

CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF PIEDMONT

AUGUST 5, 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 Venecia Butler and the pledge of allegiance to the flag the minutes were presented for consideration. Frank Cobb made the motion that the minutes be approved as presented. Terry Kiser seconded the motion and the motion carried with one "no" vote by Brenda Spears stating that what she had said about the uncollected bills was not written correctly.

The bills totaling \$437,847.27 were then presented for consideration for payment. Mary Bramblett made the motion that the bills be approved as presented. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the bills were approved with one abstention by Brenda Spears.

Frank Cobb made the motion to pay \$44,432.00 from the fire tax fund for eight air packs instead of borrowing the money. Brenda Spears seconded the motion and a roll call vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call vote of 5 yeas and 2 nays the motion carried to purchase the eight air packs from the fire tax fund.

Next Venecia Butler of Venencia's Foundation asked the Councils permission to hold her second annual run for cancer on October 4th, 2014 with vendor's downtown and the run to be held at night. Terry Kiser made the motion to allow the benefit. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Next on the agenda Joan Sanders with Sanders and Associates presented the 2013 audit to the Mayor and City Council.

In Other Business representatives from PEMCO asked the Council to have the bridge fixed on Old Gadsden Highway to accommodate the trucks that will be transporting materials to the Fifth Avenue warehouse that is now occupied by PEMCO. Mary Bramblett made the motion to allow Carl Hinton to take bids for the bridge to be repaired. Kenny Kelley 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 to start the bid process to repair the bridge.

Terry Kiser made the motion not to contract with JSU to do a financial analysis of the City. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and the Mayor asked the question, "Does the Council want to contract with JSU to do the financial analysis?" and the roll call vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call a 4 to 3 vote was cast not to contract with JSU for the financial analysis.

Also in Other Business Kenny Kelley made the motion to tear down two houses that have went through the abatement process. The houses are located on 116 Seaboard and 105 Eubanks Ave. Frank Cobb seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

In Council Reports Ben Keller thanked the water and gas department for repairing the fire hydrant he had turned in. He also thanked the Anniston Star for the article written about the one cent sales tax. Mary Bramblett said that the grass behind the armory needed to be cut.

Frank Cobb said he had been to an AMEA Board Meeting and that Piedmont needed to try to keep a member on the board.

Kenny Kelley had no report.

Brenda Spears council comments: The bills for payment for August 5 were \$437,847.27 with week of July 18 payroll and taxes \$42,320.06 and July 25 at \$80,155.86 and August 1 at \$58,972.36 for a total of \$619,295.55.

At the July 15 council meeting, I brought up the Black Mountain Software Utility Billing System from January 2013 and June 2014. As of January 30, 2013, the total of Uncollected Bills was \$783,853.74 and write-offs at \$27,808.99. For April 10, 2014, the Uncollected Bills was \$691,000.79 and write-offs was 63,884.05. In the minutes for the July 15 council meeting, it states that Brenda Spears said that uncollected utility bills for one year were over a half million dollars. I requested this information and paid for it. I believe I only said what was due according to the January 2013 summary and the April 2014 summary sheets. I know that over half a million dollars did not accumulate in a year's time. I do not know how far back these uncollected utility bills go. That is a question for the mayor and clerk to answer. I am very interested in the answer and why the mayors have let this happen. This unpaid balance belongs to the taxpayers and citizens of Piedmont. The council could discuss this and work on solutions to recover this money. Maybe, a professional agency could be approved to aggressively go after these unpaid bills and possible future bills.

Also, at the same meeting, I reviewed the 23 pages information from the June 2014 statement of Expenditure and Budget vs Actual Report. For 13 departments, under Capital Outlay, the original appropriation for each department was \$0.00 but each one had thousands of dollars under Committed YTD. The highest was \$24,205.44 and the least was \$1,782.00. All totals came to \$84,395.94. Where is the money coming from for these expenses and improvements and were not appropriated in this year's fiscal budget? How is the \$84,395.94 as of July 15 going to be accounted for at the end of the fiscal year, which is September 30?

Also, at this meeting, I asked about the Bank Account Balances as of July 10, 2014 for the 4 Cent Gas Tax and the 7 Cent Gas Tax at F & M Bank. The 4 Cent Gas Tax account has \$139,942.79. The 7 Cent Gas Tax account has \$72,647.10. This is a restricted account for street and road improvements. Why isn't the Mayor asking the council to approve projects and spending this money?

Mark Harper had no report.

Terry Kiser had no report.

In the Mayor's report the Mayor said that he is concerned about the uncollected utility bills and said that he welcomes any suggestions from the Council on ways to collect on these unpaid bills. He also said any information for new business prospects or recruitment possibilities would be appreciated by Council Members.

Kenny Kelley made the motion to adopt Resolution 2014-09 which would name a road that would provide access for city vehicles to perform maintenance as needed to operate the water tank and such other public use as may be necessary. The road is a continuation of Ray Alley. Brenda Spears seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

At this time the Mayor asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss a property matter. Kenny Kelley seconded the motion and a roll call vote was as follows:

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

Following the roll call vote of 6 to 1 the Mayor informed the audience that the meeting would not reconvene after the executive session. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.