

SOUTH FULTON CITY COMMISSION  
SOUTH FULTON, TENNESSEE  
AUGUST 19, 2004

PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Increase Rural Fire Membership Rates by \$25.00 Per Year

AGENDA

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Resolution #2004-4 (Rural Fire Membership Fees)

MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING

The South Fulton City Commission held a public hearing on Thursday, August 19, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. at the South Fulton Municipal Complex for the purpose of hearing comments on proposed increase to rural fire membership annual fee.

Those present included Mayor Greer, Commissioners Bivens, James, Moody and Pettigrew, City Manager Dillon, City Attorney Ivey, City Recorder Beadles and twenty-two residents signed in.

Mayor Greer stated the purpose of the meeting was to hear comments regarding a proposed increase of \$25.00 to rural fire annual membership fee. He turned the meeting over to City Manager Dillon.

Ms. Dillon presented proposed revenues of \$786,800 and expenditures of \$722,802 in the rural fire fund. She stated expenditures include one-half the cost of turnout gear, breathing apparatus, salaries. She stated air packs were last purchased in 1994 with life of air packs about ten years. She stated there is potential of 1100 residential members with 800 members last year. Ms. Dillon stated the ISO rating is #6 for city classification and #9 for county classification. She stated the city has requested an evaluation due to purchase of equipment/gear, but the process takes three to four months, with last evaluation in 1992.

Linda Snow, county resident, asked how long commission has known they needed to upgrade air packs and why were these items not budgeted.

Mayor Greer stated purchase of air packs has been on-going part of budget discussion, stating air packs can sometimes be rebuilt.

Glen Snow, county resident, stated he understands the city has to operate as a business, make decisions on sound judgment. He stated the fire department needs equipment and training. He stated he does not like the use of emotional appeal (that if membership fee is not paid, the fire department will not respond). He stated the city cannot levy a tax on the county residents (implied that annual rural fire membership fee is a tax). He also stated that the fire department

answered twenty-five rural fire calls and he requested of these how many were house fires, grass fires and rescue attempts. He also stated that it is a violation of the privacy act to notify insurance companies if residents do not pay membership fee. He also stated there should be rural representation on the city commission. Mr. Snow stated he had a petition with signatures of county residents opposing the increase and requested that the commission repeal the \$25.00 increase of annual rural fire membership fee. He stated the increase is hard for residents who are on a fixed income. Mr. Snow also made mention of two fires that occurred in 1965 in Fulton and 1996 in South Fulton when lives were lost.

Mayor Greer stated the rural fire is a service that the city provides to county residents and an annual membership fee is charged for that service. He stated it is not mandatory so residents can choose to have the service or not. He stated the fire department would not respond to a fire if the membership fee is not paid.

Fire Chief Smith stated if insurance company requests a listing of rural fire members, he must submit a copy. He stated the city donated the 1957 fire truck to Latham Volunteer Fire Dept after city purchased used fire truck from Dyersburg Fire Dept. He stated law requires two men go in, two men stay out (structure fire).

Ray Stanizewski, county resident, stated he was employed by WFUL and when speaking about rural fire situation on the radio that he informed the audience that he was giving his opinion. He stated he would pay for the service that was provided, that if he had a fire, he would pay the fire call. He stated he should not have to pay double.

Mayor Greer stated the city is subsidizing the rural fire fund. He stated the volunteers have to be paid for every call and every drill. He stated the fire department has filed for grants, but grants do not pay for salaries, operating costs and training.

Commissioner Moody stated city residents are also on fixed incomes. He suggested the county residents approach the county mayor about establishing a fire department in the county. He stated if county residents don't want to pay for the fire service that the city is extending to them, they do not have to be a member. He stated the city is not taxing the county residents, but providing a service for a fee. He stated this has been blown out of proportion and asked how many residents went to the county to oppose the increased motor wheel tax.

Barbara Crass, county resident and general manager of WFUL radio station, stated she was here to let the commission know that the radio station is available to serve the City of South Fulton and the city of Fulton. She stated they would be glad to make any announcements provided that they are given ample time.

Mayor Greer thanked Ms. Crass for her comments and stated the radio station does an excellent job putting information out to the public.

Chris Norton, independent insurance agent, stated she was present to help residents understand insurance. She stated she is a rural fire subscriber in the Union City area. She stated everyone is subject to the rating and regulations. She stated that she must have a receipt for rural fire membership before she can write a policy for fire insurance. She stated she requests a list of members from the fire departments in the area.

Jackie Long, county resident, complained of having to pay three memberships for her home, her rental property and her business. She stated there was a fire hydrant near her house and questioned what fire department would use to fight fire at her home.

Mayor Greer stated 1985 fire truck (pumper holds 750 gallons) and tanker (1800 gallons) are sent out for a county fire and when water from tanker is used, it is refilled from a fire hydrant or pond (if accessible to the tanker).

Jerry Moore, firemen, stated he went out with Fire Chief Smith to figure the rural fire area (within a five-mile radius of the city limits). He stated four air packs are required per truck.

Mayor Greer closed the public hearing at 6:50 p.m.

#### REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

#### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Greer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. (following the public hearing). Commissioner Moody gave the invocation. Commissioner James led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by City Recorder Beadles. Those present were K. Greer, J Bivens, D James, C Moody, T Pettigrew, K Dillon, K Ivey and D Beadles.

#### MAYOR'S WELCOME

Mayor Greer welcomed everyone to the meeting and dispensed with the reading of the formal welcome.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Moody moved to approve the minutes of the public hearing and the regular meeting of July 15, 2004 as presented. Commissioner Bivens seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carries.

#### REVIEW OF JULY DISBURSEMENTS

Commissioner Bivens moved to approve July disbursements as presented. Commissioner James seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carries.

#### REVIEW OF YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET

Ms. Dillon stated that she has amended budget ready for commission review and will include in packet tomorrow. She stated Ms. Conner has closed out June 30, 2004 and commission will be able to review expenditures.

#### DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Commissioner Moody moved to accept department reports. Commissioner Bivens seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carries.

#### COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ron Haskins requested the city publish budget information in the newspaper and asked how much city owes on sewer debt. Ms. Dillon stated she would get total debt from recorder and Mr. Haskins can get more detailed information at city hall regarding the budget. Mayor Greer stated information is available to anyone.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### RESOLUTION #2004-4 (RURAL FIRE MEMBERSHIP FEES)

Commissioner Bivens moved to do away with rural fire membership subscriptions. Commissioner Moody seconded the motion.

In discussion, Mayor Greer stated that commission should not penalize 750 people because of fifty who signed a petition don't want to pay an increase in service provided to them by the city. He stated that the service is not mandatory, but if the city does not offer the service, all residents in the rural fire area would be penalized by paying higher insurance rates. Ms. Dillon requested the commission consider the city residents that they are representing when they vote on this issue. Commissioner Bivens stated not many would get up at 3 a.m. in 20 degree weather for \$20.00.

Commissioner Bivens withdrew his motion to do away with rural fire subscriptions. Commissioner Moody withdrew his second.

Commissioner Moody moved to adopt Resolution #2004-4 (increase rural fire memberships by \$25.00 for annual membership of \$75.00 for FY2004-05). Commissioner Bivens seconded the motion. In roll call vote, Commissioners Bivens, Moody, Pettigrew and Mayor Greer voted aye. Commissioner James voted nay. Motion carries with 4-1 vote.

#### REPORT FROM MAYOR

Mayor Greer stated city sticker violations are being enforced with 35 citations written in

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August, 31 notices delivered for junk cars (19 have been moved), 2 yard warnings with 11 yet to be served.

**CITY MANAGER REPORT**

Ms. Dillon had no report.

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS FROM CITIZENS – AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no comments from citizens.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Moody moved to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. Commissioner Bivens seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carries.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
RECORDER MAYOR