

## Government Watch - County Commission

*A look at what is happening in Bradley County*

by Tonya Brantley  
Managing Editor

The Bradley County Commission's January agendas were full of several important items to vote on for the new year. Along with the new year came a new addition. Bradley County Mayor D. Gary Davis announced that Dan Howell, former senior anchor/managing editor for Fox 61 News in Chattanooga, has become new assistant to the mayor. Howell filled the vacancy left by Amy Moore, who resigned to take the position of assistant to the County Commission. The following are highlights from commission voting sessions.

- Commissioner Ed Elkins gave recommendations from the Finance Committee which included a recommendation not to participate in the sales tax referendum. Once open for discussion, Commissioner Howard Thompson reminded fellow

commissioners that they had already voted on this once when they made a motion not to participate during a previous meeting held at the agricultural center. With a motion to participate in the sales tax referendum on the agenda to vote on, Commissioner Jim Smith asked County Attorney Joe Bird if the Commission takes action now, would they still take action later, to which Bird responded, "you have dumb founded me." According to Bird, at the time the vote took place at the ag center there wasn't a second reading by the City Council on the resolution, therefore the Commission would not need to rescind their vote to not participate. Chairman Michael Plumley reminded the commission they were not voting to enact a tax, all they were voting to do was to put it on a referendum to allow the citizens to enact a tax. After much discussion

and confusion, the majority voted yes, to not participate in the sales tax referendum.

Commissioners Jeff Yarber, Ben Atchley and Chairman Plumley voted no.

- Commissioner Mel Griffith proposed a resolution to change the current method of appointing the county director of schools, which was referred back to the education committee for further discussion to be voted on at a later date.

- The Commission voted to give the county mayor authorization to negotiate the fire contract with Cleveland. A substitute motion was then made by Commissioner Stanbery to include not only the county mayor but the chairman of the finance committee, and a member of the fire board to be chosen by Chairman Plumley and Vice Chairman Yarber. Mayor D. Gary Davis said it's tough to negotiate in front of the media which would have to be done if a

committee was formed.

With a 7-7 vote the substitute motion failed. Commissioner Atchley recommended an amendment to the original motion to authorize the county mayor to negotiate the fire contract and to look at all aspects of future fire protection, including the study of consolidation. With a 13-1 vote with Commissioner Ed Elkins voting no, the motion passed.

- A resolution to build an industrial access highway was passed to serve the proposed manufacturing facility MM-Cleveland, LLC plans to construct in Bradley County in 2010. An announcement as to what the manufacturing facility will be, will be made in late February.

- EMA Director Troy Spence made a request for the Commission to agree to the lease/purchase of a former MCI radio tower on Oswald Dome and another

tower at Crown Colony. The total cost for the infrastructure is \$500,000. A PSIC Grant would cover \$150,000, leaving a cost of \$350,000 which would be split with the city. The reason is to transfer Bradley County and the City of Cleveland to a to 800 MHz radio system that will tie emergency response personnel into a communications system usable by every county in East Tennessee and stretching from North Georgia to Knoxville. The request was referred to the Finance Committee, in which it was voted on to move forward with the lease purchase agreement. If passed at a future Commission voting meeting, the county would start making payments beginning with the 2010 budget.

- Commissioner Lisa Stanbery made a motion to have the county attorney Joe Bird review the issue of liability after a statement read by Ben

Atchley asked for Dewey Woody to be removed as chief of the Bradley County Fire Department. Atchley claimed Woody allowed a personality conflict to interfere with the well being of a patient. At a joint meeting of the EMS and Fire committees, Mr. Bird concluded he didn't see liability for the county in this situation. Mayor Davis instructed EMS Director Danny Lawson and Chief Woody to have a report given to him by February 19th addressing, in detail, all measures that have been taken to insure that this type of unprofessional conduct doesn't happen again.

Bradley County Commission meetings and Committee meetings are open to the public each month. Commission voting sessions are on the 1st and 3rd Monday and work sessions are on the 2nd and 4th Monday at the courthouse. Committees meet as needed.

## Government Watch - City Council

*A look at what is happening in the City of Cleveland*

by Tonya Brantley  
Managing Editor

After a long holiday break, the Cleveland City Council met on January 12, 2009 for their first meeting of the new year.

At the 2pm work session, EMA Director Troy Spence presented the council with the amortization schedule. City Manager, Janice Casteel reminded the Council that Spence wasn't looking for a commitment at this time. Troy Spence made the same request to the City Council as he did with the Bradley County Commission, to agree to the lease/purchase of a former MCI radio tower on Oswald Dome and another tower at Crown Colony. The total cost for the infrastructure is \$500,000. A PSIC Grant would cover \$150,000, leaving a cost of \$350,000 which would be split with the county.

During reports from the council members, Council-

man Bill Estes proposed a resolution stating that the Cleveland City Council favors no change to the current law regarding the appointment of school directors. The resolution passed with a unanimous vote during the 4pm voting session.

Vice Mayor Avery Johnson reported that a lot of residents had contacted him with concerns about their utility rates. The residents were told that the reason for the increase was due to fuel prices. However, since the fuel prices have gone down, no adjustments have been made.

Johnson stated that it was beginning to have a lot of impact on people who have fixed incomes. City Mayor Tom Rowland stated that the increase was because of TVA's increase and Cleveland Utilities only passes that through, it does not increase its profit or what it holds to operate the company. Mayor Rowland said he did understand that TVA

was going to drop their rates, but on the other hand, they may have some expenses coming up from cleaning up some sludge in three locations. However Rowland insists that Cleveland Utilities isn't making more money than they were before, it is just a pass through on the rate TVA is charging. Vice Mayor Johnson requested that the information be passed along to the utility board to see if they can help.

Councilman David May asked for an update on the North Ocoee Street widening project. Crews will begin widening the section of North Ocoee Street from Sunset to Blueberry Hill. The state is going to provide milling material and do the paving as well. They hope to begin work this month.

The Council passed an ordinance authorizing Mayor Rowland to sign an agreement for Financial Advisor Services with Mor-

gan Keegan and Company, Inc. Councilman Richard Banks was concerned that the Council would be binding future Council members to a long term contract. The ordinance passed with Councilman George Poe, David May and Richard Banks voting no.

Janice Casteel was chosen to be the negotiator on behalf of the City of Cleveland in regards to the fire contract with a revision that consolidation be considered in the negotiation process with County Mayor D. Gary Davis. Councilman Estes recommended that consolidation be looked at as the primary topic during negotiation.

The Cleveland City Council meetings are open to the public each month at the Municipal Building. 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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