

CITY OF GLADEWATER
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION
MINUTES
AUGUST 27, 2015
6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Harold Wells, Mayor Pro-tem J.D. Shipp, Elijah Anderson, Chris Bland, Leon Watson, Dennis Robertson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lana Niemann

STAFF PRESENT: Melba Haralson, Paul Jaap, Wayne A. Smith, Kathi Corwin

GUESTS PRESENT: Diane Turner, Rebecca Jaap, Elaine Roddy, Jill Scurlock, Jimmy Williams, Jim Bardwell, Cathy L. Smith, Linda Harrison, Marsha Valdetero, Linda Wells

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Wells called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

Mayor Wells opened the public hearing at 6:02 p.m.

Diane Turner, owner of Antiques II and President of GADA requested \$15,000 to support GADA's efforts to advertise and promote Gladewater with billboards on I-20 and television ads. She said there are 47 business downtown and we need to promote Gladewater "the Antique Capital of East Texas" as a tourist destination or it will die. She also asked the City to research the steps necessary to upgrade GEDCO from a 4a to a 4b corporation.

Councilmember Bland agreed that we need to do a better job promoting Gladewater and stated hired a firm called Encore to make an assessment and provide a plan.

Councilmember Watson said converting GEDCO to a 4b corporation has been researched. Mayor Pro-tem Shipp stated that both types of corporations are limited to using 10% of their budget for promotions. He said Encore can help us use our advertising dollars more effectively.

Councilmember Robertson concurred that downtown is an important part of Gladewater and we are working with Encore to provide a more coordinated effort.

Jimmy Williams, 104 Pyeatt Drive, explained the misconceptions about 4a and 4b corporations and stated they have the same amount of money each year to spend on targeted infrastructure.

Suzanne Bardwell, 211 N. Main, acknowledged this was a tough budget and voiced appreciation and compliments for the balanced budget proposed. She said the city is judged by what it values and in her opinion Gladewater has three real treasures; the museum, the library and the antique district. As secretary of Friends of the Library she gave statistics of visitors, books, and programs provided throughout the year. She asked the Council to give further consideration to the library with regard to staffing and budget cuts.

Kathi Corwin, 402 Melba, Main Street Manager, stated the proposed budget still has enough to advertise for the Holiday Open House and other downtown functions. She also stated we have a greater online presence with the website and Facebook.

Mayor Pro-tem Shipp addressed the billboard issue from the Chamber of Commerce standpoint and stated the Chamber receives 100% of the hotel-motel tax revenue from the City to use for promotions. He also pointed out that the Main Street budget used to be about \$20,000 and in the past couple years it was increased to over \$80,000 with a full-time manager. He said this year we had to trim that budget to \$72,000 but we did not cut the program because we recognize its benefit to the City.

Diane Turner said she respects and appreciates what the city does and does not want to sound ungrateful.

With no other public comments Mayor Wells closed the public hearing at 6:50 p.m.

III. ADJOURN

Mayor Pro-tem Shipp moved to adjourn at 6:50 p.m., seconded by Councilmember Anderson. Adjourned by consensus.

HAROLD R. WELLS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MELBA HARALSON, CITY SECRETARY
INTERIM CITY MANAGER