

**MINUTES OF THE OKALOOSA COUNTY  
LEAGUE OF CITIES  
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2001**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President John Thomas called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. at Cinco Bayou Town Hall.

**THOSE PRESENT:**

Councilman Dutch Payne, Cinco Bayou  
Mayor Glenda Glover, Fort Walton Beach (arrived later)  
Councilwoman Fay Miller, Laurel Hill  
Mayor John Thomas, Mary Esther  
Commissioner Al Swihart, Niceville  
Mayor Gary Combs, Shalimar  
Commissioner Heyward Strong, Valparaiso  
Commissioner Paula Riggs, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

**THOSE ABSENT:**

Councilwoman Brenda Bush, Crestview  
Mayor Ken Beard, Destin

**MINUTES**

Motion made by Councilman Dutch Payne to approve the regular minutes of Thursday, December 14, 2000 meeting.  
Motion was seconded by Mayor Gary Combs and passed unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Councilman Dutch Payne reported that as of 1 January the balance was \$1,868.62, and the last check was written in December. Councilwoman Fay Miller noted that Mr. Payne still needs to get the signature card from the Bank, and he agreed to do so immediately following the meeting. The treasurer's report was filed for audit.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A follow-on discussion regarding the Resolution supporting the Yellow River Project resulted in the following cities having completed the approval process: Valparaiso, Fort Walton Beach, Shalimar, Cinco Bayou, and Mary Esther. Laurel Hill has it before the council tonight. Mayor Thomas suggested that a single resolution should be forwarded to the County, and Commissioner Strong said it had already been done. Procedures regarding forwarding resolutions from the OLoC Board ensued, with the consensus being to continue with individual resolutions from each City, then a letter from the Board to the County.

The One-Cent Sales Tax Referendum Resolution was forwarded to the Florida League of Cities, Northwest League of Cities, and each city in Okaloosa County by Valparaiso, Fort Walton Beach, and Mary Esther. Laurel Hill has it before the Council tonight. Cinco Bayou has an expert (Commissioner Strong) speaking to the Council on January 11.

Commissioner Riggs informed everyone that the County has workshops scheduled for January, February and March (see the website) and will be discussion the sales tax (and space needs) on the 16<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. The county manager form of government, hiring practices will be discussed, Commissioner Riggs informed those present. Other issues may be added to these workshops. Tuesday January 9<sup>th</sup> the Tourist Development Council will be the topic at 6 p.m. in Crestview. Hurlburt Field Road widening will be discussed on January 30<sup>th</sup>, and this was discussed at some length. Garnier's Treatment Plant will also be discussed in February or March.

## NEW BUSINESS

Submittal of resolutions and similar documents that are supported by the OLoC to the County was discussed, with Commissioner Strong stating the prior years' agreement was to have one letter circulated throughout all of the cities for signature. When it is to go to the Florida League of Cities or Northwest Florida League of Cities, each city forwards their own so that strength in numbers is achieved. For State level, copies are sent to the Governor, Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate and all of our legislative delegation. When a resolution is called from the Northwest Florida League we work with our County Commissioners. Commissioner Riggs said that there has been some confusion at the Commission level when there is a resolution from the Mayors and the League of Cities, with some council members stating that they were unaware of the resolution. This was discussed at some length to resolve the confusion.

Commissioner Strong brought up the parks issue, and Commissioner Riggs said that many times her hands are tied due to legal constraints (i.e. litigation on double taxation). There was some discussion, with Mayor Thomas concluding that now is not the time to bring this forward. Commissioner Strong suggested that we revisit it again.

Mayor Thomas asked that if any City has a project to bring forward to the County that they notify the OLoC for discussion. Mayor Glover spoke about the cities losing revenue every year and the difficulties this causes all of the cities. Commissioner Riggs said they are losing funds at the County level, too. Mayor Glover said that we need to talk about our difficulties with each other and the County to find the best solutions, and Commissioner Riggs agreed, suggesting a special revenue workshop be arranged between the two entities. She had been researching, and said that no one is tapping into the gas tax. Commissioner Strong discussed this with her, with Commissioner stating that we need to be creative with funding and revenue issues.

Commissioner Strong also said we need to call a workshop on the parks. This was discussed briefly, along with several issues facing cities: health plan costs, worker's comp, fireman 2-in, 1 out legislation. Cmbr. Payne said the one constant discussion in this group is money, such as their funding running out for police protection (grant ends), and if we don't get the one-cent sales tax hashed out, we don't know where we will get the funds. Commissioner Strong spoke with Cmbr. Payne about the franchise fees, MSTU and taxes. Commissioner Riggs spoke about her long discussion with the Mayor of Pensacola regarding their sales tax, which has been in effect for eight years. She said she would make a motion on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> to have a referendum on the sales tax. Commissioner Strong discussed this with her, with Commissioner saying that her opinion is that if the cities had not made an issue on the judicial center, the referendum may have passed. This was discussed this briefly, with Mayor Combs saying that he thought the best thing is to get to the point of a referendum. Cmbr. Payne agreed. Commissioner Riggs stated her opinion that the water/sewer projects that were listed on the needs list should not be there, that they should be funded by the enterprise fund. This is not a big enough issue to her to kill the sales tax referendum, she concluded, stating that she would do everything she could in support of it. *(Cmbr. Swihart left at this point to attend another meeting)* The distribution formula was also discussed at some length by Commissioner Riggs, Commissioner Strong and Mayor Combs. Commissioner Strong said that we appreciate the County Commissioner's support of our effort to go to the State for a change to the Statutes in relation to this sales tax. Commissioner Riggs said she had put the one cent sales tax on the BCC workshop agenda for the 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, and intended to invite the cities in general.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS / REPORTS FROM CITIES

**Cinco Bayou.** Recovering from holiday season, preparing for a clean-up of Glenwood Park area and Spring total town clean up.

**Crestview.** Absent, no report.

**Destin.** Absent, no report.

**Fort Walton Beach.** Good crowd at First Night in spite of the cold. New Publix supermarket is progressing, and they are working on plans for the library and new club house at the golf course and police/fire station. The ballet is working toward another grant. Cmbr. Payne complimented the City of Fort Walton Beach water crews who reworked the water mains in Cinco Bayou. They were very pleasant to work with and controlled the traffic, with no complaints from the residents that he was aware of.

**Laurel Hill.** They are gearing up for elections, and have a rezoning issue coming up this month with a restaurant that purchased residential property. Commissioner Riggs mentioned State grants for a library, and offered her assistance if there was any interest. Cmbr. Miller said they need a grant writer in general, and Betty Jordan's name was mentioned as a very good one who Mary Esther uses. The Mary Esther City Clerk was instructed to provide Mrs. Jordan's information to Cmbr. Miller. The question of how many seats were up for election was asked, and Cmbr. Miller said all five plus the mayor's seat, but the new charter that passed last year changed to staggered terms.

Mary Esther. Working with FDOT to extend Hollywood Blvd. to tie in to Highway 98, and may buy out 14 residences in order to use the property within the City limits in lieu of Hurlburt property and move the Springdale Park. Mayor Glover asked if there is anything the cities can do to help, and Mayor Thomas declined. There was more explanation and discussions.

Niceville. (Cmbr. Swihart had departed, so no report was given.)

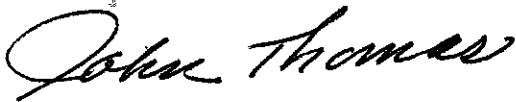
Shalimar. Mayor Combs reported that they, too, have elections this spring, and he may or may not run. The Town will be "shut down" for almost three months while Town Hall is reroofed and shutters are installed courtesy of a grant, and town funds will be used to fund the other renovations. They have almost a new Police Department, with Gary Loafman being promoted to Police Chief, adding that Egin Parkway is monitored much more heavily.

Valparaiso. State has finally installed sidewalks along John C. Sims Parkway. Stormwater projects almost finished. The one cent resolution was sent to all cities, and the water resolution to Jerry Melvin. A major TV upgrade was accomplished, with a dedicated channel to the schools and digital TV and internet. The City has received approval for an artificial reef, with the County doing a very good job in installing them. Commissioner Riggs added that the TDC had funds that can be used for additional reefs.

County. Commissioner Riggs said she had already reported during the course of the meeting. Commissioner Strong asked if she would be our County representative at future meetings, and she said that she was filling in for Shirley Ransom.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Thomas said that our next meeting would be on March 1<sup>st</sup> at Cinco Bayou Town Hall, and the next Okaloosa League of Cities dinner would be hosted by Niceville in March. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30



John Thomas, President

Wh Approved 2-1-2001

