

Council at odds over raises

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — In keeping with Mayor Harvey Watson's "promise" of raises for two specific employees, his secretary and the municipal court clerk each received pay hikes Monday night.

Over the objections of Councilmen Sonny Kilgroe and Rickey Staples,

Rhonda Chapman, the mayor's secretary, received a pay hike which would bring her to 31.5 percent more than what she was making when she began work less than a year ago.

The Council unanimously granted Municipal Court Clerk Janet Poe a raise to \$6.25 per hour.

While Kilgroe and Staples had "no

comment" on their objections after the meeting, Kilgroe had earlier signed a recommendation for raises for four other City Hall workers who had been working for the city anywhere from three to 29 years longer than Mrs. Chapman.

The recommendation stated, "All (Con't., see Council, Page 5)

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of these ladies work together in answering the phone, making work orders, taking meter deposits and keeping records of them and the many and varied duties handled by the clerk's office."

In support of Mrs. Chapman and Mrs. Poe, though, Watson said that when he hired them he "promised" them a higher hourly rate "when they proved themselves."

In December, both women received 6 percent pay hikes along with all city employees.

THE SOURCE OF contention apparently centers on an employee singled out and given a raise two months after already receiving one while the rest of the city workers wait on yearly increases.

Records show Mrs. Chapman's starting pay at \$4.75 per hour. In December, she received the same increase as all other city employees,

from the hip."

KILGROE IS CHAIRMAN of the Finance Committee with Wheeler and Watson as members, and the other raises are expected to be discussed in committee.

In other matters, the Council and Mayor unanimously voted to grant themselves and past elected officials lifetime membership to the Civic Center.

Asked if it was legal for city officials to vote themselves a benefit while in office, Watson said, "I don't think about that" before making the recommendation.

According to the Code of Alabama, The fees, salary, compensation or emoluments of" elected officials shall not be increased . . . during the term for which he shall have been elected . . . and no gratuitous appropriation in any case shall be

making her hourly wage \$5.04.

With Monday night's action, she makes more than an employee in the clerk's office with four years on the job. She also will be making just 25 cents less than another clerk's office employee with 11 years on the job.

Councilman Roy Holladay said that compared with executive secretary wages in other cities, her salary is "way below."

He added that he was "in favor of those particular two people (Mrs. Chapman and Mrs. Poe)" receiving raises.

With Councilman James McGowan's second on Holladay's motion to grant the raises, it passed on a 4-2 vote. Kilgroe and Staples voted "no."

As for raises involving the four employees of the clerk's office, the matter was tabled after Councilman Joe Wheeler asked if it was a committee recommendation or

made to or for the benefit of any officer or employee in addition to his salary."

The cost of a Civic Center membership for all past and present elected officials and their immediate families would amount to \$50 a year for each family.

In other business, the Council:

— Agreed to take under advisement a request by the Pell City High Band Boosters for a donation to its band uniform fund;

— Accepted the apparent low bid by Pell City Ford Lincoln Mercury for a dump truck contingent upon committee approval;

— Tabled acceptance of bids for two police cars and a half ton truck until a comparison is made with state bid prices;

— Agreed to extend the city limits to include property owned by Knox Wade with Staples casting the sole dissenting vote;

— Adopted an ordinance establishing weight limits on city streets.

Mayor Watson responds to pay raise terminology

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — In response to Monday night's Council action that elevated the salaries of the mayor's secretary and municipal court clerk, Mayor Harvey Watson said the action should not be called a raise.

"It was not a raise, it was a switch to a permanent position," Watson said.

Rhonda Chapman, the mayor's secretary, and Municipal Court Clerk Janet Poe were both hired on a "temporary basis with temporary pay to see if they panned out," he said.

When they completed their probationary period, he explained, "they were hired in at \$6.25 per hour, the standard base pay for these positions."

He noted that the base pay for those two positions was established by former City Administrator Con Coupland.

"Con established the base pay when he was here because he was more familiar with it. Roy (Councilman Holladay) called several

cities" and found that Pell City's proposed rate for an executive secretary was much less.

While Mrs. Poe's new salary was uncontested, Councilmen Rickey Staples and Sonny Kilgroe cast "no" votes on Mrs. Chapman's hike in pay.

A recommendation signed by Kilgroe and City Clerk Bettie Scott asked for raises for the four clerk's office employees with years of service ranging from four to 30 years.

The mayor noted that his secretary's position is "more than just an ordinary clerk's job. She has the responsibility for a lot of things handled here in this office. It's not a routine clerical job—the same thing over and over again."

Mrs. Poe, too, has a "tremendous amount of responsibility," handling warrants and serving in court until late at night, Watson said.

There should be no comparison between those two positions and clerks and radio dispatchers, who may have had more time on the job yet make less money, he said. "They're two entirely different classifications."

City employees' jobs still in limbo

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — Although city employees here have been re-hired, there's still no word on the permanent status of their jobs, Mayor Harvey Watson said Monday night.

When the new Council and mayor took office Oct. 1, the group re-hired all city employees "temporarily" until evaluations are completed.

One of the first requirements of a new administration is to re-hire its employees for the length of the term.

The Council, however, opted to re-hire them temporarily until it had a chance to determine whether or not any changes in personnel need to be made.

Watson had earlier commented that since this is the beginning of a completely new administration, now is the best time to make changes if desired.

He had also said that he expected evaluations to be completed by Monday night's meeting.

Mayor Watson opened the meeting, saying that he realized people probably "expect things that are not on the agenda (tonight)."

He explained that since taking office, the new administration had "a multitude of things we've had to do." He asked that everyone "bear with us during this evaluation period."

The mayor added that the past few weeks have been spent getting acquainted with city business and evaluating the various departments, agencies and boards.

When the evaluations are completed, "we can get on to the normal, everyday business of running the city," Watson said.

One employee, though, was re-hired for another four years. Filling a legal requirement, the Council re-hired Bettie Scott as city clerk and treasurer.

Mayor Watson would not comment on the status of any other jobs.

In other business, the Council accepted the low bid by Pell City Ford-Lincoln Mercury for two police cars at a total cost of \$21,522.

The Council had also received a lower bid from the state, which was about \$500 less than the Pell City Ford bid.

However, the Council opted to "throw out" the state bid in favor of the local bidder, an option which is legally open to the city.

In other financial matters, the Council heard a request by Margaret Mongold for an increase in the city's appropriation to the library.

Budgeted tentatively is a \$1,250 appropriation per month, up from the \$1,000 allotment given each month last year.

Mrs. Mongold noted that the library is a source of recreation and education, yet it is not included in either budget.

She said the library has long been a "neglected area" and urged stronger support because "a good library encourages growth."

Councilman Sonny Kilgroe

assured her that the Council would give the request "due consideration," and the final say would come when the official budget is adopted.

Watson added that the Council must look at the overall budget picture before it could determine any appropriation and then "distribute it (funding) in a way so we don't go in the red."

In another increased funding request, Mayor Watson recommended that the Health Department's appropriation be increased by \$500. The Health Department is currently receiving \$2,000.

On road business, Watson said that as soon as the Council has "sufficient finances," it intends to continue blacktopping of city streets on a priority basis.

He added that if weather permits, crews will be involved in a project of unstopping pipes and cleaning ditches to make improvements throughout the city.

In other action, the Council:

— Appointed Councilman James McGowan as the Council's representative on the Planning Commission;

— Appointed Mayor Watson as the city's representative on the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission;

— Appointed Eugene E. Morris to the Industrial Development Board to fill the vacancy left by resigning member, Marlin Huggins.

Meter request turned down

A request for an ordinance requiring taxi meters and a request for property to be included in the city limits were the main topics of business at the Monday night meeting of the Pell City City Council.

James McGuire earlier asked the council to make it mandatory for city taxi companies to install meters in cars. However, Councilman Forest Walls said the judiciary committee of which he heads, decided there "was not enough business in town to warrant the installing of meters."

Walls also added since the council had not heard of any complaints on the cab service, the council felt the matter could best be handled by the business owners themselves.

The group assured McGuire he could install the meters in cars if he so desired, but that "making it mandatory would simply run the other guy out of business." The only other service in Pell City, St. Clair Taxi, is owned by J. T. Webster.

In other business, the council heard a request from Charles Abbott. Abbott wants his property,

located on Hwy. 34, to be included in the city limits. The request was turned over to City Administrator Con Coupland, who is currently working on another similar request.

Walter Spitzorm asked the council to adopt a sliding scale for building permit fees. However, Councilman Barnett Lawley asked for the decision to be put off until further study could be made.

Finally, the group approved the purchase of advertising in an Alabam International Motor Speedway program, totaling \$215.00.

Fate of park hinges on county's support

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — The fate of the Pell City-St. Clair County Park, a means of recreational development of lakeside property, now apparently hinges on the support of the county commission, the city council learned Monday night.

Bids opened on the first two phases exceeded the amount anticipated by approximately \$87,000, which would mean an additional share by the city and county of \$21,779 each.

The joint venture by the county, city and Soil Conservation Service was to be shared on a 25-25 percent basis by the city and county while the Soil Conservation Service shouldered the other 50 percent of the cost.

The anticipated cost of the project to the county and city before bids were opened was an additional \$40,000 higher than the original estimate, but officials were able to secure the needed funding from state sources in addition to funds already earmarked for the project.

With another \$21,000 each tacked

onto the price of the project, local officials were faced with another decision — whether or not to call a halt to the project or proceed by providing additional funding.

The council indicated Monday night that it was in favor of proceeding with the development in that area and were awaiting word from Commission Chairman Shirley Satterfield on the commission's support or non-support.

Satterfield said Tuesday that although he was in favor of proceeding with the project, it would take a majority vote of the commission to approve the additional funding.

He added that when the commission meets in special session this week to review the new fiscal budget, the county's share of the park project will be considered at that time.

Another matter that was tabled was an ordinance proposal which would provide law enforcement authority in private parking areas such as the Pell City Plaza, which has been a source of complaints due to loitering in that area.

The council was presented with a copy of a similar Birmingham ordinance, and the council agreed to turn the matter over to the judiciary committee and the city attorney.

In other business, the council:

— Accepted the police chief's recommendation to erect street lights at Hickory Road and Circle Drive and the dead end at Ridgeway Road;

— Indicated to Bill Taylor of the South St. Clair Rescue Squad that although the council could not authorize the squad's Oct. 8 roadblock on a state right of way, it did not object to the holding of that fund raiser.

Mayor discusses accomplishments

BY KELLY BRYAN
News-Aegis Writer

Pell City Mayor Hugh H. Williamson talked about strides made over the past

year in the St. Clair County city at 1984's first Greater Pell City Chamber of Commerce dinner meeting.

One progressive move by Pell City, Williamson

noted, was the sewerage treatment plant. "That was one of our biggest problems last year, what with the announced hike of the rates. We on the city council faced criticism and pressure, but because we were able to weather that, we are now a step ahead of many of our neighboring communities," explained Williamson.

Other cities are just now beginning to experience the problems Pell City put under its belt a year ago in the utility area, added Williamson. The fact that Pell City began earlier on its sewerage problem also entitled it to one of the last Environmental Protection Agency sponsored grants, which kicked in 75 percent.

Williamson pointed out other bright spots, including education in Pell City. "Our kids did well on their basic competency tests," said Williamson. "I truly believe the Pell City School system will be among the best, if not the best, in the state in 10 years," he added.

Industrial growth was

also a part of Williamson's "State of the City" talk. "I think we have a jewel in the new industry, Sandy Hill," he said. "And, we welcome the construction of the new Food World on Hwy. 231 N.," said Williamson, who added, "I think a new shopping center will also be developed soon."

Grants have played a part in Pell City's growth over 1983. Williamson listed the \$316,000 coming the city's way for the sewer work in the Glen City area. With the completion of the Dye Creek work, Pell City will be in the new position of being able to add new customers onto its system.

All the incoming monies have not been earmarked and used for utilities, however, Williamson said the recreational offerings of the city will be improved. He talked of additional softball fields to be completed in the park complex.

"The city-county park, which is supplemented by some funds from the U.S. Soil Conservation office, is

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now underway, also," said Williamson.

Departments within the inner-workings of the city that Williamson chose to mention included the police department and the fire department. "Our police department has just initiated a new program, TIP, to help encourage people to get involved with law enforcement," said Williamson.

"And, our fire department is something that I like to brag about. The men have been working to establish a training center which will mean our workers will be the best-trained firefighters in any city our size in the U.S.," he added.

Applause came when Williamson told of work to set up a traffic light at Pell City Plaza.

But, the main problem Williamson told the large crowd about centered on needed roadwork. "Rapid deterioration of our streets in this city show the need for a resurfacing program to be started soon. Right now, 300,000 square yards of road need work. At a cost of \$1.50 to \$3, we are talking about a total cost of \$450,000 to \$900,000 needed. And, that is just really scratching the surface."

Other problems the city

fathers are still working to solve the erosion situation at Bellview Subdivision.

Williamson did chose to end on a bright note with

the statement, "Our city is financially sound. And, I hope we can do some things in the future that we have all wanted for Pell City."

PRIDE pushes for removal of 'eyesores'

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — The Project PRIDE Council took last week's resolution to "eliminate or remedy" two specific eyesores in the city a step further Monday night as it requested the support of the city council and received a positive response from city fathers.

PRIDE Chairman Dick Whatley presented the council with a resolution calling for "immediate action" concerning the building located at 1516 Cogswell Ave., which is "dilapidated and in violation of" city ordinances.

The resolution also pushed for the end to a "perpetual yard sale" at 1715 Cogswell Ave., which was termed "unsightly and constitutes a public nuisance." It too, the resolution stated, is in violation of city ordinances.

Whatley cited the specifics of the

ordinances which provide a legal vehicle to solve the problems, and the council indicated it would meet with those property owners to remedy the situation.

In other business, the council:

— Referred a budget request by Dr. Layton B. Dorman, executive director of the Jefferson-Blount-St. Clair Mental Health-Mental Retardation Authority, to the finance committee;

— Learned that the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board had rescinded the action to remove a 10 percent discount of wholesale purchases by privately owned liquor stores at state owned liquor stores, an action the council wanted rescinded;

— Referred to the Industrial Development Board an offer by Johnny Smith to pay the city \$.50 per

load for dirt removed from the sewer treatment plant site;

— Tabled a request by the South St. Clair Rescue Squad to hold a road block on Comer Avenue and 19th Street;

— Approved a retail table wine application for Thrift In;

— Approved a loading zone on 21st Street North near Robinson TV;

— Reported that Dixon Roofing Co. had the low bid for the new city hall roof at a cost of \$6,400, and Harold Jones had the low bid on repair of the air conditioning unit at the Civic Center at a cost of \$2,803;

— Heard a written request by Pam Huff and James Spann of WVTM-TV for local stories to be aired on "13 Country," a program designed to stress positive facts about Alabama.

Eden resident complains about dogs running loose

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — "Doggone" was the main order of business Monday night as Bobbie Stevens of Eden appeared before the City Council to request that all dogs running loose in her neighborhood be removed immediately.

Mrs. Stevens told the council that dogs were running rampant across her property and demanded that something be done about the problem.

Her solution thus far, she said, was filling her rifle with "rat shot" and firing at them until "Bo Jack (Police Chief Homer Layton) said he'd arrest me."

Mrs. Stevens said her alternate solution was throwing rocks at them, but when it was time to pick the rocks up to mow the lawn, she decided against the idea.

"We're having revival at the church, but these dogs have almost made me lose my religion," she said.

Council members told Mrs. Stevens they would begin strict enforcement of "picking up" dogs running loose

regardless of whether they are wearing collars.

In gas related matters, Councilman Keith Porter informed the council that engineer Bill Bright is studying the city's gas system alternatives and will be ready to submit a letter of his findings at the next meeting.

The council also authorized Mayor Hugh H. Williamson to write a letter to a Bessemer based company informing it that the city can provide gas to the company on an interruptible basis.

The Industrial Development Board has been negotiating with the company for the past three years to locate in the area.

Attorney Brad Wash, representing Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Myers, voiced opposition to the curb market located across the street from New Hope Baptist Church.

He cited city zoning regulations that the area was to be used for agricultural and livestock production, and not for retail sale of fruits and produce.

City Attorney Bill Church said the owners of the stand, Mr. and Mrs. Funderburg, could conceivably "tear it down, build a barn and raise cows. I think the curb market is the least obnoxious of the two."

Church suggested that the council table the request to remove it until the next meeting, allowing him time to study the matter and see what position the city needs to take in it.

In other business, the council:

—Accepted a lift station located in Shadydale Trailer Park as city property and agreed to maintain it;

—Approved zoning map changes of R-1 section on Comer Avenue to B-1 and the M-2 section of Bellview Subdivision to R-4;

—Agreed to a portion of Big Rock Road remaining private with no responsibility for maintaining it by the city;

—Accepted Councilman Charles Lockridge's proposal that bids for alterations to the police department be opened at the next meeting.

In Pell City

No more carnivals

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

It appears there will be no more carnivals in town if members of the Pell City council follow through with their discussions of Monday night following complaints.

The issue was brought to council's attention by Councilman Charles Lockridge who described some of the activities at last week's carnival as "plain out gambling."

"They don't play for prizes. It's plain out gambling. I want to go on record that the city not have carnivals in Pell City anymore," Lockridge told council. Councilman Paul Turner concurred, "I was opposed to it. I'm opposed to them every year."

One source of special concern was a gun incident last weekend when a carnival worker, Bobby J. Strong, 49, 316 1st Street, Warner Robbins, Georgia, was arrested for pulling a shotgun on Pell City Police Officer Don Davis.

Strong was arrested and charged with reckless endangerment and later released under a \$200 cash bond after police responded to a disturbance complaint at the carnival, according to Assistant Police Chief Ed Pennington.

Police Chief Homer 'Bojack' Layton told council he had received a large number of complaints and Mayor Hugh Williamson also told council he had received complaints, a large number of them about noise.

Besides the shotgun incident, police were called to a family dispute among carnival workers and also answered noise complaints.

Councilman Forest Walls reminded council members that the issue had been discussed on different occasions in the past and "I thought we had agreed that only rides would be allowed."

Lockridge stated that he would be in favor of a rides only-type carnival for children but stated last week's carnival "just took money out of Pell City," from a lot of people who could not afford it, he added.

Carnivals in the past have been a popular source for fund-raising by local civic groups and clubs and last week's carnival was sponsored by the Pell City Jaycees.

Council also voted not to sell property owned by the city to a developer for the construction of a subdivision on Country Club Road. The property is part of a parcel on which the new sewage treatment plant will be built and was sought

by an out-of-town developer for a government-financed subdivision.

The action was taken on a motion filed by Turner who stated the city could use the land for industrial development in the future.

In other business, council:

—HEARD a report from Walls concerning dog complaints and was informed that the city's dog catcher truck would be back in service soon. Walls also reported that the city's women independent softball league starts action Thursday night.

—HEARD a inquiry from Councilman Keith Porter concerning the formulation of a new business license schedule. Porter suggested council contact the Greater Pell City Chamber of Commerce office to learn the progress of a committee of businessmen who have been appointed as advisors on the schedule.

—APPROVED a motion that all right-of-ways be secured or condemnation proceedings be filed by June 10 for the new sewage treatment plant facility. Porter reported that there remains nine property owners who have not

(See Carnivals page 2A)

signed right-of-way requests.

—HEARD a request from Turner that the city begin work on next year's budget and that a study be conducted to remove obstructions on city sidewalks, specifically on U. S. 231 from Iola Roberts School to downtown.

—APPROVED a resolution from Councilman Barnett Lawley expressing sympathy to the Dick Black family in the loss of that Pell City businessman

—OPENED bids for the construction of a new concession stand at the ballfields behind the Civic Center. Submitting bids were Reinhardt and Ward Construction, Cospers Construction, C. D. Wilson and Sons and Bell Construction. State law requires a state contractors license for all work with public

funds involved over \$20,000.

The company submitting the lowest bid, however, does not currently hold a

state license and has requested an attorney's opinion on the law. Bids ranged from \$42,500 to \$38,950.

Charge

Continued from page 1)

alleged incident or if it had, indeed, occurred.

Under further questioning by Assistant District Attorney Talmadge Fambrough, who told the child, "Are you sure? You've got to be sure," she repeated she may have dreamed the incident.

When the state rested its case, Hanes

made a motion to exclude the state's evidence because it did not meet the requirements of the law and added, "You just can't let this case go to the jury."

The apparent change in testimony from the child apparently caught the state off-guard and NeSmith agreed with defense attorneys that there was no evidence showing an incident outlined in the charge occurred. He then dismissed the case.

Rate increase approved

PC council hears gas system report

MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

A Birmingham firm conducting a feasibility study on the city's natural gas system and two representatives from Southern Natural Gas Corporation filed reports with the Pell City city council Monday night.

Council also approved an approximate 10 percent rate increase for gas customers, handing down the annual summer rate increase from the gas company.

Dennis Self and Les Culpepper, customers representatives from Southern Natural Gas, explained a proposal that calls for the uniting on paper of the city's three gas divisions which would allow some sections of the city increase gas usage when the set quotas of other areas are not used.

This action, if approved, would allow for the availability of additional gas for industrial use. Council is expected to study the proposal at a special meeting set for next Monday night.

Currently the city is divided into three delivery points which are being treated as separate departments within the city's gas system.

These divisions are in the major Pell City area, Eden and Oakridge areas. Each station is on a maximum quota system and if gas usage rises above the quota, the city's system is penalized by the gas company.

Recent studies revealed that at times certain areas in the city are not using their maximum quota. By joining the three stations under one title, on paper, the maximum quota from the gas company would be for the entire city and not each separate division or station.

This would make available for the industrial park, more gas service without penalty. The city will consult an

Also appearing before council was Mike Cochran of First Birmingham Securities, a consulting firm which recently completed a study of the city's system. His report was filed this week with the city.

These two reports were accompanied by a report from Ed Ash concerning the possible attraction of a new industry (possibly two) for the Pell City area. Ash requested a special meeting with the industrial board and council next Monday night to discuss action on attracting the industry to Pell City.

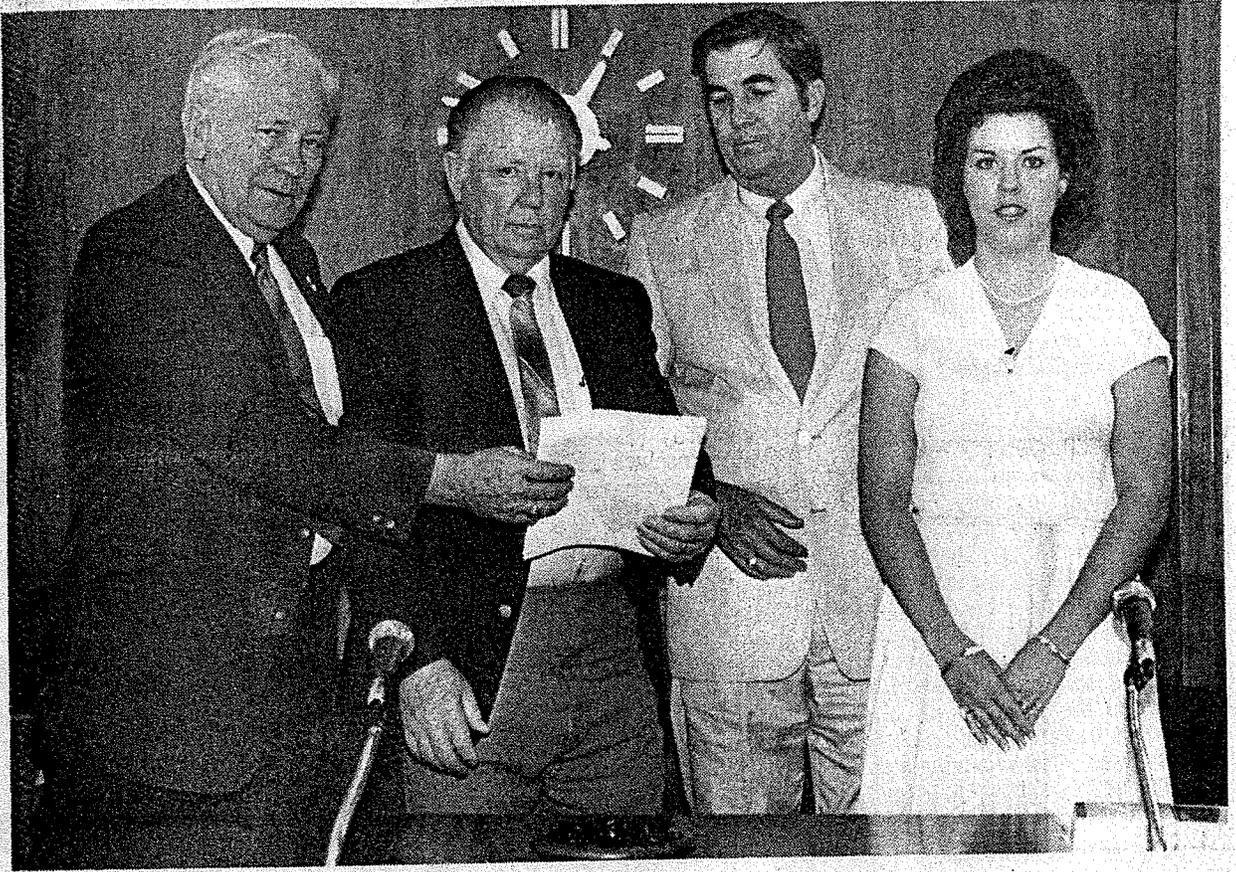
In other business, council:

—APPROVED returning a ten foot right-of-way to a private citizen in connection with an abandoned road on request of Gloria Roberson in the Cropwell community.

—TABLED action on a request by members of the Church of God to close a street with council requesting a petition signed by affected property owners.

—APPROVED a Monday night meeting to appoint an ad hoc school board consisting of five members to study for one year the feasibility of a city school district. The ad hoc board will employ Dr. S. D. Whetstone at \$550 per month as a consultant with a final report expected February 1, 1982.

—TABLED a lounge retail liquor license for Brothers Four Motel on request of James Quick.



Rushton delivers check

Bill Rushton, the director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, brought a check for \$215,000 to Pell City this week. The economic development block grant monies will be used by the city to construct a 1,500 foot rail spur to serve the site of Benjamin Moore's new plant and will allow future in-

dustry prospects to count on rail as a viable method of transportation. Rushton also reported on the progress of a grant applied for by the Town of Ragland for road work. Pictured from left are Rep. A. J. Blake, Pell City Mayor Harvey Watson, Rushton, and Mrs. Bart Arnold of Ragland.

Pell City to get hand cart plant

A California-based manufacturer of hand carts will begin building this month a 16,000-square-foot plant on a seven-acre site in Pell City.

Anthony Welded Products Inc. of El Segundo, Calif., said its Pell City plant should begin operations by the end of February and initially will employ 10 people.

The plant will be built in the Pell City Industrial Park off Interstate 20, according to the Metropolitan Development Board.

Founded in 1958, the company produces a multiple line of carts for transporting oxygen cylinders used in health care facilities and for welding, said

Gino Ferrare, company controller.

Besides El Segundo, the company operates plants in Houston, Texas, and New Castle, Pa., where the number of employees average about 10 per plant, Ferrare said Thursday.

The company decided to build in Pell City because it wants to supply service welding supply distributors and dealers of medical home care equipment in the Southeast, Ferrare said.

Whitehurst-Lassen Construction Co. is the general contractor for the plant. Ash Realty of Pell City handled the sale of the site, and Union State Bank of Pell City provided the financing, according to MDB.

Starting May 1

PC to enforce new building procedures

Notice is hereby given to all Contractors and those applying for a Building Permit that, effective on the First day of May, 1981, the Code of Ordinances, City of Pell City, Alabama, relating to new building construction, alterations and additions to existing buildings will be fully implemented.

Any building permits issued and dated prior to the effective date of this program where such construction has not yet started, shall be exempt from the requirements outlined in this notice.

Included in such implementation will be the filing of an application with the City Clerk for a Building permit together with one set of plans of the proposed construction. These plans shall include a survey of the property showing property dimensions, location of the building on the property with distances to lines, location of flood easements, etc.

The plans will be examined by the Building Inspector to insure that the requirements of the Southern Building

Code, and all other codes and ordinances have been met. Applicants should allow a minimum of one week for such plans inspection. Upon approval, a Building permit will be issued.

At the time of application for a Building permit, the permit fee shall be paid to the City Clerk. The fee to be paid will be based on the following schedule:

Up to \$15,000 per thousand, \$3.00; All over \$15,000 per thousand, \$2.00.

The original Building permit issued shall be posted at the construction site.

The Building Inspector will make a minimum of three inspections of the construction during progress of the work to determine that the work is being performed in accordance with the plans.

Walter F. Spitzform has been designated by the City as the Administrative Officer (Building Inspector) and will be available to answer any questions that may arise. He may be reached at 525-5285.

Pell City Council to consider vacating alley for restaurant

BY MIXE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

At the request of a city landowner and a prospective new business, Pell City Council will hold a special meeting next Monday night to take action on a request to vacate an alley-way which will pave the way for a new restaurant.

Councilmembers Monday night heard a presentation from the management of Jack's Hamburgers, the Birmingham-based fast food chain that desires to open a new restaurant in Pell City by July.

A spokesman for the company told council the new restaurant will employ between 25 and 30 employees and expects to do an estimated \$600,000 volume of business the first year.

Bill Gray appeared before council with the company representatives and presented a petition asking the city to vacate an alley which was declared to

be city property following a lengthy court battle.

Council was informed by city attorney Billy Church that landowners whose property is adjacent to the alley in question would have to be given sufficient notice and a public hearing held before action could be taken in favor of the request.

Council was in agreement to hold that hearing next Monday night, May 4, at 5 p.m. in the council chambers at city hall.

The location of the prospective new business will be on property between The Gas Pump and Bzd's Menswear on U. S. 231.

The 20-year old hamburger chain now

has 65 stores in five Southern states and features both drive-in windows as well as indoor seating, which the Pell City store will feature upon approval of council. The menu has also since been expanded to a variety of sandwiches and a chicken product.

The company spokesman told council that the chain would like to start construction work within a week of council approval and an opening date of July is hoped for by Jack's.

"We need the jobs so bad that I would be willing to come back next Monday night," Councilman Charles Lockridge stated and Councilman Barnett Lawley concurred, making the motion that the

(See RESTAURANT Page 2A)

hearing be held.

Council also received a visit from Charles Fields of a Boaz construction company that is expressing interest in city property in which to locate an FHA funded housing subdivision similar to the one the company recently completed near Shadydale Trailer Park.

Mayor Hugh Williamson asked for time to study the property description and Fields' offer of \$2500 per acre for the 12 acres he desires, which is located on Country Club Road in the city.

In other business, council:

—APPROVED a request from the local chapter of the United Cerebral Palsy to conduct a roadblock August 8 and 9 in the city.

—APPROVED ad valorem tax

refunds to six citizens on petition for duplication, over-payment or by mistake.

—APPROVED request for installation of street lights for Woodmont (two) and Catatoga Estates (four).

—APPROVED the reappointment of Ardis Weems to the Jefferson-Blount-St. Clair Mental Health board.

—HEARD a report on the status of the city's new sewage treatment plant from engineer Charles Tucker who noted that the city would be involved in an estimated five condemnation cases to secure right-of-way for the sewer lines.

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—APPROVED the fee for real estate license of a flat rate per company and \$50 per agent to be effective May 1.

City hires building, zoning inspector

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

The need for a city building inspector has been discussed by city council members on a number of occasions and Monday night council unanimously approved the employment of Walter Spitzform to fill the position on a part-time basis.

The St. Clair Shores resident who has lived in the Pell City area for a number of years was hired to enforce building and zoning codes at a rate of \$200 per month for 20 hours work and \$10.00 an hour for any additional time over the first 20.

Spitzform is a retired designer and assured council he would be able to do the required work within the 20 hours per month until the building industry gets back on its feet.

In a related matter, building permit fees which were approved some time ago but have not been enforced will go into effect May 1. The increases will be published in the News-Aegis between now and the effective date.

In other business, council:

-REQUESTED that water and gas superintendent James Tyus check a roof leak in council chambers and make a report on the problem.

-APPROVED the installation of a street light on the Truss Ferry Road near the Pat Harris residence.

-HEARD a report from Mayor Hugh Williamson concerning inquiries into the purchase of buildings on city property which will be the future site of the sewage treatment plant. The city may be required to take bids on the buildings.

-DISCUSSED selling property

across the street from the proposed site of the new sewage treatment plant to a firm which will develop a subdivision in the area. The city purchased land in three parcels and the property in question will not be used for the new plant. There is some question as to whether the industrial board has an option on the land and a report will be made at the next council meeting.

-HEARD a request from Councilman Keith Porter that signs be installed in key locations on the outskirts of the city warning of the possible fine upon conviction for littering. The signs will be installed, no action required by council.

-HEARD a report from Councilman Forest Walls concerning the upcoming softball league schedule and registration which will be released this week. Plans for construction of a new concession stand and press box will be ready by next week, Walls reported.

-HEARD a report on the upcoming Greater Pell City Chamber of Commerce meeting which will be held at the Riverside Holiday Inn Tuesday night at 7 p.m. Student essays will be read on "What I would do the change Pell City."

-HEARD a request from Councilman Charles Lockridge that a drainage problem on 30th Street North be corrected. Lockridge referred to the problem as dangerous and a health problem and stated, "We've promised to fix it every election."

-APPROVED the repealing of a zoning code that restricted the keeping of livestock inside the city limits and conflicted with a city ordinance which council felt addressed the question correctly.

Pell City gas system study by Birmingham firm approved

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

The Pell City council Monday night approved a study of the city's gas system by a Birmingham firm which will report within six weeks a recommendation for improving the city's investment in the system.

Jordsan Brooks and James Holbrooks Jr. of First Birmingham Securities appeared before council and presented the study proposal at no obligation to the city.

Councilman Keith Porte, commissioner of the city's water and gas departments, told council that the firm had performed for the city in the past and recommended the city participate in the study.

He added that "If we don't like the rates or the proposals they offer," the city would not be under obligation to follow through with the consultant firm's recommendations.

Holbrooks told council that initial studies revealed the system was suffering a nine to ten percent loss over and above the expected loss rate of gas systems.

The initial estimate to modernizing and repairing the system was placed at

\$500,000 by the firm and could result in an annual savings of \$120,000.

Council unanimously approved a detailed study of the system which will report three alternatives the city can consider after balancing the revenues and costs. The study is expected to result in a reorganization of the system.

The three alternatives are: 1). correct the problems which exist; 2). create a separate utilities board to take control of the system; 3). selling the system.

The city has considered selling the system in the past but did not receive an offer they were satisfied with.

Holbrooks told council his firm would employ four persons to work on the project and that the only costs to his firm would be if the city decided to use First Birmingham Securities in a future transaction.

In other business, council:

--APPROVED off-premise beer licenses for Hare's Service Station on request of Cecil Hare; Taylor Service Station on Alabama 34 on request of Mary E. Taylor; and Ann's Country Store on U.S. 78 on request of Brenda Taylor; but turned down a request from Wade Dorrough for Crystal USA citing the closeness of the high school.

--APPROVED installation of four

street lights in Belleview Subdivision.

--HEARD a request from the recreation department for temporary power to a temporary concession at the new ballfields behind the Civic Center.

--HEARD a request from Councilman Paul Turner for a study of the drainage problem at the Pell City Plaza Shopping Center on U.S. 231 to determine if the city has responsibility for alleviating the problem which occurs during heavy rains.

Medline Industries Expands in Pell City

PELL CITY--Medline Industries has completed construction on a 30,000 sq. ft. expansion of its facility here and production was scheduled to begin about June 1 according to **Mrs. Vesta Clowers**, general manager. A capital investment of approximately \$500,000 was required to complete the expansion.

The plant expansion was erected on three acres purchased in the Pell City Industrial Park. Mrs. Clowers said that approximately 75 or 80 jobs are expected to be created when full production is reached.

Medline Industries, whose corporate headquarters is located in Illinois, manufactures hospital garments and cubicle curtains. The Pell City plant was established in 1977.

The company's original facility contained 18,000 sq. ft. and with the expanded plant, now has 48,000 total sq. ft. The company's sewing operations will be expanded in the original facility and other operations will be moved to the new building.

Easements for plant near completion

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

The final steps towards obtaining all the required property easements for the new Pell City sewage treatment plant are being made this week and City Engineer Charles Tucker predicted the final paperwork for this phase of the project should be completed within a week.

Councilman Keith Porter reported to council Monday night that by the end of the week, all easements would be finalized which means all property owners will reach agreement with the city over installation of service lines or condemnation proceedings will be initiated.

Porter added, "I am optimistic that we can do this without condemnation," but reiterated that all necessary work would be completed this week.

Tucker was also at Monday night's council meeting and informed council when this phase was complete, it would take his firm a couple of days to prepare all the necessary papers to begin the next phase of the plant.

All easements or condemnation reports along with other required reports will be forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

in Atlanta.

Tucker went on to state that if all goes as planned, the city will accept bids sometime between August 15 and September 1. In other business, council heard from Thelma Hopkins who represented a group of homeowners who live in the Berkely Cove Road area that are requesting water service in their community.

Mrs. Hopkins presented council with a petition bearing the names of 35 homeowners in that community that desire water service and fire protection. She added that there were some residents the group failed to get in touch with and there were some new homes under construction.

Mayor Hugh Williamson told the group there were items to be considered in the request, especially noting that the Berkely Cove Road area is outside the city limits. The group pointed out that the new city well is also outside the city limits, however.

The area in question is close to two miles off Country Club Road. Williamson told the group he would turn the request over to the city limits expansion committee and the city engineer for a cost study and that the issue would be tabled for one month to allow all reports to be completed.

In other business, council:

—RECEIVED from the state an opinion on the requirement of a state general contractor's license for public funded projects over \$20,000. The opinion upheld that of the city attorney in that no bid from a contractor who does not hold a state license should be accepted. —APPROVED a zoning change on request by J. P. Morgan for property on U. S. 231 near Kings Circle from residential to business and tabled action on a second request. —APPROVED an off-premise beer and wine license on request from Barbara Nacon for the Farmers Market, located on U. S. 231 near the intersection of Hospital Drive. —TABLED action on a street light request on 19th Street at the entrance to Staples Trailer Court after a motion to install the light from Porter failed for lack of a second. —HEARD a request from Porter for consideration of city action, either in the form of a vote of confidence or financially, for the United Narcotics Detail Organization (UNDO). The issue will be placed on the next meeting's agenda.

For visitors

City adopts new agenda policy

Citizens of Pell City will have to do a little planning including requesting space on the agenda to appear before council with city-related business.

Council adopted the proposal of Mayor Hugh Williamson unanimously and in the future, persons not on the agenda will not be recognized during the council meeting.

Williamson told the News-Aegis that he had been considering placing city business on council nights on an agenda policy for "three or four months" and states he expects the operation of the city to be smoother at the benefit of both citizens and council.

The new policy simply states that citizens wishing to appear before council for any reason simply notify the city clerk on the Friday prior to the Monday night agenda with the business listed.

In the past, council simply took on issues from the general public the night of the meetings without any prior warning.

The new policy is expected to be of benefit to the citizens because council will have a chance to investigate complaints or requests instead of coming to the council table without prior knowledge of a citizens problem. Also, many problems that have been brought

before council could have been solved by members of the city staff.

All one needs to do to obtain a spot on the agenda is contact the city hall dur-

ing normal working hours. The policy is not designed to keep the public out of council meetings but to speed up and streamline the city's operation.

Thursday, October 9, 1980

ST. CLAIR NEWS-AEGIS

Pell City Council takes up pay raises

BY KELLY BRYAN
News-Aegis Writer

The Pell City Council managed to get through a meeting this Monday night without having to hear the word "garbage." Instead, the group took action on two personnel pay increases and an ordinance regulating weight limitations on all streets.

Mayor Harvey Watson explained two employees, Rhonda Chapman, Watson's executive secretary, and Janet Poe, court clerk were "promised salary increases when they were hired." Watson went on to express his dismay that the pay increases was included on the agenda for Monday night. "I did not place these on the agenda," said Watson. And, Councilman Rickey Staples answered, "Aren't all pay raises to come before the council?" Staples went on with, "I thought everybody had already gotten raises."

But, Watson explained, "These two employees were hired on a temporary salary until they proved themselves in their position; and as far as I am concerned, they have proved their abilities."

Councilman Sonny Kilgroe said he wanted to see the matter put off since he did not know the "legal standpoint" on the matter. But, Councilman Roy Holladay said he was aware that Chapman's salary was "way below" others throughout the state with the same title.

Chapman was hired April 22, 1985, on a temporary basis at an hourly wage of \$4.75. She was given permanent employee status in September, 1985. And, three months later, Chapman earned a six percent increase which was put into effect for all city employees by the council. So, her salary of \$5.04 was to be raised to \$6.25 an hour after 10 months of work, recommended Watson.

During that 10-months, Chapman took a week's vacation time that was paid, and she was off work for six weeks due to surgery. She received only one week's pay during that time, since she had not accumulated more than that in sick leave.

Holladay's motion to grant a pay increase to Chapman passed, but without the consent of Staples and Kilgroe.

There was obvious tension in the clerk's office this week. Looking over figures for the other employees in that department showed Chapman making more than Mollie O'Neal, who has been employed by the city for four years. And, a 10-year employee, Diane Wright, makes just a few cents more than Chapman's new rate.

Poe was hired on Feb. 8, 1985, at an hourly rate of \$5 for her services as municipal court clerk. Her salary increased to \$5.30 in December, 1985, when all personnel got a six-percent increase. The council unanimously granted Poe's increase to put her salary mark at \$6.25.

In other business, Watson introduced an ordinance on weight limitations with, "We have no means of controlling the residential areas as far as heavy traffic is concerned. Unless we have some sort of control, we're going to loose some of our city roads." The ordinance, which won unanimous approval, states, "No truck or other commercial vehicle exceeding 8,000 pounds gross vehicle weight per axle shall be permitted or operated upon any street within the city..."

A violation of this could mean a misdemeanor conviction and fine of not less than \$25 nor more than \$500.

Watson added he had hoped for more technical language and more stringent regulations to be included in the ordinance, as drafted by attorneys, but "at least this is a start, and we can amend it as we see fit."

Childersburg Council

By LYNNE HAYNES

CHILDERSBURG — The City Council Monday night balked at proposals which, beginning in October, would have slashed the salaries of Childersburg elected officials by as much as one-third.

Two versions of Ordinance 862, each one proposing a different pay cut, never reached votes during the Council meeting.

Councilman Jimmy Roberson on Feb. 1 submitted an ordinance to the Council which would have cut the mayor's pay from \$700 to \$600 per month and the councilmen's salaries from \$300 to \$250 monthly.

The Council held its first reading of the ordinance in the Feb. 1 meeting, and Roberson made a motion Monday night to enact the ordinance. No one would second the motion, however, and it died without vote.

When Roberson submitted the proposal two weeks ago, Councilman Robert Harris suggested doubling the proposed cuts. The Council, however, never conducted a first reading of the ordinance with the amendments, and on Monday none of the councilmen would make a motion to consider the amended version on its first reading.

Mayor B.J. Meeks then relinquished his seat as Council chairman to Councilman Pro Tem Royce Warren and made a motion to consider the amended ordinance on its first reading, which would have cut

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fails to lower salaries

State law requires that any such salary adjustments for elected officials be completed six months before the election, making the deadline this year Feb. 23. It is not likely that the Council would hold a called

but has not yet voted on the issue.

The Council did vote 6-0 Monday authorizing the mayor to execute a loan agreement to finance the purchase of a new ambulance.

On Nov. 31 the Council voted to

Administrator Frank E. Humber to a workshop in Montgomery concerning 1988 application procedures for Community Development Block Grants.

City vehicles returned to department assistants

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — Mayor Harvey Watson informed department heads Thursday that the procedure governing the use of city vehicles would return to its status of 11 months ago — everyone who had a car then, has one now.

“That’s what I’ve been for all the time,” said Watson.

The mayor had contested the September 1985 Council action that prompted the taking away of city vehicles from assistants.

During Monday’s Council meeting, Councilman Roy Holladay did an apparent about face from his

stand in September.

He and the rest of the Council — Rickey Staples, Sonny Kilgroe, James McGowan and Joe Wheeler — had voted in September to restrict the use of city vehicles to department heads and others designated by the Council.

However, no one had been designated other than department heads and the detective, according to the official minutes of that meeting.

All five, including Holladay, had apparently intended that assistants would lose the privilege of using a

(Con’t., see Vehicles, Page 3)

Vehicle

(Continued from Page 1)

city vehicle.

During a shouting match between Holladay and the mayor Monday, Holladay said he now interprets that motion as requiring no action by the mayor even though the mayor contends that Holladay and others “pressured” him into taking away vehicles.

The verbal warfare waged Monday night was prompted by one of the assistants informing Holladay his car had been taken away because Holladay voted for that motion.

Holladay blamed the whole incident on the mayor, accusing him of “closed door” decisions on who was to have a vehicle and who was not.

Pell City Council adopts budget

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — In regular session Monday night, the City Council adopted the fiscal year 1982 budget of \$2,265,038.

The council also agreed to take bids on interest in borrowing \$75,000 from a bank on a short-term basis to be used for cash flow until tax revenue is received.

Discussing the recent cutback in garbage pick-up to one day per week, councilmen stated they had several

complaints concerning the reduction.

The council agreed that more time was needed for the situation to improve, and the expected savings of the cutback is close to \$100,000 annually.

IN SETTING license fees for the city, the council accepted a recommendation for charging \$100 to sell fireworks within the city limits and \$50 within police jurisdiction.

The council also authorized Mayor Hugh Williamson to obtain information

from a local certified public accountant on fees for business licenses to present at the next meeting.

A request to aid in transportation expenses for senior citizens meeting at the Hilltop Recreation Center five days a week was approved at a cost of not more than \$200 per month.

Insurance agent Darryl Parker appeared before the council to request permission to approach city employees concerning additional life insurance coverage with the premium being deducted by the city.

The council agreed to Parker's proposal provided that at least half of the city's personnel agreed to the plan.

IN OTHER business, the council:

—Announced that the city now has a full-time dog catcher;

—Heard Williamson commend Councilman Barnett Lawley, Fire Chief Ben Windsor and Pell City Fire and Rescue members for their part in getting the fire rating lowered two points recently;

—Heard Lawley comment that with the new fire rating the department now needs one captain for each of the three shifts. The department presently has two captains.

Committee selected to study Pell City license fee schedule

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

A committee of Pell City businessmen met Monday night with council to study the present business license schedule and make proposals for a new schedule.

Mayor Hugh Williamson and members of council told the group of businessmen the city was not necessarily looking for large increases in license fees but hopes to adjust the fees in some areas and increase other fees.

"We're not looking for any big increase in licenses," said Councilman Charles Lockridge. Williamson added that the schedule had not been changed during the past seven years and it was time to make some appropriate adjustments.

"We've gone through seven years of single digit and double digit inflation and there are some inequities in the schedule that need to be corrected," Williamson added.

Businessmen attending the meeting

included J. D. Abbott, Ed Ash, Dick Ely, Ken Goodman, Bob Hall, Charles Hamilton, Leon Moore, James Perry, Emory Vaughan and Harold Vaughan.

Councilman Keith Porter stated he felt council was in no position to take action during the special meeting Monday night. "If we don't do it right then I don't think we need to do it at all," said Porter.

Williamson concurred and added that if the deadline for paying license fees needed to be extended, "then we'll have to extend it." He added that council might have to meet in a special meeting between now and the end of the year to act on the new schedule.

Ed Ash told council, "Some of the merchants are concerned that what we have is not being enforced," and suggested council employ a license inspector who could also double as a building inspector. "A good man could collect enough to pay his salary," Ash added.

Lockridge, who serves as police commissioner, stated that plans were already underway to designate one

police officer to serve as an inspector but also stated that the general public could help catch persons conducting business in the city without a license by calling police at 884-3333.

Abbott recognized the need for license increases but urged council to consider independent businessmen who might be making only a small margin of profit. He added that he was in favor of a ceiling of fees.

Goodwin questioned whether an increase was necessary and suggested that the current license schedule was not equal, stating he did not believe professionals and banks and savings and loans were paying their fair share.

Lockridge noted that license fees were set by the state over financial institutions.

Chamber of Commerce president Dick Ely agreed to serve as chairman of the businessmen's committee and the group will hold meetings prior to making recommendations to the council.

In other business, council:

—APPROVED obtaining a loan against two certificates of deposit to aid the city through an end-of-the-year money crunch. Included will be \$90,000 to pay a contractor for installation of lights at the new ballfields behind the Civic Center in Cropwell, one-half of which will be reimbursed to the city.

—DISCUSSED some garbage rates and categories for mobile home parks.

—REQUESTED the police department to enforce the city ordinance requiring removal of doors or installation of locks on refrigerators stored outdoors.

—APPROVED spending of \$4,085.80 to add on four elderly citizens in the Glenn City community to the city sewer, monies coming from a housing rehabilitation project.

—REQUESTED the city attorney to obtain an attorney general's opinion on a conflict of interest question concerning indirect business with the city by city officials to clarify a legal point.

—HEARD a report from Councilman Paul Turner on appraisals of property for the right-of-way for sewer lines to the new, proposed sewage treatment plant. Turner, who is expecting the appraisals within the next two weeks, stated the 20-foot right-of-ways would cross some 40 to 50 separate pieces of property.

10 percent gas increase approved by council

By DAVID HAYNES

PELL CITY — The Pell City Council approved a 10 percent gas rate increase and gave a reluctant go-ahead for a Pell City-St. Clair County park project during its Monday meeting.

The council also heard a report from Birmingham Metropolitan Development Board president Jimmy Lee who told them that General Motors is considering locating a plant in the Birmingham metropolitan area.

If that does happen, St. Clair County would benefit from "satellite industries" which the plant would attract, Lee said.

During its Monday meeting, the council also authorized a four-year commitment to BMDB and agreed to continue using the present business license schedule.

The gas rate increase for residential and small commercial customers was approved because of a 10 percent increase from Pell City's supplier, Southern Natural Gas Co., which became effective Jan. 1.

However, the council rejected the recommendation of a consulting firm that industrial rates be increased by some 22 percent. That increase would

have affected Avondale Mills, the city's largest employer.

Instead, an increase of about 12 percent will be charged, from \$2.88 to \$3.25 per 1,000 cubic feet.

While discussing the natural gas rates, City Clerk Bettie Scott reported a 25 percent leakage over the past four months in the Eden area and an overall 12 percent loss to leakage during the past 12 months for the whole system.

After a lengthy discussion of the city's financial situation, council members approved a plan to go ahead with the first two phases of a Pell City — St. Clair County park project in the Cropwell area.

St. Clair County approved the plan in late 1980. It varies from the original plan in that the city will do both of the first two phases rather than only phase two. Originally, the county was to complete phase one.

In presenting the plan, Williamson explained that the county and city would each end up paying 25 percent, with the remaining 50 percent coming from Soil and Conservation Service funds.

He said the timetable for completion

of the project would be flexible and wouldn't be a burden for city finances. The park is expected to cost about \$640,000, Williamson said.

In other action Monday, council members unanimously approved a four-year commitment to BMDB. In the past, the annual allocation has been \$2,000, but Monday's action committed \$3,000 annually to the board through 1985.

BMDB President Jimmy Lee described his board's purpose as economic development. "We're out here beating the bushes for jobs," he said.

Ed Ash, chairman of Pell City's Industrial Development Board, recommended the city continue its support of the BMDB, citing its assistance in locating industry here.

After some discussion, members agreed to investigate the cost of revamping the city's aging gas lines with plastic inserts.

Mayor Hugh Williamson suggested that funding for such a project might be included in an upcoming bond issue for a sewerage treatment plant.

Pell City Council to increase rates

By ANNE MILAM

PELL CITY — In the third informal planning session in two weeks, the City Council Monday night apparently settled on increasing water, sewer and garbage fees as the means to balance a \$51,000 deficit in the utilities budget for 1980-81.

To be proposed at next Monday night's regular meeting will be ordinances which would raise garbage collection fees from \$2 to \$3.50 per month, minimum water charges from \$3 to \$3.60 per month, set a minimum charge on garbage containers for businesses and raise sewer

rates by 30 cents per month.

In the two previous meetings, the council had determined that tightening up on city gasoline tax receipts from distributors, an expected increase in sales tax this year and an anticipated increase in fines and court costs from

(Con't. see Council, Page 4)

(Continued from Page 1)

municipal court should generate the revenue needed to balance the general accounts for this fiscal year.

The council had also previously discussed revising the city's business license schedule and cracking down on those businesses operating without licenses.

With the budget apparently balanced, the council informally approved across-the-board 10 percent raises retroactive to Oct. 1 for all city employees with more than six months on the job.

Discussing the proposed increases in charges for garbage, water and sewer, Mayor Hugh Williamson pointed out to the council that in 1977 electricity used for water cost \$27,139.58 while in 1979-80 the cost rose to \$55,000.

Electricity used for sewer was \$6,962 in 1977 and \$8,266 in 1979-80, he said.

Street light electricity was \$22,026 in 1977 and \$28,000 in 1979-80, Williamson added.

Other costs dictating an increase in

charges for services were cited as \$2,750 per month for landfill use as compared to \$1,200 per month in 1977, the cost of gasoline, trucks and labor.

Calling the increase in garbage service a "saving" rather than an increase, newly-elected councilman Barnett Lawley said, "I think you have done an admirable job keeping it down to \$2." Lawley added that the county charges \$5.

"If we had to get out of the garbage business, it would cost the residents at least \$5," Lawley said.

Councilman Charles Lockridge repeated his statements from the earlier meetings urging other members to cut equipment or anywhere else to stay within the proposed budgets and insure that the money is available to carry through the salary increases for city employees.

All council members agreed that copies of each department's budget would be discussed with that department's employees and strictly adhered to during the coming year.

Pell City budget shaping up after second workshop

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

Everything members of the Pell City Council looked at Wednesday night while working on this fiscal year's budget points upward. Costs of utilities, salaries, three upcoming natural gas increases over the next year, etc.

Everything but income. Wednesday night members of council decided it might be time to bite the bullet on some services and it was agreed that a committee should be named to study raising garbage collection fees and business licenses.

The later has not been increased in eight years and many members of council last Wednesday night believe that time and inflation have past by their old schedule.

In order to continue providing services that many suncilmen feel vital, council was faced Wednesday with finding nearly \$80,000 in additional income to meet the demands.

Of apparent priority among council this year is salary increases for city employees. "I think we should cut back

on equipment purchases if we have to cut back anywhere," said Councilman Charles Lockridge. "Our employees have got to eat."

That appeared to be the sentiments of other council members. Special notice was given to the fire department where firefighters are working more hours than other city employees, in most cases have more education in their field than other employees, and make less per hour than garbage truck drivers.

The strongest proposal to hit the table thus far was to bring the fire department pay scale in line with that of the police department even though firefighters work more hours. And while firefighters pay is being considering for this equalization, council is also attempting to employ enough police officers to put men on 40 hour shifts per week.

No formal action has been taken in any of the budget workshops and nothing is definite.

But one of the considerations for firefighters is the full 30 percent increase of salary which is needed to

bring about this equalization. The second consideration is to grant an increase across the board for all employees and add half of the

percentag difference between the two departments to the firefighters this year and half next year.

After council juggled, sliced, added and rearranged, the city's general accounts budget was balanced for all departments but the utilities.

However, council is going to study a proposal for renovating the city's gas system. If successful to the point of council's expectations, this work will save the city enough revenue to cover the current \$51,000 deficit in the proposed utility budget.

In order to do this work the city would have to borrow an estimated \$300,000 (exact amount is unknown at this time) but council also believes that the savings would, over the years, not only in lost gas but in repair fees, would pay this debt.

Tightening up on city gasoline tax receipts from distributors and other privilege license holders is also being recommended.

Council members will gather for round three next week in hopes that the budget will be finalized and ready to present at the next regular meeting. Council will also be holding a public hearing on the expenditures of federal revenue sharing in the next month.

Sunday, November 2, 1980

THE ST. CLAIR NEWS-AEGIS

Pell City Council nearer

By DAVID HAYNES

PELL CITY — City Council members, after three hours in a Wednesday budget meeting, believe they have found the \$75,000 to \$80,000 needed to balance the city's general accounts budget, which includes all city departments but utilities.

That was the good news.

The bad news was that the utilities budget still showed a \$51,000 deficit, due mainly to anticipated natural gas price increases this year and proposed salary increases for employees.

The council is still trying to hammer out a balanced budget and has not taken any official action as yet, but members indicated they would prefer to cut equipment and other purchases rather than deny employees a proposed 10 percent salary increase.

The proposed general accounts budget for all city departments but utilities was estimated at \$1,970,000. The utilities budget was projected at

\$1,243,000 with \$1,192,000 in anticipated revenue.

Going into Wednesday's session, the second informal budget meeting in a week, council members were faced with an anticipated general accounts budget deficit of about \$80,000.

Tightening up on city gasoline tax receipts from distributors, an expected increase in sales tax this year and an anticipated increase in fines and court costs from municipal court are expected to generate part of the revenue needed.

The council also discussed raising residential and commercial garbage rates by 50 percent (from \$2 to \$3 per month for residents) and revising the city's business license schedule to bring in more revenue.

No action has yet been taken on any of these proposals, but the council discussed appointing a committee to propose a new license fee schedule.

With the additional monies now

balancing budget

expected to be available, officials hope to be able to grant an across-the-board 10 percent raise for all city employees.

The proposed budget also includes hiring three more policemen and three more firemen.

With the new firemen and some additional firefighting equipment, Pell City's fire insurance rating could drop from the Class 6 rating achieved last year to a Class 5, which would result in lower fire insurance rates.

Also in the budget as it now stands is an increase in firemen's pay to bring it up to the amount police receive.

Fire Commissioner Barnett Lawley said firemen now make about 30 percent less than police and that to keep good people in the department a salary increase is needed.

He said the adjustment bringing firemen's pay in line with that of police may have to be done in two steps over the next two years, but added he hopes it can be done this year.

Councilman Charles Lockridge urged other members to cut equipment or anywhere else to assure the salary increases go through.

Mayor Hugh Williamson, contacted Thursday, indicated that Lockridge's comments reflected the general sentiments of the council.

"Everybody has trouble meeting their obligations these days and these people need an increase," he said.

The amount of the pay increases will most likely be decided at the next budget meeting, which Williamson said will probably be Monday.

Council members will be trying to trim away the anticipated \$51,000 deficit in the utilities budget at that meeting. Balancing the utilities budget could mean an increase in utility rates if no place to trim expenses can be found.

One reason for the utilities deficit is the large number of gas leaks in the city's piping system.

Howell requests

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — While it has been unclear over the past few weeks whether Officer Donnie Howell is a detective or not, the matter was apparently settled Monday.

Howell, who has been serving as detective since June, was informed Monday morning that he was being returned to patrolman duty on the night shift.

A memorandum dated Oct. 10 to Mayor Harvey Watson, signed by Chief Homer "BoJack" Layton and Asst. Chief Ed Pennington, requested the move.

In the memorandum, Layton states: "I have received a request from Officer Howell to return to patrolman duty.

"After careful consideration and for the betterment of the police department, I believe Officer Howell

should be allowed to step down from the Detective Division and placed in uniform as a patrolman."

Howell said that he had requested to go back on patrol, but it was "four weeks before the Council voted my pay raise."

Howell had been working as detective for two months, still on a patrolman's salary.

"I requested patrolman duty, but they denied it (more than a month ago), and I was never consulted again. They (Layton) informed me this morning that the detective job was being done away with and I'd go back on patrol."

Police Commissioner Rickey Staples, apparently unaware of the move, said, "I don't appreciate being called by the press and finding out my detective has been put back

— DAILY HOME, Talladega-Sylacauga- Pell City, Ala., Tuesday, Oct. 15, 1985

return to patrol duty

to patrolman."

Last week, Staples had entered several motions dealing with Howell's promotion, a raise in salary and providing him with an unmarked car.

Each motion passed unanimously, but the mayor contested and said he would not carry them out.

Staples said he asked the chief and mayor about Howell's move Monday, and "they told me they had bad reports" on Howell.

However, since Howell joined the force in 1981, he has no reprimands on his record, Staples said, reading from Howell's personnel file.

He indicated that rumors of wrongdoing by Howell, and even him, had been circulating, but he denied any truth to those rumors.

Staples challenged "the people accusing me and Donnie of

wrongdoing to come forward, and we'll go take a lie detector test."

Staples declined to comment on the specifics of the rumor.

Howell noted that he had "never been informed of any reports, complaints or otherwise, and I have never been given a chance to respond to any reports, complaints or otherwise."

Watson claimed no involvement in moving Howell, saying that "I leave the moving around of personnel up to the department."

He added that even though the Council promoted Howell to detective, the promotion was not valid because a recommendation to that effect did not come through the mayor's office.

Howell, he said, was simply "tried out" in the position of detective.

Pell City mayor implements one of Council's mandates; other four are 'under study'

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — When the Council here passed five recommendations at a meeting in late September, Mayor Harvey Watson answered each by contesting and vowing not to carry them out.

"They (the Council) want to ram something down my throat, and I can't buy that. I'm not going to obey it," said Watson just moments after the meeting.

The Council, either by majority vote or unanimous decision, had passed motions dealing with promoting Donnie Howell to detective, raising his pay and providing him with an unmarked car.

The Council also voted to move the mayor's secretary to the reception

area, restrict use of city vehicles to department heads only and mandating that all city vehicles, with the exception of the detective's car, have municipal tags.

As of Tuesday, only one of the Council's mandates has been carried out.

Watson, who drives an unmarked city car, now has a municipal tag on it rather than the investigator's tag he once had.

"I have no objection if they (the Council) want a municipal tag on that car," said Watson. "They all ought to be identified."

He noted that while it was not feasible to discuss it fully, the car he uses had also been used for investigative purposes. "It's a dead giveaway" to have a municipal tag

on the car when using it for that purpose.

Watson also stressed that "it's not my car, it's the vehicle I drive. Technically, I'm on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I respond nights and weekends to situations that are important enough to the city that I should get involved."

While he has adhered to changing tags, the mayor noted that it means "one less vehicle we have to use in some areas we have been able to use them in."

As for moving the secretary's office from the area next door to his office to the reception area in front, Watson remarked, "I haven't made

up my mind yet on the secretary thing."

On the remaining issues, Watson said they were "under study."

During the Sept. 23 meeting, Watson said all the Council's recommendations were treading on his authority as chief executive and would not be carried out.

In an open letter to the public, he reiterated that stand, saying that the Council's responsibilities lie in the area of well meaning recom-

mendations and to "ask from time to time" why the mayor did not follow certain recommendations.

As for the legality of not following the wishes of the majority of the Council, Watson said, "it will depend on what kind of advice I get whether it's legal or not."

To date, he said he has not checked on the legality of carrying

out the recommendations of the majority.

"I'm here to make Pell City a better place," Watson explained. "I hate to see petty issues arise under the circumstances under which they have arisen."

He added that the motions the Council passed "could have been resolved outside the meeting."

Gas rates increased by

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — Gas rates are going up again as a result of an ordinance adopted in the regular meeting of the Pell City Council Monday night.

For residential and small commercial customers, the new rates in effect are \$4.50 for the first 500 cubic feet and \$4.75 per 1,000 cubic feet after that.

The increase of approximately 10 percent sets the minimum bill at \$4.45 per 1,000 cubic feet.

The council delayed action on increasing gas rates for industrial customers.

In another gas-related matter, Dennis Self and Les Culpepper of Southern Natural Gas told the council their company has several directions it

can pursue in providing gas for the city.

Listed among the possibilities was combining the present two systems of Pell City and Oak Ridge-Eden so that if one system was operating at peak capacity, additional gas could be obtained from one that was not at peak capacity.

The council agreed to discuss the alternatives with its engineering consultants to decide which would be most beneficial in long-range gas goals for the city.

Appointments of ad hoc city school board members was delayed because council members have not had a chance to submit nominees.

The council recently approved establishment of an ad hoc city board of education with a consultant to

2 — DAILY HOME, Talladega-Sylacauga-

10 percent in Pell City

operate for one year to determine the feasibility of the city having a separate school system.

Board members will be selected in a special meeting Monday, at 5 p.m., although the council did appoint Dr. B.D. Whetstone of Birmingham Southern College to the consultant position for \$550 per month.

Whetstone and Dr. Hugh Stegall, assistant director of Bureau of School Services at the University of Alabama, recently studied the school situation and presented their findings to the council in late May.

In other action, the council:

—Approved Gloria Roberson's request to return the right-of-way she deeded to the city in 1970 on her property in Cropwell.

—Named the circle of Powell's Hide-

away Road, Valley View Circle.

—Agreed to close the road in front of the Church of God for a parking area if all adjoining property owners sign an agreement.

—Delayed action on granting a retail liquor license for the Brothers Four Motel until it can pass an ordinance setting the license and tax fees for the package store type request.

—Accepted Birmingham Recon's deed of a 60-foot right-of-way to the city in the Industrial Park subject to the legal description being correct.

—Heard Industrial Development Board member Ed Ash's report on the present move toward certifying the city by Aug. 1. If the city receives certification, it will be eligible for Urban Development Action Grants.

Annexation plan draws

By ANNE MILAM

PELL CITY - A group of citizens for and against annexation of approximately 1½ square miles to Pell City appeared before the city council at its regular meeting Monday night with the proponents asking for an election.

According to James Perry, spokesman for the group for annexation, the area involved encompasses some 145 households in the populated area east and west of U.S. 231 North to the old Heart of Dixie Lounge and west to Wolf Creek Road North.

Mayor Hugh Williamson gave the proponents and opponents five minutes each to present the issue.

Perry presented a map of the area involved and signatures he said constituted "over half of the landowners and households in the area."

"We are not here to ask the city for annexation. We simply want an

election on the issue. Let's settle this in the American way and let the people vote," he said.

JACK HAZELWOOD, spokesman for opposing citizens, also presented a list of signatures.

Mayor Williamson told the group the council would take the matter under advisement, possibly appointing a special committee to study the issue.

"We will not take any action until we have researched the legalities with the city attorney and the League of Municipalities," he said. "We also need to research whether we have any services to offer you," he added.

Councilman Charles Lockridge urged the group to "keep up the fine community spirit all of you have demonstrated in the past and remain friends, no matter what the outcome of this issue is."

He commended all involved in the

Talladega-Sylacauga-P.C., Ala., Wednesday.

citizens to meeting

Attsville Volunteer Fire Department to other joint efforts between them and Pell City.

PELL CITY High School students Jeff Ramsey and Len Shigley asked council permission to hold the second annual patriotic rally at the school on April 7.

Granted permission, they asked for assistance with the rally - moving a piano from the Civic Center to the school, erecting a banner on Cogswell Avenue, putting up the avenue of flags and any suggestions on raising money to pay expenses.

Council commended the young men for last year's rally and their efforts in planning the upcoming event, assuring them the city would cooperate in every way possible.

IN OTHER business, the Council:

February 11, 1981

-Approved an on-premise liquor license for Patricia Eades, doing business as the Brass Buckle Lounge on U.S. 78 East.

-Approved an off-premise beer license for Rocky Shirley, doing business as Shirley's Exxon on Corner Avenue (formerly Hindman's Exxon.)

-Opened bids for a used truck and chassis and accepted the only bid received from Birmingham Recon for a 1979 one-ton Chevrolet for \$4,950 plus a painting charge of \$300.

The truck will be used by the emergency rescue squad, transferring a pickup truck to the utility department, which council members said saved the city approximately \$3,500.

-Approved a rate increase on hospitalization insurance by Liberty National Life Insurance Company effective March 25, 1981, raising individual coverage from \$27.93 per month to \$30.09 and family coverage from \$71.88 to \$80.53 per month. The increase was the first the company had made since 1977.

-Discussed cost estimates for a new concession stand which Councilman Forrest Walls said ranged from \$35,000 to \$40,000. The Council decided to have plans drawn for a 30x30 two-story building and ask for bids before deciding whether to undertake the project.

-Unanimously approved elimination of garbage pick-up in alleys for residences.

-Adopted rules and regulations compiled by Fire Chief Ben Windsor to comply with ISO requirements.

Both Sides Speak—

Protesters revisit Pell City Council

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

A small group of citizens protesting the proposed sewage treatment plant being located just off the Golf Course Road revisited Pell City Council to reaffirm their stand Monday night.

And some councilmen had statements to make later in the meeting.

Birmingham attorney Paul Laning, representing the group which includes his parents, acted as a spokesman for the small group, asking council a number of questions about the proposed site.

Laning was told the plant site, located on the Hannah farm and an alternate site were currently being considered. The alternate site will be tested as soon as firm permits, according to Mayor Hugh Williamson.

Williamson noted a final decision was awaiting the results of tests. The Golf Course Road location is in the police jurisdiction and appears to be the city's number one choice for a treatment plant.

The mayor added construction was not planned to start until August 1980 but the site had been considered since 1972-73.

Later in the meeting Williamson commented he had visited a similar treatment plant in operation at Trussville. He noted that the Trussville plant was half the size of the Pell City proposed plant.

The plant is located two blocks from the Trussville City Hall, according to Williamson, who added he stood within three feet of an oxidation pool and did not detect an offensive odor or smell.

"There was a chlorine-type smell but that's absolutely all. Similar to a swimming pool," said Williamson. He said the plant discharges into the Cahaba River and noted water discharged into the river was of better quality than water in the river.

Councilman Paul Turner noted city fathers have worked on the sewage treatment plant for the past eight to nine years. "We have to represent 5,000 to 6,500 people and do what's best for all of them," Turner said.

"We have sought the best advice and used the best resources available. It really troubles me for something like this to happen (the protests). We're not doing anything to harm the ecology or anything else. I suggest a question whether we should continue to keep going over the same old thing."

At that Turner received an amen from Councilmen Dr. Raymond Bam-

Cox and Charles Lockridge.

Ken Layton and Steve Sedgewick appeared before council representing the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission to explain the next phase of the 208 Water Quality study program.

The two asked council to review information concerning the 208 plan dealing with surface pollution (construction run-off) and asked council to approve an implementation statement and a willingness to proceed letter of commitment by February.

It was stressed that not only is the plan noting problems but also looking for solutions. Copies of the statements will be sent to the governor, Environmental Protection Agency and BRPC.

In other action, council

HEARD a request for funding from Ed Ash and John Bloomer, representing the Birmingham Metropolitan Industrial Development Board. Last year the city donated \$2,000 and, according to Ash, received many times its investment back. This included the landing of one industry and two current prospects considering Pell City. The request was referred to the finance committee.

HEARD a request from Cox asking additional garbage dumpsters be located just off U. S. Hwy 231 near Kentucky Fried Chicken and at the City Shop on 19th Street, in view of the upcoming holidays. Street supervisor Pete Martin noted citizens could throw bagged garbage in a parked truck at the City Shop during normal working hours.

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Petition seeks to halt liquor license

By SUZANNE CRITTENDEN

Hoping to persuade the council to deny a possible request for an on premise liquor license, a petition bearing the signatures of 147 Pell City residents was presented to the aldermen during Monday night's Pell City City Council meeting.

The petition, which was given to the council by Roddy Barber, read: "The following signatures are in protest of the issuing of an on premise license for the establishment located on the Old Coal Road, owned and operated by Donald Hannah."

"At this point we haven't received a

request for such a license," Mayor Hugh Williamson said. "But we will hold the petition in case the request comes up at a later date."

An on premise license allows for the consumption of liquor at the licensed site.

In other action, the council unanimously adopted the Life Safety Code and Fire Prevention Code.

"The city presently has a Fire Prevention Code but it's old and needs to be updated," Alderman Charles Lockridge told the council.

Each code pertains to certain building standards that must be met on any structure inside the city limits.

The codes will be available for public inspection at City Hall.

After the reading of four sealed bids for a city pick-up truck and two bids for two dump trucks the council voted to accept the low bids.

Low bidder on the pick-up truck with a figure of \$4,578.96, was Sutherland Chevrolet. Others bidding were Pell City Dodge, \$5,334.98, John Rogers Ford, \$5,052.10 and Baggett Pontiac bidding \$4,888.88.

Baggett Pontiac was the low bidder on the dump trucks asking \$8,112.24 for each truck. John Rogers Ford bid \$9,624.52.

All bidders were local companies.

Expansion planned

The finance committee of the Pell City City Council and the administrator of the St. Clair Public Library and chairman of the St. Clair Library Board, will tentatively meet later this week to discuss the expansion of the Pell City branch of the library.

Several bids for the expansion were turned down earlier because they were too high, according to library administrator Mrs. Beverly Barber. However, Mrs. Barber said a number of options are open concerning construction of the expansion.

The expansion, which will consist of 2,700 square feet added to the present facility located on First Avenue, should be completed about "three months" after construction starts, Mrs. Barber said.

She said that bids may be let to sub-contractors in the four phases of the expansion. But she also said that the entire project may be rebid for general contracting firms, despite the high bids last time out.

"They didn't tell me what we're going to discuss," Mrs. Barber told the NEWS-AEGIS. "There are some options that I didn't discuss with the city council."

She refused comment on the other options.

Mrs. Barber said that \$83,000 is available for the expansion, including a \$10,000 pledge from Pell City. However, architect fees are just over \$11,000 so actual construction monies are around \$72,000.

She said she was not sure whether bids could legally be let for sub-contractors only.

"I have lawyers checking the options," she said.

The four areas of the expansion include heating and cooling, plumbing, electrical work and framing in the building including installation of doors and windows.

Pell City mayor defends allegations of impropriety

By CAROL PAPPAS
PELL CITY — Defending accusations that he is using city power to enhance his own property, Mayor Harvey Watson contends that the property in question is merely a "dumpsite" for city.

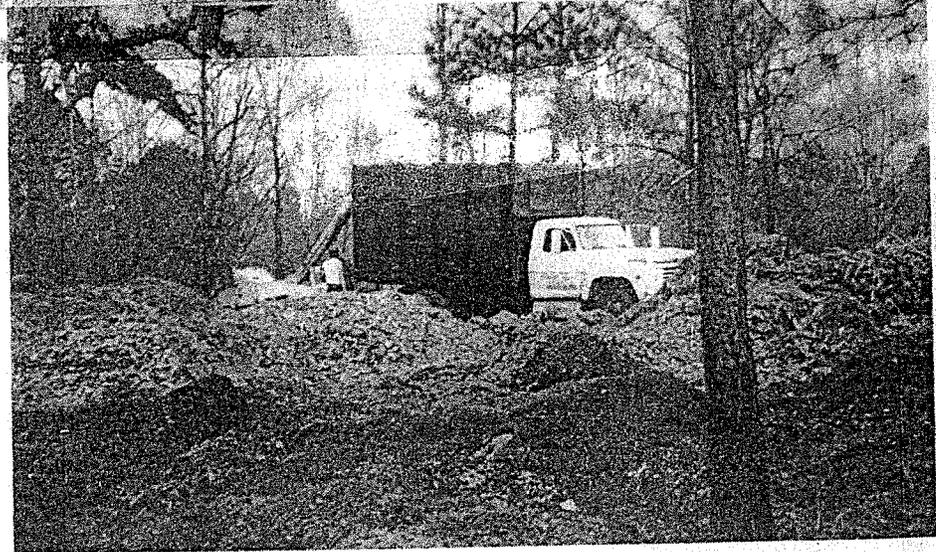
Allen Road area, a lakeside community, said they have spotted city trucks coming and going from the mayor's property, leaving behind fill dirt, top soil, chips and leaves. "It's like stealing from the taxpayers," said one resident, noting that fill dirt costs approximately \$35 per load and top soil is estimated at

\$50 a load.

Another resident alluded to residents not receiving the same benefits as the mayor is getting. "At the present time," Watson countered, "everything the city dumps, except garbage, is being dumped on my property. It's the only dumpsite the city has."

He said the city is using three pieces of property he owns as dumpsites, the Allen Road property, a tract of land in the Industrial Park and an isolated, wooded area off U.S. 231 North.

However, records in the St. Clair County Tax Collector's Office reveal (Con't., see Mayor, Page 3)



Residents in the Allen Road area of Pell City have questioned the use of city vehicles on Mayor Harvey

(Continued from Page 1)

that neither the Industrial Park property nor the U.S. 231 property have been assessed in Watson's name.

Watson's name is listed as an owner of the Allen Road property.

On that property, one resident has observed at least 25 loads of dirt being dumped in a low lying area behind a trailer that sits on the property.

Other residents have estimated the number of loads at much higher.

The mayor, himself, said "a bunch" of dirt had been dumped on the property, but reasoned that no one else would want it because of its make-up.

"Whatever's in ditches is in it. . . shoes, bottles. . ." If the city did

Watson's lakeside property. A city worker is seen unloading a load of

leaves and chips on the property in question. (Carol Pappas photo)

offer the same type of dirt to residents, "they'd tell you to come pick it up," he speculated. "Everybody would like to have dirt, but they want the kind of dirt they want."

A local contractor with 20 years of experience, however, disagreed with Watson's assessment of the situation. "You can use just about anything for fill dirt. If anybody's filling a hole or leveling off a spot, they'll use anything to fill it in with.

"If anybody could get it for free, they'd take it. I'd like to have a bunch myself," the contractor said.

A city truck has also been unloading chips and leaves in small piles on the upper portion of the property. "Once those leaves rot," the contractor said, "it's just like

topsoil. It's the richest dirt you can have."

Watson claims that the city has been using his property for eight to 12 years as dumpsites — "long before I went into office."

He added that he checked with the Attorney General's Office concerning the legality of the situation before he assumed office. "They said there was no problem as long as I didn't charge" for the service.

The legal question comes in, he said, "if I used city equipment to cover it up, but I haven't used that. I have my own equipment."

He further dismissed the allegations of impropriety, saying, some residents are "after my hide. They watch me like a hawk down there."



A city dump truck unloads dirt in a low lying area of Mayor Harvey Watson's property near the lake. This truckload was one of the many

loads that have been dumped on the mayor's property, and residents have voiced concern over what they

feel is an impropriety on the part of an elected official. (Carol Pappas photo)

Pell City implements plan to attract new businesses

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — Mayor Hugh H. Williamson Monday named city administrator Con Coupland to head a task force to attract new industry to the area and encourage existing industries to expand their facilities, thus "providing more jobs for our people."

Although Pell City has attracted new industries during the past several years, some have closed, including Blue Giant and Alabama Recon. Brandt Mfg. has also notified the city it plans to leave. The city must "make a decision to take action in this area," the mayor said.

He recognized the past accomplishments of the Industrial Development Board, saying it has "done well" and the city will "back future efforts 100 percent."

He also lauded the efforts of Ed Ash, who has been a prime moving force in soliciting new industry for the city. Williamson said Ash has "gone the second, third and fourth mile in efforts to see Pell City grow."

The mayor named Coupland as the logical choice to head a task force designed to recruit new industry. His committee, he said, should be made up of "well rounded" representatives of the community, representing various areas prospective industries study before deciding to locate.

Williamson said he wants to show industry that Pell City is the "greatest place" to live and work, to authorize Coupland's use of any records or resources needed to attract new industry and to forge ahead on plans to get Pell City certified as a Prepared City.

HE CONCLUDED this organized push for new industry should "keep Pell City on the move in decades to follow," and the plan received wholehearted support from the Council.

Also dealing with the future progress of Pell City, Councilman Keith Porter noted the city was well below the percentage of inner city four lane

roads as compared to cities of similar size.

He called for a plan of action on the matter, including a resolution to State Rep. A. J. Blake, State Sen. Butch Ellis and the State Highway Department, asking for assistance in getting additional four lane mileage.

Porter noted that with Pell City's 17.5 miles of inner city roads, only .5 miles is four lane, while Oneonta, with 27 percent less population, has 63 percent of its inner city four lane.

He cited several benefits of additional four lane mileage, including cosmetics, easier access to the lake and park, safety factors, overall better traffic flow and enhancing the value of property.

His long range plan, he said, is to have four lanes from Eden to Riverside on U.S. 78, from I-20 to Alabama 34 on U.S. 231 and from U.S. 231 to Stemley Bridge on Alabama 34.

"You're not going to get it unless you ask," Porter said, and the Council approved the request unanimously.

In other business, the Council haggled over a recent bid on baseball equipment, which was split between the two bidders. Coupland explained that whoever was low on a certain item was awarded the bid.

However, Councilman Forrest Walls, who heads the recreation committee, found fault with that process, saying that if the three percent bid law favoring local merchants was applied to the overall bid, Smith and Hayes Sporting Goods would have been the low bidder.

HE ADDED that the previous year, the bid was awarded on an overall basis and not split.

Although the Council had not officially awarded the bids, Coupland already authorized some of the purchases from an Anniston company, saying that the move would save the city several hundred dollars.

But, Councilman Bam Cox, Walls and Councilman Barnett Lawley agreed that when feasible, local merchants should get first preference.

The bids are to be computed with the three percent reduction in Hayes' bid by the next meeting and in the future, Lawley suggested, the chairman of the committee should be involved in the bid openings.

In other action, the Council:

— Accepted the recommendation of the Planning Commission changing the west 75 feet of five lots in Block 19 from R-3 to B-2;

— Had no objections to the rescue squad holding a road block April 7;

— Took no action on an on premise retail beer application for The Cellar on First Avenue South downtown, and it died for the lack of a motion;

— Agreed to abandon or vacate Second Avenue between U.S. 231 North and 23rd Street North as requested in a petition signed by Mt. Zion Freewill Baptist Church, Sutherland Chevrolet and Oak Ridge Cemetery.

\$3.2 million project in Cook Springs to provide 23 new jobs

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — The first official step by the city council was taken Monday night to incorporate a finance authority for a \$3.2 million construction project at the Baptist Home for Senior Citizens, which will add 23 employees to the facility's already 103 member payroll.

Calling it "a real shot in the arm," attorney Bill Hereford appeared before the council to ask for the incorporation and appoint three members to the authority's board of directors — two required actions before construction financing can begin.

He noted that of the facility's present 103 employees, 77 are from the greater Pell City area.

Planned for the site in Cook Springs is a 60,000 square foot multi-level facility to house 121 elderly people in private and semi-private rooms.

Other highlights of the construction, which overlooks a lake, are a 141 seat dining room, a roof garden, exercise room, craft rooms and, according to proponents of the project, virtually every feature to enhance those "sunset years."

The present operation generates \$1.6 million in revenues, and the new portion is expected to generate more than \$1 million.

In an unusual move, the city council was the object of honor in a resolution presented by members of the Greater Pell City Chamber of Commerce for its "numerous accomplishments on behalf of and in the name of the people of Pell City . . ."

Lauding the council's "collective wisdom, insight and foresight," the resolution stated that the council's noteworthy accomplishments included:

— "The establishment of an in-

dustrial development board, an industrial park and the active pursuit of industry;

— "The passage of a city zoning ordinance;

— "The financing and installation of a much needed sewer system;

— "The formation of the Pell City School System, the newest and 1128th school system in the state of Alabama."

Chamber President Dwight Blair presented the resolution, saying that "over the past several months you've been faced with making some pretty tough decisions," and the chamber "feels like you've done an excellent job."

In other business, the council:

— Approved a restaurant retail liquor license application for Bobby Ray and Jessie Atkinson, the new owners of the Big Bull Restaurant;

— Adopted an ordinance making it "unlawful to post on poles or trees and to place bills or leaflets on the surface of public streets or grounds, in yards of private residences or in or on parked vehicles," subject to a fine and jail sentence;

— Read a letter of commendation from Sandy Moody and Mary Margaret Moore for Officer Bill Turner for the way in which he handled a recent accident investigation;

— Adopted a resolution honoring City Clerk Bettie Scott on her recent election to the presidency of the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks;

— Tabled for further consideration, an appointment to fill the expiring term of Ernest White on the Pell City Board of Education;

— Received an invitation to the open house of the Central Alabama Prison in St. Clair County from 1:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday.

Watson, Holladay fight it out verbally at Monday meeting

BY KELLY BRYAN
News-Aegis Writer

The agenda for the Monday night Pell City Council meeting listed only four items. The first item of business was approval of minutes from an earlier meeting. The next two listings were briefly discussed but no action was required.

The last entry on the agenda was "Councilman Holladay wants to discuss city vehicles."

This seven-word notation on the scant agenda brought on a shouting match between Mayor Harvey Watson and Councilman Roy Holladay that is unrivaled in volume though the two have had it out verbally before.

Holladay opened his remarks by turning back to the minutes of a Sept. 23, 1985 meeting. He pointed out the council voted on a motion initiated by Councilman Rickey Staples which outlined that city vehicles should not be used by anyone other than department heads and others designated by the council.

The motion also noted the cars should be used only for city business.

Councilman Sonny Kilgroe seconded the successful motion, which Watson said he would "contest."

Holladay then turned to the handbook setting out the responsibilities of the city council and mayor. "The city council is in charge of all properties, equipment and money; and the mayor is the administrative authority. He administers what the council votes to," explained Holladay.

"Under this motion, it is my understanding that anyone that had a city vehicle should have continued to operate a city vehicle. Any jockeying around of vehicles since that time without the approval of this council is totally out of order," continued Holladay.

With that base laid, Holladay said he stopped to get gas on a recent Saturday, and was confronted by a city worker who wanted to know why Holladay had taken his city vehicle away. "I didn't even have any knowledge of the car being taken away. It upset me and it upset my whole day. I'm glad I didn't run into you, Mayor," said Holladay.

Holladay went on to explain that he was not so much concerned about the individuals without the cars, as he was about the council not being given the opportunity to vote on the matter. "Nobody should lose a car or be given a city vehicle without the majority of this council voting on it," said Holladay.

"I want to let you know how I stand when it comes to city property or money being shifted around without the vote of this body. It is totally out of order," stressed Holladay.

Watson replied that the council voted on Sept. 23 to supply only department heads with city vehicles, in spite of his opposition to the move. After some delay in implementing the council's legislation to take away the city vehicles, Watson said he was confronted by both Holladay and Kilgroe and told to take the cars away. So, he sent letters to all department heads about

the move, which he still opposed.

Holladay said that was not the way the motion read. He said that since the 11-month-old motion did not designate who had a car, those with city vehicles should have been left with city vehicles until the council voted otherwise.

Watson said Staples did indeed want the assistants' cars turned back in. "If you would like for those people to have a car, then make a motion...and you can take the blame for returning the cars to those other than department heads," said Watson.

Holladay continued to argue that the council had not taken away any city vehicles. And, Kilgroe agreed with Holladay's interpretation of the motion that he had seconded for a vote. "Maybe there was some misunderstanding on your part, Mayor," suggested Kilgroe.

Watson answered that he had problems with the move to take cars back and asked Kilgroe to recall his pressuring the Mayor to do just that when he had delayed on the council's move. "It was my understanding these vehicles were to be taken away, and it was my responsibility to do so. Right, Mr. Kilgroe?" Kilgroe answered, "I got on you pretty heavy."

Kilgroe," continued Watson. "I understand that, Kilgroe continued his claim to have understood the motion as Holladay did, though he had "gotten on" the Mayor about not taking away the cars.

Councilman Joe Wheeler asked the group to "put the matter behind them once and for all." "After the assistants' cars were taken away, we agreed to reissue a city vehicle due to an emergency situation and I thought that it was never to come up again, said Wheeler.

The argument continued after the council meeting as reporters questioned Holladay. "What I see happening is somebody is taking vehicles away behind closed doors, and I find out about it on Saturday morning when I'm filling up with gas," said Holladay.

But, Watson said the vehicles were taken away shortly after September, 1985, and the council was aware of it. "I was not aware that I was usurping the council's authority by trying to follow through on the council's action," emphasized Watson.

The argument expanded when Watson said Staples had made the motion in 1985 to take away assistants' cars because that had been a campaign promise he had made in his bid for election to the council. Holladay, ignoring Watson's comments but picking up on only the word "promise," said, "I think that is part of this administration's problem—promises."

Watson shot back that he did not make any promises.

Holladay then turned to the fact that he "can't find out anything at city hall." Watson pounded his hand on the council table and angrily said, "I'll tell you what, any councilman that wants to come in my office, I am here every day. I resent things coming to this, and getting public when I haven't had the chance to talk about the situation."

"That is exactly how I felt Saturday morning when I was approached by the city employee without a car," hollered Holladay. Watson continued to argue and Holladay's only response was, "I can talk louder than you," as both their voices continued to get louder.

Watson continued, "It has been made to appear that I'm just doing what I want to do." Holladay retorted, "You got the picture."

"Then, hire you somebody else to run things," answered Watson. "I wish we could," said Holladay. "You can if you get enough votes," shot Watson.

Two days after the heated exchange, Watson continued to say he followed the council's intention in taking away some city vehicles and told of an "impeachment proceeding" threatened by Holladay if the cars were not turned in.

"Councilman Holladay was aware of this whole thing. And, this backlash is coming as a result of the stand I took in the recent rezoning of land to make way for a shopping center development on Hwy. 231 S," said Watson.

"It suits me fine to return the cars to the assistants since I did not want to take them away initially," said Watson. "We're not talking about that many cars to begin with. It should not be all that big a deal as it has been represented," added Watson.

Annexation bid, opposition presented to Pell City Council

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

Citizens in the Wattsville-Coal City community north of Interstate 20 presented petitions for and against an-

No more alley garbage pickups

Effective March 1, city crews will no longer pick up garbage in alleys behind city homes in an effort to save money on repairs to equipment and the alleys.

Monday night Pell City Council voted unanimously to stop alley pickups. Street Superintendent Pete Martin told council that currently city garbage trucks picked up at the curb and in alleys on each street.

By stopping the alley pickup, the city will be saving time and duplication as well as costs of repairs to the alleys and garbage trucks.

Council has discussed the action on several occasions in the past and took formal action this week. Effective March 1, all garbage must be placed at the curb in front of each home.

nexation for council's consideration in Pell City Monday night.

A delegation asking that their community become a part of the city was led by James Perry who presented a petition and a map which identified the area. Perry told the News-Aegis he represented over half of the landowners and over half of the residents of the two-square mile area in question.

Jack Hazelwood also presented council with a petition of people whom he said opposed any attempt to annex to the city their property and homes.

Perry told the News-Aegis, "All we're asking is the chance to go to the voting place and vote our convictions. The greatest privilege a man has is to go to the polls and that's all we're asking for."

"If we have a vote and it is defeated, then I'll drop it (the annexation attempt). But if it passes by a vote of the majority of the people, then we're in (the city)," Perry added.

The area being considered extends approximately one mile north of Interstate 20 along U. S. 231 and is an estimated two square miles. There about 145 households affected.

Perry stated that some people signed the wrong petition by accident and that a number of people wouldn't sign a petition because they did not want to make their neighbors angry. This is why, Perry explained, his delegation is asking for a secret ballot vote.

Hazelwood, in making his presentation to council, stated he, too, had the

majority support which was against any annexation of his community.

Hazelwood commented that he did not believe the city could provide services "we need." He pointed out the need for sewerage services which the city currently cannot provide.

He later added that, as a livestock farmer, he also objected to annexation because of a city ordinance governing control of livestock.

After listening to both men and other concerned citizens in the meeting, Mayor Hugh Williamson told the gathering he would turn the question over to council, as a committee, and to the city's attorney for legal advice.

Williamson added that it would not be until the first March meeting before a decision was made on the proposal.

Councilman Charles Lockridge led the group, "People on both sides have been an asset to the city; don't let this thing lose a friend!" He added, "It's an issue, not a life and death thing."

Council has a couple of options on the annexation issue including allowing a vote by the people affected.

Lockridge, after the meeting, told supporters of both sides the city would have to weigh a number of points involved including whether the city can financially assume the added territory, whether the tax increase will support the services required, whether the annexation will be fair to all involved and whether the city can provide necessary services.

Currently, the northern city limit boundaries extend to Interstate 20 but at no point cross the interstate highway.

Councilman Paul Turner presented a financial report to council which revealed that while income for the first quarter of the fiscal year was up 4.5 percent, spending had increased some 31 percent.

Council was in agreement that a special workshop session would be in order in the near future to re-evaluate the city's budget. Councilman Forest Walls commented, "We need to get together now to see where we can cut without hurting."

In other business:

—HEARD a request and report on a second, annual Patriotic Rally which will be held at Pell City High School from students Jeff Ramsey and Len Shigley.

—APPROVED an on-premise beer license for Patricia Eades, new owners of the Brass Buckle on U. S. 78, formerly Hilltop Lounge; and, an off-premise beer license for Rocky Shirley for Shirley's Exxon.

—ACCEPTED the bid (the only bid received) of \$4,900 on a used truck and chassis which will be used as a rescue truck for the fire department.

—HEARD a report on a pending increase in city employees' insurance from \$71.88 to \$80.53 for the family policy. This is the first increase from Liberty National Life Insurance, since the city entered an agreement with the company three years ago.

—HEARD a report from Mayor

Williamson concerning the upcoming Congressional hearings on the Coosa-Alabama Waterway projects which will be held March 23. "This will be a most important trip. . . it may be the most important hearing on the project yet," Williamson said. A delegation from the city is expected to attend the one-day hearing.

—HEARD a report from Walls and Parks and Recreation Director Marci Vandergriff concerning the construction of a new concession stand for the new ballfields behind the Civic Center. Original estimates placed the cost at roughly \$35,000. The city will seek bids on the building.

—HEARD a report from Councilman Barnett Lawley on the adoption of rules and regulations for the fire and rescue department.

—HEARD a request from two citizens on road work and installation of street lights and fire hydrants on Kings Circle.

Sewer system will be funded... sometime

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

Pell City city engineer Charles Tucker delivered some good news and some not-so-good news Monday to council; The Pell City proposed sewage treatment facility will be funded through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), but when is an unanswered question at this time.

Tucker also reported to council that progress was running smoothly in obtaining easement across private property for new lines which will run to the treatment plant which will be built on Country Club Road.

Tucker and Councilman Keith Porter predicted that all easement rights would be obtained by the end of March and that the plant will be advertised for bids on construction by June.

Porter told council he had hoped bids could be sought in late April or early May but stated he has since learned of a "built-in" 30 day waiting period after final EPA approval before bids can be accepted.

Tucker stated the city could expect 75 percent of the project cost from EPA which should be an estimated \$4.5 million. He also indicated that the plant may fall short of the predicted \$6 million construction cost.

Mayor Hugh Williamson later explained that the Pell City project and one in Jefferson County are the top two priority projects in the state and there is no question at this point that the project will receive funding.

However, it is unknown how much the Reagan administration will cut in EPA funds and it is possible that funding could be delayed. "The plant will be funded this year despite what Reagan will do," predicted Tucker.

In a related matter, Porter reported he has received complaints on lack of water service in the Lynnwood Subdivision which is just outside the Pell City city limits.

Recently water meters for homes in that area have been installed, but Porter reported that the problem was "getting enough water to the homes with the present line."

It is estimated that up to two miles of larger water lines are needed to adequately service the area and Porter added, "Someone will have to pay for that and we don't have that kind of money." A rough estimate of the cost of such a project was placed at \$40,000.

Said Williamson, "There's no question there is a problem but I don't think we should spend money outside the city limits until we take care of those inside the city."

In other business, council:

—APPROVED the purchase of a new garbage truck from low bidder Ingram Equipment Company of Birmingham, on condition the bid meets all bid specifications.

—APPROVED the purchase of two patrol cars from Sutherlin Chevrolet of Pell City as the low bid at \$7,854 each.

—APPROVED a road block for April 25-26 on request of Bobby Stevens, captain of the St. Clair Emergency Squad.

—HEARD a report on funding request from George Graham of the Coosa Valley Juvenile Detention Center and tabled action.

—APPROVED street light installation in the Sedden Shores community, on 22nd Street South and on Alabama 34.

—APPROVED on recommendation of the planning commission a one year trailer permit in a residential area of Eden on request of Billy Powell.

—TABLED action for further information on rezoning a parcel of land near the industrial park from M-2 to R-4 which would allow multimdwelling apartments. The property in question is located across from the Arbor Baptist Church parsonage and request was from James Smith.

—APPROVED an off-premise beer license for Frank Wallace for the Pell City Curb Market on Cogswell Avenue.

—HEARD a report from Councilman Forest Walls concerning complaints that out-of-town real estate agents are conducting business inside the city

limits without a license. Councilman Charles Lockridge urged citizens who might know of anyone conducting business without a city license to call the police department.

—HEARD a report from Porter concerning paving in the Walker Subdivision which is expected to be completed "in the next couple of days."

—SET the next regular meeting for March 31.

—APPROVED the Jaycees sponsorship of a carnival for early April.

—HEARD a report on an employee retirement and life insurance plan from Johnny Mathis of Roosevelt National Life.

—HEARD an inquiry from Dick Whatley concerning a conflicting zoning ordinance and zoning code concerning the raising of livestock in the city limits. Whatley stated the code was more restrictive and might prevent certain areas from annexing into the city. The inquiry was turned over to city attorney Billy Church for study.

THE ST. CLAIR NEWS-AEGIS Thursday, March 12, 1981

Ordinance to strip mayor of hiring powers introduced

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — The council and mayor's continuing tug of war for authority took a new turn Monday night as Councilman Rickey Staples introduced an ordinance to strip the mayor of his hiring authority.

Due to the absence of Councilman Roy Holladay, Councilman Sonny Kilgroe voted against suspending the rules to consider the ordinance, automatically tabling the vote for two weeks.

The ordinance asks that "The power to appoint... not otherwise provided for by law, is hereby expressly vested in the City Council of the City of Pell City..."

It further mandates that the council "...delegate expressly to the head of each department of the city of Pell City, the authority to hire the employees in such department, subject to approval by the City Council."

Following the meeting, Staples said the ordinance was prompted by a series of decisions Mayor Harvey Watson has made over the past year without consulting the Council.

Staples charged that 10 people have been hired and six raises granted without the Council's knowledge. "People are being hired that we didn't know about — that's why I wanted to do this ordinance." "All monetary matters," such as raises, "are supposed to go through the Council," added Councilman James McGowan.

"FOR US, it seems that if we get any input, we're going to have to take control of some things," Staples explained.

Staples also alluded to an incident this week where Detective Donnie Howell was moved to a night shift patrolman without Staples' knowledge. Staples was serving as police commissioner at the time.

However, Watson changed the department chairmen around Monday night, saying that he only "temporarily" appointed them a year ago.

He added that he hoped in the next three years of the administration, each councilman will get a chance to become involved in different departments.

The new committee appointments are:

Fire Department, Rickey Staples, chairman, Sonny Kilgroe and Roy Holladay, members; Police

Department, James McGowan, chairman, Joe Wheeler and Harvey Watson, members;

Utilities-Water and Gas, Roy Holladay, chairman, Rickey Staples and James McGowan, members; Street and Sewage, Joe Wheeler, chairman, Sonny Kilgroe and Rickey Staples, members;

Parks and Recreation, Harvey Watson, chairman, Roy Holladay and James McGowan, members; Finance, Sonny Kilgroe, chairman, Harvey Watson and Joe Wheeler, members.

MEMBERS OF the Council had "no comment" on the change in appointments because they said they were unaware of the change before the mayor announced it in council meeting.

In other business, the Council approved a \$900 per month allocation to the Chamber of Commerce to help with its program of enticing new industry and business and the continuous promotion and advertising of the city.

The request had been made at the previous Council meeting, but councilmen asked that the legalities of such a contract be explored.

Chamber Vice President Tommy Bain presented the Council with a copy of the law which allows a city to enter into such a contract.

He also noted that Talladega and Oneonta Chambers have similar contracts in their municipalities.

Finance Chairman Sonny Kilgroe advised Bain that the city did not have the appropriation in past budgets nor could it afford it in future budgets.

He explained that he would rather see the city put money into extending sewage lines, if funds were available, to benefit the people of Pell City.

Bain countered that the Chamber's efforts in promoting the city and enticing business would broaden the tax base, thus benefiting all the people of Pell City.

CHAMBER MEMBER Keith Porter also talked of the Chamber's importance in quickly growing Pell City. He noted that it was such a "small amount" to pay for the services the city would get in return.

"It's not a small amount if you're

(Con't., see Ordinance, Page 5)

(Continued from Page 1)

trying to balance the budget," retorted Kilgroe.

The Chamber "plays a big part in city government," said McGowan, "and I think we do have money" to finance the request.

McGowan's motion to grant the appropriation ended in a 3-2 vote with Kilgroe and Staples casting the "no" votes. McGowan, Watson and Wheeler cast the "yes" votes.

Although no action was taken, Wheeler informed the Council that a motion approved two weeks ago to restrict the use of city vehicles to "department heads only" would cost the city \$75,000 or more.

He pointed out that personnel who have taken city vehicles home with them in the past are those who are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Wheeler noted that if the practice was discontinued, those same employees would have to be compensated for overtime, and the cost would be substantial.

THE PRACTICE has been that they use city vehicles in lieu of overtime pay, he said.

He also alluded to the power struggle between certain members of the Council and the mayor, noting that it has caused problems for city employees. For the first time "they don't know what direction to go in. They dread coming to work."

As for himself, Wheeler added that he had gone to Montgomery to learn more about his role as a city councilman. He described his duties as legislating "what is good for the city. I will have no part in vendettas... and I will conduct myself in an orderly manner from this day forward."

In other action, the Council:

— Approved a zoning ordinance change to allow Starving Marvin's to locate on U.S. 231, south of the Shell Station;

— Agreed to buy a \$39 ad in the Alabama Junior Miss program;

— Appointed Joe Paul Abbott to the Planning Commission;

— Agreed to give a retired one ton truck to the Board of Education;

— Agreed to allocate \$2,500 to the Health Department;

— Authorized the mayor to dispose of old vehicles and junk.

Compromise reached on alley opening, restaurant opportunity

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

It has been said that compromise is the art of legislative government and that at was exhibited Monday night as property owners reached an agreement over the vacating of a 15 foot wide alley that will allow the construction of a hamburger restaurant in Pell City.

City council called a special meeting to hold a hearing on plans to vacate the alley which has only been used as an exit from a home.

Following a lengthy motion which was prepared by city attorney Billy Church, itself a piece of art, council unanimously approved vacating the lot which will allow for the immediate construction of Jack's Hamburgers.

The fastfood restaurant, which will feature a drive-in window and inside seating, will be located between the Real Estate Store and The Gas Pump on property owned by Billy C. Gray and family.

One factor responsible for the special meeting was time, according to Jack's president Dick Reese of Birmingham. "To us, time is of the essence," Reese told councilmembers, noting that if construction begins immediately, the restaurant could be ready to open in July, the peak of the busy season.

Appearing in the hearing in an adversary role was Evelyn Watson and her son, Reed Waldrop, who were accompanied by attorney Talmadge Fambrough.

The family expressed concern about closing the alley which they are required to use because there is not enough room to turn around on the street in front of Mrs. Watson's home. They said there only concern was access to their property.

City officials stated that the alley could not be used for emergency vehicles and that garbage pickup was conducted in front of the house and not in the alley.

Reese argued that the new restaurant would provide between 25 and 30 jobs for local residents at an annual payroll of \$180,000 and would pay approximately \$12,000 in sales tax to the city.

"You're talking about trading these jobs and this revenue so a resident can have a secondary access to her house. I have a fine home in Birmingham with only one access and I'll bet many of you only have one access to your homes," Reese said.

Church interrupted the hearing to state he had previously understood the property on both sides of the alley was singularly owned by the Grays but realized Monday night Mrs. Watson also owned property adjacent to the alley.

This additional could have complicated the procedure for vacating the alley if an agreement had not been struck between the property owners.

Church then suggested that an agreement be worked out between the property owners without council's participation and all return at a later date but Reese requested a few minutes outside council chambers for this discussion.

Both parties returned in a few minutes with an agreement.

Earlier in the meeting Keith Howard of The Real Estate Store proposed construction of a one-lane alley on property he would donate and property (about two feet wide) that Gary would donate to solve the problem.

But when asked, Gray told council, "I don't like it." He went on to state his family had "spent a ton of money" on purchasing the property from the late Elizabeth Starnes and his position was that he did not want to give up any more land.

The alley itself was the subject of a lengthy court struggle with a Circuit Court decision in 1977 declaring that the city did have easement for the alley across property the Grays held title.

Councilman Charles Lockridge commented, "It's a shame that people can't get along. That's what has held this town down for years, people squabbling."

In addressing Mrs. Watson, her son and Jack's Hamburgers representatives, Church commented, "I appreciate the spirit of cooperation...I can't understand why the property owner doesn't express the same."

Gray then stated he had no objection to the alley being used as an emergency drive but not for daily use. Fambrough stated his clients were against any abandonment of the alley by the city, an action which would prevent Mrs. Watson from exiting her property.

After the short meeting, it was agreed to by all parties including the city that the east 90 feet of the alley would be vacated by the city with the remainder of the alley to the Waldrop property remaining open.

In addition, the Jack's officials, who will be leasing the property, agreed to allow Mrs. Watson to travel through their parking lot to public thoroughfares at her own risk.

Councilman Keith Porter later expressed some reservations about the agreement from the city's standpoint but did vote with the entire council to approve the action, thus paving the way for the new restaurant construction in the next few days.

In other business, council viewed drawings and bid specifications for construction of a new concession stand for the softball fields behind the Civic Center in Cropwell. Bids will be sought for the next two weeks with bid openings set May 25 at 6 p.m.

ST. CLAIR NEWS-AEGIS

Thursday, May 7, 1981

PELL CITY, AL, ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

HON. CLAUDE HARRIS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 14, 1990

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, a centennial is always a historic occasion, whether for an individual, an institution, or a community. Today I want to salute the community of Pell City, the county seat of St. Clair County, AL, which this year celebrates the 100th anniversary of its founding.

The development of this community over the past century parallels the changes of the century itself. Begun as an industrial community established by George H. Pell, its location was chosen to take advantage of the area's natural resources and its proximity to the junction of three railroad lines. Despite such advantages, the community suffered greatly in the cycle of economic boom and bust, and the fights over railroad regulation which dominated the close of the last century. In fact, the Pell City Iron & Land Co. went bankrupt, as did its successor. However, the citizens of this community did not lose their faith or optimism. And, indeed, for Pell City the third time was the charm. New investment expanded the city's industrial activity beyond the original mineral-based economy to include the South's first soilpipe plant and textile production. Sumter Cogswell, a banker, industrialist, and civic promoter, led the resurrection of the community at that time.

Government has also played a role in the development of Pell City. When we in this House consider the need to rebuild and expand our Nation's system of roads, highways, and bridges, we need to remember what a tremendous impact earlier transportation programs had on the lives of our citizens. Pell City was the beneficiary of an early highway project sponsored by Speaker Bankhead. This highway, now known as U.S. Highway 78, linked Pell City with Birmingham and Atlanta, providing an alternative to reliance on the railroads. The link to those two larger communities was further strengthened with the building of the Interstate Highway System and the location of Interstate 20 in close proximity to Pell City. The construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Coosa River, creating Lake Logan Martin, not only assured a reliable source of low-cost electric power, but also opened up a recreational area which has proven extremely popular, not only to the citizens of Pell City, but to those of the adjacent Birmingham metropolitan area. In fact, the combination of easy highway access and recreational opportunities have made the Pell City area one of the fastest-growing in Alabama.

The economic transformation of Pell City has reflected the changes in our Nation's economy. The old dependence on iron and pipe mills has given way to the production of telecommunications equipment by companies such as Contel. The local school system has a commitment to preparing its students to take their rightful place in this rapidly changing world. And the citizens of this community, as they look back over the trials and accomplishments of the past century, are both proud and hopeful. I salute them, Mr. Speaker, for their perseverance, their imagination, and the cooperation which has allowed them to work together for their common betterment. These are qualities which have served them well in the past and which will, no doubt, ensure their success in the future.

JUNE 14 1990

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Pell City Council approves rate hike for cable television subscribers

By DAVID HAYNES

PELL CITY — Cable television subscribers will be paying an additional \$1 per month for the service in Pell City in January and new subscribers will pay \$5 more for installation.

City Council granted Coosa Cable Company President Authur Smith's request for the rate increases at Monday's meeting.

Action on the increase was deferred from the last council session in November — when the request was first submitted — until Monday when council members could meet with Smith.

The new rates up the monthly base price from \$7 to \$8, installation fees from \$15 to \$20 and reconnect fees from \$9 to \$12.

Smith told council members that about half the increase was due to inflation and the other half was to cover costs associated with the addition of an exclusive sports

programming network (ESPN) into the system.

Councilman Charles Lockridge asked about expansion plans of the cable company.

Smith said his crews have just completed an extension down Wolf Creek Road South to just beyond city limits. He said the cable is installed in the Skyline area, but the service cannot be connected until necessary equipment is delivered.

He said future expansion plans include Shadydale, Truss Ferry Road, Golf Course Road, Spanish Garden Cutoff Road, U.S. 78 East and several other areas.

Council members said they have been receiving calls from residents who want the cable service but live in areas not yet served by the system.

Lockridge asked Smith if some sort of arrangement could be made with installation costs shared by the customers.

Smith said there have been cases in the past in which the cable company paid the first \$200 for connection and the customer paid the balance.

Recreation Director Marcie Vandergrift informed council members that the Recreation Hall on 19th Street South is not being cleaned up properly after meetings. Following several minutes of discussion, council members agreed to stop the practice of allowing the building to be rented for yard sales except those held by civic and church groups.

The council also agreed for Miss Vandergrift to recommend a new set of regulations and fees for use of the building for council consideration.

Council members deferred a discussion of rewriting the city's business license schedule until next Monday. At that time, members will meet with a committee of businessmen to be named by the Chamber of Commerce to hammer out a new schedule.

City Clerk Bettie Scott said if the new schedule is to be effective for 1981, it must be approved by the end of 1980.

In other business, the council:

—Approved Christmas longevity pay as follows: \$60 for department heads;

\$50 for employees of three or more years; \$40 for those with one to three years; \$30 for those with less than one year and \$15 for those employed less than one month.

—Agreed to set Dec. 25 and 26 and Jan. 1 and 2 as holidays and to keep the City Hall offices closed from Dec. 25 to 28 and Jan. 1 to 4.

—Agreed to advertise for bids on a new garbage truck. Bids will be requested on both a gasoline and diesel powered truck.

—Approved a Christmas Greetings advertisement for \$125 for the radio station.

—Councilman Barnett Lawley, who is also Fire Commissioner, reported that the Cropwell Fire Station is now complete and asked that plans be made for a dedication ceremony.

—Lawley also reported that fireman Steve Harbison has completed his intermediate EMT training at the University of Alabama in Birmingham and received the highest grade ever achieved for the course at that school.

—Police Chief Homer Layton announced that any cars parked on Cogswell Avenue after 5 p.m. Saturday will be towed away at owners expense. Saturday is the day for the city's annual Christmas parade, which begins at 6 p.m.

—Set the next meeting for Dec. 15 at 4:30 p.m. This meeting will take the place of the Dec. 22 scheduled session, which has been canceled due to the holidays.

Thursday, April 7, 1988
Price: 25 Cents

Pell City: Progress and rifts

Analysis

By CHRISTOPHER SMITH
Star Staff Writer

PELL CITY Economic development, the reorganization of municipal departments and increased public services highlight the administration of Mayor Harvey Watson and the Pell City Council. But despite these successes, disagreements have plagued relations between Watson and some council members.

Since taking office in 1984, the administration has attracted numerous industries. The city's unemployment rate has dropped from 1982 high of 14.4 percent to about 6 percent, according to state employment service estimates.

Moreover, a new purchasing system for the city's municipal departments has been established, which is eliminating the waste of the previous system described by Watson as a "formality with no supervision."

The police department, the municipal court system and the street and utilities department have all been overhauled. In fact, the courts are now considered one of the most efficient in the state, said Angelo Trimble, director of municipal courts with the Alabama Administrative Office of the Courts.

Numerous public works projects using state and federal funds have been completed in low-income areas. Pell City's park and civic center have received some much-needed work and their usage has increased vastly.

"THE CIVIC CENTER used to be a mausoleum," Watson said. "Now we have so many activities we don't have enough room."

But these achievements have been accompanied by conflict over Watson's managerial style, sometimes resulting in ugly council confrontations between Councilman Roy Holladay and the mayor.

"Sometimes I felt like the little kid who knew all the answers, but sat in the back and the teacher never called on him," Holladay said. "The administration would rather focus on Pell City's continuing industrial expansion."

(Please see Pell, Page 10A)

Industrial parks, and an addition on another 450-acre tract, growth has been impressive and shows no sign of slowing.

Ed Ash, Pell City's director of economic development, a post created by Watson, said the two industrial parks are already 82 percent full and talks are progressing with other interested industrial concerns.

Ash said the sale of Pell City Gas Co. to Alabama Gas Co., which has greatly improved access to the utility, and the building of a 1,500-foot railroad spur for the industrial parks in 1988, should influence more firms to come to Pell City.

IN EACH ENDEAVOR, the council was instrumental. It arranged the sale to Alagasco and won the grant for the spur from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

But as one of St. Clair County's fastest growing cities, Pell City has experienced some growing pains. The city's old purchasing system was outdated and was unable to keep tabs on expanding municipal services, Watson said.

"We used to have 80 many different department heads all functioning with little accountability," Watson said. "Paying bills was a formality and lots of purchases were not necessary and there was a lot of waste."

A purchase-order system has been established and the council regularly scrutinizes the itemized list of bills at each council meeting.

Several departments were also unnecessarily inefficient, Watson said. The street and utilities department once randomly assigned street crews to jobs. Watson said a crew might be at the lake in the morning and across town near the interstate in the afternoon. Now, work days are more systematically planned.

The police and municipal court system had their share of difficulties as well.

"WE WENT INTO a room in the police station one day and found shoe boxes full of about 2,500 unprocessed citations in all stages of proceedings," Watson said.

Back then, Watson said, the police dispatcher doubled as municipal court clerk. But the council quickly set salaries for each position separately.

Janet Poe has been court clerk since 1984. Trimble with the Alabama Administrative Office of the Courts said the Pell City municipal court system has been a role model ever since.

The police are also widely perceived by Pell Cityans to be more efficient and several random interviews mentioned the role of councilman James McGowan in the department's improvement.

Each council member is appointed by Watson to oversee a particular department and McGowan is in charge of police. McGowan went through a police certification program at Jacksonville State University to learn the ins and outs of his job.

The course involved 280 hours of training spread over 35 weekends.

McGowan said he insisted on paying for the training himself. Now a certified police officer, McGowan tries to put in 15 hours a month of auxiliary service.

"Without a doubt, James McGowan is the hardest working and best councilman in Pell City," said Holladay.

THE ADMINISTRATION as a whole has worked hard to win grants to improve the park, civic center and housing for low-income residents.

The city is spending nearly \$250,000 on the city park; \$120,000 from a hard-fought state and federal grant, Watson said.

The civic center and city pool have been renovated and two new softball fields have been built to accommodate the growing interest in the sport, McGowan said.

The mayor seems to have had a major part in landing a \$700,000 state grant for the city to install

sewers, water piping, resurface the roads and upgrade the homes of the low-income Park Hill area.

"It's really been a blessing," said Park Hill resident Mary Williams.

But the impressive record of the administration is somewhat spotted by the failure of its members to get along with each other.

Watson admits to working an average of 60 hours a week and going to accident scenes and fires, sometimes even before the police or firefighters arrive.

HOLLADAY ACCUSED the mayor of "micro-managing" and preventing council members from acting on their own by reserving final review for all decisions.

Holladay and Watson have had public differences of opinion on, among other things, whether the mayor should have a city-provided bar and who should take responsibility for the dog-owner arrests.

"I just do what's in the best interest of the city," Watson said.

"I work 60 hours a week for \$400 a month and we've accomplished a lot."

Like the council, Pell City itself is divided over the mayor's management style.

"I'm 100 percent for Mayor Watson," said a woman in the Pell City drugstore. "The council's gone against him too much even though he's probably responsible for 99 percent of the new industry in this town."

"He sure is a hard worker but that's all part of the problem," said a man in Jimmy's Barber Shop. "He works a bit too hard."

It does not appear that Pell Cityans will be able to pass judgment at the ballot box on the council or the mayor. Only Councilman James McGowan has said he is running in the Aug. 23 election.

Holladay said he definitely will not seek re-election and Watson has said he does not want to run and will only do so if a qualified candidate fails not run.

Council denies rezoning proposal raises garbage collection rates

By DAVID HAYNES

PELL CITY — Council members rejected the recommendation of the Planning Commission to rezone a parcel of land off Hospital Drive to allow construction of multi-family housing in a split vote Monday night.

Monday's regular session also saw approval of an ordinance doubling residential garbage collection rates and raising commercial rates.

The reason given by several council members for not rezoning the property was that no plans for intended development were presented with the request.

Another apparent reason was several residents from the area appeared at Monday's session with a petition bearing 21 names, including those of the five property owners bordering the parcel in question.

Attorney Bill Hereford spoke for Don Harper, who had requested his property at Hospital Drive and 33rd Street be rezoned from R-1 (single family dwellings) to R-3 (which allows multi-family housing).

Hereford argued that the council should go along with the Planning Commission's decision and said three hearings had been held on the matter.

SEVERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS questioned approval of a zoning change without an expressed intent of the future use of the property.

Hereford said the land would be too costly to develop for building single family housing. He said it would be ideal for senior citizen apartments, but would not say this would be the use for the property.

Councilman Paul Turner said he is concerned that if the change were approved, it could establish an undesirable precedent for future zoning requests.

Council member Charles Lockridge,

Bonaparte crowned

Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned emperor of France on Dec. 2, 1804, at the age of 35. A unanimous vote of the senate and a pelbiscite had returned France to a hereditary monarchy and paved the way for Napoleon's coronation. During the coronation ceremony in Paris, Napoleon took the crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII and placed it on his own head. One year to the day later, Napoleon won his first major victory at the Battle of Austerlitz.

who lives in the area, also opposed the change.

"What bothers me about it is that people put everything they've got into a home and then somebody buys a piece of property and wants to change it," Lockridge said.

The councilman said that the zoning change could allow a low rent apartment complex to be built on the property. He said such apartments generally lower the value of surrounding property due to an increase in crime. "I'd rather see an industry go in there," Lockridge added.

Councilman Forest Walls pointed out that the property lies between two gas lines where there have been explosions in the past and would be difficult to have financed through a federal housing assistance program for that reason.

Council member Keith Porter, who is also a member of the planning board, said he probably would not favor the change if he lived in the neighborhood, but added that he wanted to make a decision the courts would uphold.

LOCKRIDGE SAID HE COULD sleep better at night knowing that the courts had to make him do some things he opposes.

Councilman Barnett Lawley also cited the lack of a plan showing the future use of the property as the reason he opposed the change. "I think we owe it to the citizens of the area to know what's going next to their homes before taking any action," he said.

Mayor Hugh Williamson asked for comments from the group at the meeting to oppose the change.

Jimmy Crump, whose property adjoins the Harper property, presented the petition to Williamson and said the people there have most of their life savings in their homes.

Lockridge made a motion to deny the request and later amended it to read that the reason it was being turned down was the lack of a plan of intent. The motion carried with only Porter voting "No."

Should another request for rezoning the property be made, it would have to go through the Planning Commission hearings again before coming back before the Council.

Council members voted unanimously in favor of an ordinance raising residential garbage collection rates from \$2 to \$4 per month.

COMMERCIAL RATES will be \$5 per month for businesses without dumpster and a \$25 per month minimum for businesses with dumpsters. Any business with eight cubic

yards of garbage per week is required to have a dumpster and an \$1 per yard over eight yards is added to the \$25 minimum charge.

The rate increase has been discussed during several recent budget meetings and was one of the ways the council was able to balance the city's general accounts budget this year. At the last meeting, water and sewer rates were increased.

Lawley commented that even with the increases, the garbage collection rates are still less than what residents in the county or in most St. Clair towns pay.

The garbage rate increase becomes effective in December.

The Council also officially adopted the 1980-81 fiscal year general accounts which anticipates the city will operate in the black.

Total income for the year is projected at \$1,999,000 and total expenditures at \$1,983,047, including the \$145,000 Revenue Sharing budget.

The budget allocations for each department are: administrative, \$162,500; City Hall-Shop, \$31,400; Police Department, \$365,331; Street Department, \$709,500; Fire Department, \$213,616; Park and Recreation Department, \$340,700; and miscellaneous, \$160,000.

FROSS RECEIPTS TAX is estimated to generate \$1 million of the operating budget. The next largest source of revenue is privilege licenses at \$206,000, followed by \$175,000 in projected garbage collection fees.

Other sources or revenue include Revenue Sharing, \$145,000; state shared revenue, \$109,000; gasoline tax, \$80,000; property tax, \$64,000; court fines and costs, \$60,000; CETA, \$50,000; Park and Recreation income, \$40,000; tobacco tax, \$25,000; beer tax, \$20,000; miscellaneous, \$25,400.

A rate increase request for Coosa Cable TV was tabled until a representative of the firm can meet with the council to discuss the proposed increases. A letter stated that increases being sought are from \$15 to \$20 for installation and from \$7 to \$8 per month for regular service.

IN OTHER BUSINESS, the Council:

—Appointed Iola Roberts teacher Marion Frazier to a special committee studying the feasibility of a Pell City city or district school system.

—Accepted the low bid of Wilson Brothers Construction of Childersburg on base paving at the Cropwell fire station.

—Heard a report from Craig Wolfgang on the city's pre-application for Community Development Block Grant funds this year.

Council meeting 'explodes'

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — Just when City Council meetings here had settled down and started running smoothly, Monday night's meeting exploded with a war of words between Councilman Roy Holladay and Mayor Harvey Watson.

Holladay resurrected a September 1985 motion, charging that Watson had violated the Council's directive of a year ago to restrict the use of city vehicles.

Reading from the minutes of that meeting, Holladay said city vehicles were not to be used by anyone other than department heads and "those designated by the Council."

After that motion passed, Watson issued an order asking all assistants to turn in their vehicles.

Holladay accused the mayor of taking away his authority by taking away vehicles without authorization from the Council.

"Oh, come on Roy. I'm not usurping anybody's authority. I thought I was following the orders of this Council because I was pressured after the Council meeting (in September) to take vehicles away, which I didn't want to do," Watson responded.

In fact, Watson contested the Council's original motion because he said it saved the city money to allow "on call" employees to use a city vehicle in lieu of additional pay.

WATSON ATTEMPTED TO explain to Holladay that he thought he was carrying out the intent of the motion by taking all assistants' vehicles away, but the explanation gave way to a shouting match.

"Next time you think, you need to consult with me, especially since I am on that particular committee," responded Holladay.

Again, the mayor tried to explain. "When I didn't immediately enforce that (motion), I got criticism from some of the council on why I hadn't taken those vehicles away."

"I was one of those, certainly," admitted Councilman Sonny Kilgroe. Kilgroe then added that perhaps the intent of the motion was a "misunderstanding" on the part of the mayor.

"I was told that it was intended that those vehicles be taken away and it was my responsibility to take them away. Right, Mr. Kilgroe?" Watson asked.

"I got on you pretty heavy," Kilgroe answered, but said his interpretation now is the same as Holladay's.

A year ago, Holladay and the Council voted for a motion that apparently required some action — taking away vehicles. Prior to the vote that night, Holladay even indicated that at least one assistant

(Continued from Page 1)

should not be using a city vehicle, Asst. Police Chief Ed Pennington.

ON MONDAY NIGHT, though, Holladay stated that "everyone" using a city vehicle a year ago should still be using a city vehicle today.

Asked what the point of that motion was if use of vehicles was to remain the same as always, Holladay said "because you (mayor) were furnishing a car to

somebody to drive plumb out of the city."

Holladay's comments were in reference to Pennington, who was driving an unmarked police car to and from his Leeds residence at the time.

The mayor had justified Pennington's use of the car, noting that he was an on-call employee and the car was also used in after hours, undercover work.

Councilman Wheeler, "on behalf of the mayor," said that Watson was

"pressured by more than one Council member to pull these vehicles."

Another shouting match erupted when Watson said Holladay's comments were an attempt "to make it appear that I've usurped authority and just doing what I want to here."

"That's exactly what's been going on," Holladay said, laughing. "You got it. You got the picture."

"Then hire you somebody else to run things," Watson retorted. "I

wish we could," replied Holladay.

"WELL YOU CAN if you can get enough votes," Watson countered. Holladay, laughing again, answered, "We probably can in a few days if we can get them to show up."

Councilmen James McGowan and Rickey Staples were not present at the meeting.

The more than a little vocal, back and forth outbursts continued as Holladay accused the mayor of not keeping him informed about city business.

He said he kept a notebook of when he came to city hall and what he discussed, and it was "pretty much empty when it comes to informing me . . ."

Watson said he usually sees Holladay on Council meeting nights only. "Any councilman who wants to come in my office, I'm here all day, everyday. Any councilman who wants to find out" about city business, "I'll be glad to discuss anything I do in the administration field with them and work with them."

"But, I resent things coming to this and getting public when I haven't even had a chance to defend myself or even talk about a situation."

P.C. Council approves ordinance

By DAVID HAYNES

PELL CITY — Pell City residents will be paying higher rates for water and sewer services as a result of City Council action Monday night, but city

employees will have an average of 10 percent more money to cover their bills.

Council members unanimously approved an ordinance raising water

and sewer rates by about 20 percent at Monday's meeting and also voted in favor of the salary increases for city employees.

Anticipated action by the council to raise garbage collection and natural gas rates was postponed until the next scheduled council meeting Nov. 24.

At three recent budget workshops, council members indicated garbage and natural gas rates would have to be raised to balance the budget. The council has yet to approve the budget for fiscal 1980-81.

Water rates are going up by approximately 20 percent due to the council action, with the actual percentage varying with the amount used.

For the first 3,000 gallons used, the minimum rate went from \$3 to \$3.60. The price went from 75 cents to \$1 per 1,000 gallons for the next 7,000 gallons; from 70 cents to 85 cents per 1,000 for the next 10,000 gallons and from 50 cents to 60 cents per 1,000 gallons for more than 20,000 gallons used.

Sewer rates will be half the amount of the individual's water bill each month.

The city's consulting engineer, Charles Tucker, said the new water and sewer rates are still lower than rates in any other municipality he works with, but predicted another sewer rate increase in March or April

raising water, sewer rates

1981. He said the increase would be necessary to offset the cost for the city's new sewerage treatment facility, which is now in its final planning stages.

The pay increase for employees will be at least 10 percent for all employees who have been with the city more than 12 months and will be retroactive to Oct. 1.

City Clerk Bettie Scott said new employees will receive their raises soon working out their first six months, adding that it will be more after Jan. 1 because a minimum wage increase will also increase the raise. Firemen will benefit most from the council action taken Monday.

For the first time they will be paid on the same scale as policemen. They had made an average of about 30 percent less than their law enforcement counterparts.

At the budget workshops, there had been talk of adjusting the firemen's salaries in steps over a two-year period to bring them in line with those of the police. Monday's action provided that the increase be made in one step, Bettie Scott said.

Before the regular council meeting Monday, a public hearing was held to determine priorities on an application from a Department of Housing and

Urban Development Community Development Block Grant for the city.

Following a discussion by consultants Don Cosby and Craig Wolfgang outlining the Community Development Block Grant Program, the council approved a list of priorities listing where any grant monies would go if received.

Heading the list was a sewer extension for the Glenn City area. The consultants said this project would be the most likely to be approved. The second priority was drainage, with housing rehabilitation, parks improvement, planning and management and contingencies rounding out the list.

Pell City will be competing with other Alabama municipalities of its size up to 40,000 population for nearly \$6 million in the block grant program for comprehensive programs.

Any one municipality cannot receive more than the \$2,250,000 ceiling for the grant funds.

Disbursement of the federal funds will be determined by a points system that takes into account the city's needs and past performance.

Cosby said Pell City lost points on a previous application because the number of minority city employees did not correspond to the percentage of

minority citizens.

A second public hearing on the HUD grant application will precede the Nov. 24 council session.

Mayor Hugh Williamson read a letter from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks announcing that City Clerk Bettie Scott is now a certified municipal clerk. The institute commended Miss Scott on her ability and dedication as a municipal clerk and on achieving the certification, which is the highest recognition in her profession.

In other business, the council: —Appointed Randall Shumate to the Industrial Development Board, Don Raughton to the Planning Board and Bill Waller to the Zoning Board of Adjustments.

—Approved installation of six street lights near Seddon Cemetery and street lights at the intersections of 12th St. and 2 Ave. S. and Green St. and Alabama 34.

—Approved the only bid received on a Lo Boy trailer to haul the city's new bulldozer of \$5,000 from Childersburg Truck Service.

—Approved an on-premise wine license application for Scotty's Restaurant and an off-premise beer and off-premise wine application for Value Food Market.

Gate destruction, vandalism cause concern at Pell City Civic Center

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

Vandalism to the newly constructed softball fields behind the Pell City Civic Center and destruction of gates installed to prevent damage to city property has been a recurring topic at Pell City council meetings and Monday night was no different.

According to reports from city police, fire chief Ben Windsor and parks and recreation director Marci Vandergriff, gates and a fence constructed around the new softball fields have been a target of destruction in the past with four-wheel drive vehicles the culprits on most instances.

Last Saturday night a vehicle which apparently was locked in the park complex after open hours rammed and

destroyed the locked gate which city fathers must now pay to have replaced.

City police open a side road which runs in front of the new Cropwell fire station and civic center every morning at 5 a.m. to allow citizens access to the lake for fishing. Each night fire department employees lock the gate at 9 p.m.

The city has gone to extra expense to fence in the ballparks to keep off-the-road vehicles from damaging the playing fields which have been seeded for grass. Prior to that, according to Mrs. Vandergriff, the fields were also being damaged.

Council has agreed to post a large sign detailing park hours and "private drive" signs will be installed for one citizen who lives in the area who has experienced trouble with motorists driving through is yard. A similiar sign was

stolen shortly after installation.

Recently police were chasing a hit-and-run vehicle that elluded officers and attempted to hide on the deadend road. Finding the gate closed, the driver turned his car around the newly sodded fire station front yard, damaging the grass.

City police apprehended the two suspects as firefighters gave chase to the culprits and the two were charged with destruction of city property along with other offenses surrounding the accident. City officials state they will continue to prosecute all vandals who damage city property.

Councilman Charles Lockridge, who is also police commissioner, has also requested stepped-up patrolling of the civic center area.

Alabama 34 was also a source of con-

tative A.J. Blake an American flag. Lockridge commended the legislator for his active role in representing St. Clair County. Blake noted the cooperation between himself and Senator John Teague and also reported that contracts for \$1.41 million resurfacing work on U.S. 231 and Alabama 144 had been awarded with work to begin after March 15.

-HEARD a report from Mayor Hugh Williamson concerning recent correspondence from the U.S. Census Bureau. The city has filed a protest with the bureau over the lateset count of citizens and is requesting a recount of the community.

-HEARD a report from Lockridge on

asking for bids for two new patrol cars which were budgetted for this year. Lockridge requested that bids be sent to a number of dealerships in addition to dealers the city has conducted bussiness with in the past.

-HEARD a request from Councilman Paul Turner on pursuing an ordinance governing policy over late books at the county library in Pell City. The city attorney is currently studying the legality of such an ordinance.

-HEARD a request for the organization of neighborhood watch groups to aid police in combating daytime residential burglaries from Dr. Bob McClung.

cern at Monday night's meeting. Councilman Barnett Lawley and Mayor Hugh Williamson stated the work conducted thus far "will not be enough."

Lawley, noting the continual growth in the area served by Alabama 34, stated the flooding problem will continue to become a greater problem in the road is not raised. Councilman Keith Porter also requested the state be contacted about lowering a rise in the road near the Masters Road intersection.

Porter noted the city had once previously contacted the blind intersection and requested pursuit of this matter.

In other business, council:

-RECEIVED from state represen-

P.C. Council approves sales tax

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — Applause echoed through council chambers Monday night as a 30-member delegation supporting a city school system endorsed the Pell City City Council's institution of an additional one cent sales tax.

The 4-1 decision came after last week's delay because Councilman Charles Lockridge voted against suspending the rules to pass the motion into an ordinance.

In order for the ordinance to be approved during the same meeting in which it is introduced, the rules suspension must be unanimous.

With Lockridge's dissenting vote in last week's special joint session with the ad hoc school board, the ordinance vote was delayed until this week's regular meeting.

Lockridge again cast the dissenting vote and with Councilman Paul Turner's absence, the decision won approval with Councilmen Forrest Walls, Barnett Lawley and Keith Porter and Mayor Hugh Williamson voting for the measure.

THE ORDINANCE specifies that an additional one cent sales tax and the equivalent of one quarter of one percent on auto sales will be instituted for the city.

The revenue collected will be earmarked for the proposed city school system with the stipulation that if the

system is not established in 12 months, that money will go toward school improvements within the city limits.

Councilmen Porter and Lawley, who introduced and seconded the motion, both explained the merits of the city school system to those present.

Lawley said the city system would obtain 22 more teachers, reduce the pupil-teacher ratio to a "decent limit" and get the schools certified.

Porter displayed an Internal Revenue Service tax table showing that a couple earning \$10,000 per year would be paying \$37. per year with the new tax.

WITH PRESIDENT Ronald Reagan's tax cut plan, that same couple will be saving \$95, which amounts to a \$58 increase in take-home pay this year.

He then illustrated the same point with a couple making \$40,000 per year.

The new tax will cost them \$73 per year with a savings of \$490 which will mean a \$419 increase of take-home pay.

The sales tax "isn't going to cost us a whole lot," Porter concluded, and the city will be gaining 22 new teachers and an opportunity to "control the system ourselves."

One member of the delegation added, "I like seeing my tax money stay at home and see what's happening to it."

Ed Ash, an ad hoc school board

member, said "It looks like that (establishment of a city school system) will be our recommendation."

BUT, HE ADDED, the system would go into effect in July and the state and federal funds will not be allocated until the new fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 1982.

Ash explained the need of the sales tax revenue for operational costs before the actual formation of the city school system.

Iola Roberts Principal Roy Mann spoke of the indeterminate amount of the oil and gas lease windfall money "we'll get."

But, he said that in the past, the money was divided equally throughout the state's 127 school systems.

If St. Clair has two systems when windfall money is appropriated, Mann said the state will give equally to both systems "over and above" the usual state funding.

IN OTHER business, the Council:

— Approved annexation of 40 acres in the Dry Creek Road area.

— Approved Johnny Smith's 35-acre subdivision for annexation.

— Accepted Porter's recommendation to limit tree limb hauling to two shredder truck loads per year. More than two will require \$35. per hour payment.

— Accepted Porter's recommendation to reduce garbage pick-up to once a week.

— Approved Walls' suggestion of installing a "bill drop" box outside City Hall.

— Approved an off premise beer license application name change for Sheila Slovensky and Value Grocery Mart, 212 34th St. N..

— Approved the Shriners' request to sell its newspapers at businesses and road blocks on Nov. 14 with proceeds going to crippled and burned children's hospitals.

— Approved tax refunds charged in error.

Council agrees on

BY KELLY BRYAN
News-Aegis Writer

Pell City Councilman Rickey Staples handed a piece of paper with numbered items to Mayor Harvey Watson at the pre-council meeting between the city officials in the mayor's office 30 minutes before the start of the official meeting, Monday night.

As Watson read down the list of items that Staples said he was going to bring up at the council meeting; Watson said, "These are administrative items that do not need to be brought up." But, Staples said he was going to bring them up. Watson explained his responsibilities as administrative head of the city, and Staples asked what the councilmen were elected for, if they could not bring issues up for vote.

And so, a scene that has twice been played out in the council chambers was played again on the agenda. An elected councilman trying to handle issues, while Watson tries to fight off what he considers an encroachment on his legal powers by reading the written responsibilities of the two offices from the handbook for Mayors and Council Members, a handbook published by the Alabama League of Municipalities.

The arguments began months ago when Councilman Roy Holladay told of

issues;

the problem he was having in giving input on city business. James McGowan then took a stand at a council meeting saying he felt he needed to know about the workings of the fire department. McGowan asked, "Why are the councilmen needed, if we can't do anything?" And, Councilman Sonny Kilgroe agreed with McGowan's estimation of the problem.

But, all the while, Councilmen Rickey Staples and Joe Wheeler remained silent.

The difference in the Monday night confrontation between the two was Staples' capturing of a clear majority of his fellow councilmen. The majority who voted for Staples' motions forced Watson to play his hand, instead of using rhetoric such as, "I will be happy to work with any councilman. But, it is important to remember the council can only legislate. It is my duty to serve as the administrative head of this city."

STAPLES' MOTIONS FOCUS ON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Staples, who heads up the police committee, focused on issues from that department in his list of motions heard Monday night. He put a motion on the table asking that detectives for the police department earn sergeant pay, as

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Watson contests

has been paid in the past. Watson immediately balked. "I object to the council voting on this since it is an administrative duty," said Watson, who added, "A recommendation to fill the detective position has not come through the proper channels as required."

But, Staples turned to Police Chief Homer "Bojack" Layton and asked if Donnie Howell had not been serving as detective for some two months. Layton said Howell was working in the slot. Staples and McGowan then asked if the announcement of Howell's new position had been announced to the public, and members of the media agreed it had.

Watson then asked Layton if he had received a recommendation on Howell's taking on the detective responsibilities, and Layton answered, "No." "I have nothing against Donnie. He is a good man. But, promotions should be handled through the proper channels," added Watson.

Staples stuck with his motion, and the resulting vote was unanimous. With that win, Staples made a motion to recognize the fact that Donnie Howell was the detective for the city. But, Watson said he questioned the council's authority in handling promotions, which he considers a part of the administrative responsibilities. The vote was unanimous.

(See Council page 4A)

Watson addresses recent controversy

Pell City Mayor Harvey Watson who is again embroiled in controversy over the delineation of powers between councilmen and mayors, signed what he calls an "open letter to the citizens of Pell City" on Friday.

The letter in its entire reads as follows:

The "new" Pell City administration is not so new anymore. As I write this, the five councilmen and I are days away from the anniversary of having been sworn in.

One of the pledges I made during the 1984 campaign—that I would be a fulltime mayor—has been carried out. But not without conflict.

In a city which, up to a point in time, seemed content with a series of part-time Mayors, the burden of governing was spread over several shoulders. Various committees of city council shared the load. So did the city clerk. As well as, of course, whoever was then mayor.

When I began carrying out the full-time mayor pledge, the first important task was to consolidate the responsibility back onto the shoulders of the "chief executive."

It has not been an easy task, and some folks have misunderstood my motives. It is past time to clarify the situation.

Think about your own situation, fellow citizen.

If you work for someone else, do you have one boss or several? Assuming one person really supervises your work, can you imagine how hard it would be for you to keep your work priorities straightened out if you had several equal bosses, or a committee of them—sometimes making joint decisions, sometimes different ones taking different views as to what you should do next?

This was the problem that several of the municipal department heads had under the ways city business was conducted in the past. Much less those who worked under them and heard from different elected officials without much regard for the "chain of command."

To help public servants—those mostly good and dedicated workers whose pay comes from your tax dollars—to keep their jobs in good focus, they must have one chain of command.

Over the past several months, there has been considerable public debate over the question of which—among six elected officials—should have the right, privilege and opportunity to do whatever in the realm of governing the affairs of this city. Did the voters intend for each councilman and the mayor to, somehow, split the leadership job six ways?

If you had six "bosses," each
(See Watson page 3A)

(Continued from page 1)

with an equal shot at giving you your assignments, how long could you do your job efficiently and with reasonable peace of mind?

Over-riding all my concerns is my conviction that the framers of the U.S. Constitution, and, subsequently, state constitutions and city charters, were inspired when they built a careful framework of "separation of powers" and the

"balance of powers."

Judges can't tell lawmakers what to do, lawmakers can't tell the chief executive what to do, the chief executive can't tell the lawmakers or the judges what to do, and a resulting good from this is an elaborate system of checks and balances. Keeping any of these branches of government from getting "carried away."

In Pell City's chosen form of

municipal government, the city council is the lawmaking body. The mayor is the chief executive.

It's the mayor's burden to bring sharp focus to the business of governing, of serving the needs and interests of all citizens, the workaday job is his to manage, and the career, non-elected heads

of departments must answer to him and him alone.

It's the city council's great responsibility to do several very important things:

—To make the laws (at this level, that is, city ordinances.

—To stand back from the routines of municipal operations and take an objective view of the quality of the overall job; from this distance, the council can be expected to keep a clear perspective on the budgetary needs and policy interests of the city.

On the matter of the budgetary needs, the council properly has the power to fix the budget—put the general spending limits—on the municipality.

On the matter of policy interests, some of the most important responsibilities of a city council is to set general policy and make its specific recommendations as to how the executive branch might carry out that policy.

The trick is (a) to offer the recommendations, as recommendations, at the public meetings and (b) to ask, from time to time, why the mayor chose to follow a different path if he does not follow the recommendations.

Between their well-meant recommendations and the mayor's responses, a lot of light can be shed—instead of heat—as to the direction taken in governing.

There has been much confusion, confusing recommendations with mandates, confusing good lawmaking with good administration, over these past few months.

If we can now settle into our roles, all very important roles, there is a tremendous amount of "good government" that we can yet practice together. There is no doubt in my mind that each one of the six of us has none but the best in intentions in serving citizens of Pell City.

Negotiating with each other and reasoning together, your city council and your mayor can accomplish much at a time when such accomplishments are demanded.

We are the largest community in Alabama's fastest growing county. And we have assets—our lake and our new school system and our recreation facilities and our industrial parks—on which we can build.

But we, council, mayor and, most important, informed and interested citizens, have to work together if our city is to live up to its destiny.

As of Friday afternoon, the only motion that won approval by the council, in spite of Watson's objections, that had been implemented was the increase in pay for the Pell City detective. Donnie Howell will earn

sargeant's pay, beginning during the next pay period. There has not been a relocation of the mayor's secretary's office, and the municipal car situation remains the same. The council recommended however that Rhonda Chapman, the mayor's secretary, be in the front to welcome visitors in the mayor's office, with a conference room set up in her current office for the councilmen. The group, spurred on by Councilman Rickey Staples, also asked that Howell have an unmarked city car, that city vehicles have municipal tags and that the council has input as to who drives the municipal cars to and from home.

... Agree to support industrial land purchase

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — After months of negotiations and a trip or two back to the drawing board, the Industrial Development Board finally got its way on a potential \$1.2 million land purchase.

The 450 acre site, which adjoins a new industrial park, is what officials have termed an ideal location for attracting new industries.

Without it, they maintained, Pell

City's future industrial growth would be severely hampered.

The IDB is entering into a five year option agreement with the owner of the property at an initial cost of \$150,000.

The agreement states that if the Board sells two parcels of that property within the five year period, it then becomes a purchase contract.

IDB spokesman Ed Ash explained that at the end of the five year period "if there is a debt left, it will be

manageable" through the sale of parcels.

There will be "no burden," if any, on the city until the end of the five years, Ash assured the Council.

During the past five years, he noted, 60 to 80 acres of industrial land has been sold. If the Board sells 60 from this property, it comes to approximately \$400,000.

WITH THE impressive addition of nationally known Benjamin Moore

and Co., Pell City is "now attracting industries it couldn't have attracted 15 years ago," Ash said.

Councilman James McGowan entered the motion to support the Board, but the vote ended with councilmen Joe Wheeler and Ric Staples abstaining and Councilman Sonny Kilgroe voting "no."

Holladay had cast his vote for McGowan but with two abstainin

(Continued from Page 1)

was not enough to be considered a majority.

Members of the IDB continued to urge support for the project, indicating that Wheeler and Staples should take a stand on the matter.

McGowan explained his "yes" position, saying that "a lot of leg work" and thought had gone into securing the land for future development. "They shouldn't have any problems with selling this land. We're not giving them a fair shake if we don't okay it."

Board member John Haynes added, the Council is making a "big mistake if you turn this down."

Wheeler suggested that the Council meet privately for a few minutes before retaking a vote, and Mayor Harvey Watson immediately recessed the meeting.

The Council then went into an adjacent room, followed by news media representatives.

WHILE QUESTIONS of the legality of recessing a meeting to discuss a matter in private were raised, Wheeler said that members of the audience could have joined the Council if they desired.

When asked why he could not discuss the matter in the public

meeting if the public was invited to the private meeting, Wheeler said, "Let's go back in."

After a few minutes of private discussion between Wheeler and City Attorney Billy Church before the meeting reconvened, Wheeler changed his vote to "no." The mayor voted "yes," giving the necessary majority to okay the project.

In other business, the Council:

— Awarded the low bid for garbage service to St. Clair Disposal because it would be a savings to residents even though Wheeler objected because he wanted more time to research the cost to businesses;

— Agreed to consider a Chamber of Commerce budget request of \$900 per month;

— Adopted a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to complete the Civic Center Park;

— Agreed to pave the unnamed road on which Susan Davis lives on a priority basis if money is available;

— Approved the purchase of a strip of property at the entrance to Shadydale-Bellvue for \$750 and put a guard rail on the north and west side of the Jerry Carroll property where 34th Street is on his property.

Pell City mayor and Council

By CAROL PAPPAS

BELL CITY — It was another Monday night of authority vs. authority as the mayor and Council once again locked horns on who has what power.

On several occasions in the past, various members of the Council have questioned what they have perceived to be the mayor having full authority without input from the Council.

As Police Commissioner Rickey Staples attempted to legislate changes in the police department through a series of motions, Mayor

Harvey Watson repeatedly exercised his administrative authority to contest each passage.

"They (the Council) want to ram something down my throat, and I can't buy that. I'm not going to obey it," stressed Watson after the meeting.

The Council had unanimously approved the promotion of Donnie Howell to detective, raising his pay equal to that of a sergeant and providing him with an unmarked car.

Two months ago, it was publicly announced that Howell had been

lock horns on authority issue...

promoted to detective, and he has been working in that capacity since that time.

Watson, though, contends that the promotion did not go through "proper channels" and contested all motions pertaining to the job.

Staples first entered a motion for a raise in pay for Howell as detective. But, Watson insisted the motion was not proper because the promotion had not been approved by him.

HE ADDED THAT he was not against the person holding the job, "I'm against someone not going

through the proper channels: Department heads are supposed to go through me for advancement."

Staples re-entered his motion to raise the pay of detective and with a second, Councilman Roy Holladay said, "I'm calling for a vote."

"Well I'm calling for a discussion," retorted Watson.

With Holladay and Watson arguing over authority, citing the League of Municipalities Handbook, City Attorney Billy Church was called on for an interpretation.

Church, saying he was unprepared for that interpretation,

gave a "for what it's worth" opinion. "If we adhere to everything in that book, we're going to hamstring our government. We're going to bog down in legalities and impair our effectiveness."

The vote on the raise was unanimous with Watson contesting.

Staples then turned his attention toward a car for Howell. The detective is currently using a marked patrol car rather than an unmarked car.

Staples' motion was to "furnish the detective a car — one of the cars we now have" that is unmarked.

Watson warned Staples, "You're getting into the administrative end. If I don't have the authority to dictate to personnel as I see fit, then you don't need a mayor in Pell City."

Holladay seconded Staples' motion, and it passed unanimously.

Watson again contested, saying, "I will not carry this out."

A third motion by Staples involved municipal tags for all city vehicles except the detective car.

HIS MOTION WAS apparently in reference to the unmarked cars driven by the mayor and Asst. Chief Ed Pennington.

The police chief's car is also unmarked, but it does have a municipal tag. The mayor and assistant chief's car have investigator tags that cannot be traced.

The motion passed with Councilman Joe Wheeler abstaining and the mayor again contesting.

Staples' final motion concerning the police department was to prohibit the use of city vehicles other than on city business. He also wanted the use of city vehicles restricted to department heads.

had pointed out that Pennington, who is not a department head, is furnished with an unmarked, city vehicle and is allowed to drive it to and from home to Leeds.

Restricting the use of city vehicles to city business passed unanimously, and the mayor contested.

"I'm for what's doing right on this council, and you're contesting things you know are right," Councilman James McGowan told the mayor.

Citing his seven days a week on the job, Watson responded, "I know what's going on in this city. I know what needs to be done" and will not allow the Council to "disrupt" departments.

DURING THE COUNCIL'S "pre-meeting" in the mayor's office, Staples had outlined the motions he was going to present in the public meeting. The mayor had urged Staples at that time not to go public with his requests.

However, during the public meeting, Watson repeatedly urged him to get the remainder of his requests out in the open to "resolve them all tonight."

"That's all I have," said Staples.

At the conclusion of Staples' requests, Holladay entered a motion to move the mayor's secretary from the office she now occupies to the reception area.

Holladay had made the request at an earlier meeting, but wanted an official motion Monday night. Watson took a stand at that time against the office move, explaining that he needed "privacy" to conduct city business.

Holladay moved ahead with his motion, requesting that the secretary's office be moved to make room for a Council office next door to the mayor by next Monday morning.

Staples seconded the motion, and it passed with Wheeler abstaining.

At the end of the vote, the mayor announced that he was contesting. "She will stay in that office as usual. She's not going anywhere. She's needed where she's at, therefore she's not going anywhere."

Annexation requests

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

Members of city council opted for more time to conduct cost comparison studies on two annexation requests presented to Pell City recently, both accompanied by protests to the move.

Mayor Hugh Williamson Monday night told council that the two requests, one along U. S. 231 north of Interstate 20 in the Wattsville community and the second along Mays Bend Road to that subdivision, warranted further study before council considers any motion on the issues.

"I would like to see the city attorney prepare maps on the two requests showing us just what's involved by sections," Williamson told council.

In making his recommendation, Williamson added that there were people in both areas that did not desire annexation into the city and that their feelings needed to be considered, too.

The Mays Bend group have opposition along the Mays Bend Road between the city limits sign and the entrance to that subdivision, according to the mayor. "I think there are a lot of people between the city and there that just don't want in the city," he said.

Councilman Charles Lockridge added, "I think we also need to conduct a study on how much it's going to cost the city to provide these people with police and fire protection. We need to see what the costs to the other Pell City citizens will be."

Councilman Paul Turner added, "We

need to do comparison studies on what the costs to the city will be and also on what will be coming into the city."

If both annexation requests are approved, Lockridge, who serves as police commissioner, speculated that the city would have to employ additional police officers and purchase additional equipment.

It was also questioned as to the need for the construction of a third fire station and additional firefighters if the city limits are expanded.

Both communities have their own water systems but the city is not in a position to add on new customers to the sewerage system at the present time.

Williamson appointed Lockridge, Turner and Councilman Barnett Lawley to serve on a study committee to present to the full council a cost comparison study in the future before the issue is further considered. Attorney Billy Church was directed to develop a map outlining the land area being considered for presentation to council.

In a related matter, Church was asked by council to study a city zoning ordinance and city zoning code that are apparently in conflict over the law governing livestock in the city.

The animal ordinance conflicts over whether persons can own livestock in the city limits and in what zoning areas. At a previous meeting, zoning board member Dick Whatley appeared to get clarification on which law supercedes and Church is to return at the next meeting with a report and recommended ordinance change if one is needed by

tabled

the city.

In other business, council:

—Williamson, in speaking for council, expressed his concern over the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan.

—APPROVED participation in the annual progress edition to be published by the News-Aegis in May following a presentation by Truett Langston.

—APPROVED the installation of street lights at the entrance of Walker Subdivision and the entrance to the Sedden Shores subdivision.

—HEARD a request from Jimmy Bischoff and Butch Davis for use of the city facilities for a church softball league which will involve 11 mens teams and eight womens teams from area churches. No action was taken but a meeting between league organizers and city staff is planned for this week.

—HEARD a request from two separate groups on the installation of signs by the city at no other costs. Four signs will read, "Welcome to Pell City," and will bear the emblems of civic organizations and will be paid for by these groups. No action was necessary.

—REJECTED bids by acclamation for the construction of concession stand at the civic center ballfields after Councilman Forest Walls reported the specifications mailed to contractor were incomplete. The city will readvertise for bids in the near future.

—HEARD a report from Councilman Keith Porter concerning a request for the Maplewood (Adams) Subdivision to become part of the city pending paving of subdivision streets. The planning commission has approved the request when paving is complete and Porter requested the city assist in obtaining bids

for the work.

—HEARD a report from Turner following a finance committee meeting at which time the mayor pro tem requested the city take immediate action to employ a building and zoning enforcement office on a part time basis. A special meeting will be held Thursday at which time job specifications will be drawn up.

—HEARD a report request from Councilman Barnett Lawley concerning the current maintenance program on fire hydrants in the city that need replacement, repairs or minor adjustments. Water superintendent James Tyus reported some work has been completed.

Funding cut could affect

BY WAYNE RUPLE
News-Aegis Staffwriter

A possible funding cut in Appalachian funds could adversely affect Pell City's planned sewer system expansion.

Over the past 15 years the Appalachian Regional Commission has, with grants and money, helped some 35 north Alabama counties in developing water and sewer systems, vocational and technical schools, health centers, highways, airports and conservation programs.

The big question now in many people's minds is will the ARC continue to pump money into the rural areas. Since 1965 ARC has spent over \$218 million in north Alabama with a portion of that coming to St. Clair County in the way of water system improvements and highway work.

St. Clair County Commission Chairman Dr. James McClendon said much of the ARC funds coming to St. Clair County were supplementary funds and that "almost all projects requiring supplementary funds" used ARC monies.

He said it is his personal belief that the program will not be cut out though it may be cut back.

Vern Whittle with the Agricultural

Stabilization and Conservation County Committee said his office, in the past, has had some programs, using ARC funds under the Regional Conservation Program but now, "we're out of the business."

He said there are three or four farms in the county which are still carrying out some projects already committed.

A spokesperson with the Office of

State Planning and Federal Programs in Montgomery said pre-applications have been received by that office from throughout the state and a project package has been submitted but whether the \$10 million allocated for fiscal year 1981 is granted will be up to the Congress.

"We are in limbo right now. We will not know until Congress responds,"

city sewer system

said the spokesperson.

She said the only project specifically for St. Clair County is the PC sewer system expansion of which Appalachian funds in the amount of \$205,812 would be used in combination with Environmental Protection Agency funds.

Pell City Mayor Hugh Williamson said if Appalachian funds are cut the

action would, "have a definite adverse affect" on the sewer expansion program.

It said a cut in funds would mean the city of Pell City would, "have to come up with that amount of money locally."

The expected \$4 million expansion includes construction of a sewage treatment plant, main trunk lines and some renovation of existing lines.

Some 75 percent of the funds would come from EPA, with \$205,812 from ARC and the remainder in local money.

Whether the ARC funds will be cut is a question Congress will have to answer and for Pell Citizens it will be a period of wait and see.

Pell City business council passes on

By Mike Moser
News-Aegis Editor

Businesses in Pell City will be receiving license notices in the next few weeks with no increases over last year's business license schedule. Monday night council also passed on to con-

sumers a natural gas increase.

In a report to council, Councilman Keith Porter stated a group of businessmen working under the Chamber of Commerce were unable to work up a revised business license schedule in time for this year.

licenses to be due; natural gas rate hike

Licenses are normally due at the first of the year but this year notices were not mailed out because members of council felt the schedule needed to be updated. The last change was made seven years ago.

A group of several businessmen in Pell City were appointed to act as a study commission and to present recommendations on new business license rates to council for this year.

But Porter commented, "The men felt the thing was too complicated for the amount of time they had to work in," adding that the group decided it would be better to begin work now on a new license schedule for next year.

Mayor Hugh Williamson approved the option of using the same schedule as last year and also recommended the business leaders begin work now to prepare a schedule for next year.

Clerk Bettie Scott told the News-Aegis the city would be sending out notices in the near future with a deadline for paying the fees to be extended for a month to allow all a chance to pay the license fee.

In another piece of business that came as no surprise, council unanimously approved a gas hike for the city's natural gas customers.

Council was made aware of the pending increase late in December when members were working on this year's budget and Monday night's action simply passed the rate increase on to

the customers.

Mayor Williamson announced the increase from Southern Natural Gas as follows: the first 300 cubic feet, from \$2.70 to \$4.50 for the first 500 cubic feet; all over from \$3.90 to \$4.30 per 1000 cubic feet.

The increase will amount to about a ten percent hike.

In a related matter, council agreed by acclamation that an outside agent was needed to investigate possible gas leaks in the city's system.

Ms. Scott reported to council that the rate of gas loss has increased from six percent in September to 12 percent this month with an estimated 25 percent loss in the Eden area.

Gas department superintendent James Tyus told council his department had worked out most of the leaks in the Eden area and added that an increase in loss could be attributed to an increase in pressure.

Considering that the city purchases \$700,000 worth of natural gas per year, a continuous 10 percent loss would amount to \$70,000 per year. One option the city is discussing is the insertion of a pipe in existing lines to block leaks. Williamson told council, "We may have to float a bond issue to do this," but all agreed the city could be facing a vast liability in the event of an accident.

In other business, council:

--APPROVED a four year committ-

(See LICENSE Page 2)

ment at \$3,000 per year (an increase of \$1,000 annually) in the Metropolitan Development Board, an agency geared to attract industry to the area.

-APPROVED, on recommendation of the Planning Commission and at the request of Louis Tice, the rezoning of six acres of land on the Old Coal City Road adjacent to the industrial park from M-2 (manufacturing or industrial) to R-4 (multi-dwelling units).

-APPROVED, on recommendation of the Planning Commission and at the request of Jerry Gallups a zoning variance allowing a mobile home to be placed on property near Pell City High School.

-APPROVED a request from Don Namen via letter the city's participation in advertising in two race brochures to coincide with the Winston

500 and the Talladega 500.

-TABLED action on proposed ordinance from Beverly Barber making against the law to keep overdue library books. Attorney Billy Church is to study the recommendation and make a recommendation as to the possibility of liability to the city at the next meeting.

-APPROVED the city's participation in the city-county park to be built in Cropwell with a few changes which were previously reported. The amount of the city's obligation in the total project were not changed but due dates were changed to accomodate the county government.

-STUDIED a proposed drawing of a concession for the new ball fields at the Civic Center, presented by Marci Vandergriff.

PG-2

Staples wants Watson's

BY KELLY BRYAN
News-Aegis Writer

On Monday night, Pell City Councilman Rickey Staples brought up a motion which, if passed, would take away appointment powers now vested with Mayor Harvey Watson. Minutes later, Watson told of changes in the standing committees made up of the city's elected leaders.

Staples' proposed ordinance to give the right of appointment to the council, instead of the mayor, extends to such municipal offices as police chief, fire chief, street superintendent, recreation director, utility superintendent, building inspector, magistrate and "all officers whose appointment is not otherwise provided for by law."

Though Staples got a second from Councilman Sonny Kilgroe to back

up his motion, when the individual votes were called out to get a suspension of the rules, Kilgroe's "no" vote stopped the council from taking action on the matter Monday. Instead, the group will decide on the issue at the next council meeting, October 28.

Also included in Staples motion was the granting of power to committee heads to "hire the employees in such department, subject to approval by the city council." With the exception of recreation director Al Murray, Watson has hired 20 people in the various city departments since last October without the approval of the council.

Staples brought in typed copies of his ordinance to the pre-council meeting held in Watson's office. Councilman Joe Wheeler objected to the matter being brought up at the council meeting, insisting the group

had agreed to follow an agenda, on which business must be listed by the Friday preceding the council meeting. However, Staples and Kilgroe pointed out the procedure has not been followed to date. Watson said he would like to see the matter decided on at the Monday night meeting, to prevent it from "going on another two weeks and backing up the matters that need to be dealt with at the next meeting."

When asked later about Staples' motion, Watson said he thought the end result of the measure, if it is passed, would be: "It will take a little of the motivation away from the office of the mayor. Heretofore, the office has carried a little prestige, but it has gotten to the point that it is looked down on. And, this measure, if it passes, might make people who would be good prospective mayors lose interest in the job."

powers diluted

The move by Staples to dilute Watson's powers comes after a head-on confrontation between the two at the last council meeting where Staples led the majority of the council in voting for certain changes. The granting of sergeant's pay to Detective Donnie Howell headed the list. Staples also made the successful motion to give Howell an unmarked car to work with on his investigations.

But, earlier this week Howell was notified he was being put back on regular patrol due to "his requests." Police Chief Homer "Bojack" Layton explained Monday night, Howell had asked to go back to the duties he held before being named "investigator." When asked if the job change had anything to do with the earlier controversy over the unmarked car and pay, Layton flatly said, "No. It had nothing to do with

that."

However, Staples offered a different story. "All I know is that I was called and told that Howell was not going to be detective any longer. I was asked by a reporter for my comment earlier today, and I didn't know anything about the change," said Staples. He also explained Howell had asked for his former position back, but only as a result of the lack of an unmarked car and the difference in salary paid to him in the position when compared to others before him.

Watson denied any involvement in the Howell matter, and said he was unaware of the reasons for Howell's job change. Howell, himself, declined to comment.

When Watson named the council members to the slots they have held on municipal committees last year, Councilman Roy Holladay said a few

months later the appointments came as a result of whether or not the individual councilmen lined up with Watson on issues at the start of his administration. The committees, as they have been working over the past year, (with department heads listed first) include: Recreation-Holladay, Staples, Kilgroe; Police-Staples, Wheeler, McGowan; Street and Utilities-Wheeler, Holladay, McGowan; Finance-Kilgroe, Wheeler, Holladay; and Fire-McGowan, Kilgroe, Staples.

On Monday night, Watson explained he was exercising his authority as mayor in rearranging the committees "in an effort to give everyone the opportunity to work with the various departments."

The new list of committee appointments (with department heads again listed first) reads: Fire-
(See Powers page 3A)

Staples, Kilgroe, Holladay; Police-McGowan, Wheeler, Watson; Utilities-Holladay, Staples, McGowan; Street and Sewage-Wheeler, Kilgroe, Staples; Recreation-Watson, Holladay, McGowan and Finance-Kilgroe, Watson and Wheeler.

Typically, a mayor has never served as a member of a committee in Pell City's history. However, as Watson explained it, "I need to be involved in the six committees." He also explained he put himself as chairman of the recreation department "since it seemed over the last year, noone wanted to serve as such." Watson's reasoning for being on the finance committee is, "Joe, myself and Sonny already sign the checks and we are the only three that are available throughout the day." His name listed with the police committee stems from nothing more, says Watson, than the fact he wanted each councilman to have three different committees, and he did not want any vacancies.

Throughout the past year, Watson has spent time at council meeting

After council meeting telling the other elected officials of his administrative duties as mayor, and their limited responsibilities as councilmen. When asked why, at this point, he was involved himself in the legislative branch of the government, Watson said, according to the League of Municipalities he has the right in a city the size of Pell City. Questioned about the lining up of himself and Wheeler on committees, Watson said, "I think Joe is independent. He hasn't constantly been on my case. But, he hasn't agreed with everything I have done, either."

In other matters, the council voted three to two to support the Greater Pell City Chamber of Commerce financially. The contract between the two stipulates the city will pay the chamber \$900 monthly in return for the services offered by the chamber. Kilgroe and Staples voted against the measure. Holladay was absent.

Finally, they voted to name Joe Paul Abbott to a vacancy on the city's planning commission. They also agreed to contribute \$2,500 to the county's health department.

Some say physically, others say not

Holladay confronts

BY KELLY BRYAN
News-Aegis Writer

Four members of the Pell City Council who stayed in the council chambers after an early Monday morning meeting agree on there was a confrontation between Councilmen Roy Holladay and Joe Wheeler.

But, just what kind of a confrontation was it?

Two say that Holladay lifted his arms as if to shove Wheeler; two describe the argument as only a verbal exchange; and Holladay, himself, says, "There was no fight (verbal or physical) that I know of."

As Wheeler remembered the incident Monday afternoon, Holladay, Kilgroe and Staples were still in the council chambers talking when he walked back into the room to ask the group about paving work in the city. Wheeler said Holladay told him that items not listed on the waiver signed for special meetings could not be discussed. And, Wheeler told Holladay he would bring the matter up at the next council meeting and Holladay would then "have to do something" on the measure.

"Don't you tell me what I've got to do," Wheeler recalled Holladay responding before Holladay "put his hands up as if to push me."

Wheeler said he caught Holladay's hands. Holladay, according to Wheeler, asked him what he was going to do? "I told him, 'I'll handle it,'" said Wheeler, who then said Holladay came back with more verbal antagonisms, before Wheeler cautioned him, "Roy, this is not the time or the place."

Wheeler then said he warned Holladay, "Don't ever cross my path again," before walking out of the councilroom.

He also said he pointed out to Mayor Harvey Watson, "I'm walking away from him this time, but I won't do it again."

HOLLADAY REFUSES TO REBUT SUCH STATEMENTS

Holladay did not relive the event when questioned about it Monday morning. When asked if there was a confrontation between himself and Wheeler, Holladay would only say, "I don't know about that. That is purely speculative."

When told that Wheeler had described Holladay's action as a push for a fight, Holladay said, "As far as I'm concerned, it was not," before adding that he did not want to make a "rebuttal" to any such statements.

Holladay did say that people interpreted things in different ways. What happened between the two was no more a confrontation that morning than they have had in the two years of their service on the council, Holladay said.

How did the other elected officials view the argument?

Watson said he returned to the council chambers and Holladay and Wheeler were "talking pretty loud." He said Holladay was sitting on the front row of the audience section when "he charged out toward Joe, saying that he was sick of him." Holladay then reached as if he was going to shove Wheeler, but Wheeler

caught his hands, Watson said. "They both exerted a little power toward each other for quite a few seconds," added Watson.

Councilman Sonny Kilgroe would say only that Holladay and Wheeler got into an argument over the inspection of paving work to be done. "I am not going to get involved," said Kilgroe when asked if he witnessed Holladay trying to push or shove Wheeler. "That's their business," he added.

Councilman Rickey Staples said he did not remember Holladay looking as if he were going to shove Wheeler, but he did add, "I thought they were about to fight."

Wheeler at meeting

Councilman James McGowan had already left the city hall when the dispute erupted.

TEMPERS ARE AS HOT AS SUMMER TEMPERATURES

Tempers on the Pell City Council have been as hot as the temperature outside during recent weeks. The initial flare-up was between Holladay and Watson when Holladay implied that Watson had overstepped his boundaries in taking away city vehicles. But, Watson contended that the council's vote some months earlier on the matter had given him

the signal to do just that, though he vocally was against the move.

At a Friday, August 1 meeting of the council, during a special session, Holladay and Wheeler were at odds when Wheeler asked for the council's decision on matters that were not specifically enumerated with "discuss and vote" on the waiver sheet the council signed so that the special meeting could be called. Holladay refused to vote and said he understood the subjects to be discussed at a special meeting were to be specifically listed and the waiver should also indicate if a vote is to be taken. Holladay was joined by Kilgroe in delaying action on pav-

ing in the city that Wheeler proposed, so Wheeler called for the special Monday morning meeting.

All of the council turned out at 7 a.m. on Monday, and the 15-minute meeting was a relatively calm one. Wheeler read the figures on paving jobs he wanted to see done while a paving crew was in the city limits on grant work. The jobs—paving the alley behind city hall, a portion of 16th St. and a circular area around the Pell City Nutrition Center—would only cost the city around \$1,741.50 in all. The low figure comes from the transfer of monies allocated for paving Wolf Creek Road to the new sites since the council determined the need was greater on 16th St. and the rest. The group unanimously agreed on the motion.

WHEELER RUNS INTO TROUBLE OVER REQUEST FOR \$25,000

But, Wheeler ran into trouble when he suggested the council set aside some \$25,000 for other paving to be done within the city at the low bid price given for grant paving. Once again Holladay refused to discuss the move since it was not clearly outlined on the waiver signed for the special meeting.

Wheeler said the council would never again be able to get paving done at such a low cost. Kilgroe asked, "What have you got in mind?" And, Wheeler said he did not know any specific roads at that time to be included in additional paving. "I will be happy to call each of you as they come up," he added.

But, Kilgroe said, "I don't want to do it that way."

"We can't have a council meeting every other day," said Wheeler, exasperated.

"I just as soon have a meeting," replied Holladay.

Pell City Council sees progress

BY KELLY BRYAN
News-Aegis Writer

The first year in office for Pell City's elected officials has been comprised of a few meetings in which showdowns between Mayor Harvey Watson and the council were played out. Many of the heated discussions in the council chamber during 1985 resulted from different opinions as to what the responsibilities of the elected officials were. Watson saw his role as the sole administrator of council policy, and the council balked at not being able to give input on the operation of the municipal departments.

Though the issue has been discussed repeatedly, Watson recently admitted he did not think the group had agreed on a happy median to the opposing ideas; but he does think the issue has been moved to the back burner for the moment.

"My personal opinion is that a council should back the administrator of the city—the mayor—on his work to improve the operations of the city. As long as the

elected mayor is making strides and doing a good job, the mayor should feel he has the cooperation of the council. Most importantly, it should not be a sort of competition to do the same job," explained Watson.

"That is not the way the government was set up. A city should have an administrative head. If he is not operating in an efficient way, then the council should point it out and do whatever they feel is necessary. But I think as long as the mayor is doing an efficient job, the council should back him up," he added.

Watson also explained that he thinks he has done a fair job in administering the city during the first year of his term as mayor. "I devote all of my time to this city. I guarantee that. Anyone can ask a department head and get reassurance on that point. I know what is going on in Pell City. It is my responsibility to know, but the operation of the departments is something that I leave to the head of the departments—that is what they are paid for," said Watson.

"I have lived here all of my life,

and I felt it would be a challenge to come into the mayor's office and devote my time to making sure the city operated efficiently. Pell City has never had anyone spend their full day in the position as mayor.

"This is not a little, bitty town anymore, in spite of what some people believe. And, Pell City needs someone to maintain connections with Washington, D.C., Montgomery, the Alabama Development Office and the Metropolitan Development Board. Friends help friends. And, it takes a full time mayor to maintain this relationships to get the most out of grants.

"Frankly, it galls me to think that some of the council does not believe my work here warrants an old police automobile," said Watson, in reference to the fact a majority of the council voted to limit city vehicles to department heads and others they agreed on. "It is a thankless job," said Watson, who also pointed out he takes home just \$400 a month for his non-stop workdays, when the council could vote to compensate him with \$1,200

in 1985; despite problems

n monthly salary.

This led Watson to point out he will be 62-years-old this year. "I've tried to do a good job. But, a person can only stand so much. It is costing me a lot of money to maintain the office of mayor."

Councilman Joe Wheeler voiced the same feelings. He said he had taken his time and effort away from his business in order to work alongside city employees to make sure the citizens of Pell City got what they deserved. But, due to council constraints he has had to deal with, he also said he will be glad to help out with day to day city shop problems when called on, "but I will not spend my own money working for the city."

Watson, Wheeler and the rest of the councilmen agreed, however, that while the public may perceive them as a controversial council that has done nothing but argue—some real strides have been made in Pell City which will provide for a better future of the town.

"There have been a lot of things done in the past year. And, the pro-

gress has far outweighed the problems. The public needs to understand that a council coming in with no experience in municipal government is going to have to go through a learning period. You cannot do anything without making mistakes, and that includes serving in government."

Watson ran down a list of achievements which he topped with the reorganization of the city's police department and municipal court system. "Not too many people are aware of the importance of this work. But, because the police and court records were not filed, there was absolutely no way to determine anything. And, all of that was resolved very quickly. We have restructured the offices in the police department to assure this. And, Janet Poe, the court clerk, has done a great job in getting working out an efficient system for the judicial business."

He also said, "There had never been anyone full time in the mayor's office to look into the problems, and as a result, the haphazard system just became a way of life for a

number of years."

Recreation in Pell City has also seen some strides, according to Watson. "I think we've done a considerable amount in recreation. This past year, we have had by far the largest number of participants in programs of the department. And, we are expanding our facilities to include additional programs."

Another key change that Watson feels has paved the way for a brighter future in Pell City is efficiency in all municipal departments. "We have a purchase order system set up which has allowed us to eliminate a lot of unnecessary buying. Everything has to come through this office," said Watson.

He pointed to the completion of Hwy. 34 as another accomplishment. "That is something we can all be proud of. I would have liked to have done more blacktopping this year, but we had a \$100,000 deficit that we had to make up for due to paving projects the previous council had undertaken. We are just now able to accumulate monies in that area to

(See Council page 3A)

Pell City Council 'will not'

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — A rumor circulating throughout the city recently that the council is planning to raise the sales tax again was officially put to rest Monday night as city fathers went "on the record" denying the claim.

Councilman Keith Porter initiated the discussion, saying that he "never heard," "never discussed," "never proposed" and "will never propose" an additional one cent sales tax.

Mayor Hugh Williamson agreed, saying that "nobody has made a reference to an additional sales tax — now or in the future."

Councilman Paul Turner called the idea "ridiculous" and "out of the question" and added that an increase had "never been discussed by any member of the city council in my presence."

Councilman Barnett Lawley said he was "absolutely opposed to it and would not vote for it," while Councilman Ben Cox questioned who the source of the rumor was.

Ken Goodman, a representative of the newly formed Pell City Retail Merchants Association, suggested that the council put their tax opposition views in the form of a motion, but the council determined that their on the record quotes were sufficient.

ON A REQUEST by the city's church softball league representative Joe Funderburg to reschedule playing nights for church and independent teams, the council agreed to have its recreation committee meet Wednesday afternoon with two representatives from each league and Civic Center Director Marcie Vandegrift to arrive at a solution.

Funderburg explained that Ms. Vandegrift had scheduled independent teams to play Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays while church teams were restricted to weekend play.

He requested "equal representation" of the two leagues and suggested that the schedule return to the previous year's with the church league playing on one week night and

one weekend night.

Funderburg also added that Ms. Vandegrift, who is in charge of scheduling, should "give us the same amount of consideration with scheduling as she does the independent teams. We feel she has not done this."

In Ms. Vandegrift's defense, Turner described her as "one of the finest directors of any civic center around," and the problem was "too many people for the space we have."

The Civic Center has two ball parks, and there are 21 teams in the church league and 24 teams in the independent league.

IN A RELATED matter, Lawley asked that the council consider creating a park and recreation board that would serve in an advisory capacity to alleviate problems, such as scheduling, and allow time for Ms. Vandegrift to "direct her activities at managing, which she is supposed to do."

He added, "the lady needs some help."

Councilman Forrest Walls, who heads the recreation committee, asked for more time in determining what guidelines under which the board would operate, and the motion to

raise sales tax

create the board was tabled until the next regular meeting.

First Birmingham Securities representative Mike Cochran, who is assisting the council in financing \$1,750,000 for the new sewage, water and gas operation, gave a status report on the fluctuating bond market.

The city is currently in an interim financing program so that it can obtain the lowest possible interest rate on the long term financing when the rates drop.

Cochran commended the council on its choice to delay fixed financing until the best possible time because if it

borrowed today versus last year in April, the council would be saving more than \$1 million or a lower debt service of \$50,000 per year.

The council then authorized First Birmingham to proceed with the sale of bonds contingent upon council confirmation at the time it deems financially beneficial and as the mayor explained, "We need to get ready and go (enter the bond market) on a one day's notice."

In other action, the council:

—Approved an off premise beer license application by Enoch D. Pike

of Pell City Qwik Stop on Martin Street;

—Denied an on and off premise beer license application by Will Carter and Cynthia Marie Carter of Lightning Place on 6th Avenue South because of a zoning conflict;

—Tabled a decision on closing city hall on Saturdays until the survey of customers served is completed at the end of April;

—Asked that more information be furnished on the city board of education's request to close 12th Street South as a public street for control and safety purposes.

City administrator ordinance not abolished,

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — On a 3-3 tie vote Monday night, the ordinance creating the job of city administrator was not abolished. But, City Administrator Con Coupland lost that job anyway.

Although the city administrator's job was not abolished because of the tie, a subsequent motion to make Coupland assistant to the mayor got the necessary majority on a 4-2 vote.

Coupland has been on "temporary" status since Oct. 1 when the new administration took office.

All city employees were re-hired

on a temporary basis at that time until the new mayor and Council had a chance to make evaluations.

Two weeks ago, the Council re-hired all department heads and employees in those departments, but Coupland was not among them.

At that same meeting, Councilman Joe Wheeler entered a motion to abolish the ordinance that created the city administrator's job.

Before an ordinance can be considered, it requires a unanimous vote by the Council to suspend the rules.

However, Councilmen James

McGowan and Roy Holladay blocked suspension of the rules by casting "no" votes.

The ordinance was automatically tabled until Monday night's meeting for consideration.

WHEELER AGAIN brought up the motion to abolish the city administrator's position, and it again ended in a 3-3 tie.

Wheeler, Councilman Rickey Staples and Mayor Harvey Watson voted in favor of abolishing the ordinance. McGowan, Holladay and Councilman Sonny Kilgroe voted to

but Coupland loses job anyway

keep the ordinance.

Kilgroe then made a motion to re-hire Coupland, but it died on the same 3-3 split vote.

A third motion decided Coupland's fate. Kilgroe entered a motion to hire Coupland as the mayor's assistant until April 1, at which time Coupland plans to retire.

That final motion netted four "yes" votes and two "no" votes. McGowan and Holladay cast the dissenting votes.

Kilgroe explained that his motion was aimed at allowing the Council "a little bit more time to learn a few

things" before letting Coupland go.

He noted that Coupland planned to retire after he reached 65 in March, and the Council "needed input from Mr. Coupland a little longer."

McGowan indicated that he was in favor of keeping the city administrator's job. "I wanted to see it stay like it was. After that point (April 1), you don't know."

Holladay explained that he originally blocked the consideration of the ordinance two weeks ago because Wheeler entered the motion under the wrong ordinance number.

HE ADDED THAT during the campaign, voters seemed to be opposed to the city administrator himself "for whatever reasons."

They did not express disapproval of the city administrator position, he added.

Holladay pointed out that "the mayor needs help. We don't need to fire anybody . . . we're still taking notes."

Watson said that he was "still new enough that there's a lot I don't know about the city."

Coupland, he explained, will assist (Con't. see Administrator, Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

nim "as I learn different phases of operating the city. By April 1, I should know all I need to know about the city."

After April 1 when Coupland retires, "as far as I know, the vacancy (of city administrator) won't be filled. We do not have a city administrator anymore."

For now, though, the position of

city administrator remains in tact.

Watson said there was a possibility that if the vacancy was not filled within 60 days, the ordinance was automatically abolished, but he wasn't sure.

According to City Clerk Bettie Scott, there is no provision that the post would be abolished if the vacancy is not filled.

Watson added that as assistant to the mayor, Coupland will be

receiving the same salary and benefits he had while serving as city administrator.

His annual salary is \$24,600.

COUPLAND WAS originally hired during the previous administration to oversee the day-to-day operation of the city, attempt to secure grants for the city and to save the city money.

When the previous administration entered office four years ago, the budget had a balance of \$500,000, but it was earmarked for the new sewage treatment facility.

When that administration left office in September, the budget had a balance of \$500,000, which was not earmarked.

In other business Monday night, the Council:

— Accepted its revenue sharing budget of \$214,000 in unused funds and \$180,000 in anticipated funds;

— Authorized the mayor to request an Attorney General's opinion on the legality of the city contributing funds to the Industrial Development Board for expenses incurred while contacting industrial prospects to locate in Pell City.

P.C. Council voices support

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — In accordance with mounting interest in Pell City's steps toward establishing its own school system, the City Council devoted much of its regular meeting Monday night to that issue.

Earlier in the summer, the Council appointed an ad hoc consultant and a five-member school board to operate and study the situation for one year.

At the end of that year, the Board is to make its recommendation to the Council on whether to officially establish a city school system.

The Council is empowered to adopt a resolution establishing the Pell City City School System at the end of the

trial year.

Chamber of Commerce President John Thomas presented a resolution passed by the Chamber Board of Directors urging the Council to take all necessary steps toward creating the city system, including the imposition of a \$.01 sales tax.

AT THURSDAY'S meeting of the Chamber, the advantages of a city school system was the topic, and 90 percent of the record audience voted to support taxing itself in order to finance the system.

It also was pointed out that of the 15 municipalities surrounding Birmingham, one-third already has ap-

proved a \$.01 sales tax, and another one-third is contemplating its approval.

Councilman Keith Porter, also a member of the city school feasibility committee, presented the draft of a letter explaining the role of a city system.

He proposed that the letter, along with a sheet designated as "parent feedback," be sent home with each student when school opens Aug. 27.

The Council unanimously adopted Porter's proposal.

IN OTHER BUSINESS, the Council decided to accept the advice of Mike Cochran of First Birmingham

of school plan

Securities on authorizing its bond attorneys and investment bankers to prepare the city for bonding immediately.

The advantage, Cochran said, would be the city's readiness to enter the bond market at the most advantageous time.

The market has been fluctuating two or three points a week, he added, and the city needs to be ready to enter at the "right" time.

IN OTHER action, the Council:

—Authorized Civic Center Director Marcie Vandergrift to obtain a plaque commemorating Rocky Stovall, the Center's art teacher who died last

week. Stovall was an artist for Walt Disney and Universal Studios before retiring to Cropwell a few years ago.

—Denied an off-premises license for Discount Beverages, Inc. on U.S. 78 because the area is zoned R-2. Other businesses located there are exempt from the R-2 zoning because they were established before the zone was adopted.

—Approved the purchase of 24 pecan trees to be planted around the two ball fields at the Civic Center at a cost of

\$37.50.

—Appointed Leon Moore to the license committee, filling the vacancy left by the resignation of Lamar Williamson.

—Approved sharing half the cost of placing an advertisement in the annual issue of the state Chamber of Commerce magazine for \$135. The ad Porter said, will highlight Pell City and aid in soliciting new industry because of the magazine's wide circulation.

Pell City mayor responds to

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — As the mayor and Council continue their tug of war for authority, Mayor Harvey Watson tugged a little harder this week as he outlined in an open letter his reasons for retaining full authority.

During a City Council meeting last week, Councilman Rickey Staples, flanked by other members of the Council, passed several motions which challenged the mayor's authority.

While each motion passed with either a majority vote or a unanimous vote, the mayor contested each, saying he would not carry out any of the recom-

mendations because they infringed on his authority.

This week, Watson submitted an open letter to the citizens of Pell City in an attempt to reiterate his powers as "chief executive."

"One of the pledges I made during the 1984 campaign — that I would be a full time mayor — has been carried out, but not without conflict," Watson stated in the letter.

"In a city which, up to a point in time, seemed content with a series of part time mayors, the burden of governing was spread over several shoulders.

"Various committees of the City Council shared the load; so did the

city clerk, as well as, of course, whoever was then mayor.

"When I began carrying out the full time mayor pledge, the first important task was to consolidate the responsibility back onto the shoulders of the chief executive."

ONE OF Watson's first moves as mayor when he took office a year ago was to abolish the office of city administrator, held by Con Coupland.

Coupland eventually retired from that position a few months later.

Restoring full power to the mayor "has not been an easy task, and some folks have misunderstood my

'tug of war' for authority

motives. It is past time to clarify the situation," Watson stated.

"Think about your own situation, fellow citizen," the letter continued.

"If you work for someone else, do you have one boss or several?

"Assuming one person really supervises your work, can you imagine how hard it would be for you to keep your work priorities straightened out if you had several equal bosses, or a committee of them — sometimes making joint decisions, sometimes different ones making different views as to what you should do next?

"This was the problem that several of the municipal department

heads had under the ways city business was conducted in the past, much less those who worked under them and heard from different elected officials without much regard for the chain of command.

"To help public servants — those mostly good and dedicated workers whose pay comes from your tax dollars — to keep their jobs in good focus, they must have one chain of command.

"**OVER THE** past several months, there has been considerable public debate over the question of which — among six elected officials — should have the right, privilege and op-

portunity to do whatever is in the realm of governing the affairs of this city.

"Did the voters intend for each councilman and the mayor to, somehow, split the leadership job six ways?

"If you had six 'bosses,' each with an equal shot at giving you your assignments, how long could you do your job efficiently and with reasonable peace of mind?

"Overriding all my concerns is my conviction that the framers of the U.S. Constitution — and, subsequently, State Constitutions and City Charters — were inspired when

(Con't., see Mayor, Page 4)

(Continued from Page 1)

they built a careful framework of separation of powers and balance of powers.

"Judges can't tell lawmakers what to do, lawmakers can't tell the chief executive what to do, the chief executive can't tell the lawmakers or the judges what to do — and a resulting good from this is an elaborate system of checks and balances, keeping any of these branches of government from getting carried away."

"In Pell City's chosen form of municipal government, the City Council is the lawmaking body. The mayor is chief executive.

"IT'S THE mayor's burden to bring sharp focus to the business of governing, of serving the needs and interests of all citizens. The workaday job is his to manage, and the career, non-elected heads of departments must answer to him and him alone."

"It's the City Council's great responsibility to do several very important things:

"— To make the laws (at this level, that is, city ordinances);

"— To stand back from the routines of municipal operations and take an objective view of the quality of the overall job. From this distance, the Council can be expected to keep a clear perspective

on the budgetary needs and policy interests of the city.

"On the matter of the budgetary needs, the Council properly has the power to fix the budget — put the general spending limits — on the municipality.

"On the matter of policy interests, one of the most important responsibilities of a City Council is to set general policy and make its specific recommendations as to how the executive branch might carry out that policy.

"The trick is (a) to offer the recommendations, as recommendations, at the public meetings and (b) to ask, from time to time, why the mayor chose to follow a different path if he does not follow the recommendations.

"BETWEEN THEIR well meant recommendations and the mayor's responses, a lot of light can be shed — instead of heat — as to the direction taken in governing.

"There has been much confusion — confusing recommendations with mandates, confusing good lawmaking with good administration— over these past few months.

"If we can now settle into our roles, all very important roles, there is a tremendous amount of 'good government' that we can yet practice together.

"There is no doubt in my mind that each one of the six of us has none but the best in intentions in serving citizens of Pell City.

"Negotiating with each other and reasoning together, your City Council and your mayor can accomplish much at a time when such accomplishments are demanded.

"We are the largest community in Alabama's fastest growing county. And we have assets — our lake and our new school system and our recreation facilities and our industrial parks — on which we can build.

"But we — Council, mayor and, most important, informed and interested citizens — have to work together if our city is to live up to its destiny."

Pell City Council approves

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — "We're in a no win position," said Councilman Paul Turner, as the City Council readied itself for a vote Monday night on a controversial lounge-retail liquor license application.

The application for Smith Tackle was first presented at last week's

regular meeting but was tabled after a group of residents requested the denial of the application. City Attorney Bill Church was to study the matter and offer a recommendation.

Church suggested that the council approve the application contingent upon owner Barbara Smith signing an

affidavit which states she would only sell liquor for off premise consumption.

He also asked that the hours of operation be included in the sworn statement.

Church reminded those attending that the council does not have the

controversial liquor license

power to grant a license. It simply recommends the license be granted by the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.

He cited the city of Oxford as an example of systematically denying liquor licenses in an attempt to keep the area "dry."

In that case, Church said, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled the action illegal.

Based on the establishment's location in a commercially zoned area and its already holding an off-premise beer and wine license, Church recommended the approval.

He questioned how one could make a distinction between the sale of beer, wine and liquor.

Attorney Bill Hereford, who represented the group of residents living near the store, said his group had "lost the battle here tonight" if the measure passed.

He added that the approval "wipes out all the issues these people raised" such as children in the area, the possibility of opening a lounge at that location and the increase in traffic.

Church maintained that if the intent of the application was sale of "liquor by the drink" instead of liquor by the package, there would be "no question at all that it would be unanimously denied and refused."

"If I was a gambler," Hereford said, "I'd bet there will be liquor by the

drink" there because the approval is "breaking the ice" for the future.

The controversy centered upon the word "lounge" included in the title of the application.

The state liquor law application combines both a package store and lounge situation under one heading but with a greater cost for the lounge situation.

A representative for Mrs. Smith and Church stated that she did not intend to locate a lounge there.

Hereford said that her intention when the license was approved may not necessarily reflect the intention of the person who owns the business next.

Nancy Helms, one of the residents vocally opposed to the approval, said the group would do whatever it takes to deny the application.

"If we have to, we'll go to Montgomery. Barbara can make a living without selling liquor," she said. "Whatever we need to do, we'll do it."

Upon the motion of Councilman Charles Lockridge, seconded by Councilman Forrest Walls, the application was unanimously approved.

Council approves lounge

BY MIKE MOSER
News-Aegis Editor

With one councilman calling the decision "a traumatic one," and others stating they felt they had little choice in the matter, members of the Pell City council Monday night unanimously approved a request for a lounge retail liquor license.

The action may be met in court or in hearings in Montgomery, according to one vocal opponent of the license request, who promised to take her opposition all the way to the governor if he has to fight the liquor license.

The request was made by Barbara Smith, operator of Smith Tackle on U.S. 231 South in the city.

One of the fears expressed by a delegation of neighbors who opposed the license was that the store would eventually become a lounge. But after Monday night's meeting, Mrs. Smith, as she had stated in a previous meeting, commented, "I never had any intentions of putting in a lounge."

The issue first surfaced last week when the neighbors and their attorney, Bill Hereford of Pell City, attended a regular council meeting to protest the approval of the license that will allow

package sales of liquor at the bait shop.

Council delayed action at that time to allow city attorney Billy Church time to research laws concerning lounge retail liquor licenses.

The meeting opened Monday night with Church telling both sides that the city of Oxford had attempted to turn down systematically every such request only to have the Alabama Supreme Court to rule that it was not

proper to turn down request on a blanket policy.

"I really think that those who are against this don't have an argument with this council. Their argument is with the state legislature and the ABC (Alcohol Beverage Control) Board," Church said.

Church went on, "Since there is already a beer and wine license at this location, what grounds does this council



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retail liquor license

have to deny the liquor license?" He added that council does not grant license, just approves requests as part of a procedure.

Hereford told council the neighbor's fears included the possibility of opening the door for a lounge by allowing a package store operation for liquor. He added that even though Mrs. Smith might not plan a lounge, if the property sold the new owners might and by

allowing package sales would open the door for a future lounge by a different council's approval.

Councilman Charles Lockridge commented that in nearly every court case where the license process has been challenged, the courts have ruled in favor of the applicants.

Church added, "What is the difference in the eyes of the law between the sales of beer, wine and

liquor?" In an emotional plea, Nancy Helms told council she would go to court and to the ABC Board in Montgomery, even to the governor, if she has to.

"What rights do we have?" she asked. Later she commented that it would "be too late after you have to go to a funeral of one of these small children if they get run over by a drunken driver."

Councilman Paul Turner commented that council was in a "no-win situation." We (council) have been trying to recognize the rights of all citizens. My decision for me personally has been a very traumatic one."

With that, Lockridge made motion to approve the request and Councilman Forest Walls seconding the motion and all voting in favor of the proposal (Keith Porter was absent).

News-A

ST. CLAIR OBSERVER, Aug. 4, 1978
And The Progress of St. Clair County

City-County Park Go-Ahead At Pell

Project Given City Meeting

City of Pell City officials and the St. Clair County Commission signed a project agreement with the Soil Conservation Service Tuesday night which will allow the hiring of an architectural firm to draw up engineering and design plans for a proposed water-based City-County park to be behind the Pell City Civic Center at Cropwell.

Planning for the park actually began in June of 1975, when the project plan was presented to the City and County at a joint meeting by Ron Burdette of the Coosa Resource Conservation and Development Committee (CRC&D).

At that time, it was projected as a half-million dollar project with the City paying one-fourth, the County paying one-fourth and the CRC&D paying one-half of the cost.

Rod Goode, of the Soil Conservation Service office in Pell City, said the project is now expected to cost in excess of \$600,000 due to the increased building costs since the original planning.

The City and County expect the largest portion of their participation to be "in-kind services" rather than actual cash outlay.

Goode said the next step will be the immediate negotiation of a contract with an architectural firm for the design and engineering. When the contract is let and the plans are finally approved, the project will go forward probably in three phases,

situation of the city and county.

Goode said Soil Conservation Service funds have been approved for the engineering work.

He said he anticipates that construction on the park could begin in 1978, depending on the availability of funds and the completion of the engineering work.

The proposed park will contain nature trails, comfort stations, a group shelter with ten wooden tables and fireplace, concrete walks, paved parking, security lights, water fountain, campfire circle with flagpole and concrete seats, primitive campsite, multipurpose recreation court with two basketball goals, double tennis court, group shelter with 22 wooden tables and fireplace.

Also featured will be a play area with special surface treatment and playground equipment, concrete picnic table with metal grill, fishing pier, double boat ramp, boat dock with 15 slips, nature study pier with walk and covered observation area, double-lane paved roads, chain link fence, entrance gate and sign, embayment improvement control booth and barbed wire fencing on the back areas of the park.

At the time the park was originally proposed, County Commission Chairman Shirley Satterfield asked whether the public would be expected to pay for any of the services at the park and was told that a nominal fee, perhaps as low as 25 cents is charged by similar parks throughout the State.

OBSERVER Pell City, Ala. Sept. 1, 1977

BROTHERS OPPOSE EACH OTHER

AN INTRIGUING POLITICAL race is being hinted at in St. Clair County which, if it comes about, would pit brother against brother.

Former State Sen. Ray Wyatt had said he was running for probate judge. Now that he has been linked with the Muslims there, he says only that he is giving it "serious consideration."

His brother, Wallace Wyatt, has been mentioned as a possible candidate for the same post.

Wallace Wyatt says, however, only that he might be thinking about running.

Edwin News
Jan - 12 - 1960