amount of \$17,550.00. Frank Cobb made the motion to go with the bid that was received for \$17,550.00 to purchase and install the necessary equipment for the water treatment plant. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Terry Kiser made the statement that if in six months the Council could find the money that he would vote to add the pay increases back to the employees starting at October 1st, 2014.

Next Ben Keller made the motion to pass a one cent sales tax making the sales tax increase to 10% instead of 9%. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the City Clerk to do a roll call and the vote was as follows:

<u>YEAHS</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Ben Keller	Frank Cobb	NONE
Mary Bramblett	Brenda Spears	
Kenny Kelley		
Mark Harper		
Terry Kiser		

Following the 5-2 vote the one cent sales tax increase passed.

Mark Harper said that the committee worked hard on the budget but we still need a firm to come in to advise us on what financial changes need to be made in the city.

In Visitors Comments Mr. Robbie Schoonhoven addressed the Council about corruption within the City of Piedmont.

In Council Reports Ben Keller said that the limbs needed to be cut off a tree on Church Street. Mary Bramblett challenged the Council to get out and try to find businesses and jobs for the City. Frank Cobb said that the liter on Shady Grove Road needed to be picked up. Kenny Kelley thanked Robbie Schoonhoven for his comments and also thanked him for trying to take the houses and fix them up.

Brenda Spears Council Comments:

The bills for payment for October 7 were \$650,617.39 with the week of September 19 payroll and taxes at \$81,430.23 and week of September 26 payroll and taxes at \$42,654.84 and week of October 3 payroll at \$71,138.99. The grand total for the October 7 council meeting is \$845,841.45.

I do not feel comfortable addressing the 2014-2015 budget until the council has been given the true numbers and figures from the September City of Piedmont Statement of Revenues vs Actuals for the Accounting Period: September 2014. These numbers will help us focus on a tighter and well-balanced budget.

I will not vote for nor support a One cent Sales Tax. (1) Most of the businesses in downtown Piedmont in District 5 let me know they do not support the tax increase. (2) I got an overwhelming 75% NO responses with comments. (3) We cannot operate the City of Piedmont on Electric funds. (4) Manage the city's money better. Piedmont is a small community with many of the population receiving some kind of federal or state aid or retired. The Mayor is slow to address the unpaid utility bills that have been ongoing since 2009. The Black Mountain Software program generates a monthly account of the ongoing status of our utilities. Currently, the unpaid balance on all utilities is over \$600,000.00. Why should the citizens of Piedmont pay an increase in sales tax and the Mayor is not trying to collect the unpaid utilities? According to this budget, the sales tax will be used to pay bills. Our City government needs to cut operating costs across the board before we place an additional burden on our citizens.

Congratulations to Dr. Maher Gao and his staff for celebrating their tenth anniversary serving the Piedmont area.

I am turning in a work order from a doctor requesting a medical office in Piedmont.

Thanks to Commissioner Rudy Abbot for paving the back alleys for the 200 and 300 South Main Street blocks.

Mark Harper had no report.

Terry Kiser also thanked Robbie Schoonhoven for coming. He also encouraged the Council to go by the office and talk to the employees about the finances.

In the Mayor's Report the Mayor said he is not here to argue with anybody but he said he did have to respond to Brenda Spears. He said Mrs. Spears said he was slow to collect on unpaid utilities and he said he doesn't think she realizes the efforts that we make every single day. He said he talks to Casey Ponder and Jesse McKnight on a regular basis and he has even gone out in the field with Casey to collect on bills. He said he had to defend himself and say that he is at the office every day and we are trying to come to solutions with all kinds of issues.

With no other business to come before the Council Terry Kiser made the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mary Bramblett seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm.