

**Town Council
Public Hearing
Regular Session
July 6, 2004
7:30 PM
Town Hall Council Chambers**

After due notice to the press Town Council met in the Council Chambers of Town Hall. Mayor and all Council were present.

After bringing the meeting to order. Mayor Burdette asked council's indulgence to move Item #5 on the Agenda to Item #1. Frank Crenshaw made a motion to do so. James Allen seconded. Vote unanimous.

1) Proclamation to Recognize Loyd Guffie.

After the reading of the Proclamation, proclaiming June 13, 2004 as Lloyd Guffie Day, James Allen made a motion allowing Mayor Burdette to sign the Proclamation. Frank Crenshaw seconded. Vote unanimous.

2) Public Hearing-Tax Millage Increase

Mayor Burdette opened the floor for comments from the citizens concerning the Tax Mil increase.

Citizens expressing concerns over the proposed tax increase.

Anne Keeny of 100 Magnolia Point

Timothy Hume of 504 Mechanic St.

Bill Kester of 108 Winward Court

Brenda Vandermay of 620 Medlock Circle.

Martha G. Hodler

Don Plotnik 198 East Main St. property owner

Frank Burzotta 103 Magnolia Lane

Mayor Burdette brought the Public hearing to a close. Mayor Burdette responded to some of the questions that were raised and giving some of the reasons as to why a tax increase is needed.

- ◆ Workman's comp. fees increased by approximately \$12,000.00
- ◆ Health care insurance increased 45% over the last 2 or 3 years
- ◆ A decline in car Tax revenue. (a loss of approx. \$35,000.00 over a 3 year period) cannot be replaced in anything other than property tax.
- ◆ Major increases in fuel cost, repair work, tires, and maintenance for town vehicles.

Frank Crenshaw stated from his prospective everything has been looked at and there are places where we can tighten our belts but these will have to be looked at in detail before making a decision and still providing the services we have.

Sandra Gantt stated that she thought council made their mistake 6 years ago by not going up a small amount each year, as opposed to at the last minute and council is all of a sudden faced with this large amount; that's probably where council failed. But looking at this budget we are going to have to raise taxes some amount, in order to continue to provide the same services we have now.

James Allen stated that the people that live here in town do not see an increase like this every year, but stated that the town still has to operate the best way possible. Mr. Allen agreed that the assessment has thrown a curve because it has given us some additional funds and then an increase in millage on top of that. Mr. Allen said that he agreed with some of the remarks made that the assessment along with the millage rate is excessive and he would like for the town to be able to continue the services provided to the residents now but would also like to spend a little more time on finding methods on raising funds other than raising taxes.

Mayor Burdette stated that Council has met three times to see what areas could see a decrease and see what could be cut. The reassessment revenue was considered in 2003-2004 budget. Mayor Burdette also stated that a 2% increase for employees was included in the budget. Mayor Burdette urged everyone to think about the fact that 68% of the property tax that is billed out in the town is assessed at \$50,000 or less on property that is assessed at \$50,000.00 with tax millage rate of 145 would be and increase of \$30.00/year or \$5.00/month. First reading of the 2004-2005 Budget will be held Thursday evening July 8, 2004 at 6:00 PM at Town Hall.

3) **Public Comments:**

Mayor Burdette opened the floor for Public Comment.

a.) **Timothy Hume 504 S. Mechanic St.** Mr. Hume gave appreciation for the information given. Mr. Hume expressed concern as to why the democratic process is not working in the county? What does it take to get the county council to consider a referendum on local option sales tax? Mayor Burdette responded that a group of municipal leaders, school leaders, and legislative leaders were on a task force and went before members of County Council

asked them to place this on the ballot in November and it has been denied. Mayor Burdette stated that Pendleton residents could call their County Council representative and ask if they would reconsider and add this to the ballot in November.

b.) **Jim Smith 113 Shannon Dr.** Mr. Smith's opinion was that the Town of Pendleton could operate with a few less town employees. If the town needs and wants more taxes Mr. Smith asked that more effort be shown in decreasing expenses mainly employees. Mayor Burdette's response that within a 20-year period the town has not added anymore than 6 employees, and we are under the national average.

c.) **Bill Kester Winward Court:** Stated anytime a political body gets challenged by the taxpayers for raising taxes they immediately play the peer part we're going to cut your services.

It sends the signal that the taxpayers do not have any options. Mr. Kester stressed that belt tightening on both sides is needed, because services are expected. Mr. Kester also noted that 70% of the taxes go to the schools, and stated that there would not be an increase this year. Mr. Kester also stated there was lack of communication between council members and the people of the town on what is going on within the town government.

d.) **Don Plotnik-** expressed to those in attendance about the complaints of the money that was spent on the Town Hall Building. Mr. Plotnik stated that he thought this was a beautiful historical building where many of the residents attended school and does not want to see rooms used as a rental space to anyone who chooses to rent it. He stated that in the future when additional staff members are needed this building will be here

Mayor Burdette responded to Mr. Plotnik and thanked him for his comments she stated that the school district gave the town the facility which allowed the town to renovate and furnish the facility for \$400,000.00 and it will be paid for in 4 or 5 more years.

Also Mayor Burdette stated that Council was not trying to use the fear factor. Council has looked at the Budget. It is a matter of continuing to do what we are doing now or we do what we did 2 years ago where we drastically slashed the police department budget; which ended up being something that didn't work. Mayor Burdette assured the public that Council would go back and look at this budget before the 1st reading.

4) Police Department Update- Chief Jerry Sloan

Chief Sloan was not present due to a conflict; therefore no report was given.

5) Motion to turn over Repeater to Anderson County

The Repeater used for communication with Central Dispatch is attached to the water tower. The County recently repaired the repeater but suggested that we turn over ownership to the County so they will maintain it in the future. Frank Crenshaw made a motion to turn the Repeater over to the County. Leroy Galloway seconded. Vote unanimous.

7) Appointment to the Grievance Committee to fill two vacancies.

With a drawing at random the vacancies are to be filled by:

- ◆ Rod Adams, Police Department
- ◆ Amyee Hammonds, Administration Department.

8) Adjournment

Mayor Burdette thanked everyone for attending the July 6, 2004 Public Hearing and Town Council Meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted: _____

Mayor: _____

Council:

Ward 1: _____

Ward 2: _____

Ward3: _____

Ward 4: _____