



City of Clay
P.O. Box 345
Clay, Al 35048-0345

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
June 16, 2014

The City Council of the City of Clay held a Public Hearing on Monday, June 16, 2014, at 7:15 p.m. at Clay City Hall. Mayor Webster presided over the meeting and City Manager Ronnie Dixon, served as recorder.

The Public Hearing immediately followed a City Council meeting and the following Councilors were present:

Councilor Baker Councilor Halstead Councilor Johnson
Councilor Small Councilor Thackerson Mayor Webster

Absent: None

Mr. Dixon presented a power point (included) which reviewed the City's 2014 fiscal year budget, actual income to date, expenses, and cost of future projects.

Mayor Webster stated that the Council will state their comments, hear comments, and answer questions from residents. Mayor Webster informed participants that there is a three minute time limit.

Councilor Small stated that he brought up this meeting. He expressed concern about property values. He shared a desire to gain control over property values, citing public safety and schools. He asked for input from participants about what would make it worth paying an extra 5 mills on their property tax.

Councilor Baker stated that his son attends Clay Chalkville Middle School and-- although the City School System did not pass a few years ago as he wished -- he believes that it is a good school. He further stated that he would like to hear from residents how they would prefer to spend any additional revenue.

Councilor Johnson said she did vote for the school tax increase and wishes it would have passed. She also stated that her original goal was not to pass any tax increases until this administration showed that they could handle the funds responsibly. She believes this administration has proven so and commended the employees of the City for the services they provide.

Mayor Webster recognized Deanna Hunt (5728 Desoto Drive) who stated that she is not against a tax for the schools. She does have concerns about public safety and the tornado property conditions in her area and Tyler Loop Road.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Bill Blass (7780 Clayton Cove Parkway) who suggested that the Council limit City spending.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Morris Campbell (6187 Clay Palmerdale Road) who commented on public safety, road conditions, and fallen trees. He then asked if the ballpark, being a major expense, has made any money. Councilor Baker explained that the ballpark does not make a profit; neither does the library or Senior Citizens Center as they are part of services provided by the City for its residents. He further stated that the governments provide services and do not make a profit. Mr. Campbell expressed his concern about the cost of higher taxes on retired citizens.



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Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Sherry George (6245 Clay Palmerdale Road) who encouraged the Council to consider better use of their funds. She suggested the City provide necessary services such as garbage pickup instead of providing more recreational outlets if a property tax is implemented. Ms. George clarified that she is in favor of the current ballpark and library which provide services for children, but maintained that the City needn't build batting cages or a dog park.

Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Dana Henry (6120 Eagle Ridge Drive) who questioned whether any of the funds raised will be earmarked or put in the General Fund. Mayor Webster answered that the funds will likely go into the General Fund to cover expenses such as repaving roads, an estimated 4.5 million dollar expense. He further explained to residents that this administration has passed and adhered to a budget to prove responsibility.

Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Michelle Olson (6525 Chrissy Drive) who complained about the City repaving half of her road, her neighbors, and Public Safety.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Buddy Williams (7256 Self Road) who reiterated the problem with earmarking money is that the funds are not available for all projects and that residents have to trust the politicians with the tax funds. He asked the Council to spend wisely, prioritize necessary projects, and wait until funds are available to undertake other projects.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Robert Davis (6228 Clay Palmerdale Road) who said that he is against the property tax because he is on a fixed income and does not use the services the City provides.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Ronald Jo Moore (business owner in Clay) who stated that he is against the property tax.

Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Christy McKee (6304 Canterbury Road) who spoke in favor of the property tax. She suggested the current City of Clay environment will die without a property tax.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Andy Driggers (5517 Garden Valley Lane) who asked the Council what the Economic Development Committee –whose job is to entice new businesses into the City - has accomplished. He stated that he would like to see the Economic Development Committee do more in the city. He discussed other forms of government as options for saving funds. He asked the Council to enforce the ordinances in place.

Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Gail Kosher (7090 Goodner Mountain Road) who stated that she does not believe the Council should implement a tax until the Council can account for the funds they currently spend. The Mayor and Council reminded her that she can submit a records request form. She balked at the \$0.25 copy fee and \$15.00 hourly research fee.

Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Jennifer Fitzpatrick (6780 Ambassador Drive) who related that she is unsure of her position on the property tax yet. She commented on the decline in her property's market value. She spoke about the age disparity and encouraged the community to meet in the middle for any progress to be made.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Ron Self (7239 Weems Road) who stated he has lived in Clay all his life and owns businesses in Clay and Chalkville. He said he would either have to eat the tax or pass it on to



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the consumer. He commented on the vacant commercial properties and asked the Council to entice new businesses instead of raising taxes. Mayor Webster and the Council replied that there have been new businesses opening in the City. Mr. Self cautioned the Council against raising property taxes while trying to annex businesses on Chalkville Mountain Road.

Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Teresa Merrell (7142 Self Road) who warned that businesses will not come to a higher tax structure. She stated that low taxes drew her to Clay.

Mayor Webster recognized Ms. Sheryl Spivey (6212 Windsor Lane) who explained that she is a local teacher. Ms. Spivey spoke about the community activity decline in recent years. She asked the residents to consider the future of their property and the community. She stated that she is in favor of higher taxes if the funds go towards a school system.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Mark Lucas (6519 Chrissy Drive) who stated he is not for a property tax. He asked what the City has done to make money. He reiterated previous statements about higher taxes turning away businesses.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Brett King, candidate for State Senator for District 17. Mr. King admired the level of community involvement. He challenged Clay residents to be involved in the run-off on July 15. He reminded the audience that being on City Council is basically a volunteer position and a thankless job. Mr. King asked that Clay residents hold him accountable in Montgomery.

Mayor Webster recognized Mr. Shay Shelnett, candidate for State Senator for District 17. Mr. Shelnett stated that he is against the tax increase because he doesn't believe in taxes. He further explained that rising taxes is the reason he moved out of Pinson. Councilor Johnson asked where he lives now. Mr. Shelnett answered that he lives in Trussville. Councilor Baker asked if he voted for the recent tax increase. Mr. Shelnett answered affirmatively but stated that he would not raise taxes in Montgomery unless constituents direct him to do so.

Mayor Webster spoke about reducing the fluctuating sales tax in favor of a more stable property tax. He thanked the residents for participating.

There being no more business the meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ronnie Dixon
City Manager