

CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF PIEDMONT
NOVEMBER 17TH, 2015
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 Keith Word and the pledge of allegiance to the flag the minutes were presented for consideration. Terry Kiser made the motion that the minutes be approved as presented. Mary Bramblett seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

The bills totaling \$256,808.09 were then presented for consideration for payment. Mary Bramblett made the motion that the bills be approved as presented. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the bills were approved with one abstention by Kenny Kelley and one “no” vote by Brenda Spears.

After some discussion Frank Cobb made a motion to increase the local gas tax by two cents and earmark the money for paving. Brenda Spears seconded the motion and the Mayor asked for a roll call vote and the vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call the vote was 3 yeas and 4 nays and the two cent gas tax increase did not pass.

Next the Mayor called on Chief Norton to give the police report for the month of October 2015. There were 1578 total contacts with the public. There were 8 felony arrests, 35 misdemeanor arrests, 2 DUI arrests, 15 drug arrests, 3 crimes against persons arrests, 10 court/warrant arrests and 7 other arrests. There were 37 citations, 8 accident reports and 44 motorist assists. There were 8 burglaries reported, 17 thefts reported, 28 cases investigated and 104 incident reports. The Piedmont Municipal Court collected \$18,806.12 in fine money during the month of October.

Chief Norton gave the animal control report for the month of October 2015. There were 25 calls for service, 2 preliminary investigations, 1 follow-up investigation, 43 animals picked up, 6 animals returned to owner by ACO, 37 animals took to shelter, 17 strays/animals at large, 18 surrendered by owner, 2 abandoned and 2 reclaimed at shelter by owner.

Next Abatement Officer Charles McDonald gave the nuisance and abatement report for the month of October 2015. There were 33 total cases, 4 new yard cases, 4 total house cases, 12 cases being processed, 1 case with second notice, 10 cases completed, 3 community service workers and 3 court appearances.

Next the Mayor called of Chief Ledbetter to give the fire report for the month of October 2015. There were 2 structure fires, 2 automatic alarms, 3 vehicle fires, 2 vehicle accidents, 2 ambulance assist, 6 service calls and 2 brush fires.

In Other Business Mary Bramblett made a motion to allow Electrical Superintendent Casey Ponder to order four distribution gang switches for substation #3 at the cost of \$6,800.00. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mark Harper made a motion to put the kilowatt rate on the utility bills and be put on by January 1st, 2016. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mark Harper asked that the council consider lowering the electrical rates.

Brenda Spears stated that in the last packet on November 3rd the General Fund bank accounts only had \$5716.96 and what is in there now is \$171,918.86 and that is a difference on \$166,201.90. She asked where was this money pulled from. The Mayor said it was probably from taxes and that the AMEA bill had not been paid yet. He stated that the account changes daily. She also stated that in the October 20th packet that the water, gas and sewer bond was \$106788.79 and the amount now is \$34,757.17. Water and Gas Superintendent Jesse McKnight said that this was from the cast iron and the sewer project.

There were no Visitor's Comments.

In Council Reports Ben Keller thanked the city workers for the great job they did on the city offices. He also asked when the ball field lights would be put up at Bethune? The Mayor stated that it would be very soon.

Mary Bramblett thanked the police department for getting a guy out from under the bridge. She said that she would like to thank everyone for the prayers for her sister-in-law.

Frank Cobb had no report.

Kenny Kelley asked that everyone remember Trudy Loy's mother that was in a bad car accident.

Brenda Spears Council Comments:

The Bills of Payment for council tonight is \$256,808.09. Payroll and taxes for week of November 6 was \$53,141.38 and for November 13 was \$56,975.19. The total for tonight's approval is \$366,924.66. The council approved for November 3 and November 17 a total of \$676,895.24.

I have given the council information for two possible business leads for Piedmont.

For Thanksgiving 2015, the Community Thanksgiving Service will be held at PFUMC at 6 PM on Sunday, November 22. The speaker will be the pastor at Goshen UMC. The public is invited.

The Christmas season is quickly approaching. When shopping this holiday season, think LOCAL. When you shop local, it is estimated that more than 50% of the money spent stays in our community. Shopping locally provides jobs and supports our local merchants and these dollars help public services, our schools, and community groups and various charities. The money circulates again and again aiding in business growth, lower taxes, and civic pride. There's no place like HOME for the holidays ! Support of Piedmont hometown businesses this season.

During a council work session on Tuesday, October 13, I asked the mayor a question that has been asked to me by several people in my District 5 during the past months. What happens to a city/town/municipality (like Piedmont) when it cannot pay its fixed costs and bills of payment? This is a legitimate question, and I would like it answered. I consider myself an optimistic but realistic person. The council must have true, accurate, factual numbers for revenues and expenditures for us to review. Hopefully, we will stand for accountability and transparency and responsible spending for the 2015-2016 budget.

Mark Harper had no report.

Terry Kiser had no report.

In the Mayor's Comments, the Mayor stated in relation to the Brenda Spears comment on what the city would do if they couldn't pay the bills he said this is the second time this has been brought up and he thought that it had been fully discussed on the first occasion. He questioned Brenda Spears on why this

was being brought up again especially in lieu of the fact that all bills are current and paid. He explained that when negative comments are made about the financial status of the city that it hurts us as we make continued efforts to recruit businesses to our city. He said it really wasn't necessary to be having repeated conversations like this especially since all bills are paid in full. Mayor Baker suggested to Brenda Spears that she go back to her district and assure her contacts that the city is solvent and bills are all current and paid timely each month.

The Mayor said the Christmas decorations are up downtown and thanked the city crews for taking care of that. He wished the Piedmont Bulldogs the best of luck in the play-off game this Friday night. The Mayor asked that the council respond to him by Monday at 12:00 if they planned to go to the League of Municipalities Convention in May of 2016.

The Mayor said that there was a situation last week where a renter cleaned out a house and threw it in the back alley. He said this is not going to be tolerated and that the landlord was charged \$250.00 for the city to clean this up. He said the city is not a dumping ground. The Mayor informed the council that there would be a safety meeting on November 25th, at 11:00 am. He said that he was going to let the employees leave after the meeting ended and he would like the council's blessing on this. Ben Keller made a motion to allow the employees to leave after the safety meeting. Mary Bramblett seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

The Mayor also wished Mark Harper a Happy Birthday.

With no other business to come before the council Terry Kiser made the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Ben Keller seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.