

CITY OF GLADEWATER  
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION  
MINUTES  
AUGUST 7, 2014  
5:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Harold Wells, Elijah Anderson, Chris Bland, Leon Watson, Scott Owens, Lana Niemann

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Pro-tem J.D. Shipp

STAFF PRESENT: Sean Pate, Wayne A. Smith

GUESTS PRESENT: Jim Bardwell, Shannon Sisk, Richard Sisk, Michael Simmons

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wells called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

II. CONSIDERATION of request by Sabine Volunteer Fire Department regarding creation of Gregg County Emergency Services District

Richard Sisk, Chief of Sabine Volunteer Fire Department explained they are attempting to create Gregg County Emergency Services District #2, which will be part of the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction. He said it would be funded by a \$0.05 tax per \$100 valuation. If Gladewater Fire Department is the first responder, Sabine would respond under mutual aid or visa-versa. Gladewater could receive revenue for their response. He asked for the City's approval so this can be put on the ballot in November to let the community decide. Clarksville City has already given their approval. If Gladewater approves it will move forward to Kilgore and Gregg County. It takes unanimous support from all entities in order to put it on the ballot.

There was extensive discussion about the possible effect this could have on City's future annexation plans for that area.

Mike Simmons, Kilgore Assistant Fire Chief stated if the City decides to annex there is nothing they can do about it. He also stated the ESC can affect the ISO rating. Residents would shift money they are currently paying to the insurance company back into the community. Chief Simmons reiterated that they are only asking for the ability to allow citizens to decide by putting it on the ballot.

More discussion ensued regarding citizens who may prefer Gladewater Fire Department to respond, location of the fire station, their current equipment and EMT staff, current budget and funding.

Gladewater Fire Chief Wayne Smith spoke in support of Sabine VFD and stated they have a great working relationship.

There was more discussion regarding the procedure to remove territory under the ESD if the City annexes pursuant to Section 775.022 of the Health and Safety Code, and what the City may be responsible to pay the ESD.

Councilmember Owens stated he has to leave the meeting soon and would like to be able to vote before leaving. He said there is certainly mutual respect between departments now but we had a bad experience with funding from Smith County ESD. He doesn't want to negotiate reimbursements later. He wants to know what he is obligating the City to pay up front. He said residents out there are getting benefit of our fire and police departments but they are not paying for it. He said our City attorney was consulted and he conveyed difficulty involved with annexing and doing away with the \$0.05 tax. Councilmember Owens said he believes it will be several years before the ISO rating is affected by the ESD, but if they are brought into the City it will be affected within one year. He said we still want and need mutual aid agreements.

Mayor Wells called for a motion. Councilmember Owens moved to take no action as we still have too many questions. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Watson. Motion failed 3-3, with Bland, Niemann and Wells opposed.

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Councilmember Niemann stated she is normally clearly decisive on an issue but what is holding her back here is the advice that was given by legal counsel. City Manager Pate clarified that when the ESD gets approved and receives tax money they will likely have to borrow money. The law says we will have to compensate the ESD for a portion of that debt if we annex so it is not practical to do away with the \$0.05 tax.

Mayor Wells called for a motion. Councilmember Bland moved to approve the resolution of the City of Gladewater authorizing the inclusion of the extraterritorial jurisdiction in the proposed Gregg County Emergency Services District #2. Mayor Wells seconded the motion. Motion failed 3-3, with Anderson, Watson and Owens opposed.

Councilmember Owens commented we cannot obligate the City for an amount that we don't know. Councilmember Owens left the meeting to keep another appointment at 6:11 p.m.

Councilmember Niemann stated there is a lot of respect on both sides. She said we are dealing with tax dollars and unknowns are always scary. She said if we hadn't been working on annexation it would be different.

City Manager Pate stated it is unfortunate that the timing is so rushed.

Chief Sisk said this means the voters do not have a say if we cannot move forward.

Fire Chief Wayne Smith said if the Council votes to allow this to go forward, there is a lot of time between now and November to get answers to some of these questions. He expressed respect for Chief Sisk and Asst. Chief Simmons and the professionalism of their departments.

Councilmember Bland commented that these men wear patches on their arms "to protect life and property" and it in his opinion it all boils down to that. He said he has worked with

Chief Smith and Chief Sisk for a long time. They are both passionate about what they do and are truly servant leaders. He stated that if he is not mistaken Chief Smith supports the creation of this ESD and if he supports it that's good enough for him.

Councilmember Bland once again moved to approve the resolution of the City of Gladewater authorizing the inclusion of the extraterritorial jurisdiction in the proposed Gregg County Emergency Services District #2. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Watson. Carried 5-0.

III. ADJOURN

Councilmember Watson moved to adjourn at 7:00 p.m., seconded by Councilmember Bland. Adjourned by consensus.

ATTEST:

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HAROLD R. WELLS, MAYOR

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MELBA HARALSON, CITY SECRETARY