

Government Watch - County Commission

A look at what is happening in Bradley County

by Tonya Brantley
Managing Editor

The Bradley County Commission's meetings were full of items to discuss and vote on in the month of March. The following are some of the highlights from those meetings.

- County Mayor D. Gary Davis presented County Finance Director Lynn Burns with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its 2008 budget. The award is presented by the Government Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada. This is the first year Bradley County has received the award making it one of just 17 local governments throughout the state to be honored.

- Commissioner Lisa Stanbery made a motion to have the Commission allow her to attend the City Council on behalf of the Commission to put forth a joint tax notice and collection for discussion after

receiving a letter from Mayor Tom Rowland asking her to do so at the City Council meeting on March 9th. Commissioner Howard Thompson said he didn't think that having combined tax bills and collections would work out saying, "I think we should let the city run their business and we run ours." Stanbery replied, "I think we have to get past the us and them mentality. If there are any savings out there, we owe it to our residents to try to save them money." The motion passed 10-3.

- Commissioner Ben Atchley made a motion to rescind the previous action to let the 911 center sign affidavits and take over as judicial commissioners. The motion passed.

- Commissioner Louie Alford made a motion to amend the joint resolution to establish the Fire Merger Committee to include EMS. The motion passed 10-3.

- Commissioner Ed Elkins

proposed a resolution to authorize a referendum to increase the sales tax from 2.25% to 2.75% in the county. Elkins said this would be the county's opportunity to join in and share in the revenue generated inside the city. "It's only fitting that county residents reclaim a portion of what they are paying in," said Elkins. The referendum states Bradley County residents have no alternative to making the majority of their purchases within the city limits of Cleveland and will pay the increase of the sales tax; but Bradley County residents will not reap the benefits of the proceeds from the tax for Bradley County Schools and capital projects without implementing the sales tax increase in Bradley County. The resolution passed with

Commissioners Mark Hall, Howard Thompson, Bill Ledford, Mel Griffith, and Roy Smith voting no. Because the resolution wasn't a private act, it did not require a 2/3 vote to pass.



Mayor D. Gary Davis presents Finance Director Lynn Burns the Budget Presentation Award.

- In a report from the Landfill Committee, it was announced that the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held on April 18th from 7am to 12pm at Tri-State.

- Commissioner Jeff Yarber proposed a resolution requesting that the Tennessee

Department of Corrections remove state prisoners from the Bradley County Jail. However due to a motion for Commissioner Yarber to come back with a motion the commission can better understand where the revenue would be, the resolution was deferred.

- Commissioner Jim Smith recently made a motion to accept bids on the Peerless Road property for a minimum of \$1.2 million. Commissioner Mark Hall, who represents the 7th district, asked Smith to withdraw his motion saying, "We consider that home and we don't want to sell our home." The Peerless Road property is in the 7th district. The Commission will vote on the motion during the April 6th voting meeting.

- Commissioner Mark Hall, on behalf of the S.E. Tennessee Veterans Home Committee made a motion in which he respectfully asked the Commission to commit

to a balance of \$4.5 million and to sign a letter of agreement. In the meantime, the Veterans Home Committee will continue with their fund raising efforts. With over 50,000 veterans within a 50 mile radius of Bradley County, the Committee believes this would be a good investment. Commissioner Ed Elkins reminded the Commission that they have already committed to providing land for the Veterans home. The Commission will vote on the motion during the April 6th voting meeting.

The Bradley County Commission meetings and Committee meetings are open to the public each month. Commission meetings are held in the Bradley County Courthouse. Their voting sessions are on the 1st Monday at 7pm and on the 3rd Monday at 10am. Commission work sessions are on the 2nd Monday at 12pm and on the 4th Monday at 7pm. Committees meet as needed.

Government Watch - City Council

A look at what is happening in the City of Cleveland

by Tonya Brantley
Managing Editor

Several important decisions were made by the Cleveland City Council during their meetings during the month of March. The following are highlights from those meetings.

- The City Council heard from several members of the Cleveland Housing Authority Board in response to public housing residents' complaints about the treatment and threats of eviction received by many from the Cleveland Housing Authority. After much discussion, the City Council agreed to let the Housing Authority Board use the council meeting room to hold their upcoming meeting. A full report of that meeting can be read on page 11 of this issue.

- The City Council heard a report on joint tax notice and collection from County Commissioner Lisa Stanbery. Stanbery mentioned

several benefits of combined bills and collections would include one bill for city residents, one collection location, city residents would have the convenience of community satellite locations for tax collection and savings would go to the city on printing, mailing and office supplies. The city will join with the county to study the possibility of the joint tax mailings.

- Vice Mayor Avery Johnson had concerns about the city's hiring policy. He mentioned that only one African American had been hired by the city in the past 19 years. Johnson said, "We don't like to talk about affirmative action, but we all know what it is. I personally get tired of this conversation. We ought to be looking at doing what's right." Councilman Richard Banks stated that the statistic is hard to get around saying, "We have the ability to change the policy."

The Council voted unanimously to conduct an investigation into the city's nepotism policy and report back to the council by the second meeting in April.

- County resident/city business owner, Adam Lowe spoke to the Council on the impact the sales tax referendum will have on small businesses, to which Mayor Tom Rowland replied, "We appreciate your comments, sorry your late." Adam Lowe's "beef with the sales tax" can be read on page 11 of this issue.

- Councilman George Poe made a motion which passed unanimously, to proceed with the process of improving crossing at 14th Street at N. Ocoee Street to be similar to the crossing described at TN Wesleyan College in Athens.

- Councilman Richard Banks proposed Resolution No: 2009-27 concerning the sales tax referendum to be held by Bradley County

on May 14, 2009. The resolution states that the City Council goes on record requesting that the Bradley County Commission reconsider its decision to hold its own referendum on May 14th because, to do so, is unfair, confusing, misleading, and does not include increases to school funding and because city voters will not be allowed to participate in the referendum and further because the County Commission was given the option to have a county-wide referendum and chose not to do so. The City Council voted unanimously to pass the resolution.

- Resolution 2009-26 was also voted on by the Council to not distribute [share] the one-half cent sales tax approved on March 10, 2009 with Bradley County in accordance with the contract dated May 10, 1967. The resolution states: It is the desire of the Cleveland City Council to go on record that it does not

tend to further amend the contract to provide for the same distribution of the additional one-half cent sales tax increase, but to distribute it in accordance with the situs-based distribution as provided for in Tennessee State Law. The sales tax proceeds generated by the additional one-half cent sales tax increase will not be amended to distribute the additional sales tax rev-

enues in accordance with said agreement.

With a unanimous vote, the Cleveland City Council approved the resolution.

Cleveland City Council meetings are open to the public each month at the Municipal Building on Church Street. Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month with the work session at 2pm and the voting session at 4pm.

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2 Th 2:10b Because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved v11: And for this cause of God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.