

CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF PIEDMONT

MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>, 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 Richard Freeman, Council Members Ben Keller, Mary Bramblett, Frank Cobb, Kenny Kelley, Brenda Spears, Billy Baker and Terry Kiser.

Mayor Freeman declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order.

Following the invocation given by Rev. Roger Keenum and the pledge of allegiance to the flag the minutes were presented for consideration. Billy Baker made the motion that the minutes be approved as presented. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pete Yonce from Revenue Discovery Systems (RDS) gave a presentation to the council about the collection of sales and use tax that his business provides throughout the state of Alabama and other states.

The bills totaling \$563,453.79 were then presented for consideration for payment. Mary Bramblett made the motion that the bills be approved for payment. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the bills were approved for payment with one "no" vote from Brenda Spears.

The Mayor asked for consideration of Resolution 2013-04 which would allow the city to put certain items of surplus on Gov Deals to sale to the highest bidder. Terry Kiser made the motion to approve Resolution 2013-04. Ben Keller seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

The Mayor then read a Proclamation for National Nursing Home Week which will start May 12<sup>th</sup>, on Mother's Day and go through May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Rev. Roger Keenum asked for the city to help in preparing for the Christmas scene that was donated to the city and Ministerial Association. He said that it would be a mile long scene with different size props and would need many people to participate in the production and workers to put the scene together.

In other business Acting Fire Chief Mike Ledbetter gave the report for the month of April, 2013. There were 6 structure fires, 1 auto accident, 1 car fire, 1 brush fire, 1 hazmat call for natural gas and 2 service calls.

Terry Kiser told the Council and Mayor that he had had many phone calls complaining about the basketball goals being taken down at the Memorial Park and requested that the Mayor have them put back up. The Mayor stated that the goals would not go back up at the park but that they would be relocated to another area in the city.

Ben Keller made a motion that the fence be put up at the Bethune baseball field so that the community could start having tournaments to raise money to make repairs to the Bethune gym. Billy Baker seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Brenda Spears made a motion for the city departments to shop locally in Calhoun County and apply the new legislative bid law that went from 3% to 5%. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the Mayor then asked for a roll call vote:

<u>YEAHS</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Frank Cobb	Ben Keller	None
Brenda Spears	Mary Bramblett	
	Kenny Kelley	
	Billy Baker	
	Terry Kiser	

Following the roll call vote the motion to shop local in Calhoun County was voted down 5 to 2.

After some discussion about changes to the City of Piedmont Utility Policy Frank Cobb made the motion to table the policy until the Utility Committee could meet and discuss the changes. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Brenda Spears made a motion to change the date of the next council meeting because of the conflict with the League of Municipalities Convention. With no one seconding the motion the motion dies.

In visitors comments Mr. Billy Lindsey spoke to the council and thanked them for their hard work and that he enjoyed the long meetings that showed that the city was working to get things done. He discussed the importance of a good budget and a plan to bring industry in to the city.

Trudy Loy and Debra from Styles By Debra, two local business owners asked the council to consider changing the parking ordinance to have employees of local business park in the rear of the businesses.

Keith Word announced the Disabled American Veteran's Program at the Memorial Park on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

In council reports Ben Keller asked to have leaves picked up on Draper and Church St.

Mary Bramblett said that the people of her district are working hard in their yards. She said that she had ditches that need cleaning out. She also reminded everyone that Sunday is Mother's Day and to tell your Mother that you love her.

Frank Cobb said he had some abatement issues on Taylor St. and Southern Ave. that needed to be looked at as soon as possible.

Kenny Kelley thanked Mr. Billy Lindsey for his comments. He also said he needed some street signs put up in his district.

Brenda Spears said she was turning in 26 new nuisance abatement sheets to the Mayor for District 5, street paving with a total of 8 addresses / areas and 2 potholes with 5 street signs needed in the district. She stated that the budget is one of her biggest concerns and getting it amended to reflect the council's spending. She said the city's utilities account cannot continue to be siphoned to fund other projects not appropriated in this year's budget.

She stated that she feels the council needs to discuss a resolution that will be worded to make renters responsible for their utilities cut-on rate and to include a first and last month's utility payment in

advance. This money will be placed in a separate account and refunded in full to the renter when moving if not owing the city any money in past due accounts.

Also, the council needs to pass a resolution that states the landlords are responsible for removing household trash, furniture, clothing, etc. left in or outside the rental address. These items cannot be placed in the front or sides or back of the rental property for city workers to remove. The property owner and renter are to be responsible for the property upkeep according to the city's nuisance abatement policies.

At the last council meeting, the Mayor asked for a utility rate study by Jackson and Thornton. Mrs. Spears stated that she would hesitate at this time to support an increase in utility rates until there is a policy in place by the council for unpaid utility bills. She said from information she requested and paid for, the January 2013 spreadsheet reflected over \$160,000.00 in unpaid utility bills. Today, she said she would estimate the total of unpaid utility bills is well over \$900,000.00. The council must address this problem of people and businesses not paying their monthly utility bills before we approve a rate increase and other charges in the structure of the utility department and policies. Until the council is willing to discuss and work on a fixable solution to this problem, she could not ask our good and solid paying citizens to pay more for utilities.

Billy Baker said he had turned in work orders regarding abatement issues, street department needs and streets that need paving in his district. He said that he would be setting up a Park and Recreation Committee meeting soon to discuss some issues in the recreation area. He also congratulated the Piedmont Boys Track and Field for winning the state championship. He also congratulated his step grandson Hunter Pike for qualifying all-county and all-state for the Piedmont Golf Team and he said he was the only one to qualify from the Piedmont Team.

Terry Kiser thanked the Mayor for letting him voice his opinion about the removal of the basketball goals. He also told everyone to ride by the police and rescue departments and look at the flowers that had been planted in front and in back.

In the Mayor's comments the Mayor said that there would be more dumpsters put at Highland Cemetery for people that will be cleaning graves off before Mother's Day. He addressed the speeding on Dailey St. and said that children at play signs had been put up. He also said that he has asked each council member to find someone from their district that makes a difference and also a person for yard of the month. He informed the council that he has requested a sky camera to be put at Highland Cemetery from Fox 6 News. He said that he hopes to get that in the near future.

With no other business to come before the council Billy Baker made the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.