

CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF PIEDMONT
DECEMBER 17TH, 2013
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 Rev. Matt Turner and the pledge of allegiance to the flag Terry Kiser made the motion that the minutes be approved as presented. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

The bills totaling \$327,195.35 were then presented for consideration for payment. Frank Cobb 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.

The Mayor asked for consideration of Resolution 2013-16 which would adopt a holiday schedule for the 2014 year for City of Piedmont employees. Frank Cobb made the motion to adopt Resolution 2013-16. Mary Bramblett seconded the motion and Resolution 2013-16 was adopted unanimously.

Next on the agenda Missy Welborn a representative from Air Evac an air ambulance service presented a proposal to the city council. She stated that on average a flight for air ambulance cost \$20,000 to \$25,000.00 per flight. She asked that the council think about becoming a member which would cost the City \$29,148.00 a year for all citizens that live in the city limits of Piedmont to be flown in case of an emergency with no out of pocket expense to the citizen.

The Mayor called on Chief Tidwell to give the police report for the month of November 2013. Officers had 780 contacts with the public. There were 8 felony arrests, 37 misdemeanor arrests, 2 DUI arrests, 17 drug arrests, 18 court/warrant arrests, 34 citations, 9 accident reports, 43 motorist assists, 11 burglaries reported, 15 thefts reported, 59 cases investigated, 60 incident reports and 3 meth lab sites. There were a total of 1543 calls to the communications center. The Municipal Court collected \$15,420.00 in fine money for the month of November.

Piedmont Animal Control had 23 calls for service, 23 work orders completed, 5 preliminary investigations, 51 animals picked up, 49 animals taken to the shelter and 5 animals reclaimed from the shelter by owners.

Piedmont Nuisance and Abatement had a total of 37 cases, 25 yard cases, 12 house cases and 4 cases completed/properties brought into compliance.

The Mayor called on Chief Ledbetter to give the fire report for the month of November 2013. There were 6 structure fires, 2 car fires, 2 wild land fires, 4 ambulance assist, 4 service calls, 3 hazmat calls and 12 burn permits issued.

Phillip Winkles with the Piedmont Rescue Squad gave the report for the month of November for the rescue squad. There were a total of 122 runs during the month of November with an average run time enroute of 1:09 minutes to scene 3:08 minutes.

In Other Business Brenda Spears asked if the AMEA bill had been paid and what the penalty was on the bill.

Ben Keller made a motion that the council allow the city employees to be off on December 23rd because the Calhoun County offices would be closed on that day. Mary Bramblett seconded the motion and the Mayor asked for a roll call vote and the vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call vote the majority of the council voted for the city employees to work on December 23rd.

In visitor's comments Mr. Kenneth McGatha complained about a raw sewage problem in his yard and asked that the city come out and fix this problem.

Jeff Napp asked if the council had voted on the school internet payment and asked why the council would not vote to pay for the whole city and not just the school and if the school needs it they should pay for it.

In council reports Ben Keller thanked Abatement Officer Charles McDonald for the good job he is doing on abatement.

Mary Bramblett thanked the city employees for the work they do. She also thanked Dr. Clemons the principal at the high school for bringing people in and trying to get jobs for the city. She said she also toured CVG and they are really doing a lot of work there. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Frank Cobb wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He also said he appreciated the work Charles McDonald was doing with the abatement.

Kenny Kelley wished everyone safe holidays and said to spend time with your family.

Brenda Spears council comments: The December 17 bills for payment were \$327,195.35 with \$129,869.24 for payroll and taxes for a total of \$457,064.59.

This being the last Council meeting for 2013, I looked back on each month's bills for payment. The total bills for May were \$902,329.05 and that concerned me. The August bills were more than the May bills for a total of \$903,791.40. I campaigned for Accountability, Transparency, and Responsible Spending, and I discussed bills for payment at my community "Meet and Greet" meeting. The bills for November were the Council's highest at a staggering \$1,193,751.83. I have voted many times not to pay the bills because the council did not have financial work sessions to discuss and amend the 2012-2013 budget and now the 2013-2014 budget to reduce spending. In my opinion, I feel that the Mayor and City Council must start having more financial work sessions to discuss and amend the current 2013-2014 budget. The Council should create new policies to trim each Department's expenses. In addition, the Council should address our past and future hiring practices. The Anniston Star's Letter to the Editor on December 15, 2013 stated that if council members are not in the "school business: then they might find out that they lose their City Council positions in the next election. I am personally finding out the true financial picture for the City of Piedmont.

In my opinion, the City of Piedmont lacks financial leadership and is in dire financial difficulties. The Council members control the budget and all financial transactions according to the Code of Alabama. We, as council members representing 7 Districts, must question the bills of payment and take back our control of Piedmont's financial overall picture as outlined in the Code of Alabama. We should approve and amend the budget quickly to be proactive or it might not matter which council members were for or

against the "School Business" for the next election. Piedmont may not have the money to be in the "school business" or any other business without sound business based budget decisions.
Merry Christmas and Peace on Earth with a special Blessing to all Veterans.

Mark Harper had no report.

Terry Kiser thanked Mr. Cottrell and Mr. Fair for helping with the Christmas parade.

In the Mayor's Comments the Mayor thanked everyone that helped and participated in the Christmas parade. He also said that any training be approved through him or the City Clerk and if council members could receive the training by use of the internet then he would not approve training and travel with taxpayers money. He said if he needed a council vote on this matter that he would ask for it at a later date.

The City Clerk asked the council to approve letting Water and Gas Superintendent Jessie McNight get bids to replace one mile of gas line pipe in the city. Frank Cobb made the motion to allow Jessie McNight to get bids. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

With no other business to come before the council Ben Keller made the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.